President’s Report – May 2014

Although we are not yet halfway into 2014, it has already been a busy year for MESA and its members!

On 7 March MESA members enjoyed the International Women’s Day Breakfast hosted by the College. The Mocktail Party for the Graduating ‘Class of 2013’ was hosted by MESA on 14 March. It was an ideal opportunity for our most recent graduates to catch up with each other and to reconnect as they begin their transition into their post-school lives.

MESA was active at the College Open Day on 18 May, at which MESA hosted a stall, so as to provide an opportunity for future students and parents to learn more about our presence and activities, both within and post College life. The College will also host its Mentors Breakfast for students on 22 May. Some MESA members are invited to attend to share their life experiences and chosen career pathway.

Throughout this time we have had well attended MESA meetings and we are blessed to have a very enthusiastic Committee for 2014. We look forward to welcoming you to our future events and seeing you at our upcoming meetings!

Warm regards, Justine Howard

2014 Committee

President Justine Howard (Class of 1994)
Vice President Rita Panebianco (nee Lombardi, Class of 1986)
Treasurer Rita Mola (nee Romeo, Class of 1984)
Secretary Dani Wares (nee Harper, Class of 1989)

Other Members Kate Ringvall (Class of 1988)
Lydia Bordoni (nee Vieceli, Class of 1972)
Gina Romeo (nee Spano, Class of 1990)
Kellie Dobbie (nee Miocevich, Class of 1984)
Farewell and Thank you to MESA President 2012 - 2013

At this year’s MESA AGM on Wednesday 12 February the Committee bid farewell to Carol Mitchell (nee Mettam, ’82) who served as President in 2012—2013. Rita Panebianco (nee Lombardi, ’86) Vice-President presented Carol with a gift on behalf of the committee to thank her for her amazing efforts and contribution to MESA as president. Carol is a very talented, passionate and inspiring woman, and we will miss her immensely. We look forward to seeing Carol at future MESA events as a guest!

We also congratulate Carol on her new position in charge of the newly established Justice, Ecology and Development Office (JEDO) for the Archdiocese of Perth.


MESA Mocktail Party - Graduates of 2013

On Friday 14 March the MESA Mocktail Party for the Class of 2013 was held in Catherine’s Garden. It was a lovely evening enjoyed by all who attended with many of the new MESA Committee members assisting with preparations. Several of the Committee members’ daughters and Year 7 Scholarship recipients also assisted at the event. They are pictured bottom right with Georgia Wilson, Head Girl for 2013.
Best Friends’ Holiday
By Lucy FitzSimons(‘08)

Hollie Patroni, Amanda Meloni, Leah Marinovich and Elizabeth Stevens (all class of 2009) were close friends during their time at Mercedes College. Since graduating these girls have chosen various paths of work and study.

Hollie recently graduated from Curtin University with a degree in Occupational Therapy and has started working in hand and upper limb treatment. Amanda is currently completing her fifth year at UWA undertaking a double degree in Law and Commerce. Amanda is also working for the not for profit organisation Upside Nepal and as a paralegal at Bradley Bayly Legal, as well as tutoring High School students. Leah graduated from a Bachelor of Nursing in June 2013 from Notre Dame University and is currently working as a Community Support Worker for the elderly. Leah will commence a graduate program as a registered nurse at Sir Charles Gardner Hospital in August 2014 and hopes to one day study Midwifery. Elizabeth recently graduated with a degree in Accounting and is currently working as an Accounts Officer for an Engineering firm.

From December 2013 to January 2014 Leah, Liz, Hollie and Amanda travelled to and around America together. Their journey took them to many different places including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Orlando, Washington, Miami and Lake Tahoe.

Highlights from their holiday include skiing in Lake Tahoe, eating lots of Mexican food, visiting Harry Potter World, seeing the Triple Crown Pipeline Masters in the North Shore of Hawaii as well as learning to surf in Hawaii. The girls spent Christmas Day skating in Central Park and then stayed in New York to bring in the New Year! They all commented on how great it was to be able to travel with their best friends.

Women’s Long Table Lunch
By Carol Mitchell (nee Mettam’82)

On Palm Sunday, eight ex-Mercedes students attended the Women’s Long Table Lunch at the Claremont showgrounds to support Lisa Tobin-Renel (Class of 1982) on her cancer (secondary) journey. Lisa was one of three cancer survivors profiled at the lunch sharing some of her highs and lows with those in attendance. The event is also seen as a celebration of life and to acknowledge the courage and resilience shown by the women who are on this journey. So after a wonderful meal, we all then hit the dance floor. The much needed funds raised on the day go to Breast Cancer Care WA - with a third counsellor now being possible; so we have started planning for next year! If you would like to donate or start thinking about your own table for next year, check out the website: www.breastcancer.org.au<http://www.breastcancer.org.au>.
**Mercedes College International Women’s Day Breakfast**  
By Lucy FitzSimons (‘08)  

On Friday, 7 of March MESA members attended an International Women’s Day Breakfast held at Mercedes College. This event saw ex-students from a variety of years gather with the Mercedes Community to celebrate women around the world (some even attending the event with their daughters).  

