Principal’s Report

Dear Friend of Ashley School,

Thank you for taking the time to read our End of Year newsletter. What another great year it has been at Ashley School and how fast the year seems to have passed. Seems like everyone I talk to is saying this at present. For our students a year at our school can seem a very long time especially if one is here for a considerable length of time as our school has been open for 48 weeks this year with no holiday time, for our students but this has not curbed their enthusiasm and engagement to learn. Our dedicated and motivated school staff have provided a safe rich learning environment and a diverse curriculum that is conducive to student learning, engagement and achievement. Well done to all our students this year for their positive attitude, respect and manners that each have demonstrated throughout 2012.

This year we have trialled a number of new initiatives that have challenged our students to extend their thinking skills and abilities. Ian Mackenzie stepped up to the role of numeracy leader providing specialist support often via alternative methods. Some of the strategies Ian has used include, computer aided graphics and Lego as a means to hook in students’ interest and engagement. With the excellent assistance from Margaret Howard they have developed a numeracy test tailored to our students’ needs. Data gathered from each students test results are condensed and then graphed. Individual students can use these graphs to view their improvements and identify gaps in their learning. In addition to this we conducted a ‘Testing Week’ whereby all teachers prepared individual tests for their students across all learning areas. Future testing weeks will become intrinsic in our planning throughout 2013. Testing weeks are not only specifically designed to check for knowledge and understanding but also for our students to become more resilient as testing is a part of everyday life that all of society experiences in one form or another. The week went down well and all students participated without any fuss.

Throughout this year we have continued our ‘giving theme’ which is always highly supported by our students. I am always pleased with the involvement and commitment our students make to commemorate such days as ANZAC Day as well as other days of importance throughout the year. All students celebrated Bandana Day whereby they gave generous donations from their own savings. Many students got the opportunity to participate in the ‘Mugs and Bowls’ project. This was voluntary for students and many were involved in the decorating of bowls and mugs which have been donated to Youth on Paterson. Another initiative our students really got behind was decorating almost 40 prefabricated cardboard stools which were sold at a fundraising drive and auction held in Hobart. The proceeds of the sale of these stools were used to assist with the Save the Children Australia Foundation’s Ashley Transition Program. Congratulations to Mr. Mackenzie and those students upon successfully completing the trailer project for Youth Connections. This trailer will be used to deliver programs and activities for youth on the northwest coast. Our school logo will be proudly displayed on the finished product. It has also been great to see the commitment of some of our students to growing lilliums again this year. These flowers will be offered to our local age care facilities, local hospital as well as on sale to the Ashley and local community in early 2013.
Principal’s Report Continued....... 

From time to time during each year we hear from some of our past students. In most cases they contact the school for copies of certificates of achievement that were gained whilst attending our school. It is always very pleasing to hear that in many cases they are doing fine, getting on with their lives and staying out of trouble. These students generally require these copies of certificates when applying for new employment opportunities and positions.

Our school always welcomes many well known and distinguished guests throughout the year and some of the visitors this year included the Education Minister, Nick McKim and his opposition counterpart Michael Ferguson. We are all very proud of what we achieve here together and this is very evident from the feedback we receive from many of our visitors. Our students always enjoy the opportunity to chat with visitors and this is usually undertaken with the utmost use of manners and respect.

As per usual I would like to sincerely thank Bill Smith, (Manager AYDC) his senior management team and the rest of the wider Ashley community for all the support, trust and flexibility that you have provided to our school throughout 2012. Working in a custodial environment always has risks attached to all school resources used by our students in all learning areas and I thank you all for allowing and trusting us to get on with our job. This positive relationship between us has allowed for the provision of rich learning environments that are the envy of many of our mainland youth detention centre schools.

Our technology curriculum plays a significant part in our students school life and I would like to praise the efforts, commitment and skills of Bruce O’Toole (woodwork), Ian Mackenzie (metalwork), Nathan Holland (Polytechnic Building and Construction) and Jon Kerrison (automotive) who continue to motivate our students to bring out their best, have fun and produce some really excellent outcomes and products. The school in partnership with the detention centre are currently building a dedicated area in the foyer of the Centre to display student projects for all to see.

Congratulations to the detention centre management team on their commitment to build (as money permitted and with an initial donation from the school) a new dedicated program delivery area complete with offices for case management and programs personal. The new building will further enhance opportunities for our students via program delivery and therapeutic support.

It is with much sadness that we farewell one of our teachers, Sarah Mott. Sarah has been with us for the past four years and during this time she has made a significant positive impact on our school and her students. Previous to this Sarah was employed by the detention centre for two years as a service provider delivering an art program. Her role for the past four years has been core teacher of our post-grade ten students. Sarah has assisted so many of her students to make positive choices in their lives as well as transitioning many of her students into employment or further education when they leave us. Sarah will join the Learning Services North’s alternative education facility RADAR in Launceston. Her transfer will still have a positive effect on our school as Sarah will play an important role when assisting those of our students who transition to RADAR upon release. The whole of the Ashley School community wish her all the very best in her new position.

I would like to acknowledge Bruce O’Toole for stepping up as usual to acting principal when I take leave. This change in leadership circumstances throughout the year has become seamless with little impact on student learning or the day to day operation of the school. To Jill Budgeon, (SEO) a big thanks for your continued support in management of the administration side of things. Jill often has to think ‘outside the square’ with the unique challenges that often occur when running a unique school such as ours. To our support staff a genuine thank you for all that you do for the teachers and students. On behalf of the staff at Ashley School I would like to wish our students, the wider Ashley community and supporters of Ashley School a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe 2013.

