

TERM 2 2018

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2



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# COMPANION QUARTERLY

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Exceeding Expectations

# PRINCIPALS MESSAGE

Dear Parents, guardians and friends of Xavier College,

Jesus calls death a thief, robbing us of something precious - either our own life or the life of someone we love. It comes expectantly and unannounced leaving us shaken and vulnerable.

During this term, we have experienced the meaning of Jesus' words in a tragic and personal way through the death of Stephanie Hayes (Year 9 Campion). As a community, we are still in shock and disbelief that Stephanie could have been taken from us so quickly. Our grief is further deepened by the sting of so much that was left unsaid and so much that was left undone in her young life.

When we experience a sudden loss, we are robbed of so much more than a friend. An unexpected loss also robs us of our sense of security, our plans for the future and even our joy in life. The fears and emotions we are feeling at Xavier College are natural to those who lose a loved one so unexpectedly. It is natural to ask "why her?", "why me?" and "why now?" After such a shocking loss, it is natural for life to seem without direction and even without purpose.

Our faith and hope cannot take the pain away. They cannot make up for all the time we have lost with our loved ones. But, they can give us perspective and confidence as we take the first steps in putting our lives back together. I would like to acknowledge the support given to Mr. and Mrs. Hayes, by Stephanie's close friends at the College. These young men and women in Year 9 have demonstrated a deep sense of love as they assisted with the funeral and support of each other.

As a learning community, we endeavour to focus each day on 'gratitude'. Why bother to practice gratitude in your life? Because scientific studies indicate that gratitude plays a significant role in a person's sense of wellbeing. "Acts of daily gratitude result in higher levels of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, optimism and energy. Additionally, people who perform acts of gratitude are more likely to help others, to exercise more regularly, make more progress towards personal goals and are more likely to feel loved. Gratitude encourages a positive cycle of kindness among people since one act of gratitude encourages another."

McCollough and Emmons, 2016

Well, with findings like that, we should abandon all other strategies and concentrate on gratitude to ensure harmony in our family and in our learning community – Xavier College.

It would seem that anyone can improve their sense of well-being and create positive social effects by being grateful for what they have and do in life. St Augustine seems to think so and had this to say: "People go abroad to wonder at the height of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the oceans, at the circular motion of the stars, and they pass by themselves without wondering. Let us acknowledge the wonder that we are here, in these particular bodies, at this particular time, in these particular circumstances. May we never take for granted the gift of our individuality."

What great advice! Look at ourselves in a positive manner and allow gratitude to unlock the fullness of life for us. Be grateful for the demands others make of us, for that means that we are considered to be positive contributors in their lives. Be grateful for the weariness at the end of the day, for that means that we have been productive for ourselves and others. We are particularly grateful for our dedicated Captains



and Vice Captains who have guided the student body with dignity and compassion, our Xavier sporting heroes at the local, regional, state and international level, our volunteers for the Vinnies Van, Red Shield Appeal and local charities, our science and engineering challenge teams, our Captivate performers, our Jaz in the Pas performers, our SRC, House Leaders for their many initiatives within the College, and finally you're the parents who have chosen Xavier as the learning environment for your children. We are definitely 'glass full of life people'!

