FROM THE PRINCIPAL
Last Saturday’s Term 1 Working Bee was an outstanding success, with a generous number of parents and friends of the school assisting to enhance the school environment. Very pleasingly, the friendship and camaraderie on the day was palpable. I sincerely thank all those who attended, particularly P&F President, Angela Houghton, and our school grounds/maintenance man, Scott Edwards, for their organisation and coordination of the event. Please claim the mornings of May 10, July 19 and October 11 for the remaining 2014 Working Bees.

Today’s swimming carnival for students in Year 2 to 7 was another successful school event with all its colour, excitement and healthy competition. It was wonderful to see so many parents, relatives and friends of the school at the pool to cheer on the students. My thanks to staff for the work undertaken to ensure the success of the day, particularly Year 6 teacher, Josh O’Keeffe, for his organisational leadership. Special thanks to the Year 6 and 7 leaders who so capably organised and led the inspirational House war cries during the carnival. A reminder that, post our carnival, swimming lessons are on the horizon for students in Year 2 to 7, with the Year 2 to 4 students commencing next week (see related letter that should now have arrived home).

Physical violence has no place in our society, and especially not at St Joseph’s Tobruk Memorial School, for myriad reasons. Hence, it is a particular behaviour that I will be very firm on with students. I implore parents to see the significant learning opportunity that presents itself for children who engage in such behaviour towards another. Support from the home front will be requested by Mr Lovegrove or myself if discipline/consequence related phone calls to parents of offenders are necessary.

I invite you to view the left column of this front page of the newsletter so as to be aware of notable upcoming events. Strong school community attendance is desired for Father Joseph’s installation by Archbishop Coleridge as our new parish priest on Saturday, the school’s first P&F forum and meeting for the year on Tuesday, the Parent Information Night on Wednesday, and the first Tuckshop Day for 2014 on the Friday.

A reminder that the Parent Information Night will commence at 6.30pm in the hall with an address by myself and Fr Joseph. Following this, parents will be invited to move to classrooms for further input from classroom teachers, who will run three 20 minute repeat information sessions from 6.45pm. A bell will sound at the end of each 20 minutes and 5 minutes will be allowed for parents with more than one child at the school to move to the next classroom and teacher presentation. Parent attendance is strongly encouraged.

Regarding Tuesday’s P&F meeting, it is understood that evening meetings can be most problematic for a number of families, therefore, a P&F forum will be held for the final half hour of the school day on Tuesday (from 2.25pm) in the new Multi-Purpose Room. It is hoped that this forum will allow those parents with evening demands to contribute to prospective P&F meeting agenda items. Please consider this option if relevant to you.
Another important calendar event is the first of the year’s sacramental programs, commencing next Thursday 13 February at 7.00pm in St Patrick’s Church. We pray for God’s blessings to be upon the candidates as they journey towards full initiation into the Catholic Church through this Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation program.

The St Patrick’s After school Care (SPAC) service is highly valued within our school community, and its coordinator, Kirsty Cameron, does a mighty job at caring for St Joseph’s students who attend. An occurrence that often surfaces in schools surrounding such services, is that of students being dropped off at school prior to the commencement of school staff supervision, and not attending the SPAC services, as such. This, unfortunately, creates safety and social justice issues. The safety issue relates to unsupervised students in the school grounds, whilst the social justice issue relates to the fact that early drop-off parents doing the right thing by enrolling their children at the SPAC service, are financially disadvantaged. Please note that school staff supervision commences at 8.20am each school day and that Kirsty’s contact number at SPAC is 3807 1364.

Regarding another safety issue, it has been noted that some parents who are driving into the green fenced area on the Kokoda Street side of the school of a morning for drop off, are not backing into their space and/or exiting to the left via Tobruk Street. Safety in our school environment is everyone’s business and not negotiable.

There are many in our school community and many known to members of our school community who are experiencing significant health challenges and in need of our comforting and healing prayers. Please pray especially for the mothers of David Higgins (Guidance Counsellor) and Helen Dillon (Teacher Aide) who are currently unwell.

