Diary Dates

- **Friday 27th June** - Last day this term
- **Tuesday 15th July** - First day back for Classroom Volunteers
- **Wednesday 16th July** - First day back for Support-a-Reader and Help-Our-Writing Volunteers
- **Wednesday 13th August** – Exhibition Holiday
- **Wednesday 17th September** – Last day of Term 3 for Support-a-Reader and Help-Our-Writing Volunteers
- **Friday 19th September** – Last day of Term 3 for Classroom Volunteers

News from Milpera!

**Boys to Men Day**

Boys to Men Day was held on the 9th May. There was singing, dancing and inspirational speeches. David Conlon gave a “Welcome to Country” and thanked everyone for recognizing Aboriginal Culture. He encouraged students to respect their elders and to listen and learn and said that this would help to guide them on their way. Our Principal, Mr Tom Beck acknowledged the roll and contribution of boys, young and older men and volunteers who pass on accumulated wisdom. He spoke about the recipe for success which included hard work, persistence, collaboration and respecting others. Michael Kavian told students about the challenges he faced when he came from Iran to Australia and how students need to have hope and get up whenever they fall down. He started working in Woolworths at night when he had a smattering of English and he is now a Senior Consultant at TAFE. The teachers “Secret Men’s Business” presentation showed the students that it is important to learn from ones mistakes and that this influences the type of man they will become. Merselle Gebre, an ex- Milpera student who now goes to Yeronga State High spoke of his best moments at Milpera, how he learnt to swim and was introduced to cross country running. He now runs at National level and encourages all students to make the most of the opportunities they are offered.

The boys were then offered workshops in many varied subjects such as didgeridoo playing, Zova soccer, fencing, fishing, decorating boomerangs and drumming.
National Volunteer Week

National Volunteers Week was celebrated at Milpera from Monday 12 til Friday 16 May. During this week, information sessions were held for volunteers during morning tea each day.

Jane Griffin from FHEAL gave a very interesting presentation on two days. She said that the Art Therapists focussed on asylum seekers and refugee students. In particular they are currently seeing Tamil, Rohingyan, Kurdish, Vietnamese and Hazara students as well as students from African camps. All the refugee students who come to Milpera are screened to see if they need to go to HEAL. Students can be referred by their teachers or they can also refer themselves. Much of the work that they do with the students is about grief and loss. They work with students who have come from war torn countries and help them to understand the symptoms they experience, help them to minimise these and consequently help them to feel that they are more in control. Volunteers are wonderful because they provide love, care, understanding and patience to the students. These students suffer from lack of sleep, body pain, irritability, lack of concentration and are often anxious about the future. Art Therapy gives them the chance to express themselves, time to relax and to settle. An eclectic approach is used in Art Therapy at Milpera. BRITA (Building Resilience in Transcultural Adolescents) is used as well as The Tree of Life program. The Tree of Life Program is a narrative technique whereby each week you build a different part of the tree /who you are and your life. The sand tray is also used to talk about experiences. FHEAL has grown and is now providing therapy not only at Milpera but also one day a week at Yeronga State High, Woodridge State High, St James’ College and at TAFE.

Tom Beck thanked the volunteers for the huge contribution that they make to Milpera and said that their help was vital to the students’ success. He talked about the many nationalities of the students, their visa categories and the schools to which they exit. He also spoke of a research partnership that Milpera has with QUT that is looking at the factors that refugee students need in order to be successful.

![Nationalities of Milpera Students as at May 2014](image)
He also spoke about the library refurbishment, the new kitchen in Room 26, additional help for students doing basic maths and the HOW program (Help Our writing) which is being further developed for beginner students.

Ingrid Wood, the Guidance Officer spoke about the pathways the students take when they leave Milpera. Many of them go on to high schools and a number of older students go on to TAFE. The asylum seeker students who are over 18 can no longer access school, cannot work and only get minimal hours at TAFE. Life is very difficult for them.

Janelle Patterson, our Home Liaison Teacher spoke about her role at Milpera. She works with the students, their parents, carers and relatives by welcoming them and helping them find their roots in a new school and a new country. She talked about parent information sessions which were to take place with the Eritrean, Congolese, Sudanese, Liberian and Somali families. The purpose is to create partnerships with families and guardians. There is evidence that shows that when there are strong partnerships between schools, support agencies, community organisations and families, children tend to do better at school, stay in school longer, value education and like school more. More sessions are planned for the future.
She spoke of how valuable the time is that the students spend with the volunteers and what a positive impact a kind word can have on a student.

**Sorry Day Ceremony**

Mr Danny Parker organised this moving ceremony where we were reminded of the stolen generations, many of whom are alive today as parents and grandparents. By commemorating and recognising this day we are making a long lasting contribution to the achievement of reconciliation and healing in the wider community.

**Aprons4action Fundraiser**

Our talented Milpera students with their art teacher Ms Liana Trujillo, have enjoyed creating arty aprons to contribute to a fundraiser for the Shalom Community Development Projects in Southern India, an Australian DFAT approved NGO.

Anne Benson who has volunteered at Milpera for a long time took her apron with her when she recently visited the Shalom Community for the official opening of the new wing for orphaned girls. The funds earned all go to improving the facilities for the Childrens’ Home. Shalom is very inclusive of the local village and community and want to raise further funds to improve toilet facilities at the local high school which has 150 students, 3 classrooms, awful toilets and no boundary walls to the school.
Walk in my Shoes

Under the guidance of Ms Trujillo, Milpera art students created an array of enormous clay feet for a Harmony Day art installation on the theme “Walk in my Shoes,” aimed at encouraging young people to share their unique stories and to promote tolerance and inclusion. Along with live music and dance, the event was a great success. This exhibit will also be displayed at the Vera Wade Gallery, St Andrews Uniting Church, Ann Street, June 16 to 27, 11-2pm, in the “Restoring Hope” exhibition for Refugee Week, see www.artfromthemargins.org.au.

Queensland’s Positive Teacher of the Year Award

Ms Jane Griffin, coordinator of HEAL, received this prestigious award at the “Positive Schools Mental Health & Wellbeing Conference,” acknowledging her contribution to the wellbeing of students at Milpera and other schools as well. Through Arts and related therapies assisting in trauma recovery, Jane and her dedicated team make an invaluable contribution to Milpera students’ settlement experience, and to the harmonious tone of the school.

Jane welcomes volunteers to visit HEAL during the breaks to spend time with the students and staff listening to music, playing chess, drawing and talking.

Change of details

If your physical address, e-mail or telephone number has changed, please give me the new information, so that I can update our records.

With thanks

Thank you for giving of your time so generously and for making a difference to our students’ lives. Your continued donations to the breakfast club, your gifts of clothing, beads, art materials and kitchen items are greatly appreciated.