



From the Principal

Volume 17 Issue 9
12th June 2015

The Companion

Dear Parents, Guardians and Friends of Xavier College,

What do you think of this statement? “Marriage is not always wine and roses, sometimes it’s vinegar and weeds.” “Well, it’s the truth!” I hear you say and if you are making this observation from within a marriage, you are fully aware of the meaning of commitment for commitment is essential for a marriage to survive and flourish. So much of our happiness depends on knowing that we are loved wholeheartedly, uniquely and permanently by another.

Andrew Mullins in his book, “Parenting for Character”, urges us to “*Teach your children to honour commitments, to keep their word, to face up to consequences of the simplest actions, otherwise, when commitments become adult sized, their good intentions may not last the distance. If they lack the necessary habit of commitment, intentions can unravel when life picks away at them.*”

Being able to honour commitments has a lot to do with having a good strong character and “good character” in our children does not just happen; it is the outcome of the consistent efforts of parents and teachers over many years. Aristotle made the observation that, “Good moral behaviour comes about as the result of habit: we become just by doing just acts, brave by doing brave acts.” We are not born with character. **Character is a learned behaviour.**

The psychologist, Tom Lickona, suggests that character can be understood better if taken in two parts: “**Performance Character**: those qualities such as self-discipline and perseverance that enable us to give our best effort and do our best work in any performance context, and **Moral Character**: those qualities such as honesty, justice and caring that enable us to have successful relationships, live and work in community and assume the responsibility of citizenship.” He goes on to say that, “The goal of Catholic character nurture is not simply “good character” but the character of Christ.”

When we encourage our children to be the best possible persons they can be, we are encouraging them to strive for excellence, to develop their given gifts, those talents that enable them to become fully the person God means them to be and as our College motto articulates ‘*for the greater good*’. When we encourage our children to be of strong moral character, we are asking them to exercise the capacity God gave them for goodness and the ability to love other people in a way that reflects God’s love – to be of the character of Christ.

Next week provides an opportunity for EACH of us to be the character of Christ as we acknowledge Refugee Week at the College, in our homes and in our wider community. Since 1986, Australians have come together to celebrate Refugee Week. It is a chance for all of us to engage in positive action to make refugees welcome in our communities.

Taken from the second verse of the Australian national anthem, this year’s Refugee Week theme, ‘*With courage let us all combine*’, celebrates the courage of refugees who have refused to deny their beliefs or identity in the face of

persecution, fled their homeland and often endured terrifying and dangerous journeys only to face the cruelty of detention before working hard to make a new life for themselves and their families.

This theme also serves as a call to action for all Australians: how can we stand up against injustice and work together to make our country one that lives up to its national anthem as a nation with boundless plains to share?

By providing loving relationships, being tolerant and accepting of all people, being good models, setting high expectations, upholding firm and fair discipline, that holds our children accountable to themselves, we provide an environment that supports the development of good character and allows your children and our students to live a motto *'for the greater good'*.

Of course, you live as you have been taught and as Dorothy Nolte once wrote:

“... If children live with encouragement,
they learn confidence;
if children live with tolerance,
they learn patience;
if children live with praise,
they learn appreciation;
if children live with sharing,
they learn generosity;
if children live with honesty,
they learn truthfulness;”

If your children and our students can develop a character that is packed full of the values and virtues that Dorothy Nolte thinks we can provide for them by the manner in which we live, then, when the time comes for marriage and “vinegar and weeds”, they will have the benefit of true character and commitment to see them through.

Jesus, we ask to see as You see, to act as You act, to love as You love, to be of Your character.

'For the greater good'

Mr Michael Pate



From the Assistant Principal

Thank you to Parents/Caregivers

As you would be aware we have recently sent out notes to parents/caregivers asking for an explanation of student absences. We have recently moved to a new system coordinated by the Catholic Education Office and while it brings numerous advantages, it has had a few teething problems. I simply wanted to say thank you for your patience while we work through these challenges. Returning these notes allows us the opportunity to correct any transfer errors which in turn ensures the accuracy of our Semester One reports.

Thank you to the members of our community who attended the Council Meetings

Last Tuesday night, at 7pm, like the many other Xavier community members who attended the meeting, I would like to have been at home. But, we were at Penrith Council Chambers showing our commitment to the bushland at the back of Xavier College.

I really don't know if we will succeed, but I was so very proud of our community for standing up for what we believe ... keeping the natural bushland at the back of our school.

