

# St Bede's Catholic College Chisholm Newsletter No. 10 2017



## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first newsletter for Term 3. Since the last newsletter that went out on the last day of last term much has happened. These include the employment of most of the staff leaders, my immersion trip to Kenya which will provide enhanced opportunities for St Bede's to build relationships with overseas communities. These are the feature articles of this newsletter which I invite you to read.

## STAFF APPOINTMENTS

A significant part of last term was spent on recruiting the best possible staff leaders that could work in partnership with the College community to make the hopes and dreams outlined in the Foundation Plan a reality. Central to these leaders being recruited were the following: highly qualified and experienced, a demonstrated commitment to the religious life of the College, a passionate love of students and learning, a positive and progressive approach, an ability to work collaboratively with different staff holders in a team-centred approach, and a demonstrated ability to be flexible to cater for the unique challenges that will come into stepping into a leadership role in a new school where the focus will be on 21st century contemporary learning. With this in mind, an exhaustive selection process has resulted in five appointments of five outstanding educators. Outlined below is a short summary on each of these five new staff members.

- **Assistant Principal - Brett Donohoe (Commencing Term 4 2017):** Brett is the current Acting Assistant Principal at St Catherine's Catholic College at Singleton which is a K-12 school. Brett comes with an extensive background in both pastoral care and teaching & learning. With over 14 years experience in leadership positions and having achieved outstanding HSC results in the highest level of Mathematics, Brett's commitment to life-long education was shown by his Distinction plus average in a Masters in Educational Leadership and Management. His military background prior to going into teaching and his love of sport, where he played in the 1st XV Rugby team at St Joseph's, are only some of his many positive traits that made him the ideal fit for this school community. Brett will officially commence at the start of Term 4 but already has been meeting with me to ensure St Bede's gets off to the best possible start in 2018. We look forward to welcoming Brett and hearing from him at the next Parent Information Evening and Student Orientation Day that will take place late this term.
- **Student Coordinator - Jasmine Hutchinson (Commencing Term 4 2017):** Jasmine has been teaching for 16 years and is currently at McKillop Catholic College Warnervale which is one of the largest K-12 Catholic Schools in the State. Jasmine will bring to us a passion for student learning and a background in both primary and secondary education. Jasmine will be the first point of contact for the day-to-day issues and will have responsibility for the overall care of our students. Jasmine will also be commencing at the start of next term and we look forward to hearing from her at one of the Information Evenings before the end of the year.

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## STAFF APPOINTMENTS—CONTINUED

- **Learning Support Coordinator - Amy Stoddart (Commencing Term 4 2017)** : Amy has had a number of stints as Acting Learning Support Coordinator at San Clemente Mayfield. Amy will bring to the role a great love of students with special needs and talents and glowing referee reports. Amy has been teaching for 13 years and completed her tertiary training at the University of Newcastle. Amy's passionate devotion to learning support, her knowledge of how the local systems operate, her strong connections with outside professionals who can assist students with their needs, and her highly relational style makes her an ideal appointment. We look forward to having Amy on board Day 1 next term and welcoming her to St Bede's.
- **Mathematics/Science/Technology & Applied Studies and Personal Development Health & Physical Development Studies Coordinator: Tamara Borkowski**: Tamara is currently employed at De La Salle Revesby in Sydney as a Year 7—12 teacher in the area of Technology and Applied Studies, Hospitality and Religious Education. With 15+ years of teaching, her leadership experience includes being a General Coordinator and having responsibility for the establishment of a hospitality centre. Tamara will bring her practical experience, passion and commitment to high standards to St Bede's in fostering a hands-on and progressive learning culture. In moving to the local area later this year, we look forward to seeing Tamara and her family becoming part of the local community.

The next three appointments are Studies Coordinators positions who initially will oversee multiple faculties before eventually specialising with their faculty speciality when the College grows and additional Studies Coordinators are employed. These three Coordinators will form the basis of our curriculum team and will work closely with our Learning Support Coordinator and our new Assistant Principal, Brett Donohoe.