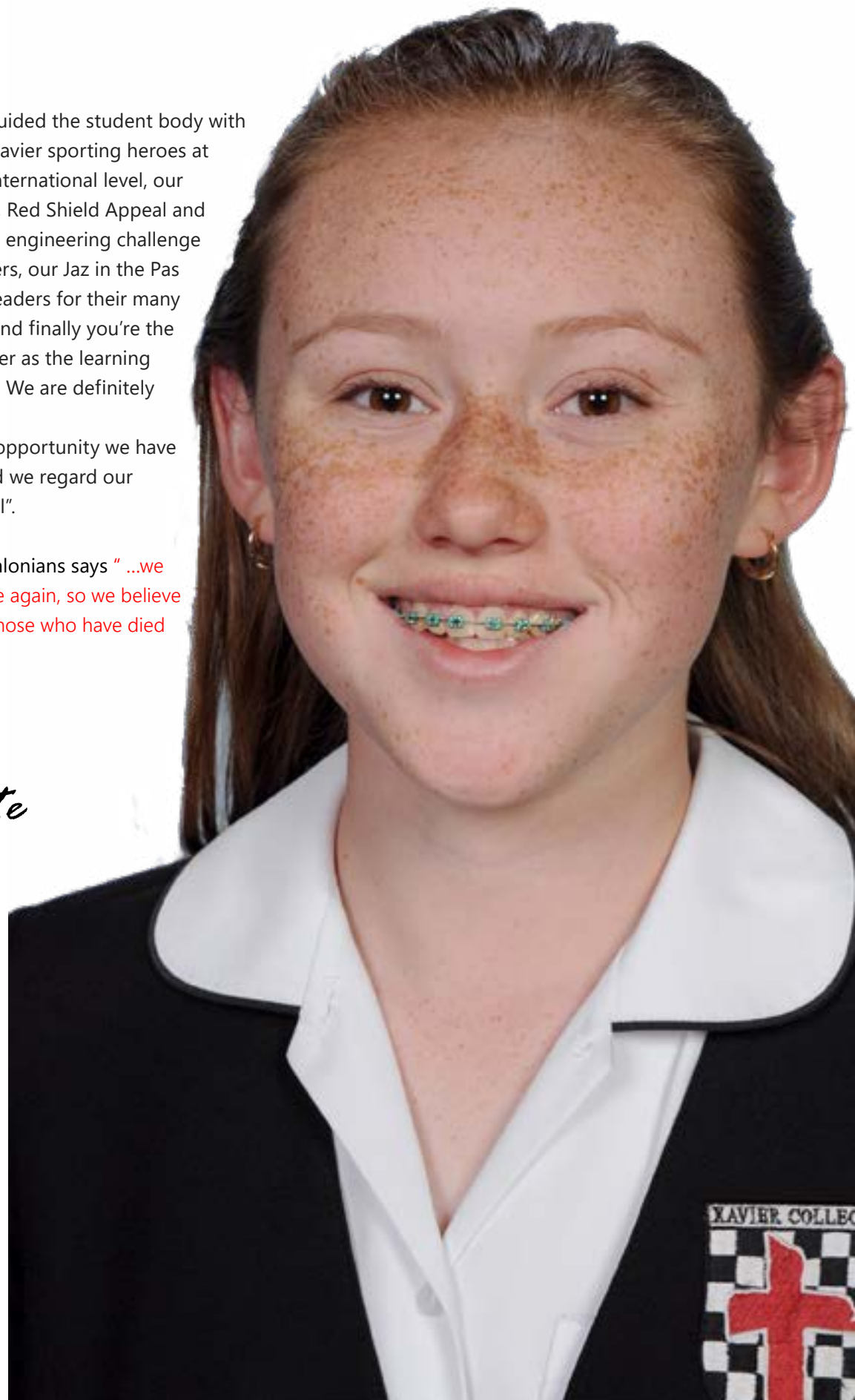
There is simply no end to the opportunity we have to be grateful people provided we regard our "glass of life" as being "half-full".

St Paul in writing to the Thessalonians says "...we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have died believing in him."

For the greater good

*Michael Pate*

PRINCIPAL LEADER



# ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS MESSAGE

As we approach the end of term 2 and indeed the end of Semester 1 we as a learning community should take the time to reflect on what has been a very challenging yet rewarding term. The cold winter months have meant a change in uniform and I would like to congratulate all students on the way they have presented themselves in their College uniform in Term 2. I always feel a

students, some of the outstanding achievements we have witnessed during the term. It has also been a highlight immersing myself in the wonderful spirit which is embedded within the Xavier College Community. The beginning of the term started with a moving ANZAC ceremony where we paid our respects to the sacrifices made by those who have fought for the life and



sense of pride when I see our students wearing their uniform so immaculately. Our new blazers which are being slowly phased in look simply outstanding and serve to further our own identity as a Catholic College. The comments we have received concerning our new blazers have been extremely positive and we look forward to the transition of the new blazers to the whole College over the next few years.

