



ΕΛΛΗΝΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟ  
ΚΟΛΛΕΓΙΟ  
«ΟΙ ΑΓΙΟΙ ΑΝΑΡΓΥΡΟΙ»

Oakleigh Greek Orthodox College "Sts. Anargiri"

# Gazette

Issue # 2/09 – Tuesday 17th February 2009

## CONTACT DETAILS

Phone: 9569 6128

E-mail: [principal@ogoc.vic.edu.au](mailto:principal@ogoc.vic.edu.au)  
[administration@ogoc.vic.edu.au](mailto:administration@ogoc.vic.edu.au)

Web Site: <http://www.ogoc.vic.edu.au>

## CONTENTS

- 1 COLLEGE PRINCIPAL
- 4&6 STUDENT SERVICES REPORT
- 4 SECONDARY SCHOOL
- 5 PRIMARY SCHOOL

## KEY COLLEGE DATES

### Term One 2009

17th February	• Yrs 7 & 8 Information Evening
19th February	• Yrs 9 & 10 Information Evening
24th February	• Yrs 11 & 12 Information Evening
25th February	• BDPSSA Swimming Carnival
27th February	• Primary School Assembly • Movie Night (Parents' Association Function)
2nd March	• School Photos—Primary
3rd March	• ELC Information Night
4th March	• PMP Information Morning (Preps)
5th March	• School Photos—Secondary
22nd March	• Independence Day Parade
24th April	• Family Photo Day & Sports Photos

### Term Dates 2009

Term One	2nd Feb—3rd April
Easter	10th—12th April
Orthodox	17th—19th April
Easter	20th April—Easter Monday
Term Two	21st April—26th June
Term Three	13th July—18th Sept.
Term Four	5th Oct—11th Dec

## COLLEGE PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

### *Bushfires*

The tragedy and suffering caused by last week's bushfires around Victoria are not easy for us to comprehend. There has obviously been a saturation of media coverage that we have all been exposed to and our own children have seen images they would not have witnessed before.

We have all been affected by this disaster in one way or another. I hope that none of our school community has been directly affected. There has been an incredible show of support from communities locally, nationally and internationally. Our own students took the initiative last week with our teachers to collect donations to give to the Red Cross Appeal. Primary and Secondary students have collected close to \$3,000 between them which is an incredible effort for our school. The Primary students have also initiated a "goodies bag" of toiletries in addition to clothing, blankets, shoes, etc. that our families are donating.

Many psychologists have been publicly very active in the past week to advise the wider community about the effects on people, especially children, when such disasters occur and there is such an enormous loss of life and property. In our Gazette, you will find an article by well-known parenting adviser, Michael Grose, that will give you some guidance about understanding and handling such matters with your children.

### *Information Nights*

Last week we conducted our first of a series of Information Nights for parents. The Primary School held a very informative and successful evening that included opportunities for formal and informal discussion between staff and parents.

This week we continue with an Information Night on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> for Years 7/8, Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> for Years 9/10 and next week we conclude the series with an evening for VCE on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup>. We en-

courage you, even insist, that it is every parent's responsibility to attend and become better-informed about the programs, initiatives and procedures that operate at the College for your children. Things can and do change in minor and major ways from year to year. My observation and conclusion after meeting formally and informally to discuss this matter with many parents, is that people are too quick to make judgements without making the effort to become informed about their child's school.

Although the evenings are designed to deal with students and parents of these year levels in 2009, the school community is warmly invited to attend any night that holds some interest for them. For example, although we will be holding a Year 7 2010 Information Night on 20<sup>th</sup> May, parents of Year 5/6 students can take the opportunity to hear from the leaders and staff of the Secondary School as early as this week by attending any of the Secondary School Information Evenings. Remember – knowledge is power!

We look forward to seeing you.

### *Blessing of our Students and Staff*

The Agiasmos Service, conducted by His Grace Bishop Ezekiel, was conducted on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February in the Sports Complex.

The words and wisdom of His Grace as he spoke of the value of a good education and the school's aim to work with families to develop young people with a strong value system and spirituality was something that touched us all.



### **Parking**

The school year has begun with us closely monitoring traffic movement around the perimeter of the College, especially at the end of the school day. There seemed to be a greater volume of traffic in the first week but this has reduced slightly as more students are participating in the after-school activities we run at the College.

