Dear Parents and Caregivers

I’ve just driven back from Brisbane after attending a friend’s wedding. Helen and I have been friends for 40 years and have shared our happy times and certainly some very sad times over those years. Thankfully, this was one of the happy ones.

Helen and David’s is an interesting and not uncommon story of love lost and found. They had fallen in love decades earlier, when she was 17 and he was 20, but life sent them off in different directions and into happy, long-term marriages in different cities with different people. They never saw or heard from each other again until two or three years ago following the deaths of both their spouses from debilitating illnesses which cast each in a carer role for many years prior.

Months after the death of his wife, David heard, through friends of friends, that Helen’s husband had died and he sent a card, including his phone number and an open invitation to call should Helen be in Brisbane at any time. And, as the saying goes, ‘The rest is history.’

The reason I relate this story is because, at the beginning of the ceremony on Saturday evening, both bride and groom gave a short speech to gathered family and friends. It was David’s speech which set the wheels in motion for today’s newsletter. You see, while Helen’s adult children and extended family have welcomed David unreservedly, David’s daughters have had great difficulty accepting their father’s new relationship. Right up until the wedding, their disapproval was obvious. And then came David’s speech and a reminder to those present, that life is not ‘either-or’.

Poignantly and simply, he shared his story. In the process, he paid tribute to his late wife and the many ways their relationship had positively shaped the person he is today and readied him to embrace love into the future. Without saying the words themselves, David was reminding his daughters and us all, that it is nonsense to think in terms of absolutes. Things are not either one way or the other, right or wrong, black or white, although we have been conditioned to think they are. Reading between the lines he was saying that finding love again did not devalue, diminish or negate his love for his former wife; there was no choice being made between one and the other.

Being a bystander in this situation has also reminded me that one’s thoughts should be watched carefully – especially those thoughts that seek to separate, divide and classify us. We need to watch the stories that we create in our heads; stories that we then believe to be true; stories that take on a life of their own; stories that go uncontested, uncensored and without critique. The mind creates an entire world that doesn’t actually exist anywhere except in the mind itself. This is the reason the daughters suffered at the news of Helen and David’s friendship. Each created stories in their minds about what this new relationship meant. These thoughts then created emotions which were enacted in reality. Were those thoughts real? Not a bit.

Of course, we all do this in our own contexts and we suffer as a result. It’s a great awakening to realise that our thoughts – yours and mine - are not real; they are just our thoughts, of which we need to become mindful. Each of us needs to become the watcher of our thoughts. In doing this we become aware of our habits of thinking, habits that cause suffering to self and others. And as we bring awareness to our habits of thinking, we can choose to make changes and in doing so, we also make the choice to diminish our suffering and the suffering of others.

Have a great week everyone. Glenda

What a great Book Week we had culminating in the dress-up parade last Friday led by ‘Dorothy’ from the Wizard of Oz. We raised $250 from our 2nd hand book sale for The Indigenous Literacy Foundation - well done! Dave Hackett orders have been sent on and books should be back before the holidays. Late orders must be made personally online on Dave Hackett’s website (www.cartoondave.com), not through the library.

BOOK WEEK CELEBRATIONS 2012 – CHAMPIONS READ

Congratulations, and thank you, to all Prep to Year 4 students and their parents who made such a wonderful effort to celebrate Book Week 2012. The hall was alive with Fairytale characters, animals and champions of all kinds. Each year level performed a wonderful item dressed in their themed character. Thankyou also to the staff who performed the story “CAPS FOR SALE” to such an appreciative audience.

From the Library desk
**SCHOOL PHOTO DAY**

Monday 3rd September 2012

Please wear full formal school uniform

Envelopes with payment must be returned ON

Photo Day. Students are to hand the envelope to their classroom teacher at the commencement of the day.

Please read the directions on the order envelope very carefully.

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**NSW University Competitions**

Thirty-seven Stella Maris students participated in the NSW University **Spelling** Competition in June.

The following children received a Credit for their Spelling knowledge: Presentations on Assembly next week.

**CREDIT:** Shaun McAnally, Jack Horridge, Gabrielle Brown, Sarah Martin, Charlotte Mc Ardle, Georgia Kapolas, Adam Gorrings, Steele Doolan, Darcy Sullivan, Blake Jackson and Sam Henrick.

