Dear Parents and Caregivers

Towards the end of last year, after my return from the Camino, I wrote and spoke about how disengaged I found many of the people I encountered on the walk. By ‘disengaged’ I mean they appeared cut off from what was happening right there and then; there was a lack of eye contact and exchange of greetings, little acknowledgement of the presence of others, a noticeable lack of connection and certainly there was little evidence of joy in their work. Of course, disengagement isn’t a phenomenon of the Camino; we are surrounded by it in our own culture as well.

This disengagement hit me so strongly, I continue to read up on what researchers say brings us to this disconnected state. One researcher in particular, Brene Brown, has spent years examining the source of a reluctance to be truly present to others and ‘how the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent and lead.’ We know that the basic need for love and belonging is strong in each of us; for this reason, we tend to hide those parts of us that we fear will have others think poorly of us or have them disappointed by our shortcomings. At the heart of the matter lies fear; fear that our authentic selves are not good enough and so we cover up, withdraw and/or pretend.

Brene Brown concludes, ‘Connection is why we are here. It gives meaning and purpose to our lives,’ and she has some pretty influential support in Pope Francis who writes in his first message, The Joy of the Gospel, (177), ‘At the very heart of the Gospel is life in community and engagement with others.’ Feeling an integral part of family, community, school et cetera provides the springboard for committed and compassionate engagement in our world. In order for that engagement to be authentic, we must allow ourselves to be vulnerable which Brown defines as ‘letting oneself be truly see.’ Brene calls those who manage to live like this, The Wholehearted, and the only thing that separates them from others is that they believe they are worthy of love and connection. The alternative is living with the shame and fear of not being ‘enough’ – whether that be not smart enough, not attractive enough, not competent enough, not thin enough and the list goes on and on. Most of us have our own version of ‘not enough.’

Brene goes on to explain that wholehearted people have four traits in common:

- They have the courage to tell the story of who they are with their whole heart; they have the courage to be imperfect;
- They show compassion; they are kind to themselves which enables them to be kind to others;
- As a result of their authenticity, they are deeply connected to self, others, their jobs, their community, their God. They let go of who they think they ‘should’ be;
- They allow themselves to be vulnerable. They fully engage in life and in relationships in spite of there being no guarantees. They understand that to be vulnerable is not a comfortable place to be, but it is necessary because vulnerability is also the birthplace of joy, love, creativity…

The alternative is to avoid showing our true selves and we all recognise the ways in which we do this:

- We numb ourselves by using alcohol, over-eating, medication, drugs, accumulating ‘things’. We cannot, however, selectively numb the emotions we wish to avoid. To numb one emotion is to numb them all, so we then feel miserable and the vicious circle continues.
- We try to make the uncertain, certain. ‘I’m right, you’re wrong.’ We use blame as a way to discharge our pain and discomfort. Being vulnerable is to live without the need to have certainty and guarantees before stepping into life, because ultimately, living involves mystery and requires a certain faith and trust that I won’t lose myself but will, in fact, discover my true self;
- We pretend that what we do, doesn’t have a huge effect upon others and upon the environment. This is easy when my primary focus is on me and mine; and lastly,
- We try to make things perfect, whether that be appearance, surroundings or circumstances … but Brene highlights that we especially try to make our children perfect. We take these little ones who are born ‘hardwired for struggle’ (a very good thing as life won’t always be easy or perfect) and we over-protect them, make excuses for them, remove all obstacles, solve their problems, give them what they want—in the name of happiness. They can’t be seen to be anything but perfect but or to have anything but a ‘perfect’ life with all its opportunities. But the fact remains that it is not our job to make them perfect or create the perfect environment for them, but to have them know, ‘You are imperfect. You will make mistakes. You will find things difficult and you will stumble. You are wired for struggle but you are worthy of love and belonging regardless. It’s okay and so are you.’

