



ST MARIA GORETTI'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL
PARENTS & FRIENDS ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

(Presented by Simone Northcott, President)

Diversity can be our greatest strength but also our weakness. Parents have vastly diverse priorities and expectations surrounding their lives, their work, their children, their children's education and their children's social-emotional development.

For our P&F, this means recognising that only a subset of the parents at this school have both the inclination and the time to participate in the various activities we conduct.

For us to succeed in encouraging parents to participate in improving their children's school life, we need to offer a diverse variety of opportunities, to listen to parents, and accept that the process is often just as important as the outcome.

Diversity amongst our Association membership must be developed and celebrated.

Thankyou Staff

Continuing with the concept of diversity, while we can't speak for every parent, the vast majority of us place the highest importance upon you the staff of our school as we entrust you with the education of our children, and for a significant part of the day we also entrust you with their welfare.

We can't thank you enough for shouldering this enormous burden of shaping the community of tomorrow.

We'd like also to express our thanks to Keith and Martin for both their guidance and their support for our P&F throughout the year.

Administrative Matters

There's a few administrative matters we need to report on.

In relation to our taxation status, when I became President three years ago, we'd been advised to look at registering as a charity. In order to do this we needed to rectify our ABN, as we'd been incorrectly registered as an incorporated association. Due to the passage of time and the fluid nature of P&Fs, the process of addressing this has been mired in red tape. We are now correctly registered as an unincorporated association, but are still trying to get our ABN details updated.

We still don't have any clarity on our tax status either. I'm regularly liaising with the Parents and Friends Federation of WA, of which I'm a council member, to obtain clear advice on why we need to register as a charity rather than remaining as a self-assessing not-for-profit. It's proving difficult to obtain satisfactory advice but work continues.

It would appear we're moving into the 21st century. For accountability reasons it has been difficult for us to offer any facilities for the transfer of money other than cash or cheque. Our treasurer Alison has very nearly completed the process for us to view our main bank account statement online, rather than just receiving a paper copy every six months. This will allow us to offer to parents the ability to donate (for things such as the readathon) via bank transfer rather than cash next year if they prefer.

So, we opened the year with a very healthy \$47,092.72 in the bank. \$11,636.56 of this was in our term deposit, \$4,245.65 in our school banking commissions account, and \$31,210.51 in our main society account.

The school had budgeted a donation from the P&F of \$25,000 this year towards

- 1) ICT including ipads and surface pros
- 2) Literacy and maths resources
- 3) Play resources subject to building space
- 4) Academic extension resources.

Given our opening bank balance, fundraising was not a high priority this year.

Term 1

We kicked off first term with another fantastic Open Air Movie Night to take advantage of the school oval before we lost it. We screened the great Australian movie Paper Planes on 18 March, offering a sausage sizzle and running a paper-plane contest. We charged a small amount for the movie to offset the cost and this enormously successful community builder eventually cost us \$279.58.

We followed this with a 5 cent contest, where the class who brought in the most five cent pieces won an Easter Egg Hunt. We collected 61 kilograms of 5 cent pieces totalling \$1,062.40, and PPM had a wonderful time hunting for Easter eggs under our mulberry tree.

We also conducted a cake stall in first term, which has been very popular with parents and kids in the past. We were a lot more vigilant in advertising 'no nuts' which had the desired effect. We managed to sell all the cakes this year, we probably underpriced it a bit, but raised another \$710.35 and the kids' eyes popped out of their heads at morning recess.

Finally we'd like to recognise in first term the start of a series of important events not organised by the P&F, being the introduction of a class paraliturgy followed by an invitation from students for parents to join staff in the school staff room afterwards for morning tea. This overture from the school has been enthusiastically received by the parents. We very warmly welcome the opportunity to reconnect parents with our school, and feel that it has generated a significant shift in parent involvement.

Term 2

Was an intense term negotiating a few emotive issues. The class reps identified an issue with disillusioned departing parents remaining on class-based facebook pages and generating negativity at class-based social events; and we successfully developed a policy governing this and other facebook privacy protection issues for the P&F.

We conducted the Entertainment Books sales again this year, primarily during this second term. Combined with the kidzabuzz books, this raised another \$837 for our P&F.

We conducted our regular Mother's Day stall, supplementing the massive surplus of last year with a few more gifts and were left with a very modest surplus at the end. We sold 365 gifts and made \$1,427.29. We should emphasise the intention of the stall is to provide a facility for the children not to raise money, and would note that last year we made a loss on this item due to significant over-ordering, so the figure this year is artificially inflated. We again discussed limiting gifts, but again we chose not to this year.

We conducted a Bingo Night this year in place of the Quiz Night we've held in previous years. If you look at dollars, the \$2,908.97 we raised this year looks pretty dismal compared to the \$17k raised last year. The attendance was down from last year as well with 100 parents, friends and school staff attending. However the event went off. We received outstanding feedback and really cemented a sense of community within the school. It's clear if we want it to be a serious fundraiser though, that there needs to be a committee dedicated to this project.

We bid a sad farewell to Father Nelson this term also, and were pleased to bring in a morning tea as our contribution to the event to see him off.

