

In The Aftermath: 'Men For Others'



Last weekend I was reminded of the impact of Jesuit education when I met up with Peter Marley (OR2015) in Shanghai, as part of *Riverview in Asia*. Peter was one of those quiet achievers who worked industriously throughout his secondary schooling but never won subject prizes, was not nominated to leadership roles, nor secured sporting premierships in the school's premier teams. No, Peter was a quiet, humble and unassuming young man who went about his business with enormous integrity and purpose. In many ways, he embodied four 'C's of his education – competence, conscience, compassion and commitment. Since leaving school, Peter has undertaken study in Shanghai and as part of that, has embraced a very different culture and lifestyle. Recently, he was in Guilin, one of the pristine but rugged regions of China, when he was hailed by a local man who was gesticulating frantically; clear indication that something was seriously wrong. Upon investigation, Peter discovered that a friend of the man had gone swimming in the river and had not resurfaced. Peter responded instinctively by diving into the stream and searching for the person, which after some minutes yielded few results – but, he persisted until he found a body which he dragged to the surface and then began cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in an effort to bring the person back to life. Despite colossal efforts that weakened him to a point of exhaustion, Peter was not successful. However, his spontaneous assessment of the situation, a willingness to forsake personal safety, and the greater concern for the other, spoke to his emotional core – something that he, his family and his school should be very proud of. Small acts of heroism such as this are thankfully infrequent, however they do give insight into the higher order ideals that our young men are imbued with and come to the fore during times of great adversity. Congratulations Peter – a noble and selfless act, one that has not gone unnoticed and one that resonates with the primary mission of a school such as Riverview.

Athletic Study Center *Scholar-Athlete* of the Week



Gianni Taranto

Recognized for promoting a developmental and accountable platform for communal academic engagement within the scholar-athlete population. For Gianni, it all starts with a consciousness of self and being aware of one's own strengths and areas of growth. He has accumulated a tremendous amount of knowledge and skills through a wide array of rigorous yet pertinent courses. As a peer tutor and advocate, he assists with the academic transition and development of incoming freshman and continuously enhances the critical reading and writing skills of students enrolled in various courses.

Coincidentally, on the same day I met Peter, I received an email from Berkeley University in the United States, where the Dux of 2014, Gianni Taranto, has been studying over recent years. Gianni has his own story to tell. Despite being at Riverview for eight years, Gianni did not win any subject or academic prizes until Year 11, and then through sheer persistence and determination went on to become Dux in his graduating year. While Gianni's achievements in scholarship and sport speak for themselves, he was recently nominated as the Athlete of the Week at his highly regarded university. Interestingly enough, it was for his special contribution to the fabric of community, for supporting the induction and inclusion of Freshman students and assisting in their learning, that Gianni was singled out for special acknowledgement. Like Peter, Gianni has responded to the post-schooling environment with great generosity and commitment, going beyond the self to recognise and respond to the needs of the other. Two boys of very different persuasions in their respective year levels, two boys who have made and will continue to make their own distinctive mark on the community in disparate geographical regions of the world. This is the stuff to be truly proud of.

While our Old Boys journey far and wide, our current boys are very much immersed in different elements of the educational program. On the Regis campus, the Year 6 boys are in their final weeks before entering secondary school next year while the Senior Campus is abuzz with various activities and pursuits. After weeks of preparation, the Year 9 Challenge is up and running, and reports to date have been very favourable. Weather has allowed the outward bound activities to proceed unabated, although extremes of heat and rain are always on the horizon. Year 10 Exams began in the latter part of the week and will continue throughout Week 6 as the assessment schedule marches inexorably along. The boys in Year 11 are now well into their HSC courses of study and these will keep them very much engaged in the intensity of classes over the final weeks of the year (and across the summer with some strategic reading, advanced course work and preparations for 2018). With only four weeks to go until classes conclude for the year, there is much that needs to be attended to.

Tonight is the Blue & White Ball, where 244 young men graduate and go forth into the world to become men for others. They may surface in the Far East like Peter, or in the more familiar cultures of the Western world like Gianni. Or, they may take up careers and professions around the metropolitan precincts of Sydney and form part of that invisible milieu who commute, work, pray, volunteer, exercise and live ordinary lives. But, it would be my hope and prayer that they will respond to the mantra of their education and become men for and with others, as part of the greater mission of this school and its impulse to

support those whose own lives will not have the same opportunity for growth and ambitious achievement. And for the many graces that we count among our daily blessings, let us – in the best of the Ignatian spirit, acknowledge a deep sense of gratitude and appreciation.