

NEWSLETTER

No. 1 Date 20/02/2015 Week 4 Term 1

Dear St Thomas Aquinas Families,

It is hard to believe that our school year is already 4 weeks old. So much has happened in that short time. The students are now settled into their class routines and as I visit classrooms I get a real sense of purpose and engagement in learning taking place.

As a school community we strive daily to create a place of nurture, learning and faith for our students. Our school motto, *Love One Another* bestowed by Christ as His new commandment challenges us all to be the best we can be in His name

- act like Christ
- think like Him &
- love like Him.

The new school year presents us with great possibilities for renewal and growth as well as reinforcing, encouraging and modeling the need for everyone to make the most of their opportunities whilst at school.

Nurturing and teaching our children also means attending to the interpersonal aspects of holistic learning – good manners, courtesy and personal pride and grooming. As educators and families working together we have a shared purpose in supporting and encouraging these ideals.

The great Italian artist and sculptor Michelangelo once said, "The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it."

Therefore for the sake of our students and our world we need them and ourselves to aim high.

Until next time,

Rosato

Sergio Rosato
Principal

New Electronic Communication Sign

Visitors to the school will now notice that we have a beautiful new solar powered electronic sign located on College Drive alongside one for St Columba's College. The new sign can be remotely updated making it a wonderful way of communicating with the local community. The sign is powered by a solar panel making it possible to be used at any time regardless of power supply, which will be most useful in the event of an emergency event such as bushfires. The sign was made possible by our State and Local governments through their bushfire recovery grants.



Opening School Mass 2015

On Thursday we came together as a faith community to celebrate the beginning of the school year. The theme for the Mass this year was 'New Beginnings'. The Mass was a beautiful and uplifting celebration marking the start of our journey as a Catholic school community.

Our students participated whole-heartedly in the Eucharist – responding and singing with reverence and enthusiasm. Our gratitude to Father Paul Slyney for his inspiring and uplifting words and his ongoing generosity. Thank you also to our Religious Education Coordinator, Joanne Toohey, for coordinating the Mass, to Viv Llewellyn for his gift of music and also to the many families who were able to attend and make the Mass such a special occasion.

Sincere Condolences to the Dyer Family

On behalf of the St Thomas Aquinas School community we wish to convey our sincere condolences to the Dyer Family – Moya, Russell and Isabel on the recent passing of their beloved son Matthew. Matthew graduated from Year 12 at St Columba's College in 2014 and prior to this was a student at St Thomas' from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Moya and her family's contribution to our school community has been substantial including coordinating our annual fete and walkathons for a number of years.

Matthew's Requiem Mass last week was an incredible reflection of the love and esteem our extended community feels towards the Dyer family.

I know that you will hold Matthew, his family and friends in your prayers.

love one another



ST THOMAS AQUINAS
NEWS

a: 168 Hawkesbury Rd
Springwood 2777
p: 02 4754 2554
f: 02 4754 3562
w: www.staspringwood.
catholic.edu.au

Parish Priest:
Father Paul Slyney
p: 02 4754 1052

Newly Purchased Technology

The school has recently purchased a number of ICT resources to be used to enhance learning and teaching through the school. The total cost of this purchase was approximately \$120,000.

The ICT resources purchased include the following:

- 126 iPads
- 32 MacBooks (adding to our bank)
- 1 large flat screen monitor & Apple TV for the Kindergarten learning centre
- 2 - 16 bay computer trolleys
- iPad covers & adapters

Parent Communication App – Skoolbag

The school will shortly start utilising the Skoolbag mobile app to assist communication with families. This app works through smartphones and smart devices such as iPads and android tablets.

We are asking parents to install the app in readiness for activation by the beginning of March. To install it, just search for our school name "St Thomas Aquinas Springwood" in either the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

Anti-Bullying Focus

This term each class will focus on the theme of Anti-Bullying as part of their class Personal Development Program. Specifically this focus will be on the areas of:

- What bullying is
- What it isn't
- What is a bystander?
- How to be an active bystander.
- What is friendship?
- What it means to be a Christ-centred friend
- How resilience and inner strength can be built

The lessons will coincide with a school focus on March 20 – The National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence. More information about this school initiative will be contained in subsequent newsletters and will be promoted in our weekly assemblies.

Reading Recovery

This year our school will have a second teacher, Joanne Toohey who will be training in the Reading Recovery intervention program during the year. Keryne Rosato received training during 2014. Reading Recovery is designed as an intensive, intervention program to assist specifically identified vulnerable students in the Early Years with reading. Tuition for Reading Recovery teachers is provided by the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta.

Mathematics

Our school currently has 2 lead teachers of Mathematics, Kate Mackenzie & Elizabeth Bamford, who have been trained through the CEDP Extending Mathematical Understanding Program. As well as these lead teachers the school also has a trained Specialist Intervention Teacher, Kathryn Cefai. Mrs Cefai's role is to assist teachers with strategies for numeracy learning, diagnostic testing of students and to employ an intensive numeracy intervention program with specially identified vulnerable students in Year 1 as well as other grades.

