



Milpera Volunteer News ~ March 2018

The goal of this monthly bulletin is to share timely news, dates, and happenings about and concerning the Milpera State High School community. If you have received this document in error and/or you wish to unsubscribe, please email the author at mmclo5@eq.edu.au

Diary Dates

- **Thurs 29th March** - Last day this term
- **Wed 18th April** - First day back for Classroom Volunteers
- **Thurs 19th April** - First day back for Support-a-Reader and Help-Our-Writing Volunteers
- **Wed 25th April** - Anzac Day
- **Mon 7th May** - Labour Day
- **Fri 18th May** - Boys to Men Day
- **Mon 21st-25th May** - National Volunteer Week
(Talk and Volunteer Morning Tea in the Volunteer Room at 10.45 each day)
- **Thurs 28th June** - Last day of Term 2 for all volunteers and Exit Assembly
- **Fri 29th June** - Last day of Term 2

News from Milpera!



FHEAL Fundraiser 27th March

The FHEAL fundraiser "Songs of Hope and Healing" is going to be held at the Concert Hall at QPAC. Come along and share this uplifting and joyous evening, while helping this charity to build young refugees into great future citizens. If you would like to book tickets for this concert you can go to QPAC.COM.AU or call 136 246.

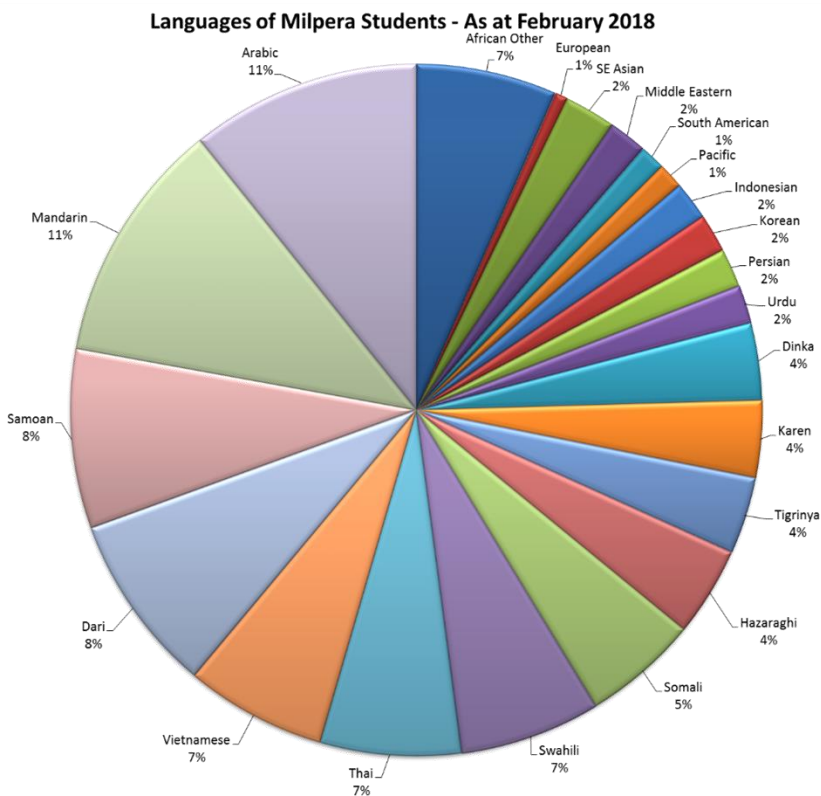
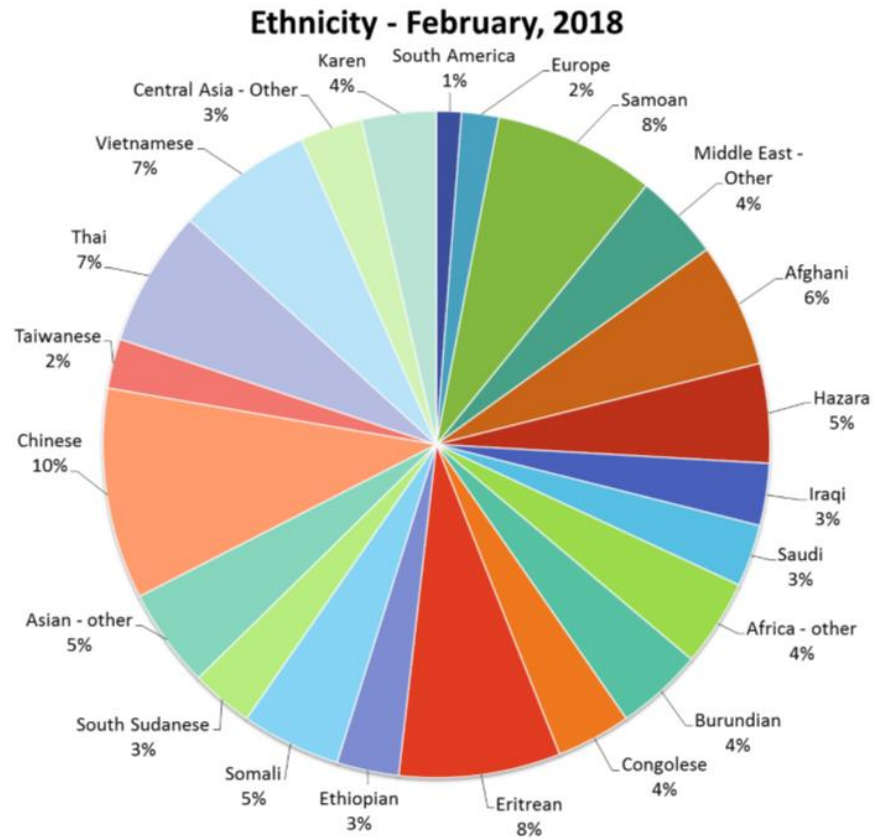
Stanley River Camp