Feedback – Please let us know

We have almost finished two terms of 2015 and I am hoping you are pleased with the learning opportunities we are providing for your child. We would really appreciate your feedback. Everyone learns from feedback and if there are any concerns that you would like to bring to our attention, we would like to hear them.

I have two children attending two different schools in the Diocese of Parramatta. There are some positives that I can easily identify, but there are also some challenges. We would like to hear any of the challenges that you may be experiencing so that we can work in partnership, with a common aim to maximise the learning of your child.

*Grant us a spirit of concern for the future of our environment;
Bring an end to the exploitation of the earth's scarce resources;
Encourage us to be responsible stewards of your creation.*

*Grant us a spirit of respect, recognising the value and integrity of each person;
Encourage us to be accepting of ourselves and of others.
Help us become advocates of peace, bringing an end to conflict and division;
Renew our commitment to challenging the causes of injustice.
Grant us a spirit of openness to see God within and around us;
Help us rejoice in the good we have experienced as we move forward to the future;
Help us use our senses to celebrate beauty and creativity in the world.
Grant us a spirit of truth to recognise failings, which have hurt us, others and the world;*

*Give us the humility to ask forgiveness for our part in any wrongdoing;
Grant us a spirit of generosity to reach out in trust to those we encounter;
Help us to embody God's love in our relationships with one another.
Lord, make us prophets of our time.*

(© Sophie Stanes CAFOD www.cafod.org.uk)

Thank you for your continued support,
Patrick Finnerty

From the Director of Mission and Formation

*The Prayer
for
Serenity*

God, give us grace to
accept with serenity the things
that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
and the wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.

The following is an excerpt from an article by Fr Andrew Hamilton SJ, which was published in *Australian Catholics* (Winter 2015, p. 9):

The Serenity Prayer, a version of which was composed as early as the Great Depression by Reinhold Neibuhr, has become a popular prayer with people who have had to grapple with parts of their lives which they regret but which they could not easily change.

The prayer gives us words to pray for acceptance of the things we think are unfair if we cannot change them. We cannot make ourselves accept hard situations. It is a gift. We also need courage to face the things that need to change in our lives and to speak to the people whose support we need.

And finally we need to know ourselves and our situation well enough to know what can be changed and what can't. That needs wisdom, for which we also pray.

Yours in prayer,
Kellie Robinson

From the Director of Pedagogy and Learning

Learning is Reading

Learning is Writing

What is learning? What does learning look like? It would come as no surprise that learning is the foundation of what we do at Xavier. Despite this fact it is important that we take time to reflect on learning and what we want learning to look like at Xavier.

Our NAPLAN and PATR data leads us to ask questions about the quality of reading and writing instruction. What are we doing to improve our students' reading and writing? How much reading and writing are they engaging in each day? Two years ago we introduced the 'read every lesson' practice. As a result there was learning gain evident in students' reading results. However, their writing results dipped. So our next step is to ensure students are engaging in meaningful writing activities every lesson, including reflecting on their learning and their progress.

The first step will be for every student, every lesson to write reflectively in response to three questions:

What are you learning?
How are you doing?
How can you improve?

These questions will be given to every student to place in their diary and use as a reference point throughout the day, and maybe even at home. Through this reflexive practice we believe our students will better embed their learning and develop life-long learning skills.

The other component of this whole school improvement practice is for teachers to see themselves as readers and writers. We are currently engaged in a program to improve our writing and in turn, our capacity to assist our students in their writing. We also envision the creation of a school emagazine to which students and teachers will contribute. Exciting times ahead.

As parents you can help us on this journey to improve your child's reading and writing by listening to them read, reading what they are writing and maybe even writing with them. Together we are stronger.

Reports and parent/teacher/student interviews

It's that time of the year. Reporting time. Teachers are currently engaged in writing your child's report. These will be distributed on Wednesday, Week 10. Reports are a significant way we communicate with you about your child's progress. Parent/teacher interviews are another.

This year we are offering two parent/teacher/student interview sessions: an afternoon - evening session on Thursday 25th June and a morning session on Friday 26th June. Full details follow this article. We appreciate you taking the time to attend interviews, as it is a valuable way for us to work together to educate your child - our students.