So why do I start the year sharing this message? Well, it appears to me that it is a vital one if we are to create the sort of community that will really make a difference to the lives of our members here and to those beyond the school fence. Imagine a community in which we allow ourselves to be truly seen and truly present to all those encountered not just those we know and like: to take the chance that our gestures of welcome, care or friendship may be rejected or ignored and to extend the gesture anyway (without judging the other’s response); to fully embrace the individuality of each person (we are not all alike and that’s okay); to take a more compassionate view, not allowing the imperfections of self and others to keep us from real connection; to be unashamedly accountable for the mistakes we make (we all make them!); to find real joy in living every day (and not just when things are going our way); to extend goodwill and courtesy even when there is little reciprocation; to speak the truth out of love and respect even when it’s the hardest road to take; to live without having to prove anything to anyone; to see as God sees, which is that each of us is already ‘enough’. I imagine Stella Maris as growing towards such a place of hope, love and joy; a place enlivened by the workings of the Holy Spirit; a place where we (as our school motto says) act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God. (Micah 6:8)

So welcome everyone to the 2014 school year, whatever comes, we will turn it to good, together. And to finish, I share another message Pope Francis writes for each of us, ‘I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world. We have to regard ourselves as sealed, even branded, by this mission of bringing light, blessing, enlivening, raising up, healing and freeing.’ Now that requires real vulnerability! Thank you, one and all, for a positive start to the year. Have a great week. Glenda

The Stella Star

Term 1 Week 2

3 February 2014

Stella Maris Primary School, McKenzie Drive, MANOCAQIANE QLD 4558 - P: (07) 5485 9800 - F: (07) 5485 9899 - Absentee: (07) 5485 9899

www.stellamaris.qld.edu.au - P & F Meetings are held 2nd Tuesdays of each month at 6.15pm

The Stella Star
P & F CARPARK RAFFLE
Tickets are $2.00 each or 3 for $5.00
Drawn at Tuesday’s Parent/Teacher Partnership Evening and announced in next week’s newsletter. Tickets for sale at front of the school all week.

No Assembly for parents this week. We start Thurs 13 Feb.
Welcome Preps and all New Families and Students - We start the year with 112 shiny, new Preps and 837 students in total. Welcome back to all existing families and a very special welcome to our new families; thank you for choosing Stella Maris as your partner in the education of your child/ren. The year is off to a very settled and smooth start – students are in good spirits, well-rested and ready for a year full of learning. Staff members are excited about working with you and your children and we have lots of professional learning opportunities planned to enhance student learning.

School Fees - A quick reminder that school fees are now billed MONTHLY with accounts strictly due by date given on the invoice. Please contact Margo Edwards immediately if alternative arrangements need to be made. School Fees invoices were posted to families Monday February 3rd; if you do not receive your invoice shortly, please contact the office immediately. Please notify any change of address promptly. Thank you for your co-operation and support.

Parent-Teacher Partnership Evening – Tuesday 11 Feb - Today all families should have received an invitation (on pink paper) to attend this important event in the school calendar. Please take the time to read it carefully and to return the tear-off slip by Friday of this week. This will allow us to prepare well for seating and hand-outs. Please note that this evening is not a night for children to attend, unless it is absolutely unavoidable, in which case, they must remain, silently, in the classroom at all times. It is also important to mention that this evening is not an opportunity for a one-on-one parent teacher discussion about a child; it is a general information evening and a chance for teachers and parents to initially meet and kick-start their important relationship. Individual appointments can be made as a follow-up.

Last year we trialled the new format of holding all meetings on one evening. Following overwhelmingly positive feedback, we will again use this approach. Four year levels will run in the first session and the remaining four year levels in the third session. A whole school meeting in between the two sessions will allow all parents to hear important whole of school messages and plans without having to attend on a separate evening. We ask that those attending session one, remain for this 30 min meeting in the hall and those who are attending session three, arrive early to attend the whole school meeting prior to moving to the classrooms. Of course if you are attending both sessions, this meeting will fill the gap nicely. This year we will address major areas of focus including Homework, following our surveys and research in 2013.

