



St Mark's College Newsletter

Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions



**Valedictory Parents'
Liturgy and Luncheon**

Our Proud Parents



Reverend Father's Message
Head of College Message
Senior School Information
Junior School Information

**Volume 18 Issue 9
Advent Term, 2013**

*St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox College
'To Live Is Christ'*

Enrolling Now for 2014 Kindergarten to Year 11

Contact Mrs Sidhom on 9825 6768



St. Mark's College Newsletter

Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions

Friday 25th October, 2013



Volume 18 Edition 9

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Advent Term 2013

Liturgy for Year 11

K – 6 Swim Programme, Liverpool continues
Parents and Friends' Annual General Meeting

Liturgy for Kindergarten

K – 6 Swim Programme, Liverpool continues
HSC Examinations conclude

Year 12 Formal

K – 6 Swim Programme, Liverpool continues
Year 6 Graduation Liturgy and Dinner

K – 6 Swim Programme, Liverpool continues
Presentation Day, Kindergarten to Yr4

K – 6 Swim Programme, Liverpool concludes
Speech Night, Years 5 to 12

Advent Term concludes

Staff Professional Development Days

Fri 1st Nov

Fri 1st Nov

Tues 5th Nov

Fri 8th Nov

Fri 8th Nov

Fri 8th Nov

Tue 12th Nov

Fri 15th Nov

Thur 21st Nov

Fri 22nd Nov

Thur 28th Nov

Fri 29th Nov

Wed 5th Dec

Wed 5th Dec

6th & 7th Dec

is more intense and we often feel paralysed of what might happen someday, somewhere or somehow. Good cognitive therapy in dealing with fear is not to think of *what if*, but rather *what would be the worst scenario* or even, *why not* work on how we can deal with the different possible results. This kind of analysis brings peace of mind and a positive calming attitude.

Also it is believed that more than 95% of our fears and worries have never happened. We may always need to remind ourselves of the many situations in our personal lives, when we have fears and worries and none of these materialise. We need to recognise that fear is not real, but merely an emotion and ideally we can control the response to our emotions.

On the other hand, there is positive fear. This type of fear works as a motivational tool to keep chasing our dreams and get the best from ourselves. Good fear generates positive energy, which assists us to chase our goals. It activates new ideas and better planning methods to overcome our worries.

Finally, we fight negative fear by reminding ourselves with the many promises of our Lord, that He cares and loves us more than we could comprehend or imagine. Our salvation is the priority of His divine plan for us. Therefore, we ought to trust Him and accept everything given to us by His hand, believing that it is for our best.

Reverend Fr George Nakhil

Message from the Head of College

Welcome back to everyone at the College after the break. This is a busy term with the Junior School children completing their academic year and for the Senior School, it is the commencement of the new academic year. For the Senior School students, this is the term that lays the foundation for their learning for the new year and the students have commenced lessons absolutely brilliantly. The tone of the College has been positive and the students are keen to be involved in a number of activities, from sport to the co-curricular programme.

The HSC has begun and our students have been well-prepared with additional lessons held over the break and a great deal of revision and diligent study has taken place. May the Lord continue to bless our Year 12 students and we pray for their success and I thank the

Uniform

Advent Term; full summer uniform including blazer to be worn.

Year 10 Senior School uniform orders.

Year 5 and 6 2014 require a blazer. Please place order.

Uniform Shop is open every Tuesday & Friday 9:00am to 4:00pm.

Special Announcement: Enrolments for 2014

For the first time in the history of the College we have introduced enrolment waiting lists for 2014 and 2015. Parents who have children enrolled in the Junior School (K to 6) will be better placed in future for siblings to be enrolled, but if left late, a place maybe unavailable.

Progressive House Points

ST ANTHONY	ST DEMIANA	ST GEORGE	ST MARINA
2876	2590	2609	2493

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous hand. Isaiah 41:10



Fear Not

HSC Exam season is one of the most difficult times in dealing with stress and fear in our community. While the vast majority of our students are well-prepared, many of them and their parents feel the intense pressure and the fear of under-achieving.

Negative fear could hold individuals back from achieving their dream and what they want to be. The reality is when we let our fears control our emotions and actions, the pain

teachers for their commitment towards their students. Also, I wish everyone well for Advent Term and encourage all our students to enjoy their learning.

