

# Free to Be...More

As the year reaches its crescendo, a range of events and activities are calendared that look back over all that has transpired across 2014, bringing a sense of closure to the educational program. Free To Be ... More, was the theme of the Year 6 Reflection Day, which asked the boys to consider some important issues as part of their retrospection on a year that has provided so much by way of growth in preparation for the transition to secondary school. Freedom invited the boys to reflect on their growing independence and how to use it responsibly – for others, in context of the ideals of Ignatian education. Being encouraged an appreciation of the extraordinary gift of life and through it, becoming the kind of person God intends each of these young men to be, fully and wholly able to realise their innate gifts and talents. More is inextricably tied to Ignatian spirituality through the magis; how to explore the boys' inner faith of a deeper and more expansive level. The closing prayer to a day of valuable reflection captured the essence of the experience:

Dear God, bless our gifts, may we have the courage to show them as we enter the final days of Year 6 and as we move into high school. May we have the courage to make this journey, share our gifts and take up the opportunities that lie before us. Amen

One of the very special days of the year is Grandparents Day, one that saw the Dalton Chapel full to capacity to begin the day for a memorable mass celebrated by Fr Jack McLain SJ. Fr Jack's homily, as it always does, struck a chord with the congregation as he emphasised the importance of relationships, particularly the unique bond that exists between grandparents and their grandchildren. Following the mass, a concert was held in Ramsay Hall, which profiled the talent of the boys and generated an even greater sense of pride and admiration from their families. It was particularly pleasing to meet some grandparents who had flown from interstate to be with their grandsons for the occasion, the strength of family bonds transcending geography and distance. Many thanks to all who contributed to such a wonderful celebration of family life and the intergenerational bonds that supports it.

After four weeks of constant motion the Year 9 Challenge formally concludes today. That at times it truly challenged the boys is beyond question, particularly the more demanding physical components of the program, but I have yet to speak to a Year 9 student who did not experience personal growth through the interactions and the demands that were part of the experience. In its 10th year, the range of activities continues to be the object of scrutiny and calibration, in order to ensure that this very distinctive part of the educational program is tailored for the boys' needs. Sincere thanks are extended to Mr Adrian Byrne for his outstanding management of the program, to the teachers who assisted in various capacities throughout, and to the boys, who responded with alacrity and commitment to a diverse and engaging range of activities.

An important parent forum was held in the Regis Hall on Tuesday to report the findings of the most recent iPad survey conducted in the Middle School. Not unimportantly, the reason for the introduction of the program was revisited together with a summary of the main findings. The review revealed some very positive aspects of iPad use and also discovered weaknesses that need to be redressed over the course of 2015. Fr Jack McLain SJ, the College Chaplain and Chair of the ICT Committee – which is a sub-committee of the College Council, and Mr Brett Houghton, the Head of IT at Riverview, coordinated the review and considered the best strategic way forward in context of both the iPad program and the constructive use of technology as a medium of learning.

The young men in Year 8 accompanied their dads (and in a number of instances mums) to work during the latter part of week 7 as part of the Men@Work Program. This rather unique initiative aimed to provide an acute insight into, and appreciation for, the work environment while at the same time affords a special opportunity for relationship building between parents and their boys. With some boys in boarding, the

corollary of this program enabled the boys to travel significant distances including to rural NSW, interstate and overseas, in order to be with their parents and witness the contextual world of work. And, the full array of professions was part of the experience including commerce, banking, law, agriculture and education. Many thanks are extended to Mr John Newey for coordinating such a vibrant and enjoyable experience for the boys and their parents.

A number of other events have formed part of the calendar that embrace past, present and future members of the College community:

- Cova Cottage hosted a wonderful evening for the P&F to look back on a year of friendship and fundraising. Two cheques were formally presented to the College; one for \$30,000 to provide a bursary for a boy who otherwise would not have access to the educational program at Riverview. Sincere thanks are extended to Jeanmaree Furtado and the P&F for their enormous support for the College.
- The OIU held it's AGM on Friday evening at the Royal Automobile Club in the city. Tim Gavan, outgoing President, lauded the great work of so many, particularly those involved in the mentoring program and those who give so generously to the social justice activities in Sydney and beyond. The reach and importance of this work should never be underestimated.
- An interschool P&F Function was held on the roof of St Aloysius' overlooking the harbour on Sunday evening involving parents from both Jesuit schools. More activities on an interschool level are planned with St Aloysius in the coming year.