As Acting Assistant Principal, one of the highlights for me has been able to celebrate, along with

freedom we enjoy today. The College celebrated a wonderful Mother's Day Mass where we recognised the invaluable roll our Mothers play in our lives. Year 9 endured the rigours of NAPLAN as the College collected crucial data which will shape the literacy





and numeracy curriculum at the College in the coming years. We have witnessed many sporting successes with Xavier teams performing admirably in PDSSSC competitions. In individual sports we have witnessed success at both Diocesan, NSWCCC, NSW All - Schools and National level. Our performing arts students continued to impress and have demonstrated their outstanding talents at Jazz in the PAS and Year 12 Showcase evenings. The House System continues to go from strength to strength, with all house being involved in reflection days in term 2 which have focussed on building connections with each other, their house patron and their God. Our House Spirit day was an outstanding success raising nearly \$3000 dollars for the Catholic Refuge Fund.



Together we have faced triumph and tragedy this term. It has been our strength together as a community and our faith in our God which has been crucial as we have navigated the turbulent waters of the second half of the term. I would like to thank everybody within the Xavier community for the love, respect and togetherness you have shown during these times and for the strength and faith you

have demonstrated through your actions. These communal attributes truly make us a great College. As we reflect on Term 2, it is time to recognise what needs to happen to ensure we are ready to embrace the challenges and opportunities that await in the second half of the year. I recently listened to some Olympians talking at an award ceremony in the city. One of the speakers really resonated with me. He was a silver medallist at the recent PyeongChang Winter Olympics and he spoke about the fact that all individuals have within them a unique talent which just needs to be discovered. I challenge all students to find that hidden talent in term 3 and to apply the motivation to make the most of that talent. I also challenge students to look within themselves as to what they can offer others and the Xavier community. Jesus says ...You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good work and give glory to your father in heaven. We can all let our light shine in a myriad of ways..... how will your light shine in term 3.

*Mr Lee McCrorie*

ACTING ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL LEADER



# LEARNING AND PEDAGOGY

Term 2 has been an incredibly busy term, from Years 7-11 reports being published, Year 8-10 subject selections for 2019, Write a Book in a Day, Poetry in Action, HSC Minimum Standards testing, Years 7 and 9 NAPLAN testing, to the Science and Engineering Challenge. Many thanks to all of the staff who have organised and contributed to these events. During Term 3 there will be a number of significant events occurring.

The Trial HSC Examinations will commence on Monday 6th of August for Year 12 and some Year 11 students (early Commencement VET students) and continue into Week 5 Monday 20th of August.



These examinations will provide a fantastic opportunity for the Year 12 and relevant Year 11 students to experience examinations that have been set externally and are unseen to the students. The students have been revising for these during early part of Term 3 and will continue their HSC revision in each course when the examinations are complete. The Trial HSC examination timetable was given out to students and is available on Moodle under Student Learning. Please ask your son/daughter to see their Trial HSC timetable so you can support through this valuable stage of their education.

During this time, it is very important that students maintain a healthy diet, get a minimum of 8 hours



sleep and integrate physical activity into each day. This allows them to be able to study well and perform to their optimum during the exam weeks. Good luck to all students who are working very hard preparing for the Trial HSC Examinations. A pleasing exam result will be the direct result of many hours of preparation and hard work.

The Year 11 students will work solidly during Term 3 to revise in preparation for their Assessment Block during Weeks 8 and 9 of Term 3. The Assessment Block timetable will be available on Moodle under Student Learning early Term 3. You can help your child by ensuring they have revision folders for each course with the following suggested materials in each in order to be able to study effectively for their assessment tasks:

- Preliminary HSC syllabus
- Study cards/notes for each topic
- Areas that require extra revision for each topic
- Support notes from teacher.