Unfortunately this one-evening format will not allow all parents to attend all their children’s meetings; however, we hope that the convenience of attending one evening only, will go some way towards making up for this lack. Where a conflict in times exists, parents may wish to attend different classes in the same time slot. Teachers will prepare a written overview for each of their sessions and these will be available to those who are unable to attend year level meetings; and of course, it is always possible to make an appointment with any of the class teachers as needed.

Pick-up and Drop-off - Parents, could you please remember to let those who drop-off or pick up your children (eg grandparents) that they do not park in, or at any time leave their vehicles while in the incoming lane closer to the footpath. There is definitely no parking in this lane at any time. Thank you for helping to keep the traffic flowing smoothly and safely.

P & F MEETING

Dear Parents/Caregivers,
Welcome to a new school year! 2014 promises to be one that builds on the solid work that has gone before and which we hope will be the best year yet in the lives of our students and families. In developing the foundation for the way forward - the way we treat each other, how we support, encourage and challenge each other (and ourselves for that matter), to try our very best to grow and expand our horizons, we have chosen the virtue of Courtesy for the first fortnight of this school year. Courtesy underpins the way we speak, listen, respond, encourage and support each other. Courtesy is being polite and having good manners. It brightens people’s lives. Please and Thankyou, Excuse me and You’re welcome are courtesies which show people you appreciate them and care about their feelings. Courtesy helps to make life graceful. It is one of the key ingredients in enabling communities to thrive.

Signs of Success:
I am practising courtesy when I…
- Show others that I value and respect them;
- Remember to treat elders, parents, teachers and children politely;
- Think about how my actions affect others;
- Eat, speak and move graciously;
- Make requests instead of demands; and
- Greet people with a smile.

I am courteous, speak and act in gracious ways and show others that I value and respect them.

The following story (adapted from Linda Kavelin Popvo - The Virtues Project) demonstrates courtesy very powerfully, as well as ‘Excellence’, ‘Purposefulness’ and ‘Trust’:
Maggie was assigned to the inner city classroom at the beginning of the year. All the principal told her was that the former teacher had left suddenly, and this was a class of ‘special’ students. She walked in on bedlam, spit-balls flying through the air, feet on desks, the noise deafening. She strode to the front of the room and opened the attendance book. Next to each name was a number from 140 to 160. Oh, she thought to herself. No wonder they are so high spirited. These children have exceptional IQs. She smiled and got their attention.

At first, students failed to turn in work, and assignments handed in were done hastily and sloppily. She spoke to them about their innate excellence, their giftedness, that she expected nothing short of the best work from them. She continually reminded them of their responsibility to use all the extra intelligence God had given them.

Things began to change. The young people sat up tall, they worked diligently. Their work was creative, precise and original. One day, the principal was walking by and happened to look into the classroom. He observed students in rapt attention composing essays. Later, he called Maggie into his office: ‘What have you done to these kids?’ he asked her with amazement.
‘Their work has surpassed all the regular grades’. ‘Well what do you expect? They are gifted, aren’t they?’ ‘Gifted! They’re special needs students, many with behavioural and social problems.’
‘Then why are their IQs so high on the attendance sheet?’
‘Those aren’t their IQs. Those are their locker numbers!’

Each New Year brings the opportunity to turn over a new leaf, to start afresh, and to put one’s best foot forward. One of the elemental areas in which we can have a tremendous impact is in our attitude towards others and in the courtesy, consideration and respect we show them.

It’s catching! God bless, Judith.

BOOKCLUB Orders are due to LIBRARY by THIS FRIDAY, 7th February.

P & F CARPARK RAFFLE
Tickets are $2.00 each or 3 for $5.00
Drawn at Tuesday’s Parent/Teacher Partnership Evening and announced in next week’s newsletter. Tickets for sale at front of the school all week.
Welcome Back! Welcome back to 2014 and what promises to be a music-filled year at Stella Maris. There are many exciting events planned for the year. As mentioned at the end of last year, we will present 'The Wizard of Oz'. More details to follow next week.