- **Religious Studies/Ministry Studies Coordinator — Fiona Duque :Commencing Term 1 2018)**: Fiona is the Acting Religious Studies at St Pius Adamstown. She has over a decade of teaching experience and consistently gains outstanding learning results for her students. In being in the role as Acting Religious Studies Coordinator this year, Fiona comes to us with the highest of recommendations. In recently completing a Masters of Theology Course, Fiona will be working closely with the teaching staff to establish and implement an authentic and challenging Religious Studies Curriculum. Until the appointment of a Ministry Coordinator when the College has expanded in size, Fiona will be a key player in establishing close and personal relationships with the Father Paul O'Neil and the local Parish, in addition to leading the liturgical life of the College. We look forward to her commencement at St Bede's next year and to introducing her later this year.
- **English/Humanities (HSIE)/ Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA)/Languages Studies Coordinator — Andrew Cornwell**: Andrew will officially start at St Bede's at the start of next year but as the driver of our computer tendering process is already making a substantial contribution to our community. Andrew has extensive school leadership experience in a range of roles and is committed to life-long learning as demonstrated by having two Masters degrees. Currently, Andrew is an Educational Officer at the Maitland Newcastle Catholic Schools Office with a focus on Learning Technology. With St Bede's to have a cross-curricular student learning approach with digital technology being an important learning tool, Andrew will bring experience, expertise and a genuine desire to make St Bede's a great school. As a local, Andrew appreciates the gifts of the people who will form the community of St Bede's and will become an important member of our staff.

I couldn't be happier with the appointment of these five staff members who all bring their own gifts and talents to a school community that will be unique in its opportunities and challenges. Starting this week with our newly appointed Assistant Principal, Brett Donohoe, will be a self-profile on each newly appointed staff member. These profiles will generally be limited to one per newsletter to allow you the opportunity to fully absorb and appreciate the unique contribution of each of these staff members.

## MEET OUR NEW ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL—BRETT DONOHOE



### Teaching qualifications:

Master of Teaching (Mathematics) Used  
 Bachelor of Science (Mathematics) UNSW  
 Master of Leadership and Management in Education UON

### Teaching experience:

St Joseph's College Hunters Hill 1996-2003  
 -Mathematics Teacher  
 St Ignatius College Riverview 2004-2013  
 -Mathematics Teacher  
 -Boarding Coordinator  
 St Gregory's College Campbelltown 2014  
 -Director of Boarding  
 -Mathematics Teacher  
 St Catherine's Catholic College 2015-2017  
 -Mathematics Coordinator 2015-2017  
 -Acting Assistant Principal Welfare 2017

### Family background:

Married to Alison with three children; Emily (16 years), Charlotte (13 years), Patrick (9 years). Alison is a paediatric nurse working in the Hunter Health Community. Family are Catholic.

### Personal Interests/Passions:

Rugby union, tennis, golf, camping, fishing and bush trekking, beach, time with family, social justice initiatives.

### My hopes and dreams in coming to St Bede's:

To witness a school evolve into a vibrant, safe, inclusive and welcoming Catholic community. Contemporary and engaging teaching and learning practices will be embraced by all students and no student will be left behind as the curriculum will be differentiated to cater to the needs of all. Staff will be committed to our Catholic identity and focused on building positive relationships which engage each student leading to meaning and purpose in all they do. Through their experiences at St Bede's students will become confident, resilient, compassionate and reflective young men and women. They will be comfortable with their own faith and informed citizens wanting to make a positive contribution in our world.

### Advice to the incoming Foundation Students:

As foundation students at St Bede's you will hold a very special place within our community. You will be our leaders of tomorrow as the school grows and other year groups arrive. You will make history as the first graduating class in 2023! Embrace this unique opportunity by daring to do your best in everything you do. Accept every challenge and you will have them! Do not be afraid of failure. It is when we fall and get up again we learn, become more confident and grow in character. You have a competent and committed staff who are excited about getting to know you and guide you in your journey at St Bede's. Listen to what they say and let your actions speak louder than words. Be true to yourself, your peers and your staff and respect the unique qualities and differences that everybody brings to our community. Welcome to St Bede's Catholic College Community.

