

Celebrating over 50 years of special education

Mater Dei Matters



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MATER DEI, CAMDEN

ISSUE 1 - 2009

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Mater Dei 50 years on

A WORD FROM THE CEO/PRINCIPAL

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our first edition of Mater Dei Matters for 2009. I hope that your year has started well and that at this difficult time you have managed to retain a sense of optimism. Mater Dei has had a wonderful start to the year with our new students settling in very well and our continuing students delighted to be back at school.

Our students continue to make excellent progress as they settle into the routines of school and enjoy the many challenges that our programs offer.

Already we are beginning to see our new students form friendships and find their own way around the school. I believe this says something about the very strong sense

of community that exists at Mater Dei as we see the new students being accepted just as they are and our current population embracing them as friends immediately. Our students have much to teach in so many areas and the way they extend the hand of friendship and welcome is just another of the lessons we can learn.

As you are aware, we are a Good Samaritan School and we identify very strongly with both the mission and the charism of the Good Samaritan Sisters and the Rule of St Benedict. A strong focus of the Rule of Benedict is that we build a community where "the strong have something to strive for and the weak nothing to run from" (RB 64:9). I find this a very inspiring passage, not only for our community, but for our

world. At Mater Dei we continually try to provide an environment where our students are challenged to the extent that they can be, and supported to their level of need. In this way we build a community based on mutual trust, love and respect for the abilities of all. What a world we would have if these simple words of Benedict were embraced and lived out by all people.

I hope that you continue to enjoy good health and happiness throughout the year and I look forward to sharing the many successes of our students in future Matters magazines.

Yours sincerely

Frank Pitt
CEO/Principal

Starting Kindergarten at Mater Dei



Any parent who has taken their child to school for the first day will tell you how many emotions they feel all at once.

Starting school at Mater Dei is just as exciting and as daunting for children, parents and teachers as it is at any school. Perhaps we are not as big as other schools, but everybody and everything looks big when you're in Kinder. And what does this taxi stuff really mean?

So there we all were. Miss Mitchell and Mrs Charles looking excited and feeling nervous.

We had 20 children to greet and keep calm, happy and wanting to come back again. Well, you can't learn everything the first day.

It has been a wonderful Term. The children have all settled in well with the help of those who returned for their second year. We have made friends. We know how to sit in assembly, get our award and shake hands as proud as all the big kids. We have learnt our sounds and sing the "Ants in the Apple" with pride and passion. We have experienced swimming lessons in the school pool and we have learnt to move to other

places in the school for cooking, assembly and music. Going to chapel for Mass has been a new experience for most and we are learning how to behave in God's house. We have learnt how to catch our taxi's all by ourselves and walk to the ramp. Most of all, we know what it feels like to belong: to belong to our class, to belong to our friends and to belong to our school. And, most importantly, we know what it feels like to be happy.

Eryn Mitchell and Michelle Charles
Pastoral Teachers, Kinder Blue and Red



You are invited to attend our first ladies Lipstick Luncheon

Friday, May 15, 2009 Noon-2.30pm
at The Cube, Campbelltown Catholic Club
Tickets are \$60pp or table of 10 for \$600

Sponsorship packages available. For bookings call 4655 7481 or visit www.materdei.org.au



Mater Dei Raceday

Saturday, August 1, 2009
at Kembla Grange

Sponsorship packages now available

Enquiries call 4655 7481 or visit www.materdei.org.au

KATE'S STORY



On the May 25, 1993 our beautiful daughter, Kate, was born. She was perfect, just like a porcelain doll.

I started to worry when Kate wasn't reaching her milestones but my mother would tell me to be patient, that all babies were different and reached their milestones at different ages, so I shouldn't compare.

By the time Kate was 6 months I knew things weren't right so we were referred to Campbelltown Hospital for physio and things started to improve but Kate was still way behind.

By 11 months Kate was sitting up, crawling at 18 months and finally walking at 22 months. It was at this time we received the diagnosis of a global developmental delay. At 3 Kate started talking and, according to Michael (Kate's dad), she hasn't stopped since!