Room 22 and 23 went on a three day camp to Stanley River Environmental Education Centre where the students learnt about Australian culture and also how to canoe. They made new friends and played team building games, planted trees, went fishing, saw kangaroos and made damper. They also roasted Bunya nuts and ate them.



Volunteer Morning Tea

Ian Miller our Principal told volunteers that he arrived at Milpera in Term 4 last year. He thanked volunteers for their commitment and hard work and said that Milpera would not run well without them. He showed and spoke about the latest data, some of which can be viewed below.





Ian also said that some of the areas in the school had received a refurbishment and that the tuckshop had been painted. He said that swimming had started and was being led by Danny Parker. Tracy Tucker, Clare Wynn-Williams and Helen Dickinson have been helping at the pool each week.

He also spoke about the innovative boys group that was running on a Tuesday afternoon that Danny Parker and Jonathon Balaszczyk had started. The program aims to foster connections to self and others through sharing. Ian also said that our youth support co-ordinator Stephanie Christian would be starting a girls group with students from Milpera and Brigidine College. Ian also told volunteers that to assist student needs, the school will be running a free bus service to/from Yeronga and Yerongpilly train stations. The school service intends to significantly shorten travel time for students who come to our school from the Runcorn suburban precinct.

Ian told everyone how teacher aides are utilised in the classrooms and said that Milpera would be looking for a Thai teacher aide to work with our Thai students. He said that some teacher aides have held down substantial jobs in their countries. He ended by saying that so many of our students have not had age appropriate education and that volunteers do a wonderful job supporting them.

Julie Peel, our Deputy Principal brought to our attention how difficult life can be for children who have come from a war zone, for example a mother who wouldn't let her daughter go to school in Australia because she was so fearful for her daughter's safety. She also highlighted how students may look settled, but once you get to know them you can see that they are not coping well. She stressed that we need to advocate for a number of students and we need extra care to get them started on their journey.

Julie then spoke about a conference that she had attended in Melbourne last year called “2017 Myan National Conference: Young People in a Multicultural World.”



She said that speakers at the conference said that the world is going through a time of major change and uncertainty. They felt that the notion of citizenship, multiculturalism are being challenged at this time of increasing migration across the world and that these things are having an impact on refugee and migrant young people.