Twenty-seven Stella Maris children participated in the NSW University **Writing** Competition in June.

The following children received a Distinction or Credit for their Writing skills: Presentations on Assembly this week.

**CREDIT:** Gabrielle Brown, Sarah Martin, Reese Marinic, Rehym Glover, Connor Murray, Charlotte Mc Ardle, Georgia Kapolas, Dekota Berkery, Matilda Jarrott, Sam Hendrick and William Brown.

**DISTINCTION:** Estelle Tonkin-Farr, Sarah Baillie and Dominique Meehan

Congratulations to all those students who participated in these competitions.

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**GARDEN NEWS**

**Harvest Day Celebration!**

If your child has been participating in the Garden Program this year through his/her class groups, we would like to celebrate the journey with a big celebration! So, there is going to be a Harvest Day Festival on

**Monday 10 September** from 9:00AM – 2:00PM.

We are going to have a ‘Country Theme’ and are asking the children to get dressed up in their best country get up. We have a special guest chef, Max Porter from Native Sun Cuisine that will be designing the menu for the children using the fresh, organic produce from the garden.

The day will consist of the children helping set up, do some simple food preparation, play some old fashioned country games and listen to country songs performed by the student musicians of Stella Maris.

For this to work, however, we need at least 10 -12 parents to assist with the day. Your help and participation is much appreciated and it is a fantastic day to share with the children. If you are interested in helping we need to have volunteer numbers confirmed by the end of this week.

Please contact Lynsey Koch at ljmartin@bne.catholic.edu.au or send a text at 0420 804 762.

Thank you so much, and we are looking forward to sharing an organic feast and some garden festivities with you!!

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**APRE News**

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

Sometimes, stories can give us a clarity that escapes us when we are faced with real life situations. If we are aware of our immediate reaction and can name it, then perhaps, with experience, we may develop the resilience needed to address the problem that has arisen, being steadfast in living out our beliefs and aspirations and perhaps even able to change the situation as it stands. In thinking about the Virtue for this week, Steadfastness, I came across the following story which provides food for thought in relation to this virtue when we are faced with challenges in life.

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water. In the first she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil without saying a word. In about twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl.

Turning to her daughter she asked, "Tell me, what do you see?" "Carrots, eggs, and coffee," she replied.

She brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft and mushy. She then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hardened egg. Finally, she asked her to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its deep flavour and inhaled its rich aroma. The daughter then asked, "What's the point, mother?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity - boiling water - but each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin, outer shell had protected its liquid interior; but, after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened.

The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water they had changed the water. "Which are you?" she asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong? But with pain and adversity, do I wilt and lose my strength? Am I the egg that starts with a fluid spirit but, after death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside do I have a hardened heart? Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water - the very circumstance that brings the adversity, the pain, the hardship – into something quite wonderful. When the water gets hot, it releases its fragrance and flavour. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you for the better. When the hours are the darkest and trials are their greatest do you elevate to another level? How do you handle adversity? Do you remain steadfast? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?

God bless, Judith.

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**RAINBOWS**

Rainbows again tomorrow afternoon.

Meet facilitators outside Library at 3.10 for afternoon tea
MUSIC NOTES

QUOTE OF THE WEEK
“Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world.” — Martin Luther

TIP OF THE WEEK - Write On Your Music: Always have a pencil handy. Writing on your music is not a bad thing. It is actually a very professional action.

CLASSROOM NEWS - All year levels will receive various forms of assessments from written reports about musicals and dramatizations of Australian music to singing and recorder performances. These assessments reflect what students have been working on in class over the last seven weeks. Hopefully you will be hearing a lot of singing at home in preparation for these assessments.

MUSICAL NEWS – ‘JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT’ -Our third afternoon rehearsal is Wednesday 29 August in the Hall for singers and dancers. Backstage crew are to meet at the Music Room. It is important that we have as many cast members as possible to ensure a productive use of the time we have at these rehearsals.

We will be looking for assistance to paint various props and backdrops for the musical. If you can provide some time and wish to help, please let us know. You don’t have to have a child in the musical to join in and help. Anyone is welcome. We would, however, like to say thank you to those parents and staff who assist each Wednesday afternoon in so many different ways. Your help is invaluable!

