Dear Parents and Caregivers

I was reading this article in the Women’s Day while walking on the treadmill this morning (it’s warmer in the garage than it is out on the street). It is titled, ‘Are you a competitive parent?’ It caught my attention because I can’t tell you the number of conversations I’ve had over recent months with parents who have raised this very issue. It seems that there is quite a culture of competition out there, with many of you becoming increasingly aware and sceptical of society’s tendency to reduce the meaning of life to how much can be produced and consumed. Many people want to get off the treadmill which has them trying to keep up with others. They are tired of the stress this puts on everything from friendships to finances and parenting.

Of course it is not only parents feeling the pressure of this worldview of accumulation and competition; children are also feeling it. And why wouldn’t they, when they are surrounded by the symbols of status that come at them from all angles, from their peers, the television and social media. They breathe it in like oxygen these days. We all do. It’s hard to escape when multi-million dollar advertising campaigns convince us that we can’t live without whatever it is they are selling. Does every child really need a smart phone? Brand-name clothing and shoes? The latest gadget? Half a dozen activities after school?

Well, they do, if we think that these things must be provided in order to be considered a good parent. It takes a strong awareness of what is important, a strong sense of moral purpose really, to hold firm against the inevitable pressure. Isn’t it time to bring these matters to the light of day, along with our unexamined beliefs, habits and patterns of thinking? Perhaps it’s time we open our eyes to the economic pressures this puts on everything from friendships to finances and parenting.

I must be a better parent if my child is excelling, if I am providing my children with every opportunity or everything.’ Should children be considered the measure of a parent’s success when each child is on his or her own timetable of growth and development? When each day is merely a point in time; one small part of a far larger story that takes a lifetime to unfold? Ultimately each child will make his or her own decisions about the person s/he becomes; what we do, as adults who journey with children, is assist in equipping them to discover and deal with life’s ups and downs, with the pleasure and pain of it, the mystery of it when the unfathomable occurs, the fragility of ‘having’ (be it possessions, position, status, looks…) and ultimately the transcendent nature of life which has us find meaning in a relationship with our God, and for Christians, that means through the person of Jesus. In this way, children learn that it is okay that life lacks certainty, that life is fragile because we are a people of hope and can trust that there is a larger story enacting itself with, in and through each of us. That is something we share as human beings and something that draws us close to one another.

Why not get back to the basics? Mums and dads spending real time with their children, on activities that cost little (or nothing). Real time together – just talking while baking a cake, digging a flower bed or going for a walk along the beach. What about talking in the car instead of children watching a movie or using the ipad on the backseat? Why not ride the bikes and teach the children road safety? Watch a great movie together and discuss its meaning and moral. Aren’t children today in the care of others long enough? Isn’t it time to reclaim parenting by spending time with the children, to really get to know them, and they, you? To have fun, relax and chill with them just because you love them and like them and want to be a positive influence.

Is it any wonder there are so many anxious kids today? So many anxious parents? Life is so busy and adults so distracted, that perspective is easily lost with the smallest matter catastrophized and a scapegoat sought. Maybe it’s time to step back and take stock.

When these children are grown up, what will be remembered (and valued) more – the new Nike sneakers or the regular Saturday afternoons with dad? The expensive birthday parties or the daily family meals around the table discussing life matters that changed as the years passed? The gymnastics lessons or the cartwheels and chasing games in the backyard with mum and siblings? Perhaps your family can do both? Great. But maybe you can’t and then the questions are, ‘Do I need to provide these things to be a good parent? To keep up appearances? Am I stressing myself and the budget to provide these things for my children? Is this what my children really need? What really matters here? What am I teaching my children in the process?’

Have a great week everyone. Enjoy time with your wonderful children. I know the best parts of my week are those spent talking with students about the ups and downs that affect their lives.

It’s a privilege.

Glenda
Year 6 and 7 Leadership

The leadership shirts for 2014 are now being worn by the Year 6 and 7 leaders. We thank the P&F for their continued support of the students with this. Last Wednesday members of the P&F, Kelly Loe and Fiona Johannsen, presented the shirts to the designers John Saxon (Year 7) and Lilly Ochmann (Year 6).

YEAR 7 Shirt - John Saxon Year 7

I wanted to emphasise that we were the last Year 7. From that came the symbol of the setting sun over the Stella Maris waves. The qualities radiating from the sun are required for leadership. The quote at the bottom means we will shine the brightest using these qualities.