Throughout Kate's entire life she has had a fear of animals. Owning our dog, Scrappy Doo, was impossible. So when Kate was 9 we started her at "Riding for the Disabled". Getting Kate on a horse was agony and I worried that I was doing the wrong thing. She was terrified but eventually she overcame her fear and she is now an accomplished horsewoman having weekly riding lessons and attending Wollondilly Pony Club. She has formed an inseparable bond with the love of her life Joshua John, an Australian Stock horse stallion, and her fear of animals is a distant memory.

In 1999 Kate started Kindergarten at Mawarra public school but by Year 2 things were getting hard. She struggled to keep up and was transferred to the IM class at Camden public school. Finally she was happy and had friends.

Looking for a high school was exhausting. We went for interviews at various schools but Kate really wanted to go to Mater Dei. She said she felt comfortable there when we visited and it was obvious this was the perfect place for her. I had my doubts about sending my child to a "special" school but I knew it was the best thing for Kate. She has blossomed at Mater Dei and she is a very popular young lady with many friends. What more could a parent ask for?

The support and friendship Kate and our family have received at Mater Dei is something we will all treasure forever. I was particularly touched by the way the Mater Dei community genuinely showed their care for all of us after the recent passing of my beloved dad and Kate's grandad, Ron. Dad was a regular visitor to Mater Dei and a great advocate for the wonderful work that they do. It was clear that the staff, students and families thought of dad as a valued member of the Mater Dei family.

I feel so lucky to have Kate as she has taught me that no matter how hard things can be, there is always a way to get through. She has matured into a young lady that we are very proud of.

Christine Feeny

OUR HIGH ACHIEVERS

The Year 11/12 students have a very busy life at Mater Dei as they are involved in a great range of activities both on and off the school campus. A very important part of the program for many students is the Business Services VET course taught by our very experienced teacher Janelle Barlow. Janelle does a wonderful job and has achieved outstanding results. For the second time we had two of our Year 12 students, Stacey and Sarah (pictured L&R with Janelle) complete the Certificate II in Business Services in 2008. This is an outstanding achievement and a great credit to the students and teachers involved in this program. This is just another very good example of the 'can do' attitude of our staff and students.



50th BIRTHDAY BOOK

Since 1957, Mater Dei, in partnership with parents, has been an advocate, carer and educator of children and young adults with an intellectual disability. JOURNEY TO THE HEART - 50 years, 50 stories, is a beautiful book that has been written to celebrate this. Sr Jeanie Heiningers, the editor of JOURNEY TO THE HEART, says "the book speaks of the inner journey that is experienced by everyone who has anything to do with Mater Dei. The stories articulate its spirit, its special role, its paradoxes and the effect it has on all who become involved with it." Available now for \$30.

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PEOPLE PROFILE

Special Education Support Teacher

Bethany Early Intervention Program,
Mater Dei



Karen Kelly

BORN & EDUCATED: I was born and grew up in Goulburn with my two brothers. I completed my early education at Marian College, Goulburn. I completed my Bachelor of Education at Charles Sturt University at Wagga Wagga.

WORK HISTORY: My first job was at K-Mart as a 'check out chick' during high school and while I completed my university studies. Since gaining my degree I have worked in a number of early childhood settings in the Campbelltown area where I was an authorized supervisor/director. I worked mostly with the preschool age group.

FAMILY: Ian and I married in Goulburn and moved to Campbelltown in 1991. We have two children, James who is 15 years and Dana who is 11 years and I spend a lot of time taxiing them to various sporting, school and social activities.

LIKES: I like spending time with my family and friends and going to the movies. I like reading 'everything'.

DISLIKES: I dislike cleaning the oven and the shower.

FAVOURITE MOVIE: 'Bridget Jones' Diaries'.

FAVOURITE SONGS: 'Time of Your Life' by Greenday and 'All Summer Long' by Kid Rock.

FAVOURITE TV SHOWS: 'Criminal Minds', 'Bones' and 'House'.