Many blessings,
Alyssa Roach

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This semester **Years 7 to 12** Parent/Teacher/Student interviews have been organised in two sessions: **Thursday 25th June, 3.30pm – 7.30pm and Friday 26th June, 9.00am – 1.00pm**. This is a valuable opportunity to discuss your child's progress and assist them to *exceed expectations* throughout the remainder of the year.



Your child/children will receive their Semester One report(s) Wednesday Week 10. Please take the time to look at your child's report and identify areas of concern or issues you may wish to discuss with his/her teacher. This is an ideal time to examine your child's progress and explore strategies with their teachers that they could employ to improve throughout Semester Two.

We use an on-line booking system (please see instructions below) for scheduling all interviews. This allows parents/guardians to work with their child in arranging the interviews on any personal computer with Internet access. We recommend that 5-minute breaks be scheduled between each interview.

It is an expectation of Xavier College that your child/children attend the interviews with you and are wearing full school winter uniform.

Please Note: There will be no regular scheduled classes Friday 26th June.

If you experience any difficulties, or require some assistance in making an interview please contact Mrs Krohn on 47770900.

Kind regards,
Ms Alyssa Roach
Director of Learning & Pedagogy



Book School Interviews Online

Parent/Teacher/Student interviews will be held on

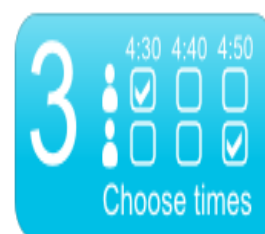
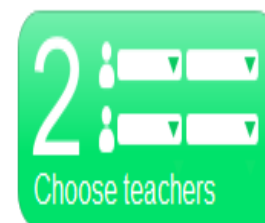
**Thursday, 25th June 2015 (3.30pm—7.30pm) and
Friday, 26th June 2015 (9.00am—1.00pm)**

You can now book interviews at times that suit **YOUR FAMILY BEST**.
Go to www.schoolinterviews.com.au and follow these simple instructions.

**BOOKINGS CLOSE ON WEDNESDAY 24th JUNE AT 5PM.
NO BOOKINGS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS TIME.**



Enter THIS school event code.
Then follow the 3 simple steps:



When you click **finish**, your interview timetable will be emailed to you automatically - **check your junk mail folder** if you do not receive your email immediately.

You can return to www.schoolinterviews.com.au at any time, and change your interviews - until bookings close.

From the Student Counsellor

Ten phrases you hear in resilient families

According to Michael Grose, author of eight parenting books, resilient parents focus on building children's and young people's strengths for the future, while helping them cope with the present difficulties and challenges they experience. The key to promoting resilience lies in the language that parents use. The challenge for parents is to make resilience an integral part of your family's proprietary language.

Resilient families develop their own words and phrases to help each other get through the inevitable tough times that each person experiences. The language of resilience generally refers to coping strategies such as empathy, humour and acceptance.

Here are 10 examples of the language of resilience and the coping skills each reflects:

10 best phrases to teach resilience to your kids

by Michael Grose

1  <i>Goal</i> Humour <i>Phrase</i> "Come on, laugh it off"	2  <i>Goal</i> Contain thinking, perfectionism and anxiety <i>Phrase</i> "Don't let this spoil everything"	3  <i>Goal</i> Distraction <i>Phrase</i> "Let's take a break"	4  <i>Goal</i> Handling worry and asking for help <i>Phrase</i> "Who have you spoken to about this?"	5  <i>Goal</i> Offering hope <i>Phrase</i> "I know it looks bad now but you will get through this"
6  <i>Goal</i> Positive reframing <i>Phrase</i> "What can you learn from this so it doesn't happen next time?"	7  <i>Goal</i> Acceptance <i>Phrase</i> "Don't worry – relax and see what happens!"	8  <i>Goal</i> Perspective <i>Phrase</i> "This isn't the end of the world"	9  <i>Goal</i> Flexible thinking <i>Phrase</i> "You could be right. But have you thought about ..."	10  <i>Goal</i> Taking action <i>Phrase</i> "What can we do about this?"

<http://www.kidspot.com.au/10-phrases-you-hear-in-resilient-families-are-you-using-them/>

kidspot

Year 8 Technology Excursion to Sydney Showground Stables

On Thursday 21st and Friday 22nd of May, the entire Year 8 cohort, accompanied by their teachers, trekked to the Sydney Showground Stables for a full and exciting day of 'hands-on' practical activities. It was a great experience for the Year 8 students that attended this day; they had the opportunity to have direct experience with traditional and modern methods of production.