YEAR 6 Shirt - Lilly Ochman

Year 6

My design includes a pencil which forms a tree. I chose a pencil because it’s something we use a lot to learn in class. On the branches of the tree, the words achieve, community, guide and success are written as they are words that relate to a leader and their role. I also included symbols such as a soccer ball, a computer, a book and a music note. These were included because they represent the subjects that we do.

RAINBOWS PROGRAM

Rainbows starts again this week.
Children meet outside the library Wednesday afternoon at 3.10.

July School Fees are due.

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

This week we continue with the Virtue of Determination. “Determination is focusing our energy and efforts on a particular task and then sticking with it until it is finished. Determination is using our will power to do something even when it isn’t easy. It means we care about something so much that even when it is really hard, or we are being tested, we still keep going (excerpts from the Virtues Cards with permission of The Virtues Project™).”

The following story about determination comes from high school Special Education Teacher and Virtues Project Facilitator, Lesley Shams, of Port Alberni, BC, Canada:

“I have a special needs student who generally has difficulty coping with situations in her life. Any changes in her routine are really hard for her. Anyway, this semester she is in a regular P.E. class. She’s doing really well because she is capable of meeting the expectations there.

On Thursday, the day after our facilitator’s training, I noticed that she looked like she was going to cry. So I approached her and asked her if she needed to talk. She said ‘yes’ and we went to a quiet room. I waited and let her talk to me. She explained a little bit about what was happening and cried a lot. I let her talk which was really hard – it is hard for her to express herself. I could see that she was watching me, almost as if she was wondering why I was just sitting there listening instead of rescuing her and solving the problem as I’ve done in the past. I waited longer, and she said more and cried more.

The situation was that the students in the P.E. class had gone for a run in the forested area around the school. She had gotten lost, she was all by herself and she got scared and cried. She eventually found her way out of there and joined her class. I don’t even remember what I asked her then, but she took it as an opening to solve the problem – she said she would get another student to run with her so she wouldn’t get lost. Then she said whoever would be willing to run with her would probably have to go slower – she recognized that the other students would basically be sacrificing their run to help her out. And she concluded by saying she would talk to her teacher and let him know what she had figured out. I asked her what support she would need and she said none. I acknowledged her determination to sort it out herself and she was just beaming. The tears had turned into a glorious smile. She was so proud that she had done it herself. And so was I.

Later, she came back to tell me that she had talked to her teacher and everything was ok now. I am so amazed and awestruck at the power of this work!”

This story also demonstrates the power of Spiritual Companioning, the deep listening technique that helps someone find their own clarity or resolve their own problem.

Questions for reflection:
1. When have I used determination to stick with a task until it’s finished?
2. What helps me to focus my energy and efforts on a task?
3. How have my family members, students, or colleagues practised determination lately?
4. What accomplishment am I most proud of, and how did determination help me?

(Adapted from: http://virtuestraining.com/virtue/Determination)

Judith
MUSIC NOTES

QUOTE OF THE WEEK
“Being in a band is always a compromise. Provided that the balance is good, what you lose in compromise, you gain by collaboration.” ~ Mike Rutherford

TIP OF THE WEEK - Encourage and support your child to listen to artists who play their instrument. This can include good recordings and better still, go to a live concert!!

MUSICAL NEWS - ‘The Wizard of Oz’ - We are looking for a variety of items for use in our musical. If you have ‘out there’ items of clothing that are green or gold and think they may be useful for our Oz scene please let us know, especially if you would like them to have a new home. We would be most grateful for your donations.

SUNSHINE COAST CATHOLIC SCHOOLS CHORAL SPECTACULAR - To celebrate choral music in our schools, STELLA FELLAS and 5M SINGERS will join together with seven other Catholic schools from across the Sunshine Coast in the Stella Maris School Hall on Monday 28 July for a choral workshop with master conductor Harley Mead. Students will be involved in workshops during the day, culminating in a twilight concert featuring the choirs of each school and the massed workshop choir. We are truly very fortunate to have Harley’s talents brought to us here on the coast and Stella Maris. This is a rare opportunity not to be missed. We encourage as many families as possible to attend what promises to be a wonderful twilight concert (5:30 - 7pm), of magical young voices. Ticket costs are: Adults $5, School aged children – gold coin donation. We are also requiring parent volunteers to assist during the day as well as at the concert. If you are able to help or have questions, please let Mrs Durrer know as soon as possible.