Professor Fethi Mansouri from Alred Deakin Institute then spoke at the conference about the notion of Global citizenship. Could it be a way of thinking, a way of relating or a way of behaving? He felt that having citizenship for 20 years was not enough to say one fully belongs, and he wondered if Global citizenship had the potential to overcome this.

Claire Naughtin from the CSIRO also said that 45% of young people now have one parent born overseas and that 25% of young people are born overseas. She also noted that 1st and 2nd generation migrants are more likely to be engaged in further education. She noted that migrant and refugees are more likely to work part time as they find it difficult to find full time work. She said that 1 in 7 migrants and refugees will not have their qualifications recognised in Australia and that people who have temporary visas are not allowed to study and often feel a lack of hope.

Another speaker Grace Edward spoke very powerfully. She said that everything starts at school and that young people need to be empowered and given responsibility. She thinks that communities should run things themselves and she would like families to be involved, such as being on the school P and C. She feels that the media should sell positive stories. She said that she is not “just a refugee”

and that she wants to go beyond the refugee experience, she wants to prove to the Australian community that refugees are not useless. She highlighted that migrants and refugees come from a collectivist culture where decisions reflect on the family and the community. She also said that often the younger members of a family have moved on, but Mum and Dad have not.

Georgia Paxton, the head of the Child Refugee Clinic at the Royal Children's Hospital said we need to watch the way we use language. We need to take care of the way we describe people of refugee and migrant background. For example, I saw an engineer with two children. She said, "I don't see race, religion and colour and often have to check background. We must acknowledge that we all have a subconscious bias for trying to see differences".

She also said that light skinned people in Australia have a duty to call out racism.

Next the Hon Tony Bourke spoke on Multiculturalism and said that Facebook has incredible power to get positive messages to people. He also said that he would like Australia to be a nation where everyone's story is a part of the story of this nation and that our fiction stories could be about diversity.

One of the last people to speak was Docas Utkovic who has an Australian African TV Show. He stressed that we need to use positive words when describing multicultural youth. He also said that we should start personalising refugee and migrant people by talking about the similarities more than the differences, and to be curious about each other to develop an understanding of each other.

International Women's Day Celebrations and the opening of the Helen Byrne Building

Inalian Conlon from Glenala State High School gave a wonderful welcome to country on behalf of her Grandmother. This was followed by the Dinawina Nurie welcome dance which celebrates the Emu in the sky. If one looks up at the night sky in April/May one can see the picture of an Emu in the dark places between the stars.

After this, Julie Peel our Deputy Principal, acknowledged the traditional owners of the land and welcomed everyone to Milpera's 27th International Women's Day ceremony. The theme for the day was "Leave no woman behind". Julie acknowledged the families of our children who have come from refugee camps. She also mentioned women leaders, in particular those known to many at Milpera namely Adele Rice our founding Principal, Helen Byrne our ex Deputy Principal, Tracy Tucker, Clare Wynn-Williams and



Jennifer French who have started the charity "Pushing Barriers". Julie acknowledged all women who have created opportunities for our students. She spoke with students from Room 17 and shared their thoughts with us. They told her stories about how girls are powerful, how they should be equal to boys and men, how they should have fun playing sport, how girls should fight for their rights and how families should share work between the men and women. They felt strongly that girls should get a good education, make good choices and not forget their family and friends. Julie said they need to grow their English to a high level and to have a voice. She thanked all the talented women who volunteer and help at Milpera. Julie also said that girls acquire English quickly, they have a love of learning and a love of life here. She ended with the words from the song "One Woman". "Your courage keeps us strong, Your dreams are mine, We shall shine."

Olivera Simic then spoke. She emphasized the need to believe in oneself and to make one's dreams come true. She told of how she fled her country and lived in seven countries and on three continents before coming to Australia and how she had to get her education along the way. Some people helped her to find her feet, but she did most of it herself. Although she was forcibly removed and it was difficult, she always valued education and pursued it wherever she could. Olivera studied in Serbia, London and Costa Rica as well as in Melbourne. She said that yesterday she was a refugee and today she is an academic who works in the area of armed conflict and how wars impact peoples' lives. One of the questions she tries to answer is, "How can we help people who have been forcibly removed, move on with their lives and make something good out of them?" She spoke of the need for International lawyers who are sensitive to women. She encouraged the students to follow their dreams, to have patience and passion, and to change peoples' lives.

