



PRINCIPAL'S PRIZE-GIVING ADDRESS 2010

I looked at my last year's prize-giving speech and noted with interest that I started off with "This has been a fantastic year" - this leaves me very little room to move as 2010 has been an even better year! So, I am going to say that 2010 was a vintage year with a wonderful harvest. Our students have done so well on the sports field, in cultural events and in academic terms.

One of the most memorable events was the outstanding success in Stage Challenge. We hope that you saw it either on the night itself or at our school concert in July. This wonderful animated electric circus-based dance sequence was one of the most stunning Stage Challenge concepts I have ever seen. Congratulations to all the students in Stage Challenge.

Another notable success is this year's Young Enterprize group who were the Wellington Regional team selected for the National contest. These outstanding young entrepreneurs went to a special dinner earlier in November and Mrs Durant told me that their presentation of their product was outstanding. They did not win the National contest but they did our

school great credit and it is a significant first for the College as it is our best showing so far in the Young Enterprize Awards.

Another first for the College is our triumph in the Henning Cup which is the Premier Debating contest. Laura Kelly, Wendy Zhu and Natasha Henden beat a very competitive side from Scots College. Natasha Henden also received the cup for the best speaker of the debate.

A team that has earned our College real respect in the local community is our Civil Defence team. These girls were First equal this year with St

Patrick's Silverstream for the local Civil Defence Shield but it is the fifth year in a row that they have won this shield. They have almost started using ditto marks on the shield engraving as Sacred Heart College virtually have "ownership" of the shield! Sacred Heart College also took out the cup for the best team spirit! Well done to this fantastic group of students.

Also first this year was the wonderful trip to Rarotonga that our Kapahaka group did with St Bernard's. Thank you Whaea Frost and Mr Waiti. Thank you also to many parent helpers. Kia ora koutou katoa.

Another major success for this year is the netball team's triumph over Hutt Valley High School in a wonderful final for the Premier A netball

trophy. On the same night our “Team of the Year” Year 10 netball team won a stunning curtain raiser against St Oran’s College. The senior team’s success in the local Premier A contest is the first time since 1999 that we have won the cup.

This is also the first year we have had a Sports Captain and Natasha Narasy has carried this role with great dignity and a huge amount of energy. Thank you Natasha.

This is also an opportunity for me to acknowledge our Sportsperson of the year, Kate Enoka and our Coach of the Year Deborah Hunter who led the fantastic Year 10 team to victory in netball.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of Tessa Siolo-Thompson who won the Volunteer of the Year at both our own sports awards and at last night’s dinner in town. Congratulations to all our sports finalists:

Danica Ferriso, Julianne Alvarez, Barbara Parreno, Natasha Narasy, Hannah Freebairn, Kate Enoka, Nadine Manning.

Our successful sports “awarders” were:

Danica Ferriso – Best All Rounder

Nadine Manning – Gymnastics, and

Julianne Alvarez for golf and she is only in Year 9.

This has also been an outstanding year for the Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award Scheme. We had fifteen Gold Award recipients at a delightful ceremony with the Governor General and Lady Hillary on the Massey University Campus. It was a very memorable day. Our new Duke of Ed. Co-ordinator, Emma Peterson, deserves special mention as she has really made the role her own this year and led some fantastic expeditions. She is always cheerful, well-organized and we are so glad that she has brought new zest to our outdoor ed. department. We also thank all the teachers and parents who have marched out into the bush in sometimes very questionable weather (Yes – I've seen the photos of the Heaphy expedition where the track looked like a stream!)

Our students also won two cups at O'Shea Shield which this year was held at Francis Douglas College. One cup was earned by our debating team and Sister Valerie and Sister Jo will be pleased that the other was for the religious questions.

Important for parents to know that we have not neglected the academic side either. We have NCEA results which again place us as the highest performing Decile 7 school in our region, but we also out perform schools in the higher decile band too. We are proud of the academic success of our Maori and Pasifika students who continue to run counter to the National trends which give our Ministry of Education cause for anxiety.

We have a very special homework group which is open to all students. My thanks to Pam Breek and other staff for assisting with this. A special thanks to Pam for assisting our Pasifika group with their performances. Their performance in the Polyfest at the TSB Events Centre was outstanding. A small group have also performed at Te Papa with great credit. A special thanks to our Deans and to the fine pastoral care given from form teachers. At the end of this year five of our Deans will have 3 days of training in restorative justice practice. Our school is committed to change not blame in all matters of discipline.

None of this happens in a school without a very special part of this equation. If this was chemistry I might say:

$$S + SHS = MS$$

That is: Students + Super Hero Staff equals a "Mega School."

My description of a mega school is not 'BIG is GOOD' because we are still only 800 in student numbers, but it would be this:

A school in which the climate and tone of the school allows for maximum focus on learning and where all members of that community understand the need for co-operation, respect and a constant review of standards.