Valedictory Liturgy and Parent Luncheon

On the last Friday of Theotokos Term the College held the Valedictory Luncheon for Year 12 Parents. It was a wonderful event where the parents with their child prayed together in the Liturgy and at the Luncheon the parents were honoured for selecting St Mark's College as the school of their choice.



The parents had the opportunity to receive an award and to hear the words of appreciation from their child. The Office Bearers delivered outstanding addresses and touched all those who were in attendance. Mrs Maha Ramzy replied eloquently with her address on behalf of the parents and Mrs Vaitzas as the Year 12 Patron, spoke about her experiences with Year 12 with great sincerity and warmth. In all, it was a family atmosphere and an emotional event.



On behalf of the College I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to the Year 12 Parents for making St Mark's the school of their choice and for giving us the opportunity to contribute to the spiritual, social and academic life of their children. God bless you and I thank you for being such caring and loving parents. The College has been enriched with the presence of your children and your influence upon them.



On behalf of the College Community I wish Year 12 the very best for the HSC Examinations.



Special Assembly



On Friday 11th October Mr El-Orabi visited the College and spoke to our students about the plight of the citizens in Egypt and how lucky we are as a community to live in a country like Australia. In the past Mr El-Orabi was the Foreign Minister for Egypt and he mentioned what the role entailed. He has thirty five (35) years experience in the diplomatic service and it was an honour to have him at the College.



Mr El-Orabi was overawed by the respect and attention that he received from the students and was highly appreciative of the College Community. I would like to thank Mr El-Orabi for his attendance and to the Australian Egyptian Council Forum for organising his visit.

Bishop Antonios Morcos Visits St Mark's College



His Grace Bishop Antonios Morcos visited the College on Tuesday 15th October and addressed the students at a special assembly. His role and title is the Bishop for African Affairs and he spoke to the students about helping the poor and the needy of Africa and how we can all play a role in changing their lives.

He was impressed with Nadine Nada (12SG) who introduced Him to the students and mentioned her recent visit to Africa to do missionary work.



I would like to extend our sincerest appreciation and gratitude to His Grace for making the time from His busy schedule to be with us. God bless Him for all His good work with the people of Africa.

Staff Welcome

At the conclusion of Theotokos Term I mentioned that two of our wonderful staff would not be returning to the College in Advent Term. Over the break the College was blessed with the appointment of two experienced Junior School teachers, Miss Tennant and Mr McLean, and they have made an impressive start. I congratulate them on their appointment and I wish them well in being a part of our blessed community.

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Fr Shenouda Mansour will be on leave for a semester and we wish him well with his studies. Mrs Morgan joins St Mark's College and is a very experienced teacher in the area of languages (French, Arabic and Coptic) and Coptic Orthodox Studies. With the Lord's blessing, hopefully in the future, the College will be able to reintroduce Arabic as an elective course in the Senior School. We welcome Mrs Morgan to the College and we wish her well.

Curriculum Matters

Academic Rollover

The Senior School students have rolled over into the new academic year and lessons have commenced well with the tone of the College being busy and diligent. Students have moved into their new classes and the teachers are looking forward to the lessons this term.

The Junior School students are continuing with their programmes and assessments have begun. I wish everyone well for this term and encourage all our students to do their best.

Senior School Semester Two Reports

Years 10 to 12 reports have been posted to parents and next week Years 7 to 9 reports will be distributed. In the previous edition of the Newsletter I outlined how to interpret the report and I have included it in this edition.

How to interpret your child's report?

Firstly this report only provides feedback to parents on their child's performance for semester two. Years 7 to 11 reports have a semester two examination mark, assessment mark and rank. The outcomes and commitment for each course are listed and indicate the level that the student has attained. Also, on the cover is a pastoral comment, the student's attendance record and participation in major compulsory activities.

Achieving Your Best

In the previous edition of the Newsletter there was an article about students working towards producing their best while at school. Currently a large proportion of parents have a firm belief that tutoring can support their child's learning. In some cases there is some validity to this notion of thought. But this can be turned on its head if we strategise our children's learning by building the foundation skills in each course, as a child progresses from one year to the next. As the foundations are reinforced with each year of learning then the student is well-prepared for the HSC years. Cramming knowledge and skills in Year 12 after years of neglect in building her/his learning, only leads to unwelcome stress and eventual disappointment. This is why parents seek a quick fix and in many cases they resort to tutoring for their child. Students who give their best and take their studies seriously every year will be less prone to requiring tutoring, as their learning becomes natural and their skills and knowledge are continually added to a student's repertoire.