The traffic issues we face can be managed more effectively when there is an understanding and commitment from the school and the parents to contribute to the safety of our students.

I have directed all College staff to leave all spaces on Clapham Rd available to parents and visitors of the College - ALL DAY, EVERYDAY. This should alleviate some congestion by making available an additional 15+ spaces to parents. You can assist by following driving and parking regulations and accepting that you belong to a school where there will be some "inconvenience" to you or should I say a greater tolerance needed by you when picking up your children. I have been on the corner of Willesden and Clapham Rds. almost every afternoon this year to assist in the flow of traffic and the movement of students as they cross the road. Parking Inspectors have been spotted but I also will not hesitate to note and report to police any dangerous or reckless driving that may jeopardise the safety of our children.

Your cooperation is greatly valued and appreciated.

### **School Uniform**

All students who will require items of the winter school uniform should go to JJ's in the next few weeks for a fitting to ensure that stock is on hand or an order can be placed to ensure the items arrive before the end of April, when the compulsory wearing of the winter uniform will take effect.

### **School Photos**

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March – Primary School Photo Day  
Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March - Secondary School Photo Day  
Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April - Family Photos and Sports Photos

Please note that photos this year will be taken with students wearing the summer uniform.

### **Parents' Fundraising Association**

#### Air Conditioning

The PFA, through their fundraising efforts in 2008 and with your great support, have contributed to the full cost of installing 5 air-conditioning units on the top floor of the Secondary School. The College and our students in particular extend their gratitude and appreciation that part of Stage 2 has now been completed. With your continued support of our fundraising events such as the Movie Night and Bunnings Barbecue (see below), we would like to complete Stage 2 this year, being the Prep rooms and the ground floor of the Primary School building.

I have had many parents directly and indirectly offer their financial support for this initiative over the past few years.

We have not gone down the path of asking for contributions but instead offering a variety of events and fundraising efforts to give you something back for your dollar. However, if you sincerely feel that you are in a position to offer this type of financial support to the College, I would welcome discussing this with you.

Thank you to the PFA, who represent ALL parents of the College.

#### Next Meeting

We are always looking for more parents (mums and dads) to join us at our meetings to share their ideas and become more involved in the efforts the PFA is making to support the addition of more "value-added" facilities at our College.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February at 7.30pm in the Staff Lounge. Please give serious consideration about adding your energy and ideas to this parent representative group. I attend all meetings, it is open to all, there are no official office-bearers, just volunteers to fulfill key roles AND it's fun!

#### Movie Night

The College, in conjunction with the PFA, is holding a Movie Night for the students on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February in the Community Hall. Students and families of the Primary School will have their movie screened at 6.00pm. Prepaid tickets are \$20 for the family or \$25 if purchased on the night.

Secondary School students will watch a different movie, screening at 9.00pm. Parents can attend (good luck when discussing this with your child!!) or can drop off and then pick up at the end of the night, details of which you will be advised closer to the date. The cost for students is \$8 if prepaid or \$10 if purchased on the night.

Popcorn, fairy floss, choc tops and drinks will be available for purchase on the night. You are encouraged to bring a fold out chair, bean bag, pillow/cushion or blanket for your added comfort.

#### Bunnings Barbecue

Bunnings supports not-for-profit organisations by inviting them to secure a day during the year to hold a barbecue to sell to its customers. We have been lucky enough to secure two dates in 2009 at the Bunnings store on Centre Rd to run such a barbecue (sausages, bread and drinks only). The first one is scheduled for **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March**.

We need to be in attendance all day, the barbecue is provided by Bunnings, and we do the rest – cook and sell, with all takings going to the school.

Would you please contact Georgina Turewicz (parent) on 0408 368 240 to volunteer your support for an hour or two during that day. Come on all you BBQ chefs out there, help us out please!

### ***Greek Dance and Music***

This year the College has employed the services of Dimosthenis Manasis of the established and highly-respected “Manasis School of Greek Dance and Culture” to conduct Greek Dance and Music classes for our Year 7/8 students during the Music Elective classes. In addition, Dimosthenis will be taking Greek Dancing classes after school on Thursdays for all interested students.

The College aims to establish our own Dancing Group at a level of performance that will see them represent the College at a range of College and cultural events around Melbourne.

Expressions of Interest and Enrolment Forms will be available at Reception for the Thursday classes. We especially encourage our older students to participate and become part of what one day we hope is one of the premier young dancing groups in Melbourne.