Music, Italian & Physical Education

These important curricula & co curricula programs have recommenced through the teaching of Leigha Wills (Music), Jenni Wurf (Italian) & Robert Mullen (PE). Music and Italian lessons are taught in our new demountable building adjacent to the Pastoral Centre. We are grateful to the CEDP for providing us with this brand new building as all our other learning spaces are now fully utilised. We are also fortunate that our covered outdoor area is used extensively for PE lessons during the year.

Drama Literacy

This program will continue this year and is facilitated by a trained actor, Lucinda Armour. The drama/literacy program will focus for the first half of the year on Year 3 and then incorporate another grade group later in the year. The intent of this program is to connect the English and Drama curriculum using texts as stimulus. This strategy is also used in other grades facilitated by classroom teachers. At the same time, the Drama/Literacy program provides teachers with "in house" professional development in the use of drama strategies. Our students and teachers have benefitted from this program for a number of years.

Junior & Senior School Choirs

Both school choirs have recommenced this term under the supervision of Viv Llewellyn. The Junior Choir is for students in Grades 2 & 3, the Senior Choir for students in Grades 4-6. It is encouraging to see many new students commit to these groups and enjoy the rewards of choral singing. The Senior Choir are part of the Diocesan *Captive* Combined Choir and will rehearse next Thursday 26 February.

Personal Planning Meetings

Over the next few weeks Mrs Orford will be conducting Personal Planning Meetings for a few selected students. If you have received a letter from the school regarding your child's Personal Planning Meeting could you please remember to book an appointment online for your meeting as soon as possible. Thank you. **Deborah Orford**

Student Awards

Congratulations to the following students, who received Merit Awards at this week's School Assembly. Well done on your efforts everyone – keep up the good work!



Luke Arnold	Carmen Fiala	Veronica Lloyd-Williams	Benjamin Prior
Annalise Blattman	Alex Freer	Seth Loughton	Joshua Pyle
Asher Bogg	William Ghata	Addison Machon	William Richardson
Nathan Broadhead	Cooper Golby	Ivan Mayorchak	Noah Samoluk
Thomas Brosnan	Jakub Grus	Estelle McLellan	Anastasia Sawyer
Anabel Caristo	Zofia Hammond	Lincoln McLoughlin	Maya Shore
Antoinette Caristo	Harry Hicks	Brendan McMaster	Isabel Sia-Stone
Imogen Carvasiglia	Kyle Hodges	Rose Miall	Bronte Tracey
Aden Cullinane	Payten Holmes	Freya Mylne	Nathan Treble
Ella Danks	Matthew Hurley	Keyuri Naidoo	Ellie Watson
Addison Down	Bridie Knibbs	Annie Oliver	Mackenzie Williams
Summer Faulkner	James Lin-Green	Gigi Orobello	Daniel Woods



Swimming Carnival 2015

Our annual swimming carnival took place earlier this month for Grades 3-6. The day ran smoothly and was well attended by families. The students, as always, participated with enthusiasm and were cooperative and encouraging of their mates. Our sincere thanks to the many families who volunteered to assist in various ways on the day and to the organising group of teachers and support staff led by James Costigan and Robert Mullen.

The presentation of ribbons, medals and trophies for highly-accomplished swimmers was held at our school assembly on Monday. Our school swimming champions for 2015 are as follows:

	Champion	Runner Up
Senior Boys:	Matthew Hill	Sebastian Jamnicky
11 Yrs Boys:	Oliver Alves-Jones	Connor Harvey
Junior Boys:	Texas Down	Riley Barglik
Senior Girls:	Ellie Watson	Isabella Valle
11 Yrs Girls:	Olivia De La Harpe	Alyssa Pospischil
Junior Girls:	Molly Jones	Abbey Gomez

These students are part of a group of approximately 35 St Thomas Aquinas students who will compete at the Zone Swimming Carnival next Tuesday 24 February at Glenbrook Pool. Congratulations and well done to you all and best wishes at Zone.



Student Voice – What makes a Good Teacher/Learner?

On the first day of school this year each class teacher in every class asked their students to respond in writing and/or drawing to the question – What makes a good teacher? On the second day the students were asked to do the same thing focusing on the question, What makes a good learner?

The responses given by the students were enlightening and provided great insight for teachers about how to engage students in their learning. Teachers were asked to bring their class responses and share these with colleagues at a subsequent staff meeting. The responses included as an insert to this newsletter are some of the common themes that emerged across the school to the first question.

Meet the Teacher Meetings

These meetings took place this week and provided a valuable opportunity for families to meet with teachers in order to get to know each child as an individual learner. The focus of this initial meeting was *sharing* and *listening*. For parents and families it provided an opportunity to share what you know about your child – academically, socially & emotionally. The insights gained enable us collectively to help your child to achieve their potential.

This year, all meetings from Kindergarten through to Year 6 used the same guiding questions, which were sent out to families prior to the meeting as a framework for discussion. We thank all for your support of this process.