Therefore the HSC needs to be viewed as a marathon, which commences in kindergarten and concludes in Year 12. The College is committed to this approach as a student's academic record over the years provides a valid measure of a student's capacity to do well in a course. This school of thought has been *mentioned regularly to students and parents in newsletters, information sessions and assemblies so they seek to attain the standards set in courses to be eligible to do a course in the following year*

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eg Year 11. This approach will avoid any future disappointment. If students work within these set expectations and follow the advice then their educational outcomes will be positive and their learning will be favourable throughout their years at school.

I encourage all students to work with purpose and apply themselves diligently in all their assessment tasks.

Textbooks

Some students have commenced the new academic year without their textbooks. It's essential for a student to have their textbooks if they are to achieve their best. Please make sure your child has all their textbooks. They can be bought from Endeavour Books. Unfortunately the deadline for orders has passed, discounts will not apply.

*Mr Chahrozian
Curriculum Co-ordinator*

Co-Curricular Activities

HICES Speechcraft Forum

On Wednesday 9th October, a group of students from Years 8 to 12 were invited to Macarthur Anglican School to partake in the annual HICES Speechcraft Forum. HICES or the Heads of Independent Co-Educational Schools Public Speaking Competition involves several schools including Broughton Anglican, Macarthur Anglican and Oxley College. The day included interacting with students from other HICES schools and creating impromptu speeches in groups based upon three topics: Heroes, Eating Disorders and Global Warming. These speeches were then presented to a group of students and then the winners represented that group to the whole forum.

Our students found this an invaluable opportunity to build relationships with others from the HICES schools and to also engage in discussion that saw them extend their speaking skills. The day turned out to be a very informative and enjoyable first day of term and as a whole, they were able to build upon their public speaking skills, which will help them all not only in their English classes, but in any future public speaking competitions.

Joshua Henein (12SA)

Study Skills Day for Year 11

Term 3 concluded for Year 11 with a series of study skills seminars. The College invited an experienced team from Elevate Education to teach students how to study more effectively. The advice provided by Elevate Education is based on research that has been done into the common study habits of high-achieving students from past HSC cohorts.

Our students learned some handy hints on how to make better notes and how to make sure they have learnt all the content for an exam. They were introduced to some techniques on managing their time in a healthy way to maximise their learning, without giving up everything for study. They also learned some tools for improving how they remember what they are studying.

The day finished with some pointers from Dr Tham about looking after one's health, looking after one's relationships and learning in a team, in order to achieve a good outcome by the end of Year 12.

All students who attended found the series of study skills seminars to be of great benefit. A student commented that he now felt more confident about entering Year 12.

Year 11 Camp

This camp saw the Year 11 students travel to the peaceful surrounds of The Tops Conference Centre, situated on an escarpment that overlooks natural bushland south of the Royal National Park. In this picturesque setting, students were able to unwind after a hectic term at school. It was an important time for students to get away from the stress and worry of study, and to relax in each other's company.



The camp provided a number of interesting activities for students to do together. The first, known as "Survivor", put students in two competing tribes and asked them to complete a variety of challenges that involved team strategy and problem-solving. There was the "Vertical Cluster", which asked students to climb to a height of 10 metres. A number of different methods were offered, including knotted ropes, rope ladders, hanging tyres and horizontal planks. Few could forget the "Giant Swing". From a height of 18 metres, students pulled the release and swung to the edge of the escarpment, which gave them the thrill of flying over the cliff. The fourth activity at camp was for the racing enthusiasts. In pedal-powered go-carts, students raced around a track that included hair-pin turns, a downhill straight and a pit lane for drivers to be changed.



The range of activities allowed students of all abilities to participate. It also allowed students to build up confidence and push themselves through emotional barriers. One student proudly remarked that he did all the activities at this camp, sharing that he had not attempted activities at previous camps.

Perhaps this best captures the theme of Year 11 Camp, which was "Resilience". As students look forward to their final and most challenging year of high school, it is important to build resilience into their character. Resilience is the ability to bounce back after facing difficulty. What helps to build resilience is the confidence that you have bounced back from, and overcome past challenges.