The Kathleen Bourke Memorial Bursary was presented, and we watched Irena Zdral's digital story.

Sahba Hamiel who came to Australia from Afghanistan 16 years ago, also spoke. When she arrived in Australia she came to Milpera. She told the students to dream big and to work hard. She said that she was able to navigate her way with the aid of the teachers. She longed to become a social worker. She did a Bachelor of Psychological Science and then did her masters in Social Work. She said she taught herself strategies to speak up. An example of this was how she boosted her esteem by telling herself that she spoke 4 languages, she also discovered that she could learn from her mistakes. She loves her work as she is now able to help others who in turn helped her to overcome her fears. Her parting words were, "Throw yourself into challenges, never be scared of failure or making mistakes".

Martine Kite, the Cultural Captain for 2018 from Yeronga State High also spoke. She came from The Democratic Republic of Congo and spent 6 months at Milpera before going on to Yeronga State High School. She too spoke of her fear of failure, of being compared with others and of being judged. She pushed herself to get out of her comfort zone, she joined different clubs and started to take on responsibilities. She is in a much better place and encourages other to get involved and to step up!

Mary and Lucy from The Sparkle Fantastic Dance Crew brought lightness and laughter to the morning.

Ian Miller, our Principal thanked everyone for coming to support our school. He said that he had landed in a unique school filled with magic. He spoke of the love that the staff have for their work with the students and said that he was lucky to work here. He acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land, past, present and future. He said that the ideas for the new building started in 2016. The staff and the P and C had shared their ideas and had contributed to the design and use

of the building. Ian then thanked all who were involved in getting the building designed, built and completed. He thanked the construction workers, the project managers, the teams on the ground, Julie Pell, Sue Jelacic, Bob Logan, Tom Beck and Helen Byrne. Ian said that he had worked briefly with Helen, but said that he had seen her dedication to Milpera and her ongoing commitment. He said that Tom Beck was the key driver in getting the building started.

Tom Beck, our ex Principal then spoke and said that it was wonderful to be back at Milpera and to be able to speak about Helen and to honour her. He spoke of Helen's initial ideas for the new building and how she thought it would be so good for students' mental health as they could use it for sport and different activities as well as for assemblies. Tom praised Helen for her contribution to EAL/D education in the State, as well as her great contribution in developing the curriculum, for her compassion and her awareness of the support that students need. Tom spoke of how he had taken the important qualities of compassion and support for students with him to his new school at Redbank Plains. He said that Helen had a dream for EAL/D education and that it had spread beyond



Milpera to other schools in Queensland. He said she had left a legacy of staff and students who have done better because of her. He then officially announced that the Building is named the "Helen Byrne Building".

Helen responded by thanking Tom for his kind words and the whole Milpera community. She said, "The wall behind me is so bold and gold, here I am and I am honoured". She spoke about how the land at Milpera used to be lower lying and how the traditional owners all those years ago used to come here to gather food and to get water. She acknowledged them and said that this was a good place. She hopes that this building will too be a place where people gather, learn and play as well as recover from difficult times. She encouraged the students to include others in this space and not to fight. She said it should be a place where students perform and celebrate before leaving Milpera. Lastly Helen thanked everyone for the honour. We then had a smoking ceremony where education and cultural practices were acknowledged.



During the smoking ceremony the building was blessed. Spirits that need to be here were welcomed and ones that are not welcome were driven away.

After the ceremony all the Milpera girls attended different workshops such as bead making, yoga, rock climbing, zumba, bike maintenance and making paper lanterns.



Connecting to Country - Napartjii Napartjii

Every Tuesday afternoon a group of boys have met with Mr Parker, Mr Balaszczyk, Mr Shaw and Mr Namusomwa and have participated in a program that has focussed on learning and connecting to themselves, to each other and to nature through sharing stories and participating in other activities.