WHY ARE YOU INVOLVED WITH MATER DEI: I came to work at Mater Dei six years ago as a Special Education Support Teacher with the Bethany Program. I changed from mainstream children's services as I wanted to do something where I would really make a difference to the lives of some very special children. While doing this I extended my theoretical knowledge and gained a Certificate of Special Education in 2006. I am enjoying many wonderful experiences at Mater Dei, but the best is being around to see the children and the families in our care celebrate every achievement.



A day in the life of a Bethany Teacher

I have worked with the Early Intervention Team at Bethany for 6 years and no two days are the same. My duties are many and varied.

My primary responsibility is to provide educational programs and support to children. I facilitate an early learning group here on site at Bethany one morning a week. This is a structured group where the children have the opportunity to learn skills such as following routines, sharing, turn taking and socialising with their peers. During group we have activities which help the children practise and refine their skills.

The children have craft activities such as painting, cutting and pasting. We use manipulative toys such as puzzles and construction to develop fine motor skills. We have a group time when the children come together for music and story, we share "little lunch" and have some time outside to practise gross motor skills.



A Bethany child can also attend a mainstream child care centre. It is my job to visit them in this setting and liaise with the staff so that the child gets the most benefit from being there. Often it is as simple as modifying an activity so the child with additional needs can join in with their friends.

I organise meetings with parents and other therapists and professionals who work with the family to make sure we are all working to get best results for the child. We all find we become "counsellors" of sorts when the parents and sometimes the childcare staff just need someone to talk to or some ideas on how they can help their child improve their skills. Sometimes just saying "your doing a good job," can make such a difference to the parents or child care staff's day.

As I said no two days are the same!

Karen Kelly



Mater Dei 50 years on

ANOTHER GREAT GOLF DAY FOR MATER DEI



The Annual Mater Dei Charity Golf Day was held on Monday March 23, 2009 at the Macquarie Links International Golf Club.

Mater Dei students, parents, carers, staff and Camden Police reps had great fun manning the on-course BBQ, drink stations and betting, guessing and putting holes for the players. After an enjoyable round of golf, guests were treated to great lunch time entertainment by well known comedian Paul Martell, who together with MC, auctioneer and long time Mater Dei friend Steve Edge inspired the 150 present to give generously. The winners of the day were the BCP Group Services team. The event raised over \$59,000.

As in previous years, Mater Dei was very fortunate to have the support of the leading Macarthur motor dealers as major sponsors - *Clintons Motor Group, Paul Wakeling Motor Group and Macarthur Automotive* - and also *the Campbelltown Catholic Club*.

The Mater Dei Golf Day has raised over \$880,000 over sixteen years. Monies raised have helped fund and support therapy programs, specialised computer equipment, a wheel-chair ramp and an outdoor sensory primary playground. The proceeds from this Golf Day will go primarily towards

supporting the Inclusive Schooling, Community Access and Work Placement Programs that are offered to the students of Mater Dei.

Frank Pitt CEO/Principal of Mater Dei says "These programs provide our students with opportunities, skills and abilities to be part of their local communities - thus reinforcing the underpinning philosophy for everything that we do at Mater Dei - inclusion for all into the wider community. Our Golf Days have always been a great day for building community whilst raising much needed funds for Mater Dei. Simply put, we cannot afford to offer many of the services and facilities that we do for our children and students without the proceeds from the Golf Day."

Frank acknowledged the importance of having loyal sponsors, a great golf course and a dedicated committee for the event saying how grateful he was to this year's committee - Steve Beattie (Clintons), Paul Wakeling, Michael Lavorato (Campbelltown Catholic Club), Peter O'Brien (Macarthur Automotive) and Camden Police (the patrons) represented by Neil Williamson.

"Our vision is a world of inclusion for all. We thank all our supporters for sharing this vision with us" said Frank.