Your son/daughter will need guidance on how to organise their time with other commitments and demands such as work, sport and social activities.



Please ensure that they have a balance of all these things including time for physical activity each day. As well as this, a healthy diet and at least 8 hours sleep each night are critical to achieving success. Good organisational skills and time management are essential, as well as a commitment to reducing any distractions, such as social media, are all important to achieving their very best.

Year 10 students who have applied for their initial subject preferences for Year 11 2018 will have their Subject Selection Interviews, with their parents/ guardians on Tuesday 14th August at the College in the Xavier Centre. The purpose of the Subject Selection interview is to discuss the suitability of their initial selections and to make final subject selections, taking into consideration subject teacher feedback, subject combinations, current achievement and future aspirations. Further information regarding this will be published early Term 3.

Best wishes for a wonderful year of learning in 2018.

*Mrs Alexei Hawkins*  
DIRECTOR OF LEARNING AND PEDAGOGY





# ATTENDANCE

Dear Parents,

I just wanted to update you on student attendance. The Parramatta Diocese has a target for attendance which is 90% attendance for all students, now students have approximately 185 school days each year, so depending on the numbers in a school year a student could be away up to 19 days and still be at 90%. Xavier's attendance level for the school is currently 78% at this point in the school year. This means that 78% of our students are here 90% of the time. In other words, we have 22% of our students who have more than 19 days absent if we carry our current rate to the end of the school year.

In the world of business, no company could carry staff who only came to work that amount of time. Of course, we are talking about kids and they can get sick, but we need to also teach them about resilience, meeting commitments and perseverance. The educational research across the world has linked attendance not only to educational success but to success in life. The United States has huge issues around student attendance. They have organisations such as "Attendance Works" (look up the web site) to help schools solve problems of student absenteeism. Please ensure your child comes to school regularly.

The quote that "The single most effective measure a parent can do to help their child succeed at school is to get them there", I believe to be true.

If you have an issue with getting a child to school, then we are here to help so please contact us, so we can support you and our students.

Regards

*Glenn Trefoni*

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND FAMILY LIAISON





# POETRY IN ACTION

In term 2, Students in years 7-10 were treated with a performance from Poetry in Action. This company takes poetry and incorporates it into performance pieces that are created to ask students to think about the relevance of literature and our role as informed and experienced readers.

## STAGE 4: 'THE POET'S QUEST'

They followed the bumbling hero Blake Williams as he embarked upon a time travelling adventure that brought all the joy and frivolity of language to life. We witnessed Blake's transformation from being unable to express himself to learning how poetry can help him win back his muse.

Students laughed and learned with Blake as he mastered the techniques of poetry from some of the greatest poets in history, the show featured a fantastic selection of poetry and songs.

## STAGE 5 'FACT VS FICTION'

This dynamic and brand-new show from the pen of Joanna Erskine explored the power and impact of language, speeches and poetry in the real and fictional worlds. The students were prompted to consider: Who can we trust? Who is deceiving us? And how can we possibly tell the difference? If, as Coleridge says, poetry is simply 'the best words in the best order' how can our leaders use poetry to better express the needs and ideas of our time? Using excerpts from film, television, poetry, and real life, students navigated the world of critical literacy. It was an insightful and entertaining show that gave our students the tools to question and challenge the wealth of information in our modern world.

The performance Included selections of work from: V for Vendetta, Network, Newsroom, Emily Dickinson, Carl Sagan, Barack Obama and more.



# MISSION AND FORMATION

Term two has been a very eventful term at Xavier College. We had overwhelming support at our Mother's Day Mass which took place on Friday 11th May. The chapel was filled to capacity and my sincere appreciation goes out to all who were involved in making it such a special and memorable occasion.