### ***Seconded Teachers from Greece***

Our College has once again this year received the support of the Greek Consulate of Melbourne, representing the Greek Government, by providing us with seconded teachers from Greece to work at the College.

This year we welcome the return of Afroditi Tassiou (3 days), Kosta Taoulas (1 day), Simeon Korofidis (2 days), Nikolaos Bizios (2 days) and the arrival of Eleni Tsefala (Saturday School).

We acknowledge and thank the Greek Consulate of Melbourne, and in particular the Education Consul Mr. Charalampos Ladopoulos, for his support of our College in providing us with teachers.

### ***Presentation Night DVD***

The DVD of our 2008 Presentation Day/Night will be available for collection from Reception on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February.

### ***Greek Independence Day Parade***

The celebration for Greek National Independence Day will this year be held on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March. Every student of the College (Yr 1 – Yr 12) is required to be in attendance for this significant celebration.

Oakleigh Greek Orthodox College has a major presence at this event each year. In 2009, I would like to ensure that we do so again so that we show our support for this major Greek celebration as well as grow our profile further within Melbourne’s Greek and wider community. Notices to all families will be included with the next Gazette.

### ***Saturday Modern Greek Language School***

Oakleigh Greek Orthodox College operates a Modern Greek language School on Saturday mornings at the College. This school takes many enrolments from beyond our existing school community but is also available to our own school community. The College provides support to our families who would like to further enhance their children’s Greek language skills by offering places at the Saturday School **free of charge**. If you are interested, please pick up

an Enrolment Form from the General Office. I encourage those families that are attending other Community Language Schools during the week or on Saturdays to seriously consider the many benefits of his offer to you and your children.

### ***Meet Brooke Hansen***

The Doug Ellis Swimming Pool at Monash University, Clayton is excited to announce that Olympic gold medalist swimmer, Brooke Hanson will be visiting the Aquatic centre on Saturday 21 February between 9.00am—9.30am to sign autographs and promote her new autobiography ‘When Silver is Gold’.

An invitation is extended to our school community to attend this special event.

*Mr. Steve Charisis—College Principal*

### **OUR PREPS START SCHOOL**



## **SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT**

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2009, “*Black Saturday*”, will remain in our memories as the “*Day of Horror*”, “*Our Darkest Day*” as described in *The Age* headlines. On Monday’s edition of the paper we read “Terror, loss and acts of quiet courage ... marked Australia’s worst natural disaster.” And as the week unfolded we learnt the extent of the horror and devastation that the fire caused in the outskirts of Melbourne. We felt the tragedy of the loss of life, of property and the environment. As Sonya Hartnett wrote in *The Sunday Age* (15/2/09): “*Everyone in this state, this country, and the world has lost something in these fires. Those forests that have burned were beautiful things. Those animals were precious. Those towns were keepers of our story. Those people were linked in countless ways to the rest of us. In losing these, we have lost something irreplaceable.*”

No one has remained untouched by the tragedy of the bushfires and their dreadful aftermath. We spoke to our students and asked them to reflect on the remarkable courage of those who have given all that they could to fight the fires and the sacrifices that they had made in order to protect other people and their property. We informed them that as a school community we needed to assist and the best way to do that was to donate money to the Red Cross.

It did not surprise us that the following day, when we took a yellow bucket into the schoolyard, our students willingly made generous contributions ranging from \$10.00 to \$100.00 notes to help those in need. For the next few days, students continued to seek the yellow bucket and drop in it whatever they could, raising \$1,600.00 in total. In times such as these, the strength of communities shines through. The level of concern that so many of our students shared and more importantly, their desire to contribute so readily and generously overwhelmed us.

There is no doubt that over the coming days we will continue to hear stories of tragic loss and of remarkable courage. It is important that we keep in our hearts and minds the suffering that so many will continue to experience. However, it is perhaps even more important to consider

what it is that we can do to make a positive difference so that those same people may rebuild their lives and their communities. What we must never lose sight of, is hope; hope that things will get better and that we will endeavour to prevent such tragedies from happening again. This sense of hope is reflected in the following poem, written by Graeme Base and published in *The Age* (15/2/09):

### **From the Shadows**

A world of ashes leached of life.  
The colours swept away.  
A paradise lies lost beneath a shroud of ashen grey.  
And yet in time the veil will fall.  
The streams once more will flow,  
And from the shadows ‘tween the trees  
New life will surely grow.

