Diary Dates

- Wed 9th December - Last day of Term 4 for classroom volunteers
- Mon 2nd February - Volunteers return to Milpera
- Wed 24th February - Volunteer Morning Tea
- Fri 11th March - International Women’s Day
- Tues 22nd March - Last day for S.A.R. and H.O.W. for Term 1
- Wed 23rd March - Exit Parade

News from Milpera!

Showcase

Fifteen Milpera staff and 15 volunteers attended the spectacular Showcase Dinner on Friday 30th October. Prior to the dinner Tom Beck, Helen Byrne, (our Acting Principal) and Donna Torr (HOD Junior School) had to address a panel to discuss our submission and extra information required by the judging panel. Although we were finalists, we were not the winners in the Community Engagement Section. The Hon Kate Jones MP, Minister for Education said that in the categories involving community engagement (of which Milpera was a finalist) the benefits extend well beyond the school gates. The awards play an important role in promoting public education to the whole community. Dr Jim Watterston, Director-General of Education and Training said that the awards provide the opportunity for other schools to learn about and adapt programs to their own needs.

The previous Friday, RemServ, who were the sponsors for the Showcase Award in the Community Engagement section, put on tea for staff and the Friday volunteers to celebrate our achievements in this program.
Futures Day

On Futures Day professionals and trades people came in to speak to the students and to show them real life examples of work activities. This year students gained new ideas and understanding about construction/engineering, plumbing, policing, firefighting, health, council libraries, agriculture, community and retail services. The aim of the day was to give the students an understanding of the job opportunities and career pathways that will be available to them when they leave school.
Volunteer Morning Tea

At the Volunteer Morning Tea on Wednesday 4\textsuperscript{th} November, Helen Byrne, Milpera’s Acting Principal, spoke about our submission to the 2015 Showcase Awards for Excellence in Schools. We had previously been recognised as winners in the Community Engagement Category of the Metropolitan Awards. The Awards were presented on Friday 30\textsuperscript{th} October and although we were unsuccessful with our entry, we presented a very strong case. Helen distributed the submission booklet to the Volunteers, and explained the data which had been gathered and collated. Some of the information pertained to topics such as the cultural breakdown of our current students, their visa categories and their years of prior schooling on entry to Milpera, their level of English as an Additional Language (EAL) on exit from Milpera and the volunteer input to ICT outcomes for the students.

Finally Helen showed a sample of the work undertaken by one particular student throughout her time at Milpera. This detailed such information as the student’s written work on enrolment day and then a sample of her work on referral to the Help-Our-Writing (H.O.W.) program. The last piece we were shown was a sample of the students work performed in the classroom after having completed the H.O.W. program. The level of improvement was remarkable and really illustrated the benefits gained by the students with the wonderful one on one support given by Milpera’s volunteers.

Reading Research

Professor Sue Creagh from the University of Queensland (a former long-serving Milpera teacher), directed a research project at Milpera into strategies for teaching and learning reading, especially for EAL learners who have limited literacy in their own language. Ms Creagh led a dedicated group of teachers who studied and collaborated for a series of seven professional development sessions and interviews, culminating in sharing their insights and strategies with staff at a Twilight PD session.
**Multicultural Development Association (MDA) Meeting**

Last Monday Janelle Paterson, our Home Liaison Teacher and Helen Byrne, our Acting Deputy attended the MDA Local Area Coordination meeting, where information relating to the impending arrival of Syrian refugees in Queensland was shared. It appears that we can expect double the number of refugees into the SE corner following the commitment of the federal government to take 12,000 extra Syrian people fleeing the crisis in their homeland, and no reduction of other Humanitarian entrant groups. Immigration reported they have mobile teams working in Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon assessing claims for resettlement and working with UNHCR to complete relevant checks. When checks are completed, the visa grants can be given, so Immigration expects that grants will start to be given around Christmas. It could be a few months later before these people start arriving in Australia. Karen Benson CEO of MDA made the following points in relation to the displacement of Syrian people:

- 4 000 000 people displaced in Syria – worst humanitarian crisis in 50 years
- 30% of displaced are families with female heads of house
- 11% of displaced are under 4 years of age
- 7% are 4-11 years of age

**Surf Safety**

Our Swimming and Surf Safety programs ran for six weeks during this term. They culminated in classes going to Burleigh Beach at the Gold Coast to learn about beach safety. The students learnt life-saving and beach skills. They also played beach volleyball, soccer and then surfed on surfboards.
Singing Group and Morning relaxation

Kylie Hinde, our music therapist started a singing group on Tuesdays at lunch time in Room 19 for students, staff and volunteers. Every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning before school she welcomed students, staff and volunteers to come along and listen to music and participate in mindfulness exercises.

Queensland School Tuckshop Awards

Congratulations and a big “Thank you” to Milpera Tuckshop convenors, Ms Mavis Renton and Ms Selma Mesalic, who won three awards for excellence in 2015:

- One of the top 10 tuckshops in Queensland
- Menu of the year for a Secondary school
- Community service award for cultural diversity

Mavis & Selma provide wonderful nourishing food for our school community.

Queensland College of Teachers Award.

Ms Fiammetta Stefani who teaches the students in Room 20 has been commended as an outstanding teacher and colleague and was a finalist in the QCT Excellence Awards in the “Beginning Teacher “ category.
Mental Health Week

This term we celebrated Mental Health Week. The theme was “Gratitude and Thankfulness.” Fun activities such as tie dying, origami, nia dancing, growing your own food and relaxation were offered for both students and teachers.

With Thanks

Thank you for the gift of your time so freely given and for the love and compassion you show to our students. It makes them feel valued and helps their settlement and learning.