Once a fortnight during this term the students of individual house groups across the college



have come together in the Mary MacKillop Centre, and under the supervision of the house staff members, have spent 2 periods on Fridays engaging in reflection sessions. Here, they were reminded about the life of their patron saints and encouraged to emulate the Christian traits that each saint demonstrated.

This was followed by a practical activity, and general observation indicated that the students enjoyed working together, becoming more acquainted with peers and extending their friendship groups.

Towards the end of the day a group of students from the house planted a tree which would produce flowers to match the colour of that particular house.

Students will be given the responsibility of caring for the plant.

Our next celebration will be Grandparents' and Great Friends' Mass on Wednesday 25th August at 11.10 am and you are all if your busy schedules permit.

During our daily lives at Xavier College, both students and teachers are, at times, led to engage in the powerful prayer practice : The Examen Bearing in mind that Xavier College is an Ignatian College, this prayer, taken from the wisdom of St. Ignatius and formed in the Jesuit tradition—can be a powerful way to uncover meaning in our daily lives. This simple prayer method can change the way we view the events of our day and commit us to changing bad habits and adopting new perspective on our world. Should you be interested in learning more about this prayer, please contact me at the College.

God Bless you all.

*Mrs Bainbridge*  
ACTING DIRECTOR OF MISSION







# XAVIER INQUIRY LEARNING

After completing a depth study on Ancient Greece, Year 7 applied their knowledge, skills and understanding to investigate life in Ancient China. In doing so, they completed their first Xavier Inquiry Learning Project. Students had 4 weeks to respond to the following driving question:

**"HOW CAN WE, AS AUTHORS, COMPOSE A STORYBOOK TO EDUCATE YOUNG CHILDREN ABOUT LIFE IN ANCIENT CHINA?"**



The project was set as a challenge to Year 7 students by Natalie Panzarino, author of children's book *Pointy Pembleton*. On the 29/5/2018, Natalie along with our dedicated librarian and HSIE teachers, ran a variety of literacy workshops as part of Year 7's XIL Project Launch.

Throughout this XIL Project our students took on the roles of authors, editors and illustrators and their end products highlighted their literacy skills, creativity and understanding of life in Ancient China.

Students showcased their storybooks to Holy Family Luddenham Primary School students. Stage 3 students visited Xavier College as an authentic audience for our students and completed a book review on their end products. Our Xavier students were enthusiastic about reading aloud and

interacting with their younger audience.

This XIL Project was a great opportunity for students to learn new enterprise skills and transfer their learning.

*Miss Bridget Mazzella*

Xavier Inquiry Learning Team Leader







# WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY

Earlier this month, more than 40 students from across Years 7, 8, 9 and 11 gathered to participate in the Write a Book in A Day in support of the The Kids' Cancer Project. Held annually across the country in schools, workplaces and universities, teams of up to ten are tasked with the mammoth job of creating, writing and illustrating their own book in just 12 hours! Once completed, the wonderful books are donated to children in hospitals all across Australia to provide a welcome reprieve from the day to day of these children's lives. This year, Xavier College held our Write a Book in a Day Challenge on a cold brisk Tuesday! Our four teams, comprised of 1 x Year 7, 2 x Year 8, 1 x Year 9 and 1 x Year 11 met at 8am to receive the parameters and begin crafting their stories. The parameters include characters as wide ranging as librarians, fish, beauticians, chickens, newsreaders and winemakers. As if their task is not hard enough, each year, the students are also required to include 5 randomly chosen words into the book without any modifications.

This year, the students' words were prickly, silver, struggle, patch and clock and all students found their own creative and entertaining way to include them. The students' hard work, creativity and determination persisted all throughout the night, even as the weather became stormy and wet. For some students, this was their first attempt at Write a Book in A Day and their efforts in both producing their book and fundraising the donation for The Kids' Cancer Project through a cake stall held the week before are to be commended. We are extremely proud of our budding writers and cannot wait to see what books they write next!