Finally, term 2 finished with a movie night at Reading Cinema watching Ice Age 5. We learnt a great deal and will need to have some clear understandings in place with Reading if we do this event again. The families had a wonderful time once the soft drink glitch was fixed and we completely sold out the cinema.

Term 3

We kicked off term three with a wonderful initiative - the children were all invited to donate specific items to fill comfort bags for Constable Care. These were essentially overnight bags for children who for any number of tragic reasons were unable to return home that night. Once the items were collected we spent a lunchtime packing the bags with any children who were interested to join in. There were some really beautiful conversations with the children about why they were doing this and Constable Care was extremely grateful for both the completed bags and the leftover items. If we do this again we will need to allow a longer time to collect items and invite a second collection to supplement missing items. This initiative cost us \$98.11 but was well worth the experience for the kids.

This term the school celebrated Book Week with a variety of events including a day where the children were encouraged to dress to the theme "Australia: Story Country". We sincerely thank the school for allowing the children to loudly dress as their favourite characters in this theme.

We held our regular Father's day stall, we ran out of items which always means a frantic dash and wrap overnight. We sold 341 gifts and made \$585.49, which covered our regular Father's day breakfast costing \$244.19.

We again managed to book the weekend immediately following Father's day for our Bunnings Sausage Sizzle and I think we set a new record at Bunnings Belmont raising \$1,658.49. The event is also very good for building community between the parents involved.

We concluded the term by issuing forms for our Readathon.

Term 4

Early in term four we conducted a Read-a-thon. We did this because last year we introduced an Obstacle-a-thon as a great way for the children to participate in fundraising activities for their school. It was very successful but unfortunately there simply wasn't enough space to conduct it this year so we offered a Read-a-thon. While the participation level was a little lower than hoped, by less than half the children in the school, the funds raised of \$4,951.30 were still excellent. A number of children won individual prizes in a raffle of donated items, and the two classes which collectively raised the most being years PPM and 2G have won a gymbus incursion which they are really looking forward to.

We enjoyed participating in our school's Open Day celebration of our 60th anniversary and the official opening of stage 11 this term. A number of parents helped prepare and serve the morning tea and barbeque lunch at the event which was an outstanding showcase by the staff and students of our school.

Our final event for the year was our school disco which was held on school grounds for the first time in several years. The year six students again selected the theme which was Masquerade this year, and we were pleased to secure an excellent DJ. Instead of another sausage sizzle we offered a couple of food trucks on the basketball court. While there's things we will do differently next year, the disco was very well attended and very well received. We were fortunate to secure a community development grant from Belmont City Council for \$500 which offset the vast bulk of the cost. After selling cans left over from the Bunnings sausage sizzle, the disco will cost us \$69.50. At this time, we have not yet received the Council grant so the cost is currently recorded as more than \$500.

So we close the year with a total bank balance, including the term deposit, of \$65,109.78. No donation was sought, nor made, to the school this year towards the wishlist items, and these were not ultimately purchased by the school. At our last meeting a donation of \$10,000 was authorised towards the purchase of ICT resources upon receipt of an invoice from the school.

We note the school has budgeted to receive \$25,000 from the P&F again next year and look forward to discussing with the school in the new year the areas in which it will be spent. We will need to give careful consideration to ensuring this substantial pool of money is thoughtfully directed toward the benefit of the children whose families worked so hard to accumulate it.

Next Year

With a change of leadership next year you can look forward to fresh ideas and enthusiasm to continue to grow our P&F. A key challenge for us will be diversifying responsibility. This is something we've done very well in some respects - for example Julia Watson does a sterling job of co-ordinating our school banking, Peta Casale the sale of entertainment books, Alison Lynton the Bunnings sausage sizzle, and there's an army of parents who reliably support our school canteen without any involvement from the P&F executive. Last year we had an excellent committee running our highly successful quiz night, and if we are to have a major parent event next year this will need to happen again. Events such as the obstacle-a-thon and disco can also be run independently of the executive.

We hope to offer another cyber-safety presentation next year, and to build our relationships with neighbouring schools. Within the school, we're going to pull back on our focus of having two class representatives in each class, and instead focus on offering better support for the representatives who want to step forward. This will include providing better facilities for contacting parents via email, maintaining effective classroom facebook pages, and one-to-one support for representatives where appropriate. We are very interested in the development of the SEQTA Engage

software with its huge potential for improved communication between the school and parents, and look forward to finding opportunities to further engage parents in our children's education.

I'm very excited to be handing over the presidency to Karen. She has some incredible ideas and enthusiasm, and will lead our P&F to the next level. Having said that, she currently juggles a demanding career, a chronic health condition and three kids including the busiest toddler we've ever seen. **For our P&F to continue to succeed in 2017, it will be essential for all of us to jump in and take on a role, and so we encourage all parents to consider over the school break what you will offer to do when we come back next year.**

We're grateful to Simone Roney for taking the plunge along with Alison and I to support Karen in leading our wonderful parent organisation next year, and we sincerely thank Kirsty for taking the journey with us over the past three years.