For more pictures of the day visit the golf day gallery at www.materdei.org.au

THANKS TO OUR GOLF DAY SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

Major Sponsors - Campbelltown Catholic Club, Clintons Toyota, Macarthur Automotive, Paul Wakeling Motor Group & Macquarie Links International Golf Club

Sponsors - BCP Group Services, Esanda, Inghams Enterprises, Sunblest Cleaning, Bradcorp, Caldwell Martin Cox, Camden Hire, Catholic Education Office Wollongong, C91.3, Firstlease Australia, Hayters Timber & Paving, JMC Academy, KPMG Wollongong, Marsdens Law Group, Max Tegel, Macarthur Nissan, Regans Accounting, Solartint, The Outdoor Furniture Specialists

Supporters - Blackrock Media, Ingleburn RSL, Investa Land, Jetset, MG Gateway, Nepean Engineering, Steve Watt Constructions, Woolworths and our patrons Camden Police

Committee - Steve Beattie, Michael Lavorato, Peter O'Brien, Paul Wakeling, Neil Williamson, Debbie Gates, Lee Murphy and Frank Pitt

PEACE EGG

The 2009 PEACE EGG campaign was once again very popular being sold as far south as Nowra and as far north as Manly. It raised over \$20,000 bringing the total profit from the sale of the eggs to \$145,000 over 10 years. Funds raised this year will be put towards Mater Dei's community participation programs. We would like to acknowledge and thank our volunteer co-ordinators Jan Verbinyecz and Anne Adam and their team for helping to get the eggs ready for sale.



Thanks also to the following businesses and schools who helped make it the success that it was: Darrell Lea Chocolate Shops, Tony Wolf and Son Quality Printers, radio station C91.3, Narellan Town Centre, Macarthur Square, and the students from St Clare's Primary School Narellan, Magdalene Catholic High School Narellan, St Patrick's College Campbelltown and Mt Carmel Catholic High School Varroville for helping Mater Dei students sell the eggs. And thanks to everyone for buying them!

Our partners in making a difference

THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS



In addition to the funds raised from our Golf Day and PEACE EGG, we have received a further \$10,500 in donations since December 2008. Thank you to all for your generous support of our programs and projects.

MAJOR DONATIONS:

- \$5,500 from the Catholic Development Fund for our Scholarship program
- \$1,026 from Camden Men's Bowling Club for our school programs

OUR THANKS ALSO TO:

- Mr & Mrs A Flett, Mr & Mrs P Fitzgerald, Catholic Women's League West Wollongong, Mr & Mrs M Bambagiotti, Macarthur Singers, Mr & Mrs J Daly and Ms Ann Tyos for their recent donations.
- A big thank you to Lisa, the Proprietor of Rascals Play Centre in Picton, for her co-operation in organizing the Bethany Early Intervention Program end of year get together for our children, families and staff (pictured left). Thanks also to Dennis Doherty for his kind donation towards the cost of the day.

Mater Dei also acknowledges the support of DEEWR – Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations in respect of the General Recurrent Grant and Chaplaincy Grant, the NSW Department of Education and Training and the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care.



As proud supporters of Mater Dei for many years we ask that when you next consider a special savings account or term investment, give the CDF a call - you will be surprised at what we offer..

Make Money and Make a difference

Phone 1800 047 703 or visit www.cdfwollongong.org.au

The Catholic Development Fund is a agency of the Diocese of Wollongong, creating sustainable financial support for our Diocese, parishes, education, aged care and social welfare needs. By raising deposit funds from clients and parishioners, the CDF is able to provide loan funds to support parish and school building projects.

Disclosure: The Catholic Development Fund, Diocese of Wollongong (CDF) is not subject to the provisions of the Corporation Act 2001 nor has it been examined or approved by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). Deposits with CDF are guaranteed by CDFP Limited, a company established by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference for this purpose. We welcome your investment with the CDF rather than with a profit oriented commercial organisation as a conscious commitment by you to support the Charitable, Religious and Educational works of the Catholic Church. CDF nor the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church for the Diocese of Wollongong are prudentially supervised by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA); contributions to CDF do not obtain the benefit of the depositor protection provisions of the Banking Act 1959; the CDF provides an opportunity for persons wishing to promote the charitable purpose of the Diocese.



Mater Dei Chardonnay - 2007

50th ANNIVERSARY VINTAGE

Mater Dei Chardonnay is locally produced from grapes grown at Mater Dei's Wivenhoe Vineyard and bottled at Vicary's Winery at Luddenham. 2007 tasting notes: "Lovely fruit aroma and a clean flavoursome palate with a lingering crisp finish. Ideal with lighter flavoured fish and salads." only \$12 a bottle or \$144 a case. Available for immediate delivery.

CRICKET REP VISITS



Primary S and Primary G have been learning cricket skills this term. So, you can imagine their excitement when they received a special visit from Dennis Lonergan, a local cricketer who plays for the Campbelltown/Camden Ghosts and for English County cricket. The two classes participated in a modified game of cricket and had a lot of fun while learning how to improve their batting and bowling skills. Our "English" team, magnificently led by its captain Adriana Gattellari (above left), won the day but our "Aussie" team, captained by Victor Fineranganof (above right with Dennis), were gracious in defeat. We thank Dennis for taking time out from his busy schedule to visit us.

Mater Dei 50 years on

OUR STUDENTS STAR AT CAMDEN SHOW!

Last year we successfully fundraised for our new Market Garden. We were fortunate to receive funds from Kids Funday Sunday and our Golf Day, and funds and donated labour from the members of Society 389. The garden has been a great success and brought much pleasure to all involved, especially our parents who came and watered it during the holidays, our students who have attended to it daily and the co-ordinator of the project, Mater Dei teacher Mary Rudd. This year Mary decided that the fruits of the garden were of such a high standard that we should produce a Mater Dei relish and enter it in our local Camden Show, which was held the last weekend of March. Mater Dei students attended the show, had a great time and won awards for their artwork entries and a major award which has had everyone at Mater Dei (and Camden) talking! Mary writes.....

It has been my intention this year for the students to use the tomatoes and capsicum that we grew in our new Market Garden to make a 'Tomato Relish' and enter it into the Camden Show under this section. So we used the vegies from the garden and followed the recipe from the Good Sams Cook Book. The students made a label and took it to the show office on the Wednesday before the show. They entered it under Mater Dei and on Friday the whole school went to the show and claimed.....first prize!! Very exciting stuff.

Mary's Footnote: We only entered one jar but all together we had enough ingredients to fill 5 jars – so the other jars may be used for fundraising, especially as they are from the same batch of 'Award Winning Relish'!!

For more pictures of the day visit the Camden Show gallery at www.materdei.org.au



YES, I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT MATER DEI'S PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN!

- I wish to make a **tax deductible** donation of \$ _____
- I enclose my cheque/money order or
- Please charge my: Mastercard Visa AMEX

Expiry ___/___/___ Signature _____

I wish to give ongoing support. Please charge \$ _____ monthly to my credit card above until I advise otherwise.

- Please send me more information about:
 - Becoming a member of the Mater Dei Foundation
 - Becoming a supporter of Mater Dei's Scholarship Program
 - Remembering the children of Mater Dei in my Will.

Mr/Mrs/Ms/ _____
First Name Surname

Postal Address _____ Postcode _____

Telephone (Day Time) _____ Telephone (Mobile) _____

Email _____

If you would like to make a donation to Mater Dei please complete this coupon and return it to: **Mater Dei PO Box 3090 Narellan NSW 2567** *Thank you!*

DIARY DATES

OUR FIRST LADIES LIPSTICK LUNCHEON
The Cube, Friday May 15, 2009

OUR FIRST GREAT PIGEON RACE
July 26, 2009

MATER CHARITY RACE DAY
Kembla Grange, Saturday August 1, 2009

MATER DEI FOUNDATION DINNER
The Cube, Saturday September 12, 2009

MATER DEI COUNTRY FAIR & EX-STUDENT REUNION
Mater Dei Estate, Sunday October 25, 2009

Enquiries: (02) 4655 7481 or visit our website