All parents with students involved in ‘Joseph’ should have again received the rehearsal schedule for this week. If you did not receive an email, please contact Mrs Durrer to ensure you are on the email list and your details are correct.

DATE CLAIMERS
Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat - Rehearsal Wednesday 29 August (3:00 – 4:30 in the HALL for all singers and dancers. Backstage crew will meet in the Music Room)
Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat – Full Cast Rehearsals Thursday 4 October & Friday 5 October
Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat – Friday 19 October & Saturday 20 October

INSTRUMENTAL NEWS - A reminder that all changes to enrolment in the tuition program need to be advised by the end of this week to avoid additional charges. Please refer to the “Lesson Conditions” provided on enrolment and at the start of each school term.

If you have queries regarding anything musical – please feel free to catch up with us before or after school, by contacting us in writing or via email.

Musically Yours,
Inez Durrer
Classroom Music Specialist
idurrer@bne.catholic.edu.au

Todd Wynyard
Instrumental Music Coordinator
twynyard@bne.catholic.edu.au

AGL ACTION RESCUE HELICOPTER FAMILY FUN EVENT
Saturday 15 September, 5.30pm - Aussie World
Enjoy half price entry, unlimited free rides and a night full of carnival-themed fun for the whole family!
Support your local community rescue helicopter and make sure to book your tickets online at www.actionrescue.com.au or phone 5458 8700.

Father’s Day Stall
A Father’s Day Stall will be held outside the Uniform Shop from 8a.m. until bell time from Monday, 27 Aug.— Friday, 31 Aug. Prices range from $2—$6

SCHOOL BANKING
You are all doing so well collecting your tokens for exchange for Rewards. The following items are currently available for you to order (with 10 tokens). Exciting new Rewards will be announced in 2013!
• Pat, Spen, Cred, Pru & Addy Money Boxes
• Drink Bottle
• Booklight
• Pen Pod
Don’t forget School Banking day is TUESDAY

Principals’ Awards
30 August

Tuckshop News...

NB: Vanilla Milk is no longer available from suppliers

Wed 29/08 C Cleary M Johnston
Cleary
M Johnston

Mon 03/09 K Elder
H Persons
N Burrows

The third grader's brain Part 1

"Is this good? It's not good? You didn't say it was good right away, so you think it's bad. Now I hate it and have to do it over again!"

Many eight-year-olds are hypercritical, particularly of themselves and their efforts. Third-graders are just passing through a brain development stage known as learning "evaluation." They'll inflict this new cognitive skill on themselves, and also on you! Third-graders enjoy catching parents and teachers making mistakes, but they'll also beg for praise to alleviate shame in their own perceived flaws.

Here's a flurry of contradictory adjectives that can describe a third grader: exuberant, self-deprecating, gregarious, obnoxious, friendly, secretive, silly, bossy, dramatic, defiant, cheerful, affectionate, curious, resistant, helpful, rude, know-it-all, insecure, easy-going, impatient. This tangle of at-odds traits is due to the young brain's evolving — and confusing — abilities. Here's what's happening in your third grader's smart, jumbled, and often very funny mind, and how you can help your child along:

Brighter brain
Third-grade brains' myelin-coated "white matter" now usually exceeds their non-myelinated "grey matter." This means that their interconnecting brain has greatly strengthened the ability for high-level thinking, planning, problem solving, and information processing. You can help your child by guiding her towards "memory strategies" so your child can quickly file away the immense quantities of data that schooling requires. One great outcome of all this white matter development: Third graders can be significantly less forgetful than second graders.

Deep reading
With its quickened memory, the third grader's brain no longer needs to overly focus on "decoding" words in reading, but can instead concentrate on substance. "Learning to read" is replaced by "reading to learn." Parents can help by providing a rich language environment. Encourage reading out loud and quiz your child afterwards on her reading. Also, include your child in adult conversations with high-level vocabulary, give her instructions with multi-step directions, ask her to describe involved accounts of past events, and guide her (without doing it yourself!) in homework projects and book reports.

More brain resources
The Developing Brain: Birth to Age Eight, by Marilee Sprenger
Your Child's Growing Mind: Brain Development and Learning From Birth to Adolescence, by Jane M. Healy, Ph.D

Christine Craig (Guidance Counsellor)
email: craig@bne.catholic.edu.au

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