### **Upcoming Events**

Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> February	Year 7 & 8 Parent Information Evening
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> February	Year 9 & 10 Parent Information Evening
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> February	Year 11 & 12 Parent Information Evening

*Marina Theodore—Head of Senior Years Education*

### **New Initiatives**

#### **ASX Schools Sharemarket Game.**

As part of the study of The Market System in Unit 1 Economics this semester, our Year 11 Economics students have been registered to participate in the Schools Sharemarket Game.

The challenge is to increase the value of their share portfolio in a set time frame and experience what it is like to invest in the sharemarket without spending any real money. Trading begins on 5 March 2009 and ends on 13 May 2009 and students from around Australia are in competition to win from a total prize pool of over \$25,000.

I wish our students the best of luck in this competition.

*Mr Kakavas - VCE Year 11 Economics Teacher*

## **STUDENT SERVICES REPORT**

### **Rotary Community Fund Raffle**

Unfortunately, those who assisted with our Smart Grass Fundraiser will need to continue driving the cars you have or keep saving for your dream car. All results were published in The Herald Sun on Tuesday 10th February 2009. Together we raised an incredible \$7,800 and our total for the Smart Grass is now around \$14,000. Thanks.

After the disastrous news of our fellow Victorians who have lost so much in the recent fires, our staff and students passed a bucket around for 4 days and so many students took money out of their own savings to help raise the incredible amount of \$1,600.00. Thanks.

### **Hair and Uniform**

Thankyou to the 98% of parents and students who commenced the school year in the correct uniform with hair suitably presented. The College is still working with a few students and parents to come on board and respect what all others have been so willing to do naturally.

*Mary-Anne Lewis—Head of Student Service (Secondary)*

## **Education Maintenance Allowance**

EMA applications must be submitted to the school by **27 February 2009** for the first instalment and **7 August 2009** for the second instalment.

EMA application forms are available from the school office.

## PRIMARY SCHOOL REPORT

Another week has gone by and I can confidently say that all teachers and students have settled in and getting on with their teaching and learning. I am happy to report that our Preps have also settled in and are now beginning to become more familiar with the daily routine of school.

On Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February, the Primary School held its first Parent Information Evening of the year. This was an opportunity for parents to become familiar with the programmes and routines that operate in the school. Parents had the chance to hear the direction the Primary School is taking in the teaching and learning of our children and ask questions about the new teaching strategies we are adopting in 2009. Furthermore it was an opportunity for parents to spend an evening at the College to meet the classroom teachers, specialist staff and other parents on a social level. Parents saw that the school provides a supportive environment with a range of learning areas and a curriculum attempting to improve student achievement at all levels and for all abilities.

We appreciated the positive feedback with regards to the format of the evening. The staff and I would like to sincerely thank the parents who attended the evening.

I would also like to thank all the staff for their hard work and professional manner in which they led the sessions. It certainly came across that our teachers are enthusiastic about teaching, provide help and support to all students, and understand and allow for different abilities.

In response to the devastating bushfires in Victoria, we decided to send support to the children in the way of toys, books, stationery and money. Last week our children and their families came together to support the Fire Survivors, by collecting **\$1,837.10** to assist in the rebuilding of their lives. Congratulations to all our children.

This week we will be collecting "Goodies Bags." Please be aware that we will be running this until Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February. All bags are to be taken to the classrooms.

A big thank you to the parents and children of our wonderful school.

### Student Leadership in the Primary School

We believe we need to give as many students as possible experience in leadership positions. This will increase the students' sense of belonging, responsibility and partnership. In this way we will provide an avenue for students to act on their Christian Orthodox values.

In the last two weeks the Year 6 students have been busy applying, in writing, for the position of Primary School Captains. The applicants presented a speech to the Year 4, 5 and 6 teachers and students who subsequently voted for the candidates that they felt would make suitable captains. Two girls and two boys have been elected as Primary School Captains. Congratulations to all the candidates who presented, we were so proud of you. Your love and commitment to make this a better school was evident. Your enthusiasm and passion to make it a fun and learning environment was also evident.

There will be more opportunities for students to go for other leadership positions such as House Captains, Eco leaders, Student Representative Council and Peer Mediators



Congratulations to our School Captains!