All students were involved in diverse and practical experiences that included various methods in agriculture, food production, textile production and technology. Year 8 had the opportunity to see for themselves the usefulness of turning one resource into many. The program was called the Paddock to Plate Experience.



In these photos the students are having a go at milking a cow and turning the milk into butter.

In addition to labour intensive hand milking, the students moved on to watch a demonstration in sheep shearing and an explanation of wool spinning, after

which it was time to roll up their sleeves and have some fun in making felt balls.



Food Production was next on the agenda and traditional scone making was the task. Technology was then used to create food logo designs using iPads

Year 8 are commended for their exceptional behaviour on the day and for the level of participation in all activities.

A big thank you to Mrs Alexander who worked extremely hard to organise this excursion.

TAS Department Teachers



Student Representative Council BBQ



Thanks to the kind support of the
Xavier College community

\$349.60

was raised on this BBQ day.

Proceeds will be donated to the
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation



Xavier College P&F Committee Bunning's BBQ Fundraiser



As the saying goes,
"Many hands make light work,"
And we need you!!

The Xavier College annual Bunning's BBQ fundraiser is being held soon and we are in need of volunteers to assist with the BBQ during the day.

When: Sunday 19th July 2015
Where: Bunning's, North Penrith
Time: 8am till at least 4pm

Watch this space for details on how to assist



Important Dates for 2015

Terms 2 and 3

For dates of more Xavier College Upcoming Events go to
<http://www.xavierllandilo.catholic.edu.au/upcoming-events#>

<i>Monday, 15th June</i>	<i>CAPTIVATE Choir Rehearsal NSWCCC Tennis Teams Championships</i>
<i>Tuesday, 16th June</i>	<i>NSWCCC Touch Football Championships</i>
<i>Thursday, 18th June</i>	<i>Year 8 Music Incursion PDSSSC Softball Trials</i>
<i>Friday, 19th June</i>	<i>Xavier College Athletics Carnival</i>
<i>Monday, 22nd June</i>	<i>PDSSSC Under 15s Football Gala Day</i>
<i>Thursday, 25th June</i>	<i>Students last day of attendance Term 2 Parent-Teacher Interviews, 3.30pm—7.30pm</i>
<i>Friday, 26th June</i>	<i>Parent-Teacher Interview Day 9.00am—1.00pm LAST DAY OF TERM 2</i>
<i>Monday, 13th July</i>	<i>Staff return for Term 3 STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY</i>
<i>Tuesday, 14th July</i>	<i>Students return for Term 3</i>

XAVIER UNIFORM SHOP AND SECOND HAND SHOP

OPENING HOURS
THURSDAYS ONLY
8.00am - 4.00pm

REMINDER TO PARENTS

Parents are asked to notify the College if your child will not be attending school.

Phone: 4777 0900



Community News...

Raising Resilient Teenagers



FREE online program empowering parents to make sense of adolescence and parent their teenager more confidently.

We are seeking parents and their teenagers to take part in a trial of a new online parenting program designed to provide parents with strategies to deal with adolescence, and protect their teenagers' mental health.

Who can take part?

Parents or guardians of at least one child aged 12 to 15 who live in Australia, are fluent in English, and have internet access.

As our program is designed to **prevent** depression and anxiety disorders in teenagers, it is best suited for parents of teenagers who are **not** already having difficulties with depression or anxiety.

If you are concerned about your teenager's mental health, we recommend that you see a trained mental health professional instead of participating in this trial.

What's involved?

- As a parent, you will receive a brief, individually tailored parenting program that will give you feedback about your current parenting and strategies to reduce the risk of depression and anxiety in your teenager.
- You will be allocated to one of two groups, either receiving the program straight away, or in 3 months' time.
- We will ask both you and your teenager (if they agree to take part) to complete some online surveys, at the beginning, and after 3 months. We may also ask you to complete similar surveys after 6 and 12 months.

In total over 12 months, your participation will take a few hours of yours and your child's time. To say thank you, both you and your child will be reimbursed with e-gift vouchers.

How do I find out more?

To find out more, or to register to participate, please go to www.parentingstrategies.net/depression.brief.intervention
For further details, you can contact the researchers at med-parentingstrategies@monash.edu or on (03) 9905 1250.



MONASH University



PARENTING STRATEGIES:
Preventing Depression & Anxiety

This research has been approved by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee.