The Bridge 2022

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Thank you to those who contributed articles and photos to make this edition possible.

If you are interested in submitting content for the next edition please email JohansenA@brigidine.qld.edu.au

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On behalf of the Brigidine College Community, I welcome all to the sacredness of learning with '*Strength and Gentleness*'. We also celebrate and give thanks for the Country upon which we gather. I acknowledge the Turrbal and Yuggera Peoples as custodians of this land and

acknowledge the elders past, present and emerging as we walk in reconciliation with our sisters and brothers.

Our community gives thanks for the legacy bestowed to us by Mother Brigid Foley and the four Sisters from Randwick, New South Wales. The gifts of '*Fortiter et Suavitier*' (Strength and Gentleness) are etched in our ongoing story of Hospitality and Welcome to All.

As the year began with another lockdown and learning online, the College was able to focus on several things. These included:

- New College Strategic Plan 2022 2024
- \cdot New Mission and Vision Statement
- New College Leadership Framework
- · 2022 College Theme: Compassion

Brigidine College Mission Statement An inclusive community of faith and learning that challenges and inspires young women to be active voices of Strength and Gentleness Brigidine College Vision Statement "We are a sustainable presence in the community providing an innovative education for young women in the Brigidine tradition."



From Guest to Presence 'I was a stranger and you made me welcome....' I was a guest and you were my host; a spirituality of guest-hood, of Compassion.

Catholic schools also provide a broad range of life-learning attributes that enrich teachers and students. These include being a collaborator, an effective communicator and a critical thinker. These further offer opportunities to be a creative person with character, core knowledge and a cultural spiritual citizen that allows for a rich worldview.

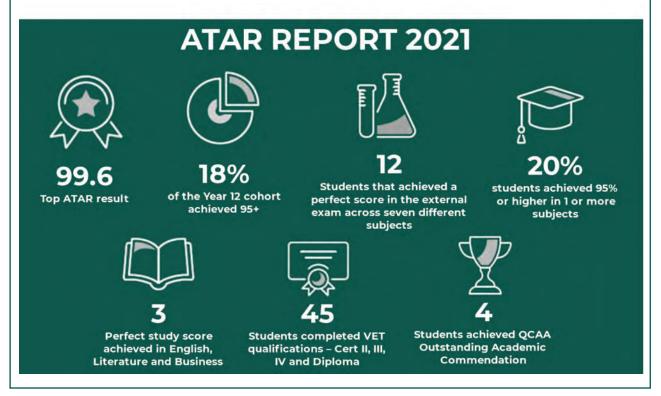
Senior Results 2021

Congratulations to the Year 12s of 2021 who achieved wonderful results, with many students achieving their best results for the year. Their commitment to their studies was outstanding. Through their hard work and with the support of their teachers, they were well-prepared for their external exams.

Across the cohort, many students achieved 100% in their exam results across a range of subjects, with

over 78% of students achieving an A or B result. With over 90% of students also being offered their first or second choice for tertiary studies, the College is immensely proud of their efforts and sharing their success with the College community. All students have achieved their desired pathways through tertiary institutions and traineeships, and we wish them well for the future.

Our 2022 Seniors are currently sitting their external exams and we wish them well.



The Wonder of Life, Faith and Learning opens doors, to see the possibilities and explore the world with Awe, Inspiration and Creativity. In 2021 and 2022, our Year 12 students identified:

- · Wonder Quest/Wellbeing
- · Action and Creativity
- · Care and Celebration

These 'life giving' opportunities enable us to see what the future might hold. Whether it be University, TAFE, work, travel or encountering the roads to be travelled.

Educators in the Catholic tradition engage in wisdom and enlightenment to open students' eyes to another vision of reality and understanding. This could be identified as being open to the responsibility of educators to respond to the 'call', to work for something more, for something better for others and yourselves.

In Mark's gospel – there is an offer to encounter a vision from the other side,

'Let us go across to the other side' (MK4:35) 'Let us cast again on the other side of the boat' (MK1:16) As mentioned at the graduation ceremony last year, be counter-cultural, raise your voice and challenge injustice in all its ways, structures and practices. For the focus on community, rather than the individual, is important for all.

When the offers come, accept the opportunities to be involved, to volunteer, to connect with others and 'be the difference' to yourself and others.

Brigidine is immensely proud of the efforts of every student and thankful that we were able to be a part of your journey. Thank you to the parents and families who engaged with us and placed their trust in the College to support your daughters. Also, thank you to all teachers and support staff who contributed so passionately to outcomes each day.

Brendan Cahill College Principal



Libraries are often recognised as places that facilitate learning, but sometimes their role in the provision of safe and inclusive spaces can be overlooked. It is often for these qualities that libraries are valued by their patrons the most.

As noted by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), libraries of all kinds "...frequently have an explicit mission to serve all members of the community, in particular the vulnerable..." (2018). While book borrowing statistics and database searches are relatively easy to quantify, it is sometimes harder to 'nail down' the other less measurable impacts a welcoming library has on the community it serves. It is important to remember the significant contribution these school library sanctuaries make to the wellbeing of our young people. School libraries should provide a physical space that is flexible, comfortable and non-traditional. When designing a school library's physical space, it is not only the educational needs that should be considered, but the contribution it has on the wellbeing of the people using them. Dr Margaret Merga's 2021 study on school libraries and student wellbeing highlights that; "Library staff created inviting and supportive environments with careful selection of furnishings and decorations, and the school libraries in this study sought to cater for highly diverse purposes, supporting both lively and social activities as well as quietude" (p.15). When asked, as part of this study, what they valued about the physical space of the school library, it was clear that students ... valued choice and had favourite furnishings that related to comfort and security" (Merga, 2021, p.15). Perhaps the most significant takeaway for school leadership and library staff is that, in order for the physical spaces to successfully contribute to the wellbeing of the students using them, then they should be involved in the process of furnishing and designing the spaces.

Another significant factor in ensuring that a school library is providing a welcoming space is the inclusion of student voices in developing the collection. For students to have a sense of ownership over the library, staff must ensure they are responsive to student input. As American school librarian, Ashley Hawkins writes; "Culturally responsive librarianship means listening to student wishes and giving the community what they need." (2022). At Brigidine, we continue to think of ways to listen to student needs and encourage students to exercise choice in developing the collection. We maintain a very well-used book purchasing Suggestion Box, and we take all these suggestions very seriously! We also invite booksellers (such as local Manga specialist, Zombster) to bring in their "wares" for students to peruse. We are also developing two new book clubs, providing another avenue for staff to stay connected with what the students want to be reading.

Finally, it is through ensuring the library's collection is reflective of all different studentlived experiences, containing diverse voices including; ethnically diverse, diverse gender and sexuality, LGBTQI+, that school libraries can continue to guarantee that inclusivity and safety are reinforced. Fiona Stager, owner of independent booksellers Avid Reader and Where the Wild Things Are, defines a diverse library as; "...one that offers all students the opportunity to engage with a variety of texts that are a source of pleasure and learning" (National Education Summit, 2021). This includes texts that reflect all the voices mentioned above, as well as a diversity of formats. We have also recently instituted a new identifying collection sticker for all books with LGBTQI+ representation. If students are looking for something that features LGBTQI+ characters and relationships, this should now be easier and more accessible than before.

The school library should be the heart of the school. It should be a place of learning, but also of safety, security, responsiveness and inclusion. The Brigidine College library team continue to use evidence-based practices to strive to ensure all students feel welcome and seen, in our collective space, and in the books that are housed in it.



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In the News...

by Susie Stavens

2022 has been a busy year so far with lots of exciting events to look back on – and many many more to look forward to.

We've had a number of staff recognised this year for their outstanding work in Education.

In April, Ms Melissa Armsden received *The Educator's* **Rising Star** award in recognition of the ongoing contribution she makes toward student outcomes, not just within her own subject areas of English and the Arts, but across all curriculum areas. Her passion for her teaching is evident at the College on a daily basis.

In May, Ms Renee Dunne was announced as The 2022 *Educator Australia* Most Influential Educator awardee. The impact Renee has on the development of the Excellence Programs at the College, and student attainment has been phenomenal.



In June, *The Australian Educational Leader Publication* published a couple of articles by Assistant to the Principal, Teaching and Learning, Mrs Allison Johansen. The articles focus on the excellent work the College is doing to support both experienced teachers' and early career teachers' professional learning.

In July, Mr Andrew Beiers was presented with the **Spirit of Catholic Education** award for his tireless effort and work within the Brigidine Community and beyond.

"Andrew makes a positive difference in the lives of those with whom he engages. He connects to the heart first... with storytelling that captures the heart. Great leaders want more for their people than they want from their people. Andrew does this as a servant leader himself. The role he plays at the College makes the work of others easier – he equips others while bringing out their best."

In August our Middle School students participated in a study that looked at the development of metacognition and emotion regulation in Middle School students. This study



is part of a broader project in which UQ is trying to better understand the dip that occurs in adolescent academic and social-emotional wellbeing in the early years of high school.

Our Year 7 and 8 students benefitted from presentations by Dr Aisling Mulvihill, who is currently a post-doctoral research Fellow in the School of Psychology, Dr Natasha Matthews, a senior lecturer of Psychology, and PhD students Kali Chidley and Kristy Armitage.





Message from our 2020 Dux

by Piper Frederickson

Firstly, congratulations to you all for the hard work you've put in over your time at Brigidine College. I want to start by acknowledging the immense amount of effort, stress, highs and lows that I'm sure all Year 12 students experience in their final moments of school. I know it's not easy, and I think you all have so much to be proud of and excited for.

I've always been a particularly routine-oriented person. For years, I've been eating the same thing for breakfast, catching the same buses, studying at the same time each day, the same days each week, scheduling my time between work, school, and home with the precision of a neurosurgeon. In high school, this was my path to success. And it worked. I had a set goal, I knew what I had to do to reach it, and that meant knowing exactly what each day had to bring.

High school was secure. It was hard, don't get me wrong, and anxiety-provoking, but it was a world that I knew inside and out. But at some point a routine becomes a coping mechanism. A way to avoid change. And what I found as I embarked on my dual degree of Law and Humanities at UQ, is that it was impossible to avoid change. Whether it's the tumult that is O-week, the way they just throw you directly into Contract Law (which is infamous for it's mid-semester drop-out rate), or even something as simple as changing the public transport routes that I'd taken for years. The start of 2021 was exciting, and new, and fresh – and I was ready for it – but it was also overwhelming in a way that only happens a few times in your life. Suddenly, I was in a degree full of like-minded people who seemed to know everything already and have a full life-plan and I could trick myself into thinking that I was the only one who had no idea what I was doing. Spoiler alert: no one knows what they're doing at the start of any degree.

Once I actually talked to, and got to know, the people I had just made bold assumptions about, I became friends with people who have all sorts of stories, and plans, and interests. As resistant as I might have been to change, my world was opening up.

And the unexpected kept piling up, too. I realised that an academic goal is all well and good, but if that's all I did with my life, then I would never really figure myself out. For the first time, my goal for the year wasn't just a number on a report, but also independence – financial and otherwise, and to engage in skills I'd never exercised before.

What started as just the search for a casual job landed me at the most tight-knit, interesting and

engaging retail company I could imagine, where my love for learning culminated not in academic success, but in helping people set up for a new puppy, or a fishtank. It feels bizarre that a space so outside of my comfort zone could feel just as much like I belonged there.

What I'm trying to say is my life now is so much fuller than it was in high school. Do I have a 10 year life plan? No. But am I ok with that? Yes. Because now that I've engaged with the unexpected, I'm confident that I have what it takes to figure out the place that I want to get to.

In your first year outside of high school, whatever it brings for you, make your life full. Allow yourself space to figure yourself out a bit. You can let go of some of that pressure you put on yourself last year, and move your way through adult life in the way that feels right for you. Celebrate the small victories just as enthusiastically as the big ones.

Sometimes, a routine is made to be broken.



Why wait?

From 2024, she can join us in Year 5 or 6!

www.brigidine.qld.edu.au





Lessons from our Year 7s

Maxie McFadyen – Learning in Elective Subjects

In the transition to high school, I was excited about lots of things (especially the Curragh Café), but the ability to participate in the elective subjects caught my eye. At my primary school, we were only given the opportunity to take part in the core subjects, so coming to Brigidine and participating in the elective subjects was an exciting new journey. Learning in the elective subjects has allowed me to discover more about myself, my peers, and the College itself, and the teachers have taught me new, life skills that I didn't have the opportunity to learn in primary school.

Food and Textiles is a personal favourite subject of mine because it has allowed me to learn two very important life skills – sewing and cooking. Also, this subject gave me a better understanding of my peers as we worked together on specific cooking assignments.

Another elective subject that I have taken part in is Art and Media. It is very relaxing to paint, and it helped take my mind off other schoolwork for a while, which in the transition to high school is important as everything is different and new. Art and Media has



also allowed me to see another side of my peers outside the classroom.

The last elective subject that I have studied so far is Digital Design and Technology. In this subject I have had the opportunity to learn how to use Adobe Illustrator to make my own logo and a flag representing myself. I was also introduced to a program called Sketch-Up where I designed a piece of furniture for my bedroom in 3D. As well as learning these new skills, I was also briefly shown a program called Thonny where I learnt how to code using Python. In primary school, Technology had been a strong interest of mine, so knowing that I had the chance to expand on my learning was exciting for me.

Overall, the transition into high school was made easier thanks to the elective subjects, which have allowed me to learn more about myself, my peers, and the College, and the teachers taught me new skills that I had never been introduced to before.

Lilli Sharman – Cocurricular Involvement

In my first semester at Brigidine College, I've participated in Rowing and Circus and attended weekly Environment Club meetings. I've competed at three South Queensland school-age conference regattas with the College and been lucky enough to win a bronze medal with my quad at the end of the school season trophy regatta!

Throughout my first semester, I've discovered that there isn't the same attitude around sport at Brigidine as there was at my old school – I can join whatever club, sport, or arts activity I want to – just to have fun! I've also been exposed to many different activities such as Environment Day, Patron days, reading and writing competitions, and, of course, lunchtime karaoke. Through participating, I've found new interests, hobbies and friends. Overall, I'd highly recommend signing up for a club, sport, or arts activity. You never know when you might find a new passion at Brigidine College.





Lucy Pagliano – Learning in Core Subject Areas

Learning in Year 7 at Brigidine College means solving real-world problems, collaborating with new friends, and breaking out the Bunsen Burner. So far this year, I have been busy formulating a solution to Chile's water scarcity crisis in Humanities and mixing it up with like-minded mathematicians at the 2022 Junior Maths Challenge. New friendships are being forged around the flames of the Bunsen Burner - and riotous laughter echoes in the aftermath of controlled explosions in the new, state-ofthe-art, science classrooms. Coincidentally, I think many of us have walked the real-life version of Shaun Tan's 'The Lost Thing' (our learning focus earlier this year for English) in discovering that, sometimes, all it takes is for one person – a new classmate – to show interest, empathy, and acceptance to foster a sense of belonging. Ultimately, the Year 7 cohort is up for the challenge, so please keep the experiences coming! Year 7 is exploring its newfound collective voice and by the end of the year, hear us roar!





Empowering Arts:

How the Arts help young people find their voice by Amelia Cameron

The Arts play a critical role in our society as a platform for change as it has the power to convey complex problems in artistic form, address contemporary social and political issues and empower creative problem-solvers. Studies have shown that giving students the ability to engage in Arts education from an early age, is known to improve motivation, teamwork, self-confidence and concentration. At its very core, it provides an outlet for self-expression, personal and cultural messaging and a medium to share a message. At Brigidine, the staff and students are working collaboratively to use the Creative Arts to help our young women react to the challenges of a rapidly changing world, filled with COVID-19 and other omnipresent challenges. Through the Arts, we are building women of strength, expression, and resilience.

Term 1 provided a stark reminder of how important the Arts can be in times of hardship and uncertainty, and provided students with the channels to show and share their feelings on these challenges. At Brigidine, we are mindful that many families were, and continue to be, impacted by the recent floods and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Arts community is working hard to create a sense of belonging and participation, bring people together, and provide helping hands through a shared creative vision. Our goal in the Brigidine College Arts Department is to create moments in time for your daughter, to meet her wherever she is on her Arts journey, and to set high standards while providing the path for her to succeed, express and embrace her own personality. Through participation in Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts, students are active participants in making art that is personal to them, reactive to their world and full of selfmessaging about how they feel about topics that are important to them.

From climate change to COVID-19, this vision is being led by our Arts teachers, who walk with our students and provide more than just a teacherled lesson. In Brigidine Creative Arts, our staff embrace the challenge of allowing the students an outlet to express their views and provide leadership and expertise on how best to do so. Brigidine Arts teachers want their students to take part in the full process through making choices, demonstrating their voices and creating authentic art. In short, our student-led visions lie not in our students making art but rather in working as genuine expressive artists. By enacting this vision, we serve to equip our students with the ability to produce meaningful works that allow them to express their feelings and to feel secure in expressing those feelings. In partnership with other teaching staff, we work collaboratively to extrapolate your daughters' artistic vision, providing a medium for self-expression and the chance to have their message, about their world and their lives, heard loud and clear.

A wonderful example of this is the Annual Awards and Acknowledgement evening which played host to our year 10 Artisan Market, Gallery and Showcase for our 2021 Principal's Art Award titled *Weighted Sky* by 2021 graduate, Sierra Solomon and 2022 Principal's Art award titled *Claire* by Taliyah Muller. This award aims to recognise and promote excellence in senior visual art education at the College. Events such as these are designed to celebrate and showcase our budding artists' work.

To allow all students this medium of selfexpression, we have personal authenticity as a core objective of classroom learning. Through an exploration of process-based thinking and skills-based learning, students are challenged in an Arts classroom to work as artists. Through the Arts, they gain access to the real world and other possible imaginative worlds; their world. They make coherent meaning and order for themselves out of the welter of impressions and sensations bombarding them, from inside and out. Researchers have found connections between learning in the Arts and acquiring knowledge and skills in other areas. According to a 1993 Arts Education Partnership Working Group study, the benefits of a strong Arts program include intensified student motivation to learn, better school attendance, improved multicultural understanding, and the development of higher-order thinking skills, creativity, and problem-solving abilities.

However, the Arts thrive on community engagement and our programs require your support. Our Arts Showcase in November will be an event for our community to engage in through performances and activities. We look forward to walking with your daughter on her Arts journey and supporting her in her voyage of selfexpression.

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Environment Club

by Maya Pianta and Indiana Tichon

Environment Club (nicknamed EC) has been full guns a'blazin' this year! But not too a'blazin', cause of global warming and everything... haha.

As always, we've been hard at work minimising our school's environmental footprint, with the segment we're naming 'General Maintenance' – this includes recycling, 10c refund bottle collection, school clean-ups, and educational videos for assemblies. All these little steps combine to make a much bigger difference in the world around us.

Student initiatives have also been underway, including Year 9 students Pippa Plint, Emily Seiler, and Nilanjana Dasgupta's introduction of a Rubbish Toss game, where students get a toss at lob-a-choc for every piece of rubbish they pick up. In addition, we held our the first workshop for IndyKits where students helped make drawstring bags, made from recycled pillowcases, to keep injured wildlife in.

EC has been hosting a calendula-flowers-growingcompetition, however, we have also been 'Growing Our Knowledge.' EC is a team of keen, passionate learners that continues to expand. We have also been lucky enough to have quite a few guest speakers visit us this year to share their passion and expertise with us. These include employees from Bunnings to talk about plant care, and Elise from the RSPCA Rescue Unit to talk about animal welfare and careers in animal rescue. We also loved it when our very own Ms Dom Strachan ran an afterschool plant-potting workshop.

In June, we held the 2022 World Environment Day. This was one of the College's biggest turnouts with over 12 stalls dedicated to educating and engaging students in all things environmental. With Holy Family joining in, EC had many fun and educational activities; such as an environment quiz, photo wall, rubbish toss game, bread tags in a jar and even a surprise visit from Bumpy the wombat (yes, a real wombat)! We had stalls on the impact of palm oil harvesting, ocean awareness, a suitcase rummage, fingerprint pledge and an upcycled Brigid's cloak. We were fortunate to be able to raise over \$300 to be donated to the RSPCA.

The Brigidine 2021 Lord Mayor's Young Environmental Leadership Network's (LMYELN) project is also in action this year – with the implementation of two compost tumblers and four collection bins situated around the College. This project is a significant step in the College's goals to reduce its environmental impact. Maddie Minty and Maya Pianta have been working to divert as much food waste from landfill as possible. In the future we hope to expand the project to include a total of nine collection points around the College. This next segment is from the Year 10 team; Tiah Kalaja, Millie Field, and Jessica Persich, with a rundown of their experience as 2022 LMEYLN representatives.

Take it away guys: During 2022, we have worked alongside like-minded students from various schools around Brisbane to share our passion for environmental conservation and implement a project within our school that would positively impact the environment. Together, we chose to implement an Indigenous Garden to promote biodiversity and greenspaces, but also highlight the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture within our school. In this program, we have obtained and, improved, our skills and values in teamwork, communication, leadership, care, compassion, and connection – all critical to complete our project and contribute to Brigidine's Environment Club.

Thanks Tiah, Millie and Jess! So, this brings us to the end of the EC segment. Thanks for reading, but one last thing! All of this could not be done without the amazing support and hard work of EC's many mentors and supporters, so we would like to thank Mr Wilson, Mr Beiers, Mrs Jeffcoat, Mrs Antcliff, and Mr Jones and the incredible maintenance team.













Suspend Judgement 2021

A project explanation by Rosie Pope

For my Suspend Judgement project, I created an abstract, multimedia artwork titled "The Allegory of the Coin". My project is deceptively simple - a porcelain jar of coins is dropped and smashed; the pieces scattered on a pedestal – however, the meaning behind the work is anything but. The jar and coins are symbolic of two concepts; the first is a metaphoric representation of the oppression and silencing of Jewish people during the Holocaust. The small, nondescript jar initially obscures the coins from view, much like the Nazis concealed the reality of the horrors they were inflicting on Jewish people. The moment of impact – when the jar shatters and the coins explode outwards - is representative of the aftermath of the Holocaust, when those held captive in concentration camps were set free. It also resembles the Jewish marital tradition of

breaking a glass – a ritual often associated with remembrance of the destruction of the first and second Jewish temples – and hence my work is fittingly solemn in depicting the oppression and subsequent freedom of Jewish people.

However, people are far more complicated than that, so freedom is never as simple as walking away from our oppressors. When working on the second symbolic concept of my work, two women's stories stuck out to me. The first was the testimony of Edith Eger, a Holocaust survivor who wrote the memoir; "*The Choice – Embrace the Impossible*". She posed the question, "Do you want to be a driver, or do you want to be driven?". The second was the story of Susan Retik, the widow of 9/11 victim David Retik, who started the humanitarian organisation, "Beyond the 11th", "Your efforts today will affect people you will never know. It is your choice whether that effect is positive or negative. You can choose every day, every minute, to act in a way that may uplift a stranger, or else drag them down. The choice is easy. And it is yours to make." Thank you.

which runs income-generating programs for Afghan widows and their children. These strong individuals have one thing in common; they used the power of choice to not only move forward from the horrific events that ruptured and displaced them and their families but to make a positive impact on the world.

Hence, the second concept that is evident in my work is the power of choice that the Jewish people obtained after the liberation of the concentration camps, and the power of choice that we all possess, right now. When you flip a coin, it will land on either heads or tails. While it may appear to be pure chance, seemingly trivial factors like the friction on your hand and the air resistance can vastly impact the outcome. Similarly, every decision we make, no matter how insignificant it may seem, compounds to form the people we are today. We have the power to make an immeasurable difference in the direction of our lives and the lives of others if we start making our decisions thoughtfully and ethically. Thus, the goal I hoped to achieve with this artwork was to encourage us all to constantly think beyond the short-term, self-serving benefits of our own actions and consider how we can make the most of the freedom we have for the greater good.

I want to end the presentation of my project by dedicating it to the inspiring, late Eddie Jaku, a Holocaust survivor who emigrated to Australia in 1950 and passed away in October 2021. One potent quote from his book, "*The Happiest Man on Earth*", perfectly reflects the message that I wanted to encapsulate in my work. Eddie said: "Your efforts today will affect people you will never know. It is your choice whether that effect is positive or negative. You can choose every day, every minute, to act in a way that may uplift a stranger, or else drag them down. The choice is easy. And it is yours to make."

Our 2022 Suspend Judgement program was presented on 13 October 2022. If you would like more information on the program, visit the website.

Some images from our 2022 Suspend Judgement evening















Afghan Refugee

Chapter 1 by Lily O'Donoghue Foley 1 - Year 7

I was staring out of my smashed bedroom window, adrenaline pumping. "Asal!" My heart started pounding again, but my eyes, holding in tears, couldn't leave the sight of my grandfather's corpse. Blood rivered down from the gunshot through his forehead. Moments before, he was standing in my room in the city of Kabul, full of love and life... Before death gripped him, spawned from the Taliban's grip on Afghanistan. It was then, the moment to steer my life, a seven-year-old Afghan girl named Asal, an invisible speck in the universe, that we had to flee.

Bells sounded from the town, my heart had beaten itself numb. The tears started. My eyes, a broken dam that cannot hold water any longer. Life seemed distant, mine turned on its head. My vision, hearing and mind had all become blurred from either tears or frantic confusion. My family broke into the room and told me something I already knew, and in the heat of the moment, it was the sole thing I could think about, "grabthe-closest-things-we-are-leaving!" After a small pause taken up by my mother noticing her father motionless on the floor her eyes glassy and hollow, she said, "We may never come back...". Her voice reverberating, my body following suit. I stared at my grandfather's body, now looking more peaceful in death but the prospect of us being able to evade it. I recall gazing at my mother. She looked lifeless without her father, a lost soul. As screams and gunfire echoed from the town... I remember, oh so vividly, how her opaque eyes awoke with fear.

I had suddenly realised that the Taliban didn't want people like us in Afghanistan. They wanted fighters who would make them powerful, and win them land and war. They saw death, they saw it every day. They wanted people who would worship them. And those people weren't us.

Many more casualties, prey of the Taliban, had been littered across the town – my family amongst them. There was no more time to lose. My life had gone in and out of focus all day, only snippets resurface in my memory every so often. But back then, one thing was clearly written in my mind's eye: we were refugees, we were fleeing. With a pocketful of money and a bag of food, we carried our belongings throughout the night. With our things and nothing more, but a shining hope of freedom.

I had been warned that the journey ahead would be treacherous. My breath was giving in, freedom spurred me on. We walked for weeks along the

I threw up.

highway, staying a long way back so we would be close to invisible from the street. Making most of our progress at night, we walked. One excruciatingly long hour after the next. Every so often we caught a glimpse of a body and chillingly some faces, unrecognisable. When my mother, stepfather and I made it to the outskirts of Kandahar, in the dead of the night we'd found a man who called himself Abdul-Ahad. He greeted us cheerfully and asked my stepfather if he would be interested in purchasing a border pass. He sounded half genuine, but just about everything about him seemed off. As my mother brought out some money from her pocket, about to hand it to Abdul, a subtle smirk had crept across his face... 1 000 000 answers and questions blew across my mind. Some too fast to catch. One thing had been clear: we weren't safe, and we might never be. Everything blurred. The world had slowed, as Abdul-Ahad drew his gun...tears had come hard and fast as they'd streaked down my dusty face. A deafening blow brought my stepfather to the ground in seconds, even with my world in slow motion. My tears ran dry as my sorrowful face started to set like stone. I'd slowly looked back as I had started to run. Abdul-Ahad had wrestled my mother to the ground with a knife before he pierced her torso. She'd screamed out in pain as the knife cut deeper, I heard her last choked breath as she gurgled blood. I turned back around and fell to the ground. I kept falling and getting back up time after time again. All things have to go some time. I had escaped death while feeling the losses, I had felt happy and loved amidst war. I may not have been much, but I could still find freedom.

I ran for days, but no tears ever rolled for my mother. Occasional guilt splashed over me. It had made me feel like I hadn't loved her enough in life to care about her death. I never looked back, I never stopped running, until reached the Chaman International Border Crossing. My plan was simple, sneak over the border into Pakistan and get to Karachi, a city by the coastline, and board a boat to a southern country. It wasn't that simple.

Early morning at what I thought could be about 3:30am, I'd slipped across the border. A flashlight shot to my face. Sweat trickled down my back and I could hear my heart in my throat. I bolted. I ran from the shouts of people and gunfire. I ran for days until I reached Quetta.

The week after I had made it to Kalãt. And through a splitting headache, hunger, thirst and homesickness, I was sure that by the searing pain gripping my wrist, I was broken in more ways than I could imagine.

A week later I'd made it to Karachi and boarded a boat. I didn't know where I was going exactly, but I'd heard a few crew members mention "the southern land" and "Aust-rali-a". I'd looked out across the crashing waves as the freedom-seeking boat set sail. The world wasn't perfect, it never could be. But freedom can be – and will be.

I smiled to myself that night on the deck, my travels were just starting.

Synopsis

I've felt heartache, the Taliban is feeding off my fear. All is at a loss in Afghanistan. How far can I go? How much longer? Someday I will find free will and freedom. Follow the story of Asal, a seven-year-old Afgan girl who is fighting for a place and a life in this twisted world. This Chapter Book is targeted to an audience of middle school-aged readers or older.

Lily's submission was a winner in the **Children's Young Adult** writing and illustrating award.





by Salwa Marsh

My name is Salwa Marsh and I graduated from Brigidine College more years ago than I care to admit. I was fortunate – I enjoyed my time at school and I threw myself into it. I got to give speeches a bit during that time (which I enjoyed immensely) and now I get to give speeches a bit for work. I always was and remain grateful to all those with the patience to listen to me.

Brendan (and it still feels weird to call him that, to me, he will always be Mr Cahill) asked me if I would like to give a speech and he did so by reference to some things I said in Year 12 which at the time seemed like a cute sort of analogy but I now see revealed what would become a dogged lifelong obsession. Both in my speech at the opening of the school year and the closing of it – I talked about shoes.

At the beginning of the year, I talked about how I finally felt like I had grown into my school shoes. The child of pragmatic parents, my mother always bought me clothes that were more than just a little bit too big. I know she was hoping that I would grow into them. But it wasn't to be – despite my highest hopes, my high school blazer still only skims my knees. At least I grew into my school shoes. Eventually. And starting my final year felt quite momentous – the shoe literally fit. I had been doing the high school thing for a little while now. At first my brown lace-ups – they were brown back then – pinched and blistered but I wore them in and, as I grew, I stopped tripping on my toes. By Year 12, my school shoes, like school itself, felt comfortable. And I enjoyed walking through the year. Towards the end, it felt like I had broken into a run. That final year passes by so quickly! It felt like it all sped up and to be honest, I am still waiting for it to slow down.

By the end of the year though, my shoe of choice was about to change quite drastically. I bought a pair of metallic blue Doc Marten 9-hole boots. I'd saved up for them. And I loved them as much as my mother hated them – I think those two things were related in hindsight. They represented my financial independence but a lot more than that. They represented tentative steps out of my comfort zone and a bit of a rebrand personally. They represented something exciting and challenging and new – they were a symbol of change. They felt fitting for the conclusion of a very important time in my life and for stepping out in a new direction.

What I wished I knew then but I know now – is that those shoes took time to wear in too. As anyone who has ever tried to break in a new pair of Docs learns the hard way – it's not so much about moulding the shoe to the foot but vice versa. I'm going to be honest – they hurt a lot for a while. And I could never get quite the right sock to go under them. And they were really hot in summer. And this is an admission against interest - they didn't really suit me. I persevered with them for years because of the idea of them. Because of what they meant – because of what I wanted them to mean. I still have them but I don't wear them. I can accept now that they aren't quite right for me and they probably never were.

I tried on quite a lot of new shoes in the years after school. I loved university – I studied Arts/Law at UQ and I threw myself into clubs and societies and part-time work and volunteering and travel. That , path isn't the path for everyone but I suspect in those few years after school we are each looking for the right pair of shoes to equip us for the journey ahead. And I suspect we want them to be perfect. First try, I certainly did. But I think what I've learnt is that the challenge in life, and the joy, is trying on the new shoe when it's time to do so and taking tentative steps in them – being open to where they take you and making the very best of the journey. Because there's no perfect pair of shoes. Cinderella's glass slippers are just a fairy tale and there's no right path.

But if there were, we would all be the poorer because we are each the product of our pinched toes and our deviations, of the band-aids on our heels and having to find our way. What has surprised me most about my twenties and now my thirties – is that often it's the wrong turns that teach you the most about yourself and sometimes, if you are lucky, they are how you find what you love. If nothing else, they are surprising and a gift and a lesson. Because none of this adult stuff has been quite perfect but it has been great. And the best bit has been trying on new shoes and facing new challenges and learning from them.

And I know that I have learnt a little from each pair of shoes I've tried on:

- There were the brogues I bought in Paris after a 6am French class which cost more money than I had ever spent on clothes, but which I will always associate with walks past Notre Dame and felafel in the Marais – and getting lost with new friends at that time who are now old friends – those shoes taught me that sometimes life is impossibly beautiful.
- Then there are the 90s black clogs I bought in Sydney – which also seemed like quite an investment at the time. I think I am sensing a theme... I bought them on the recommendation of a Federal Court Judge, who was also in the change rooms at the shop, who I idolised and who told me that she loved them on me but could no longer comfortably walk in shoes like them and that I should buy them and wear them while the going was good – those taught me that our heroes are just people too. And also, with shoes as with life, it is important to seize the day!
- I moved to London in my late twenties I bought another pair of Doc Marten boots. This time elastic-sided Chelsea boots. I wore them every day for years but they were never that comfortable.
 I really persevered with them but I learnt that

sometimes in life we repeat the mistakes of the past. That it's ok to do so but not too many times.

- When I started work as a barrister, during the pandemic, I bought a pair of sunny yellow vintage court shoes from the 80s from France. They arrived in a box that smelt of lavender and memories. I bought them because I missed the world I knew and so that on bad days during Teams trials I could look down and have something to make me smile. They are a constant reminder to stay positive – for everything, there is a season but you always need sunlight.
- Then there were the shiny boots I bought last year for an on-country native title trial which were scorned by many as a city slicker faux pas – "Are they new boots love?" I was asked by the locals before I listened to days of testimony about Australia's history that I found truly devastating – those shoes taught me that it's ok to have a lot to learn as long as you are prepared to listen.
- · Finally, there are the boots I am wearing tonight. I've been running a lot during the pandemic and I had been running past them at a vintage shop near my house for months thinking about them. They seemed like a shoe for the times - pretty tough - a shoe for all terrains and equal to rocky paths ahead. A shoe with a bit of confidence and a great deal of ability but also a bit of flair - you have to have a bit of flair. I've been working all weekend for guite a few in a row now but last weekend I ran down to the shop and tried them on. They fit. And they were comfortable. And they worked with all my clothes. And I thought – sometimes, just sometimes, on this journey, it sort of all comes together ok.

I could go on but you've indulged my shoe habit quite enough. The question for each of you is what shoes will you put on tomorrow as you take your next steps on this exciting journey? But it's not just that – it's also how well you deal with the blisters and the band-aids and the scuffs. Because there will be plenty of them. But they will be the making of you. And I suspect you already know that.

Coming to the end of 2021 is quite an achievement. This year is not a year like the others – though none of them have been. I think the next steps that we will take as individuals, as a community, as a nation and as humans, will require commitment to destination, but creativity, compassion and humour as to the route. We may each need to be prepared to step into each other's shoes to be the best that we can be for each other but if we are each prepared to do that, then none of us walks alone. And when you walk a bit further with pinched toes due to a wrong turn but with truly great heels – well those times will be the best bits.



Strong Community Connections

by Louise Johnston

The Brigidine College Parents and Friends Association (P&F) have been busy this year – with their social events back in full swing after a COVID-enforced two-year hiatus.

They kicked off the year with the Welcome Evening inviting new and current parents to come together for an evening of music, great prizes and friendship.

As May rolled around, over 500 mothers and daughters enjoyed the Mother's Day High Tea in Brisbane's beautiful City Hall.

And to ensure our Dads didn't miss out on spending time with their daughters, during Term 3, the P&F hosted the Dads and Daughters evening. This had a different energy to the Mothers and Daughters event but, as always, was very popular – with over 300 guests enjoying a high-energy evening with trivia, music, and dinner.

The final event on the P&F social calendar is the Carols on the Curragh – always such a lovely evening and a wonderful way to finish the year.

In addition to the social events, the P&F also supports the College with a number of student-focused events, including Brigidine Day, International Women's Day, the annual Spirit Squad Fundraiser and cocurricular evenings.



As there is no fundraising involved due to the annual P&F levy's inclusion in the College fees, the P&F is really about making new friends and supporting the College to provide the best opportunities for our students.

The P&F Executives and committee work closely with the College Principal to identify how to financially support improvements to the College facilities and resources using this levy.

Over the past year alone, they have purchased two industrial mobile BBQs which have already been put to good use – just in time for the return of the popular sausage sizzle for social events, Year 6 transition evenings and Twilight Tours.

They have also funded the much-needed sports scoreboards in Kildare Hall and outdoor basketball court, PA speakers for Kildare Hall, a piano, and outdoor tables for break times for students.

Meetings are held regularly and can now be joined via TEAMS from the comfort of your home. They are an opportunity to discuss the allocation of funds and hear from the College Principal about happenings at the College or from our Local, State and Federal Parliamentarians.

The contribution of the P&F to the Brigidine Community is invaluable in developing strong partnerships between the College, families and the wider community. They provide support, information and an avenue for involvement for parents, guardians and caregivers in their children's education and the greater school community.









P&F Mother's Day High Tea

'BECOMING' | Thank you to Trinity Waller, 2019 College Captain, who was our guest speaker at the Brigidine College Parent and Friends' Mothers and Daughters' High Tea.

Trinity has fond memories from when she was young, of her mother singing Que Sera, Sera, making reference to the opening lyric line 'When I

was just a little girl, I asked my mother, what will I be'. This was a beautiful metaphor for her speech engaging over 500 guests, young and old.

She also spoke about the importance of her role models within her family and beyond.

Trinity shared what she calls 'mum-isms', sound advice from her Mum including; don't be afraid to say no, don't be afraid to say yes, don't make up time on the road, and vulnerability is always the right choice.

Trinity began a Bachelor of Law and Humanities at the University of Queensland. She was awarded the prestigious Ramsay Undergraduate Scholarship in philosophical, literary, political, religious, historical, and artistic legacies of Western Civilisation for her leadership, outstanding academic excellence, intellectual vision, commitment to service, and strength of character.

Alongside her studies, she has received a number of social justice awards and was a representative at a range of conferences and fundraisers.

Trinity's passion lies in her volunteering, community, and social justice projects. She is at the beginning of her career and hopes to serve and learn in every experience. We wish her well in her exciting and bright future.







Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

Mark 6:30-44 (New International Version)

30 The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. **31** Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. **33** But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. **34** When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had *compassion on them*, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

35 By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. **36** Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

37 But he answered, "You give them something to eat."

They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"

38 "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five— and two fish."

39 Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. **40** So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. **41** Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. **42** They all ate and were satisfied, **43** and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. **44** The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

The Gospel of the Lord

Chanel Patron Day Gospel



In this Gospel story, we see that Jesus was always serving others; even when it seemed impossible to serve them.

The Gospel tells us that Jesus was looking for solitude, but instead, He encountered a crowd who had flocked to see Him. Jesus wanted to rest and his disciples too; but, His compassion for the crowds' needs was greater than his own. Jesus took time to teach the people as they were like "sheep without a shepherd". This is a powerful image, that I am sure many of us can relate to. Many of us may feel lost at times, where we look to others to guide us.

In the Gospel, Jesus was this Shephard, guiding his disciples to show them that if they have faith and compassion, they too, would always find a way to serve others.

Through the miracle of feeding the 5000, he demonstrates loving hospitality, whilst allowing the masses to witness the presence of God, ultimately strengthening their faith. Jesus is inviting us to be aware of our neighbours, those beside us in day to day experiences. There are many opportunities for us to follow in Jesus' footsteps and respond to people in the same way – not as a bother or hinderance – but simply as 'sheep that need a shepherd'. We can do this through acts of compassion and hospitality. On a global level, we are called to act in solidarity and compassion with our brothers and sisters in Ukraine. As a community we have rallied to support those who have endured difficult times during the floods or due to COVID.

Our Brigidine community has led like Jesus – by putting the needs of others before your own – cleaning up streets and homes, feeding our neighbours and donating to strangers.

These are all great examples of compassion and living out the message of Jesus, however, it is in our day-to-day activities at Brigidine where we need to look for these moments of compassion and, as Chanel students, moments of hospitality.

When reflecting on the Gospel and my own personal experiences at Brigidine over the last five years, many acts of compassion came to mind.

Now, you may question what these things on the screen have to do with compassion. To me, they represent times that members of our wonderful Brigidine community have shown me compassion in our everyday life.

Compassion is when Mr Roberts took down the Volleyball nets for me in a time of struggle.

Compassion is when Miss Tobiano left a coffee and a note offering assistance on my desk after a late night of marking.

Compassion is Mrs Porter opening her home to me in the last week when I was unable to stay at my own.

Compassion is Charlotte Smith generously gifting me a 'a little book of self-care and Wisdom' for Christmas recognising a need for me to slow down.

Compassion is Maddie Ellice and Marnie Nottingham going out of their way in exam week to write affirmations on my whiteboard to make my day better.

Compassion is Katelyn Sa making me a toasted sandwich one lunch after noticing a busy lunch time where I wouldn't be eating.

Just as in the Gospel story you have just read, I'm sure in many of these cases, these people were exhausted but put my needs before their own. Together we can live out Jesus's work by having compassion in times when it seems impossible and demonstrate hospitality to those who need it.

Although at times, these acts may seem small and insignificant in comparison to what is happening in the world around us, it is so important that we look for opportunities to act with compassion and live out hospitality in our every day.

I challenge you to reflect on the times that someone has shown you compassion and to think about how this made you feel. One of my favourite quotes from Maya Angelo is "People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel." This is a message that translates with the Gospel story, the crowds feeling nourished – both physically and spiritually – and heard.

The words on the inside of the book Charlotte Smith gave me say 'learn to nurture your inner world with kindness and compassion. As you change the world around you will transform too, delighting and guiding you.'

This is an important reminder that before you can do any of this, you need to be compassionate to yourselves. Be understanding to yourself when you fail or feel inadequate and recognise that it is okay to be imperfect. It is then that we can start to look at the bigger picture and really strive to live out the teachings of Jesus in our community.

I encourage you to take a moment each week to look at the quotes on the splash page. This was last week's and is fitting with today's Gospel. 'Do your little bit of good where you are. It's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.'

So, Chanel House, it is my challenge to you to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and identify the little moments where you can show compassion to others and seek to make everyone welcome through acts of hospitality.







by Mrs Helen Jeffcoat

The last day for our Year 12 students is an emotional one for all. This year, the last day of classes was Tuesday, October 18. The day began with a ceremony run by the new Year 11 Prefects. The assembly also featured a Liturgy, the singing of the College Hymn, a look back through the photo archive of their time at the College and gift-giving from their House sisters. Part of the morning also involved the presentation of the traditional Capes.

How did the Cape tradition come about? The Cape tradition started when the uniform was a green tartan skirt and a pale lemon blouse. On the last day of school, students customarily wrote messages on the back of their friend's blouses messy, and annoying for parents who planned to sell the uniform or pass it down to a younger sister. The idea of a bespoke House-coloured 'Cape' to write on first took form. Initially, all those years ago, it was just a rectangle of fabric threaded across the top with a length of ribbon very easy to create and it served the purpose well. However, when Mr Ben Wilson was appointed Head of Foley House, he asked if I could help him make the Capes, and suggested that maybe we could introduce the Foley theme - the pink heart - into the mix. It was also important to involve the Year 7-11 students in the planning and construction of the Capes.

During Term 4, we run House to design and create the Capes – this is a strictly top-secret affair with no Year 12s allowed to participate. The design is always a surprise! We choose a theme that matches the House motto. Foley is always hearts. This year the De Porres Capes had a long dragon tail, and Chanel had a shiny red flame leaping up the Cape. Once presented with their Cape on their last day, the seniors wear them for the rest of the day to allow friends and teachers to sign and add a personal message. This then becomes a lovely memento of the day – their last day of classes in Year 12. On that day, you can easily spot the senior girls – wearing bright-coloured Capes covered in messages of goodwill – a bit like in the College hymn to St Brigid; they are "enthroned in glory".

"I really like making pom poms Miss, can we have lots on the Damien Capes?" Ava Dryden, Year 9 Ava went on to make 88 blue poms in the September holidays, four for each Damien Cape.

"Yikes, there was a needle still pinned in mine!" Amy Manthey, Year 12

The MacKillop Capes only just got finished in time.

"Would dragons be too hard to do?" Dr Schofield, Head of De Porres House

It did take some thought, but in the end, using green Woolworths bags for stiffening and felt triangles for scales, we managed it.

"Tuesday felt good but sweet and sour. I was glad it was our last day of classes but sad we are leaving. Really, it is just a new beginning." Nia Tauelangi, Year 12

"Our grade got really close, we were just like – one. It was a great day! I've always wanted to be one of the girls wearing the Capes, and I finally was one!" Marnie Nottingham, Year 12, Delany Prefect

"It was important to spend time with our Houses, to be with our teachers who have supported us for the past six years, to connect and reflect and say goodbye. It's the same every year and yet special every year." Maddy Ellice, Year 12, Sports Captain



BRIGIDINE COLLEGE INDOOROOPILLY

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