Classroom Music Specialist - StellaMarisMusic@bne.catholic.edu.au

did not receive the email, please send us a message and update your details to...

Lessons commenced at the start of this week (from Monday 3 February). If you written reminder on their wrist or on the classroom white board can help.

Please print and check lesson times carefully and ensure you have a plan for

Stella Maris will have received their Term 1 lesson timetable over the weekend. Students enrolled to have Instrumental, Singing or Speech and Drama Tuition at

This term we welcome Miss Georgie Ostenfeld to our Stella Maris Music Team

Percussion Ensemble
Junior String Ensemble
Stella Fellas
Piccolo Choir
Junior Band

commencing Monday 10 February

for 2014.

~ Max Heindel ~

MUSIC NOTES

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

ENSEMBLE TIME - Choral and Instrumental Ensemble Rehearsal Schedule for 2014. Ensemble rehearsal will begin in Week 3 of Term 1, 2014 (week commencing Monday 10 February).

Junior Band - Monday 7.45am to 8.30am (from Term 2)
SM Singers - Tuesday 7.45am to 8.30am
Concert Band - Wednesday 7.30am to 8.30am
Senior String Ensemble - Thursday 7.45am to 8.30am
Guitar Ensemble - Thursday 7.45am to 8.30am
Piccolo Choir - Thursday 1.45pm to 2.20pm
Stella Fellas - Thursday 2.25pm to 3.05pm
Junior String Ensemble - Friday 7.45am to 8.30am (from Term 2)
Percussion Ensemble - Friday 7.45am to 8.30am

This term we welcome Miss Georgie Ostenfeld to our Stella Maris Music Team as a specialist string teacher. Miss Ostenfeld will teach Cello and Double Bass. She holds a performance diploma (AMusA) in both Cello and Piano and has good teaching experience. Please join me in welcoming her to our school.

Students enrolled to have Instrumental, Singing or Speech and Drama Tuition at Stella Maris will have received their Term 1 lesson timetable over the weekend. Please print and check lesson times carefully and ensure you have a plan for your child to remember to get to their lesson on time. An alarm clock watch or a written reminder on their wrist or on the classroom white board can help.

Lessons commenced at the start of this week (from Monday 3 February). If you did not receive the email, please send us a message and update your details to StellaMarisMusic@bne.catholic.edu.au.

Musically Yours,

Inez Durrer
Classroom Music Specialist
durrer@bne.catholic.edu.au

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

The junior state titles for QLD Oztag were held at Stockland Park at Kawana over the weekend. A great number of Stella Maris students were selected to represent the Maroochydore Suns. Over 147 teams from as far as Cairns and Weipa came to participate. It was a fantastic weekend with Maroochydore winning the under 10 girls, under 11 boys, under 12 & 15 girls. Congratulations to all Stella Maris Students who participated and represented Maroochydore in a fantastic weekend. Well done!

Coastal District Swimming Trials - The Coastal District Swimming Carnival will be held on Monday 17th February at Cotton Tree Pool. Start time is 9.30am. Any students born in 2002, 2003, 2004 who wish to attend need to forward their times and events to Mrs Till by Thursday 6th February. Only 50m and 100m events will be swum at the carnival. Students who wish to nominate for 200m Freestyle or 200m Individual Medley must submit their times on a Club Letterhead with their coach’s signature and forward to Mrs Till. Students times from the 2013 Stella Maris Swimming Carnival may be used for qualifying. Students and parents are required to arrange their own transport to and from the carnival. See Mrs Till for more information.

Queensland Cricket and Cricket Australia are hosting a FREE come and try session from 5.00pm - 6.30pm at the Buderim Cricket Club on the 14th of February 2014. If you would like to participate in the come and try day please register your interest by sending an email to rianm@qldcricket.com.au.