Marina Mendrinou

Sophia Xanthis

Dean Antos

Arsenios Zervides

Special mention must be made to our College Captains who assisted me in the first Primary School Assembly on Friday. If this was an indication of their commitment to the college, our junior year's students have excellent mentors to guide them along.



### SUNSMART POLICY

A reminder that children **MUST** wear a broadbrimmed, bucket or legionnaire hat when playing outside (in both terms one and four). This is also a requirement when playing sport, at physical education sessions and on excursions. Please ensure children have appropriate hats for fun in the sun. Thank you.

### My Word Origin Segment

This week's word is **zany** • In the dialect of Italian spoken around Venice, Zanni is a nickname for Giovanni, or John. Giovanni was the nickname of a particular goofy character in farcical theatrical productions, and thus Zanni came to mean any character whose job it was to look ridiculous. The word transferred into English (zany) in William Shakespeare's play *Love's Labour Lost*, first staged during the twelve days of Christmas in 1597

*Ms. M. Adams—Head of Junior Years Education*

### School Events.....

#### February

Friday 20<sup>th</sup>: Year 6 Peer Mediation Day

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> BPDSSA Swimming Carnival

#### March

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> School Photos

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> ELC Parent Information Evening

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> PMP Information Morning  
(Prep Rest Day)

## STUDENT SERVICES REPORT

### PRIMARY SCHOOL CLASS CAPTAINS TERM 1 2009

Prep A	N/A	N/A
Prep S	N/A	N/A
1P	James Liouzas	Irene Pilakis
1T	Michael Finfinis	Andrea Georgiou
2P	Michael Likapoulos	Vayia Karanikas
2V	Theo Panagiotopoulos	Mary Seriatos
3K	Nick Goumas	Maria Pappas
3M	Liam Diamantopoulos	Leah Robatsos
4C	Nicholas Chatgoglou	Sophia Koutsioulis
4T	Mahi Pappas	Georgia Noutso
5G	Perry Katopodis	Angel Maretis
5P	Michael Andrea	Maria Anevlavis
6A	Tomas Theodore	Elisabeth Goss
6P	James Floulis	Helen Anestopoulos

### PRIMARY SCHOOL VIPS AND STUDENT OF THE WEEK AWARDS—13/2/09

Prep A	Harry Anestopoulos	Jenni Babatsias
Prep S	Rydon Tochovitis	Sophia Philios
1P	Stevie Garth	Christopher Micheil
1T	Katie Lelekakis	Athan Tochovitis
2P	Andrew Asimakopoulos	Mia Diamantopoulos
2V	Helena Katsipodas	Harrison Dimopoulos
3K	Samantha Kagarakis	Nicholas Petrakis
3M	Christina Gougoussis	George Kypreos
4C	Evan Panagiotou	Mary Markos
4T	Georgia Tsiagalos	Lambros Konstantellos
5G	Victoria Maltezos	George Tsitouridis
5P	Costa Comninakis	Kathlea Tamvakis
6A	Sophia Karras	Dean Nicopoulos
6P	Danai Angelopoulou	Christina Liatsos

### IT'S CIRCLE TIME AT OGO

The wellbeing of our students underpins everything we do at Oakleigh Greek Orthodox College. Our Pastoral Care program teaches students to be resilient and to respect others. One of the ways we help our students to get on well is to involve them in an activity called "Circle Time."

**Circle time is a group activity, in which students and teachers sit down together with the purpose of furthering understanding of themselves and of one another.**

Teachers make sure that there are no barriers between participants in the form of desks or classroom clutter, and often provide an object that can be passed around the circle with only the person holding it being allowed to speak at any time. This object could be anything — a toy, perhaps, or a natural object such as a large shell — as long as it is bulky enough for the rest of the circle to see clearly who is holding it. Each person should be able to see everyone's face too. The class teacher also sits in the circle as an equal rather than as a superior.

**The main principles and guidelines of circle time are as follows:**

- Circle time is a space within the school curriculum into which each person comes with unconditional acceptance.
- It is not the place for judgment or coercion.
- It provides an opportunity to learn and explore through the discussion of experiences and individuality.

Used properly, circle time is not a forum for behaviour-management intervention. Rather, it's a space in which children can learn the skills they need to thrive in life, such as effective communication, emotional literacy, anger management, peer mediation and conflict resolution. These may, in turn, have a positive impact on behaviour in those pupils, but this is a side-effect rather than a goal of circle time. Even the most beautifully behaved classes would still benefit from circle time.

