

Magic Moments

Schools like Riverview have the rare yet distinctive capacity to present magic moments at unscripted times, one of which surfaced in the yard on Friday at lunch time and captivated hundreds of boys. It was through the agency of 'gorilla busking', musical entertainment provided by two senior students – Zac Roddy and George Goodfellow, which aimed to raise funds for Colegio Santo Inacio de Loiola in Kasait, a Jesuit school in Timor Leste. On a day when the sun shone brightly the boys gathered round in a carnival atmosphere, not only appreciating the musicianship, but expressing felicitous applause for the staff and students who approached the busker's guitar case and threw in their dollars. It was a unique celebration of community, music, fun and philanthropy, which yielded some very appreciable gains: \$565 in just 30 minutes!! These funds will be added to the thousands of dollars that are sent from five Jesuit schools across Australia each year to a project in one of the most impoverished nations in South East Asia, funds that have progressively built a school for over 300 children over the last three years who would otherwise not have access to education. And, the work goes on as construction begins on a teacher training institution contiguous to the school, which will take the best graduates and place them in undergraduate teaching degrees in order to redress the educational lacuna in East Timor. The importance of this project cannot be underestimated, but, it was the spirit of goodwill, the generous commitment and a vibrant sense of community that erupted in the grounds that combined to produce a poignant reminder of how wonderful it is to be in schools and to work with young people.

Sunday mornings are normally quiet around the College grounds, but not so over the weekend with over 700 gathering for the Welcome Mass and Information Session for the new families who are taking up their enrolment at Riverview in 2016. There was a palpable mixture of excitement, expectation, anticipation and apprehension as 260 new boys and their families participated in the first formal transition event at the College – formalities that will culminate in the graduation process for the boys who enter in Year 5 and Year 7 next year in 2021 and 2023, respectively. Each new boy, each new family, each new year, writes another inimitable chapter into the extraordinary history of the College; the symbolism of the first gathering on Sunday presented its own significance that was not lost in the power of the moment.

I returned to school on Monday, after a very busy weekend of sport, a co-curricular dinner, the gathering for the new families in 2016 and a meeting with the Heads and Rectors of Jesuit schools across the nation, to discover that the Mentor Camp for the Indigenous boys was arguably the best in 10 years. Looking at the range of activities it is no wonder why: water skiing at Chifley Dam, the Cowra Corroboree, motor bike riding and driving under supervision, peer support activities and the 'rapping' of the boys at bedtime. The only downer for the weekend was the result of Rugby World Cup, but that was beyond anyone's control. Special thanks are extended to the senior boys who took time out of their own schedule to attend, and of course, to John Allen and the Mentors who gave generously of their time and their wisdom to support the boys as they traverse the sometimes tricky divide of secondary schooling in the College.

Vignettes from some of the finest drama performances of the year were profiled in the 2015 Elective Drama Showcase, which was held on Friday evening in the O'Kelly Theatre. The audience were treated to a fusion of mime, mask work, monologues and physical theatre from the boys in Year 9 to the more sophisticated work with Greek Theatre, Clowning, Commedia dell'Arte, Theatre of the Absurd and Shakespeare performed by the senior boys. In all, it was an evening that demonstrated the diversity of skills and genres that form the drama program at the College. As demanding as public performance under the spotlight of the theatre can be, the boys responded magnificently to the many composite disciplines including special effects, sound, lighting, acting, direction and production. A number of emails were received from parents in the aftermath of performance.

On Thursday evening the Bursary Thankyou Mass and Dedication was held in Dalton Chapel, which brought together those whose generosity provides opportunity for approximately 100 boys to have the

honour and privilege of a Riverview education, those who could otherwise never afford to come. This speaks to a fundamental tenet of both Christian and Jesuit teaching – to provide for those whose own circumstances would preclude it, many of who will become leaders of their own communities into the future. Tom Randall (OR 2009) and Joe Althouse (OR 2015) spoke with enormous passion and considerable insight into the opportunities the Bursary Program has provided: Tom who will graduate from Law in 2015 and Joe who hopes to audition for the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) over the coming months. These lofty ambitions reflect those of the bursary program that has seen boys move into some of the most competitive of fields and embrace the challenges associated with them. The depth of sentiment that prevailed on the evening was beautifully captured in one of the boys' address to over 250 benefactors:

'The child that I was is the father of the man I have become, because this school was the place where my teenage interests were nourished, and grew into the dreams and plans I now have access to.'

Some of the boys at the Regis campus combined service with enjoyment when they mingled with the younger children at Mirrabrook during the week. When the school and the child centre were constrained by weather during the middle of the week it was decided that there were mutually beneficial gains to be had by sharing some play space. Under the watchful eye of Ms Erica Reading, who has creatively been plying her classroom skills for 45 years, both came together for some sharing and enjoyable games. It was another magic moment to bookend a busy but memorable week in the life of the College.

Best wishes for the week ahead.