Welcome to the new Soccer season at Stella FC. Please join us on Sat 8th Feb from 8am-10am at the soccer shed on Bliss Oval & Wed 12th Feb from 2:30pm at the front of school to sign on for soccer. Fees are U6 - U8 $130 & U9 - U13 $150. Players new to the club need to bring their Birth Certificate or Passport. Socks and shorts available on these days.

First Reconciliation (First Confession) For Children

- The child is 8 years old, or older.
- The child has been baptised.
- One parent is Catholic.
- Both parents are agreeable to the child proceeding with this sacrament. A parent must attend one Information Night.
  - Monday 10 February 2014 7-8pm
  - Monday 10 March 2014 7-8pm
  - Monday 26 May 2014 7-8pm
  - Monday 18 August 2014 7-8pm

Children do not attend this meeting. It is held at the Stella Maris Church, Baden Powell Street, Maroochydore.

Dates for the Workshop AND Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation

- Week of 28 April 2014
- Week of 21 July 2014
- Week of 13 October 2014

Letter coming home today requesting helpers for the working and ingredients roster. Please fill this in and return to the Tuckshop ASAP

A new Menu will be sent home soon; some small price increases are to be expected.

SAINTS NETBALL CLUB

SAINTS NETBALL CLUB REGISTRATION AND UNIFORM TRY-ON DAY, FIRST AND FINAL OPPORTUNITY TO REGISTER – SATURDAY FEB 9 TO 12.00, FISHERMANS ROAD COURTS, MAROOCHODYRE.

Any queries please call Annie McArdle 0438 112 689 or Shelley Burchell on 0414 803 551.

First Reconciliation (First Confession) For Children

- The child is 8 years old, or older.
- The child has been baptised.
- One parent is Catholic.
- Both parents are agreeable to the child proceeding with this sacrament. A parent must attend one Information Night.
  - Monday 10 February 2014 7-8pm
  - Monday 10 March 2014 7-8pm
  - Monday 26 May 2014 7-8pm
  - Monday 18 August 2014 7-8pm

Children do not attend this meeting. It is held at the Stella Maris Church, Baden Powell Street, Maroochydore.

Dates for the Workshop AND Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation

- Week of 28 April 2014
- Week of 21 July 2014
- Week of 13 October 2014

Letter coming home today requesting helpers for the working and ingredients roster. Please fill this in and return to the Tuckshop ASAP

A new Menu will be sent home soon; some small price increases are to be expected.
Expectations

I am hoping you have had time to rest and regroup over the holiday season. I have been blessed with special family time and a chance to recharge my batteries. It was a lovely experience to be a meeter and greeter on the children’s first day. The positive energy and the great smiles were wonderful and promise a great year ahead for our school community.

We all start a new year with expectations, some of ourselves and some for our children. Expectations are really interesting things when you think about them. Quite often we don’t even know that we consciously have expectations and yet we behave in accordance with them all the time.

One of the biggest changes that happened in the parenting landscape around 20 years ago was the arrival of parenting magazines and now parenting blogs. I noticed one day when I was in a newsagent how many of these new publications were coming out. I’m quite sure there weren’t any when I was parenting when my boys were young.

Then I spent some time looking at the cover images and it struck me that these wonderful, well-intentioned magazines were probably setting most parents up to fail. I noticed that all the supposedly ‘new mums’ on the front cover were very slim and, amazingly, appeared to have had a full day in the day spa to look so polished! Not only that, the babies they were holding were ‘oh so perfect.’ If we have a baby and we are meeting the needs of that baby up to 3 months of age we probably will not look like these Miranda Kerr look-a-likes. Let alone if you have other children as well!

There are the expectations we hold about our child’s year at school. Maybe it has shifted a little with the changes in teaching and learning, but it seems that many parents have the expectation that their child will face no challenges in school life. But, as we know, there are no ‘absolutes’ in guiding our children through life and having high, yet realistic, expectations is the best way to support them as they learn and grow. With a good dose of realism – expectations can be met and achievements celebrated.

Expect to have a great week,
Christine Craig (Guidance Counsellor)
email: c craig@bne.catholic.edu.au