Generally pupils love circle time and the opportunities it gives them to talk about themselves and one another, but it is still essential to establish some basic guidelines for all to

follow. The reality of a well run circle is such that **very few 'rules' are actually needed.**

- Only one person is to speak at any one time.
- It's perfectly acceptable to 'pass' on anything you don't want to talk about.
- All circle members will show respect for one another at all times.

**There are a number of activities that teachers use during circle time.**

- Playing a game (Miming Games)
- Discussing an issue (Setting Classroom Norms or 'Rules')
- Checking in (How was your weekend?)
- Checking out (What do you look forward to doing tonight?)
- Reviewing Curriculum (What have you learnt today?)
- Healing / Problem Solving (What happened at lunch-time?)

We are committed to using Circle Time and Restorative Practices as the approach to building and maintaining positive relationships throughout our college as the development of Emotional Literacy has been recognised as a core element in the success of a child's future.



Mr Perry using Circle Time in his Music Class

**Con Roubos—Head of Student Service (Primary)**

## INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAM UPDATE

A number of changes have occurred at the start of yet another busy year. With this in mind, I have put the “new” things first!

New teachers: Three new instrumental teachers have started with OGO in 2009 –

**Regina Grace**, who will be teaching piano on **Wednesdays**. Students who have been allocated to Ms Grace have already been informed, and any new students of piano will have Ms Grace as their teacher.

**Priscilla Tie**, who will be teaching violin on **Thursdays**. I am delighted to see that most of the violin students from 2008 are continuing this year. Ms Tie is also experienced in the Suzuki method, having learned violin via that method, and therefore very young children may consider taking lessons if desired. Please speak to Mr Perry for more information.

**Peter Lithotomos**, who will be teaching bouzouki and other Greek instruments on **Saturday mornings at OGO**, at the same time as the Greek Saturday School. Parents who are interested taking up the opportunity of their child studying a traditional Greek instrument, please contact Mr Perry in the first instance, either at the College or via email: [dperry@ogoc.vic.edu.au](mailto:dperry@ogoc.vic.edu.au).

Mr Lithotomos has been teaching Greek instruments for the past 20 years, and directs the successful band “Meraklithes”. He has been teaching a half dozen OGO students privately for at least the past year, some of whom have played in College performances, including Presentation Night. Mr Lithotomos places great importance upon music theory and understanding of scales, as well as exposure to performance.

Byron Triandafyllidis, the former Greek instruments teacher, will not be at the College this year, due to personal circumstances and performance commitments. I realize that some parents had made payments to Byron for instrumental lessons. Those parents should contact Byron directly on 0408 317 069. I apologise for any difficulties this may have caused.

Drum group: Along with other after-school activities, we are proposing an extra-curricular drum group to be directed by our drumkit / percussion teacher, David Ruljancich. This group will run from 3.30 – 4.15 every Wednesday afternoon, for **10 weeks over the semester**. Participants will learn to play a variety of percussion instruments, including hand drums, and to play and perform as an ensemble. **This ensemble is open to primary and secondary students.**

Details for this ensemble are still being finalised, but parents can still register their interest for this ensemble by emailing Mr Perry on [dperry@ogoc.vic.edu.au](mailto:dperry@ogoc.vic.edu.au). We hope for the drum group to start in the next couple of weeks.

Choir: Choir will be starting again **this Wednesday lunchtime**. Along with this rehearsal, choristers will have another rehearsal time once every two weeks. There are a number of performances waiting for our choir to participate, so let’s get singing!! Please encourage your child to participate if you feel they will enjoy and benefit from it. Choir is open to students from Year 2 to Year 6.