Lorin Nicholson Visits STA

Last week we were privileged to host one of Australia's pre-eminent motivational speakers, Lorin Nicolson. Amazingly, Lorin and his younger brother were the first blind persons to ride over 4000 kilometres across Australia from Perth to Sydney. Lorin spoke to all students in Grades 4-6 sharing his amazing gift of music and his inspirational life story and touching on the themes of resilience, respect and anti-bullying. Copies of the book that Lorin wrote about one of his bike rides are in the school library.

Book Club

All orders for the first Issue of Scholastic Book Club for 2015 **must be placed by next Monday 23**

February. Orders after the due date WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED so please make sure you get them in on time.

Please check that order forms are filled out correctly including both the child's name and class. Credit card payments must be made online first and the receipt number needs to be recorded on the order form.



love one another

Important Reminders Re Parking and School Access

- Vehicles should only be parked in approved places. Parents are reminded that the No Standing/No Parking signs, Staff Only and Reserved Parking Signs are positioned for **significant safety reasons**.
- As signage clearly indicates - the large double gate at the entrance of the school bus bay is **not a pedestrian access point**.
- Parents and visitors are reminded of the strict expectations to sign-in at the office before entering the school.
- ALL visitors are expected to be wearing a VISITORS badge regardless of the length of time they intend being on site.

Your attention to these matters is much appreciated.

FREE Movie Nights in February – TONIGHT 20 FEBRUARY 2015 at 6pm

Catholic Care and **St Thomas Aquinas Parish** will be hosting 2 FREE family movie nights in February at **St Thomas Aquinas School Hall**, 168 Hawkesbury Road, Springwood. **FRIDAY 20 FEBRUARY: 6.00pm** – Family animated movie (G); **8.00pm** – Older kids and teens movie (PG). **FRIDAY 27 FEBRUARY: 6.00PM** - Family animated movie (G); **8.00pm** – Older kids and teens movie (PG). Due to licensing restrictions titles are withheld. To find out the movies being shown, contact Celia on 0499 077 511. Free popcorn and face painting also available. Bring along comfy rugs, pillows and picnic.

For all the community to enjoy!

Child Protection for Volunteers

All volunteers wishing to assist in any capacity at school e.g. groups, excursions, reading tutors etc are required to complete the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta online module via the following link: <http://ceo-web.parra.catholic.edu.au/asp/volunteerscpmodule/index.asp>

DIARY DATES

2015 TERM 1 Week 5	Monday 23 February	12.30pm Assembly 3.40pm Leadership Meeting
	24	Nepean Zone Swimming Carnival at Glenbrook Pool – selected students 3.40pm Staff Meeting
	25	8.30am Staff Briefing 9.20am Parish Mass – Year 3 attending
	26	8.30am Staff Prayer <i>Captivate</i> Choir Rehearsal – Senior Choir
	27	Diocesan Swimming Carnival – selected students
Week 6	Monday 2 March	12.30pm Assembly – SRC Induction 3.40pm Leadership Meeting
	3	3.40pm Staff Meeting
	4	8.30am Staff Briefing 9.20am Parish Mass – Years 4 & 5 attending
	5	8.30am Staff Prayer
	6	

COMMUNITY NEWS

Stepping Beyond: Support For Those Separated or Divorced: CCSS Solo Parent Services Monthly Support Group, "Stepping Beyond" will be held again on the last Tuesday of the month for those who are separated or divorced. Venue: CCSS centre 51-59 Allawah St, Blacktown. Date: Tuesday 24 February. Time: 7.30 – 9.30. Cost: \$5.00. Registration: Eileen or Rita Ph. 99330205 or soloparentservices@ccss.org.au.

Blue Mountains Youth Choir, Sponsored by Academy Singers: A choir for boys and girls age 9 to 16 years, meeting three times a year for specific projects. Children from all Blue Mountains schools welcome! Tuition by qualified and experienced teachers and leaders in the field of choral and musical training for children. Rehearsals in the Mid-Mountains. Occasional special performances may be in other areas. 'Let it Go!' Songs from the Movies. Musical Director – Sarah Mann. February / March 2015. Registration essential. Phone: Marianne 0418 602 690 or email bmyc@academysingers.com.au Further information: www.academysingers.com.au Academy Singers Inc. is a registered Non-profit Association.

Uniting Kids Care Preschool Program for 2-5 year olds: Uniting Kids Care is a not-for-profit long-day care centre with a caring Christian environment, a Preschool Education Program based on the Early Years and Learning Framework. Open 7.00am to 6.00pm. Individual portfolios; no payment for Public Holidays; Child Care Benefit and Rebate available. **Contact us:** Director: Amy, Admin: Cathy, 4 Lewin Street, Springwood by Phone: 4751 9314 or visit the website: www.ukcspringwood.unitingchurch.org.au

Sent Home Recently:

- Rescheduled Opening School Mass note (*blue*)
- School Band note for Years 4, 5 & 6 (*gold*)
- Meet the Teacher Booking Note
- Information Notes to KB, KL & KM (*salmon, lilac & blue*)
- Consent Forms re Raffle Tickets & Use of Student's Image/Work
- *Captivate* Choir Note – selected students (*orange & white*)
- Head lice Notes to Years 2 & 3 - today (*salmon*)



Scan with your smartphone or tablet for more information.
www.staspringwood.catholic.edu.au

love one another