I would like to thank my colleagues for providing just these sorts of opportunities for our young people and to assure parents that you are getting great value at this college. We are currently working on a

Performing Arts Centre as our Centenary Project and in fact I have a meeting with our architects tomorrow. We have had a few unfortunate hold-ups with this project but it is very much back on track now.

Speaking of staff leads me to the sad part of school life – the saying good-bye. This year we are losing a wonderful Dean who has given 10 years of service to the College. I refer to Gabrielle Bartholomew who is a respected teacher of English and Religious Education and she has given wonderful support to our ESOL learners and to the Special Character of our College. Gabrielle, thank you for your humour, your pastoral care of students and your laughter. We will miss you.

[Flowers presented by Charlotte Aspin]

Also leaving is our HOD Information Technology, Mike Wespel-Rose. Like Gabrielle he has new plans and pathways. It is healthy to have a break from teaching and we wish Mike well for his future plans which include language learning and music tuition. Thank you for your contribution to IT in the College, Mike and for your work with the guitar group.

Jenna Brooking is also leaving to do further study. She is hoping to do a Masters degree in English literature. Jenna is the coach of our victorious Premier A debating team and we wish her well in the future.

Marion Gibson, our Home Economics teacher, is leaving after 4 years at Sacred Heart College. Marion came to us as a part-timer and has been a well organized teacher in this busy practical subject. Marion has qualifications in psychology and is keen to pursue an academic career. She will be doing a Ph.D with research into eating disorders. We wish her well for the future.

We are fully staffed for 2010. The new appointments are Simon Blandford from The Maling School, Kent, United Kingdom and our own Tim Baxter who has done a great job relieving for us this year, Adam Glover from Chilton St James and John Screech who has also had time at Sacred Heart College this year. Sandy Roundill has also been appointed HOD Information Technology which is about to be called Digital Technology I am told.

There are two more special people to acknowledge this evening. The first is our out-going Board Chairperson, Rowan Southee. Rowan is presenting our Year 13 awards tonight. Rowan has done two terms on our Board. We presented him with a token of our appreciation at a special assembly in June of this year. Thank you to both Rowan and Jill for all the support they have given to Sacred Heart College.

The second person is Terry Bartlett. Terry has now had a twenty year association with Sacred Heart College. He has been Chair of the Board

of Trustees and more recently Chair of the Mission colleges Lower Hutt Trust Board. I have asked our Head Girl and Deputy Head Girl to present Terry with a gift to show our appreciation of outstanding service.

[Moushmi and Brooke come forward]

This year we have had three special assemblies to acknowledge good work and achievements. I have written over 160 special letters of commendation for work that is forwarded to me by teachers as part of a scheme known as “The Principal’s noticeboard” but in reality more of a cluttered desk! But - I do read and look at all the work submitted and I am always impressed by it.

I would like to acknowledge the work our Guidance Counsellor Jenny Ellis does with both Peer Support and the School Council and the School Council this year have been very selfless in their commitment to helping others. They have contributed money for Muscular Dystrophy, Te Omanga Hospice, a post-earthquake “cheer-up” for elderly Christchurch residents and money to a Sister College in Christchurch.

Our School Council also gave \$1200 to Caritas for their Pakistan Appeal and in our World Vision Group master-minded by Katie Bardsley, Courtney Tokorangi, Georgia Jarvis and Louise Chow we raised a staggering \$10,000 plus for World Vision and yes, for three weeks I was blonde until I got sick of the blonde jokes. I had no idea there were so

many. The one I liked the best was “Why did the blonde put lipstick on her forehead?” - “because she was making up her mind.”

I have to say that I did not notice any difference in my decision making during my blonde era so don't believe all you hear about blondes.

Finally, I would like to wish our Year 13 students well for the future. They have so many wonderful qualities and are a very fine cohort. They are kind, warm, compassionate, and really good fun. We hope that your tertiary education is rewarding and memorable. A very special thanks to Moushmi and Brooke who have been wonderful leaders. Brooke marks a special moment for me as I taught her Dad at Makoura College in Masterton. I didn't think that the 1973 girl in a mini-skirt would wake up 38 years later to find herself still in a school, but thankfully not in a mini-skirt!

We are less than two years away from our centennial celebrations and we hope many of you will return to catch up with each other and re-live the memories. We will be celebrating one hundred years of Catholic education for girls in the Hutt Valley.

We are poised to move into a new decade with a school that is running at capacity under full sail.

We are proud of every one of our students and stand for the principles laid down by our Sisters. Our task, as theirs was, is the transmission of the values, beliefs and love that are at the heart of our faith. Our faith as we share it at Sacred Heart College is not doctrinaire, not emphatic but more of an exploration. T.S. Eliot put this quest in a very neat summary:

“We shall not cease from exploration
And at the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know that place for the first time.”

We want every girl to feel unique and valued. We acknowledge parents as the prime educators of children but we strive to give value added. Our thanks to all our parents and care-givers for the wonderful support you give.

No reira e nga kotiro o Year 13 kia kaha kia toa, kia manawanui. Piki mai kake mai. Tena koutou katoa.