Instrumental lessons: Remember that studying an instrument at the College is open to **primary and secondary students**. Instrumental fees this year are **\$25 per half hour for individual lessons** and **\$18 for group lessons**. Limitations apply for some instruments – please contact Mr Perry on [dperry@ogoc.vic.edu.au](mailto:dperry@ogoc.vic.edu.au) if you wish to know more. Instruments and times are as follows:

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Nicola Eveleigh – flute, recorder, voice</i>	<i>David Ruljancich – drumkit, percussion; Regina Grace – piano</i>	<i>Paul Varone – guitar; Alex Garsden – piano; Priscilla Tie – violin</i>	<i>Alex Garsden – piano</i>	<i>Peter Lithotomos – Greek instruments</i>

*David Perry- Performing Arts Co-ordinator*

## ELC REPORT

It’s great to see that all the children have well and truly settled in to the kinder environment with eagerness to learn and discover everything around them. This kind of enthusiasm is what ignites the passion in us as teachers to explore and question along with our students the greater world beyond our neighbourhood. As we all know, the tragic bush-fires in our state have affected all of us in one way or another and many of us may not realize that our children too have been exposed to and felt the impact. Young children in particular have an amazing capacity to view such devastating events with innocence, optimism and empathy that they often take us by surprise. Our program this week will focus on the topic of bush fires and the effects on human, animal and plant life. The bush fire events have prompted

us to explore the topic of peoples, communities and the Australian environment much sooner in the year than usual.

Reminder: Please ensure that your child brings with them on each day they attend the ELC an appropriate sun hat and their own bottle of sunscreen. Parents are asked to apply sunscreen to their children in the morning before kinder and teachers will re apply sunscreen to children later in the day as required.

ELC Parent Information Evening: To be held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March at 7.00pm-8.30pm at the ELC. We hope to see you there.

*Mrs. Elli Lithotomos— Teacher-In-Charge of ELC*

# INSIGHTS

by Michael Grose - Australia's No 1 parenting educator

## Help your children make sense of the natural disasters

*As adults we all want our children to live carefree lives and keep them from the pain and even horror of tragedies such as natural disasters. In reality we can't do this.*

The Queensland floods and the Victorian bushfires continue to wreak incredible havoc on so many people's lives and will no doubt leave an indelible imprint on our collective psyches. These two natural disasters will be brought into our living rooms via the media over the coming days and weeks.

As adults we all want our children to live carefree lives and keep them from the pain and even horror of tragedies such as natural disasters. In reality we can't do this.

So what is a parent, teacher, or other caring adult to do when the natural disasters fills the airwaves and the consciousness of society? Here are some ideas:

1. **Reassure children that they are safe.** The consistency of the images can be frightening for young children who don't understand the notion of distance and have difficulty distinguishing between reality and fiction. Let them know that while this event is indeed happening it will not affect them directly.
2. **Be available.** Let kids know that it is okay to talk about the unpleasant events. Listen to what they think and feel. By listening, you can find out if they have misunderstandings, and you can learn more about the support that they need. You do not need to explain more than they are ready to hear, but be willing to answer their questions.
3. **Help children process what they see and hear, particularly through television.** Children are good observers but can be poor interpreters of events that are out of their level of understanding.
4. **Support children's concerns for others.** They may have genuine concerns for the suffering that will occur and they may need an outlet for those concerns. It is heartwarming to see this empathy in children for the concerns of others.
5. **Let them explore feelings beyond fear.** Many children may feel sad or even angry with these events so let them express the full range of emotions. They may feel sadder for the loss of wildlife, than for loss of

human life, which is impersonal for them.

6. **Help children and young people find a legitimate course of action if they wish.** Action is a great antidote to stress and anxiety so finding simple ways to help, including donating some pocket money can assist kids to cope and teaches them to contribute.
7. **Avoid keeping the television on all the time.** The visual nature of the media means that images are repeated over and over, which can be both distressing to some and desensitizing to others.
8. **Be aware of your own actions.** Children will take their cues from you and if they see you focusing on it in an unhealthy way then they will focus on it too. Let them know that it is happening but it should not dominate their lives.
9. **Take action yourself.** Children who know their parents, teachers, or other significant caregivers are working to make a difference feel hope. They feel safer and more positive about the future. So do something. It will make you feel more hopeful, too. And hope is one of the most valuable gifts we can give children and ourselves.

Children's worlds can be affected in ways that we can't even conceive of so adults need to be both sensitive to children's needs and mindful of what they say and how they act in front of children.

In difficult times, it is worth remembering what adults and children need most are each other.

**Published by Michael Grose Presentations. All rights reserved.**

**Michael Grose is one of Australia's leading parenting educators. For more parenting information and resources visit [www.parentingideas.com.au](http://www.parentingideas.com.au)**

**PO Box 167 Balnarring VIC 3926 P. 03 5983 1798 F. 03 5983 1722 E. [office@parentingideas.com.au](mailto:office@parentingideas.com.au)**