Heavenly Father, giver of life and health, comfort your unwell servants who are known to our school community, and give your power of healing to those who minister to their needs.

May the unwell be strengthened in their weakness and have confidence in your loving care.

With Courage, Faith and Love
Stephen Johnson

You may have had a chance to admire the banners placed on the outside of the hall. These great pieces of art each contain symbols and images which tell a story or convey a message. I would like to present the core values of St Joseph’s to you this week. These important messages will be presented to the classes next week.

Our Core Values are derived from our two founding patrons, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and Monsignor Owen Steele. Both these people have had a positive influence not just on our school but on the wider Catholic community. St Mary MacKillop founded the Sisters of St Joseph who were the order of nuns given the responsibility of running our school when it opened just over 60 years ago. She was a leader and teacher in our faith. She wrote wonderful letters filled with prayerful hope and joy even when things were terrible in her own life. These sisters looked after the school founded by the Rats of Tobruk Chaplain, Msgr Steele, who was in charge of the then Beaudesert Parish. He came back from the war to work in his community which stretched from Yeronga to Beaudesert. He formed our parish and its school. He was also responsible for the founding of Boystown for underprivileged boys. Both he and St Mary MacKillop are also patrons of our sports houses.

Please take the time to look at the Core Values of our school and support us as we develop these within your child.

I would suggest that they are useful in promoting a just, prayerful and friendly child. - and who wouldn’t want one of those?

Term 1 school fees and levies will be invoiced to families next week by mail. Please watch for its arrival. Prompt attention to payment is appreciated. Thank you in anticipation.
Welcome back. Art Classes commence this week. Please ensure that students have a suitable art shirt. One of Dad’s old work shirts will do if you haven’t purchased a commercial art smock. We do try very hard not to make too much of a mess but the nature of paint, charcoal and such like does lend itself to it, I’m afraid. So, check that your child has a protective art shirt/smock at school as students do have to sit out of certain activities if they come to art without one. Remember to save items that you think would be helpful in the art room. We are always pleased to receive clean margarine/butter containers with lids. We are at the moment collecting old cutlery so don’t throw any out. Cutlery is good for so many activities especially mark making in clay activities. Items can be left at the office marked for the art room or left at the art room if you have time to drop things off directly.

If you would like to spend time in the art room helping in some way, please let me know. We are always short of hands and the children love to have adults working alongside them. Even if you believe that you are not creative and aren’t comfortable getting involved in art activities specifically there are always materials to be prepared, brushes to be washed etc. Ask anyone who has helped, the art room is a busy place but also is a very therapeutic environment.

Don’t forget GOMA’s ‘Falling Back to Earth’ exhibition currently on view until 11th May. This is a large scale installation and is amazing to view. The centre piece of the exhibition, Heritage 2013, features 99 replicas of animals from around the world, gathered together to drink from a blue lake surrounded by pristine white sand, reminiscent of the lakes of Moreton Bay’s islands. Adults and children alike just love it. A visit to the art gallery is a lot of fun. Queensland Art Gallery and GOMA are especially child friendly!

Picasso said that all children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once the child grows up.

Mary McBride (Visual Art Specialist)
CONVEYANCE ALLOWANCE is a payment from the Department of Main Roads for those who travel more than 3.2 km one way to drive their primary children to school. You can download the application form at www.tmr.qld.gov.au and search conveyance allowance or collect one at the school office.

WORKING BEE: A huge thank you to all those who came along on the weekend to help make our school beautiful. It was awesome to see so many parents, grandparents, children and staff lending a hand and working together. Thank you and well done everyone. Mark the date for our next working bee on Saturday 10 May 8-11am. See you there.

The Sacramental Program for Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation is beginning with a Launch at St Patrick’s Catholic Church on Thursday 13 February 2014 at 7.00pm. Parents and their children who wish to participate are required to attend the Launch. Please be aware that only Baptised children are able to commence the Sacramental Program this year and are 8 years and older. For further information please contact the St Patrick’s Parish Office on 3287 2282.