The theme of the breakfast was ‘Inspiring Change’ and was attended by an inspirational guest speaker Marianna Cuza. Marianna shared her story of growing up in Communist Romania and the hardships she witnessed and suffered leading to her escape to Australia. Marianna spoke of the first memory she had of her arrival which involved a kind act from a Sister of Mercy. Marianna then worked for several years in order to move her family to Australia. Marianna’s never ending strength and courage radiated throughout the College Hall as she told her motivating story.  

Thank you very much to Mercedes College for extending the invite to this wonderful event to the Victoria Square Alumni community. All who attended felt privileged to be able to hear such an inspirational story and experience an event within the College grounds. This event occurs annually and so we hope to see more members attend next year.

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**Ex–Students: Where are they now?**

**Thea Walton (2008)**

Thea Walton graduated from Mercedes College in 2008. Thea was an active member of the College admired by her peers for her immense dedication, enthusiasm and fun nature. Thea was Social Justice Prefect during her graduating year and was also Dux of the College in 2008.  

Upon graduating from Mercedes Thea underwent a Bachelor of Arts/Commerce majoring in Communications, Economic and Finance at the University of Western Australia (UWA). As part of her degree Thea spent a year on exchange studying at the University of Pennsylvania, an Ivy League school located in Philadelphia. Whilst
studying here Thea was awarded a place on the Dean’s Honours List for 2012-2013.

During her University years Thea played hockey and was involved with various organisations including the Oaktree organisation (Australia’s largest youth aid organisation). Thea was involved with AIESEC, an international youth organisation that worked to create globally-minded young leaders. In 2011 Thea was the WA State Manager of this organisation. Whilst completing her degree Thea also undertook the role of Treasurer for the UWA Education Union.

Upon graduating Thea was successful in obtaining a place in the graduate programme at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and so at the beginning of 2014 Thea was moved to Canberra. She is currently working in the Office of Best Practice Regulation. This Office oversees all large Australian Government (de)regulatory policy proposals, working to ensure that regulation created by government is efficient and effective in addressing the identified problems. Thea continues to be actively involved in post-student life undertaking the role of Treasurer for the Prime Minister and Cabinet’s Social club as well as the Media Liaison Officer for the Social Network of Graduates. She also has started studying Spanish.

We wish Thea all the best as she undertakes this programme and look forward to hearing about her future exciting endeavours.

The Re-dedication of the St Joseph’s Learning Centre

On Thursday 7 February 2014, the St Joseph’s Learning Centre was re-dedicated by Fr Robert Cross. After the re-dedication several ex-students of St Joseph’s shared with current Year 12 students their memories of school when they attended St Joseph’s. Pictured below is Moya Hextall (nee Michael, ’60) with Year 12 students.

Congratulations to 2013 Year 7 MESA Scholarship Recipient Sophie Hamer

In an effort to promote student involvement in and reflection upon Anzac Day, the Social Sciences Learning Area encouraged students to enter the first Mercedes College Anzac Day Photo Competition. To enter students needed to attend a ceremony or event and have a respectful photograph taken proving their involvement and then electronically lodge this on the College’s learning management system. Sophie Hamer has won a pack of Unibic Anzac biscuits with her entry which showed her in her choir uniform next to the State War Memorial just after the dawn service. Congratulations Sophie.
Big Issue Street Soccer
By Rita Mola (nee Romeo 84)

One of MESA’s objectives is to undertake fundraising activities for the benefit of charity groups. To support further the amazing work done by the Mercedes College Young Mercies throughout 2013 with The Big Issue Community Street Soccer Program, MESA made a financial contribution towards the Community Street Soccer Christmas party and purchased medals and trophies for the participants. The funds were raised through raffling a beautiful quilt which was made with love and donated by Ann Kinsman (Class of 1965) at the Victoria Square Alumni (VSA) Mercy Mass afternoon tea. (Pictured right)

MESA has received an email of appreciation by Chris Cornelio, State Coordinator of the Community Street Soccer Program WA, ‘Thank you MESA very much for the medals/trophies…the xmas party went great and all the guys felt appreciated getting a medal and the two spectacular glass trophies were very impressive.’


Catherine’s compassionate response was immediate, practical … enabling the poor to help themselves and to find new dignity. (Quote by Sister Carmel Bourke referring to Sister of Mercy Catherine McAuley).

‘Roll Call photos for 2014 Mercedes Reunions’
Click HERE to see if you are in any of the class photos? Is your leaving class photo included? If so, start planning your reunion now. If you would like assistance from MESA, such as promoting your event, you can also email us on: mesa@mercedes.wa.edu.au.

MESA on Facebook
Join the ‘Mercedes Ex-Students Association (MESA) Facebook group.

Upcoming Events
Sunday 21 September Victoria Square Alumni Mercy Day Mass

MESA Meetings / 6.15pm / Mercedes College Staffroom
Wednesdays 18 June, 6 August, 17 September, 15 October and 26 November.

News stories, reunion updates, photos or contact detail updates can be emailed to mesa@mercedes.wa.edu.au.

The only return God requires of us for all favours is a return of love.
- Catherine McAuley

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