The evening presentation, given by Father George Nakhil, focused on resilience. After a brief talk, he showed students a video about a Christian man born with no arms or legs, who had learned to overcome these challenges. His story, which was firmly based on a hope in Christ, was an encouragement to all to meet the challenges they face in life one step at a time without giving up.



We hope all students will remember this camp as they embark on their Year 12 journey.

Sport

2013 Sports Award Presentation Ceremony

On Monday the 16th of September, St Mark's celebrated the fine sporting achievements of the students at the College's 2nd Sports Awards Presentation Evening. This year the presentation was formal, with a canapé menu being served while parents and students were seated.



Sports Captains Natalie Crofts & Stephen Spirou addressing the audience



With the Sport and Arts Centre at capacity, the student award winners were recognised for their fine display of sportsmanship and success throughout the year, with some new award categories being added to the ceremony, including a formal scarf presentation to all first grade teams. This was capped off with an inspiring speech from Futsalroo representative Mark Symmington, and some quality performances from the Year 12 HSC music students and percussion group and the evening was definitely a memorable one.

Our major award winners were as follows:

Junior School Sport Persons of the Year



Angela Tawadrous and Mina Grace

Senior School Sports Persons of the Year



Helina Kila and Stephen Spirou

St Anthony Trophy



Awarded to Stephen Spirou as the College's overall sports person of the Year.

Congratulations to all the major award recipients for 2013.

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SWISSA Success Theotokos Term

Special congratulations to all students who competed in the SWISSA competition last term. Out of 5 teams in the competition, 4 of our teams managed to qualify for the finals, with the First XI Girls' Football progressing to the grand final and were only narrowly defeated 2 goals to 1 by the highly favoured All Saints' Grammar School.



SWISSA Senior Girls' Football XI Grand Finalists

This term will see our teams compete in the summer volleyball competition. Good luck to all students involved.

Junior School AFL Development

At the end of last term, our Junior School students took part in an AFL Development Program run by the GWS giants. The students were given the opportunity to participate in a wide range of AFL drills, skills and games, with the overall purpose of increasing the exposure of Australian Rules Football to our students.



Overall the students enjoyed the experience. Many of our students have elected to pursue the AFL program, through a program run by GWS every Monday afternoon at Australis Park. This will hopefully allow our students to continually and consistently develop and refine their skills within the sport of 'Aussie Rules Football'.

Junior School News

Advent Term

Welcome back and I hope all the children enjoyed the holiday break. Their happy smiling faces and enthusiasm for learning has been infectious. I wish everyone well for this busy term.

Mathematics and English

This term in Stage 3, the College has introduced enrichment Mathematics and English writing. Mr Micheal, Mrs Williams and Miss Petrakis will be undertaking this programme. This adds to the already diverse curriculum that is being offered in the Junior School. We are a unique school that is offering far more than any traditional public or catholic school, by providing a curriculum full of interest and learning.

Swim Programme

The swim programme will continue this term every Friday. So far the children have been keen to attend the sessions and their swimming strokes have improved with every lesson.

CAREERS

Year 10 Work Experience 8th – 11th October

The Year 10 Work Experience Program was again a success this year. We had a good range of employment positions in hospitals, medical practices, dentistry, vet, pharmacy, primary schools, childcare centres and businesses such as real estates, accounting, architecture, hairdressing and plumbing. The feedback which I received from students and employers has been quite pleasing. Most students realise the benefit of this program and have reported back with positive comments. I'm currently in the process of collecting Employers' Evaluation Reports. Some students were offered work over the summer holidays, which indicates the calibre of our students in the eyes of prospective employers.

For students who put a lot of thought and effort into finding Work Experience placement in a career that they are aspiring to reach, this program has been really worthwhile. However, for others who left finding work till late, this week did not serve its purpose fully. Once students leave school, these opportunities will not be available to them again. I urge parents to encourage their children to benefit from every opportunity that opens to them.

*Mrs S. Gerges
Careers Adviser*

Parents and Friends' News **Annual General Meeting** **Tuesday 5th November, 7:00pm**

Our next Parents and Friends' Meeting in November will be the Annual General Meeting. I ask parents to come along on this evening and join us. A great deal of planning will take place for the coming year. One of our major events is our Autumn Fair held in May and this will be our main fundraiser for our children. As you are aware, the new building is progressing well and we will need to furnish it.

Looking forward to seeing you at our next meeting and please keep our wonderful College Community in your prayers.

*God bless,
P&F President
Mr Rouchdi*