*** A reminder that permission notes should have been returned yesterday to Mrs Durrer.

GRANDPARENTS' DAY is Thursday 31 July. All Concert Band and Senior String Ensemble students will be performing. Please remember to bring your instruments on that day.

YEAR 2 PICCOLO CHOIR – A reminder that the Year 2 Piccolo Choir will perform on Assembly this Thursday 24 July. Students are asked to meet Mrs Durrer at 8:15am for a quick rehearsal in the Hall after taking their bags to their classrooms. These students will also be performing in the Eisteddfod at the Nambour Civic Centre on Wednesday 6 August (during school hours). More details will be coming home this week.

SUNSHINE COAST JUNIOR EISTEDDFOD begins this week and many students will be involved in solo and party events for instrumental, speech and singing sections. Best wishes to all students who are entered and remember to do your best and enjoy the experience.

BUSY TERM – this is a very busy term with many commitments and performances for students. Parents are asked to ensure all students arrive promptly at every lesson and rehearsal to ensure the best possible preparation. Where a student is going to be absent from a lesson due to another school event, early advance notice via email, text or letter will ensure the lessons can be rescheduled. If your child is sick on the day of their lessons, please ensure you email or text the teacher prior to 8am to assist with planning for the day. A message left on the school absentee line is not acceptable notice as music teachers do not have access to this information.

Senior String Ensemble, Junior Band and Concert Band are reminded that a combined rehearsal with the Siena students is planned for Saturday 2 August and it is expected that all involved students will attend. (Strings – 3pm to 5pm, Junior Band – 2pm to 4pm, Concert Band – 4pm to 6pm).

Remember, if you need to contact your child’s tutor, details are shown on the top left corner of their lesson timetable. 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
durrer@bne.catholic.edu.au

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

Principal's Awards
July 24 2014

SAINT’S CUP
Last Friday, our Girl’s and Boy’s AFL Teams played our annual game - "Saint's Cup" against our Northern Neighbours, St Thomas More from Sunshine Beach. In very gusty winds, both our girls and boys demonstrated impressive skills and played in a manner which made us all very proud of them. St Thomas More came away winners of both the Girl’s and Boy’s game. Congratulations to all the girls and boys who competed and represented their school.

GRANDPARENTS’ DAY
Thursday 31 July
In Week Three of this Term, we will once again be celebrating Catholic Education Week. During this week, we also celebrate a very special day in our school calendar, “Grandparent’s Day”. Going home with the newsletter will be an additional sheet with all the details regarding this event, including a reply slip which we’d like returned no later than the end of Week Two. These replies indicate those Grandparents who will be attending and those you would like remembered. To help us remember those Grandparents who cannot attend or who are in God’s hands, heart-shaped cards for decoration with photos and sentiments will be sent home shortly.

Tuckshop News

Wed 23/07 | Thurs 24/07 | Fri 25/07 | Tues 29/07
L Mancini | T Gorring | L Martin | K Loe
HELP NEEDED | HELP NEEDED | HELP NEEDED | HELP NEEDED

PLEASE REFER TO THE NEW TUCKSHOP MENU & REMEMBER THE TUCKSHOP IN NO LONGER OPEN ON MONDAYS. DESPERATELY NEED HELPERS AS THE TUCKSHOP HAS BECOME VERY BUSY.
Kidsmatter and Smiling Mind share the goal of promoting children’s mental health and well-being in schools. Smiling Mind is a free program that provides resources to support the development of mindfulness and meditation skills. These skills help to manage stress, increase awareness of emotions, improve attention and focus, and can prevent difficulties from getting worse. The Smiling Mind website ([www.smilingmind.com.au](http://www.smilingmind.com.au)) and smartphone App provide information about mindfulness and action-based tools to guide children (starting from seven years) and adults through Mindfulness Meditation practices.

Mindfulness is a state of being fully awake to life-being aware and undistracted in the present moment and observing life as it unfolds without analysis and judgment. It is about focusing on the present, rather than thinking about the past or worrying about the future. Mindfulness meditation involves setting aside time in a quiet space to focus on the present moment and what’s happening internally and externally. Practicing Mindfulness meditation helps to develop the state of mindfulness that allows us to reduce stress and experience life more fully.

**Anxious children.**

If you are concerned that your child is anxious, have a look at the BRAVE program ([www.bravepsy.uq.edu.au](http://www.bravepsy.uq.edu.au/)) A program designed for parents to do with their children.

“Always consider who a person is, not what a person has.”

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Christine Craig - Guidance Counsellor/ Psychologist  
email: c craig@bne.catholic.edu.au