## IMMERSION TRIP

Over the last holiday period, I had the privilege of being part of a small group of people who spent two weeks in Kenya on an immersion trip. An immersion trip is different to a recreational trip, with the focus being on building potentially long lasting relationships with people from their local communities. In our case, we spent most of the time at schools, community and health centres in the slums. With both our Schools Diocesan Director, Michael Slattery, and I having come from Edmund Rice schools, the trip to Kenya was an opportunity for people from a range of backgrounds to witness and have a genuine encounter with the poor and marginalised. Michael and his wife Alison led this trip, as they have done on numerous occasions. Their strong connections with a range of relief organisations, some of which are driven by the work of the Christian Brothers, enabled us to truly appreciate the hardships and injustices of poverty and the enormous value of the work being done by generous volunteers and donors.

Our two weeks were based in the capital of Nairobi which has an interesting contrast of natural beauty, a wealthy minority, and sadly incredible poverty of the majority who live in unacceptable conditions in districts known as slums. The two largest slums which we spend a lot of time in are Mukuru and Kibera which 'house' over a million people combined. The life expectancy of 47 years of age in these slums are at least 10 years lower than the national average. Poor sanitation, high levels of disease and crime, a lack of basic health and education facilities, unfair high rents, a lack of a social welfare system for those who cannot care for themselves, and a lack of employment opportunities are only some of the overwhelming dominant features in these slums.

With many motivated good people, charities and Churches not prepared to ignore the plight of these people, there are a range of improvements that are occurring which are giving hope and opportunities to some of these victims of poverty. In getting to know the local people living in these inhuman conditions, we were able to see the extremes at one end of the despondent whose fate were all but sealed, and at the other end the success stories of those who through assistance and hard work have been able to build a future. The incredible works of so many committed people, including Nuns and Brothers, were inspiring. As a new community next year, we have the opportunity at St Bede's to build relationships with some of these organisations and people where donations are second to connections. I look forward to sharing some of my experiences with you and exploring ways in how we can live out our four Gospel values of love, truth, justice and compassion.



Some pictures of housing in one of the world's largest and most infamous slums, Kibera, which has a population of about one million people.

## IMMERSION TRIP



Some of the performers in the gymnastics performance team at the Ruben Centre which is a multi-purpose school in the slums of Mukuru in Nairobi.



Our immersion trip led by Michael Slattery (with the Souths cap), our Maitland/Newcastle Catholic Schools Office Director, and his wife Alison (far left) and an Edmund Rice Youth Worker (Samuel Karanja). The two Africans at the back are leaders at the Ruben centre.



The sheer joy when relationships are formed through multicultural exchanges. The children at the schools I visited in the slums are amongst the happiest, hard working and intelligent students that I have ever met. I want the same joy to be experienced by the broader community as we establish overseas partnerships .



A vibrant Mass at the St Michael's Parish Nairobi with beautiful and enthusiastic singing from the local parishioners.



The Mary Rice Centre in the Kibera slums for students with severe intellectually and physically challenges. Without the inspirational work of this Christian Brother led informal school, which receives no funding and relies solely on donations, these students would not have the skills to cope in mainstream schools or in any type of employment. I am particularly motivated in exploring how St Bede's can form a relationships with them next year.



The beauty of Africa– Rift Valley (to the left), Nairobi National Park (to the right)

## ST COLUMBANS MAYFIELD CELEBRATIONS

To ex-students and teachers of St Columbans Catholic Primary School Mayfield (also known as St Joseph's and St Columbanus): The school is celebrating 100 years. Please come along and help us celebrate on Saturday 12th August 2017 at 11am Mass with the Bishop, followed by visits of the classrooms and a BYO Picnic and playing some old fashioned games. For further information contact [admin@mayfieldsc.catholic.edu.au](mailto:admin@mayfieldsc.catholic.edu.au)



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