Over thousands of years, Aboriginal people developed a variety of ways of learning and connecting. The students have focussed on this learning.



They participated in a yarning circle, shared stories, tuned into the sights, sounds, smells and feelings of local places, listened to traditional aboriginal stories, sang and danced and have begun to consider how these ways of being and knowing can impact on their lives at school and at home.



Karibu Group

Stephanie Christian from Milpera and Sylvia Aparicio from the Multicultural Development Association have started the Karibu (Swahili for “welcome”) group for girls on a Tuesday afternoon. The aim of the group is to create deeper cultural awareness and long lasting friendships between students from Brigidine College and Milpera. Each session has had a focus. During the first session the girls participated in a Cultural Cooking session where the emphasis was on cultural awareness. The second session was focussed on emotional awareness. The students did a science experiment that related to their physical and emotional reactions. In the third session the girls looked at their goals and aspirations and they played a game of netball. Next week they are going to Brigidine where they will connect with their friends and will enjoy the afternoon doing craft.



Research Project

Dr Sue Creagh, a former teacher from Milpera, and currently a lecturer at the University of Queensland in EAL/D Education is going to do a research project at Milpera. The project will map the educational pathway of newly arrived migrant and refugee background secondary students across 2018. The research will entail the collection of data about the students from enrolment records, grades and academic work samples.

This project will contribute knowledge about the language development of young people of migrant and refugee background who have significant language learning needs for engagement with secondary school. The project also provides an insight into the educational factors which support both the early development of academic English and good settlement, for a diverse group of students.

Capturing all school enrolments across 2018 plus current students in the school, Dr Creagh will collect information about:

- student pre-arrival educational histories, from enrolment forms
- academic progress during first school year in Australia, from teachers
- destination Brisbane post-Milpera, and level of language services available

The project will also include 10 case studies of students from a range of representative backgrounds based on migratory visa category, age and gender. In the case studies, the students will be involved in five interviews with Dr Creagh, across the duration of the school year. The interviews will be supplemented with school work samples, photos and video documentation, capturing the student's experiences during the school year.

Dr Sue Creagh has also applied for a grant post Milpera so that she can continue her research in this area.

Hive Mind Project (An ongoing community driven installation and research project)

Last year Song Room, which engages young people through creativity, applied for a grant to work with us to make an interactive Art installation. They won the grant and Rooms 5,6,22 and 24 participated in making the installation.

The artist Amelia Kalifa and her assistant Kate Redward showed students how to make flowers out of wire. These flowers have been joined together to make a hanging vine which has been installed in the library.



The project also included students answering two questions which were recorded. The questions were - What did you wonder about as a child? and What is something that you hope for?

The recurring aspects of the work are the creation of flowers from wire that the students made and the collection of their voices and ideas through audio recordings. These two components were then installed into a touch sensitive sound installation where audio is triggered simply by touching the artwork.

Amelia Kalifa said, “The project explores our experiences of being human - our worries and concerns as well as our hopes and dreams. It is about the big and little questions whispered in our minds, the ones with no clear or simple answers and the ones we tend to push to the side and forget about”.



M.O.A Award

Paul Bland, a volunteer at Milpera for eight years, was awarded an M.O.A. in the Australia Day Honours. The citation accompanying the Award recognized Paul’s service to Education and the Anglican Church. As a school principal and chaplain, Paul has worked in Brisbane and

in rural Queensland and regional Queensland. At present Paul helps in Room 15 and he and his wife Chris also work in the breakfast program.

Signing in

Please remember to always sign in and out when you come to Milpera and to let us know if your address, email or phone numbers have changed.

Thank you

Thank you for your generous donations which will enable 2 students to receive \$250 dollars each at the coming Exit Assembly, which will go towards their school books, uniforms or other educational needs. The students who receive the bursaries will be of a refugee background and need to have shown consistent effort in their school work and a strong work ethic and commitment to achieving success.

Thank you also for empowering many students by your patience, kindness and generosity of spirit and simply by being present when they need help.