Shane Stanton
Principal

End of Year Student Awards

Minister for Education “Global Citizen Award for Thinking Globally, Acting Locally” — Zac, Tori
Principal’s Award — Aaron, Steven
Students of the Year Award — Julian, Aaron, Ashton, Jake
Technology Award Metalwork — Dylan
Technology Award Woodwork — Aaron, Jake
Health and Physical Education Award — Michael, Jake
Library Award — Albert
C.S Memorial Award — Blake
Numeracy Award— Robert, Jake

Merry Christmas
It’s been a big year in health and wellbeing at Ashley School. All Students need to be congratulated on the way they have conducted themselves for the whole year. Some students were new to learning about fitness, strength conditioning and team sports, so it was good to see students work outside their comfort zones. Most lessons were exciting, challenging, hard work and most importantly enjoyable. Majority of students now understand the importance of having a healthy balanced lifestyle and the effects it can have on them. I believe some students who will leave Ashley in the near future will have a keen interest in fitness when they are back in society and will do for the remainder of their lives.

We ended the year in health and wellbeing with a successful athletics carnival. Firstly I would like to thank all the students who participated over the 3 days. It was a huge effort from everyone to give their best day in day out. In my 5 years at Ashley this Athletics carnival would be the most successful, due to the fact that everyone participated and gave their best in every event. The encouragement, sportsmanship and competitiveness were of a high standard by everyone. By day three of the carnival a few students were complaining of soreness and some fell to injury, but this didn’t lower their spirits. There was a lot of fun and laughter had during the events also which made for a great day overall. The under and over age competitions were close from start to finish. Nearly everyone won a personal medal during the carnival, which would be the widest spread of medal winners I have seen, the under 16 winner was Michael, followed closely by Robert, Nic, and Zac. The Over 16 Winner was Steven, closely followed by Jake who had tight battles in all events. The overall house scores were as tight as the individual competition. Wellington were clear winners for the best part of two and a half days, however Ben Lomonds’ fighting spirit allowed them to make a late charge and took out the tug of war to become the 2012 winning house. This typified the closeness of the whole event and capped off a great carnival. The final award went to Tyler for the “Have a go Award” teachers had a tough time selecting the winner as there were a number of notable candidates, it could of gone to anyone of them, but we thought Tyler typified the true meaning of the award.

Lastly I would like to thank all youth workers and teachers who contributed throughout the three days. So well done everyone.
Wow what a term! Our students have been busy with a variety of programs and educational activities. We have continued with our CAD (Computer Aided Drawing), which is a skill development program based around measurement, scale, spatial and visual awareness using Google Sketchup you may have seen some of the work on display in our school. Our students have been busy working on a range of mathematical ideas, skills and concepts. One of our focuses this term has been on fractions. The fraction unit started out of a metalwork concept having to convert imperial drill bit sizes to metric and vice-versa. We started with what is a fraction, the parts of a fraction, how many of these parts make a whole and the sizing of fractions. From there to mixed numbers, equivalent, improper, proper fractions then on to the conversion of fractions to decimals and decimals back to fractions. Some students are now able to convert imperial drill bits and some of the groups moving on to addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of fractions.

Our other main focus was around ratio and gearing. We have used Lego Technics to explore this concept. Students had to design and construct a range of vehicles from the fastest vehicle to a vehicle that could travel up the steepest incline. Students had to investigate gearing and ratios to either gear it up or gear it down depending on their challenge. Students had a range of trial and error processes before they ended up with their final vehicle. With the incline challenge a couple of students were able to get their vehicles to travel up an incline of 65° and 70°. The fastest vehicle was able to get to a speed of 6.6 km/h which was 1 ½ times faster than a 1:1 standard vehicle. This challenge highlighted the importance of torque to get the vehicle moving.

Our metalwork program has been running well as an elective. Some students that have been attending on a regular basis have progressed well and are up to making their 8th or 9th project. The overall standards of work, attitude, aptitude and productivity achieved by these students are excellent. A couple of standout students this term were Aaron and Jake for their involvement with the trailer and the park benches and picnic table projects. Their efforts are commendable and very much appreciated. Well done to all the students that attend these electives.

Until next time Macca!

Metalwork Teacher
It has been a real privilege to be a part of all of my students’ learning. I have really enjoyed sharing my days with such an amazing array of young people who all have their own individual strengths and characters. As a teacher at Ashley School I have learned a great deal about myself as a teacher and as a person, about humour, patience, persistence, timing, and not to get caught rolling my eyes!

Looking back on the years that I have spent at Ashley - first with programs in the art room, then with Ashley School, I realise how much I am left enriched by the experience. I am very grateful to all of my students, colleagues and youth workers who have touched my life and enjoyed the ride with me. You have been my daily family, my support, my friends, and my sounding board in tricky situations and my valued colleagues.

My students here have all been so special to me; I have been challenged (in more ways than academically!!!) Been laughed with (and at!) I have been cross and frustrated, proud and delighted at their progress. It has been an honour to share their learning and instil a love of successful learning. I have been well rewarded by my older students in seeing them become self-motivated and independent in their learning, achieving their goals and gaining qualifications and certificates.

I take with me the many rich memories and experiences that I will always treasure. There are many things that my students have taught me but most of all;
Never promise what you may not be able to deliver!
Never entertain an argument with a teen - they have had a lot of practice!!!
Always celebrate success - no matter how small it may seem!

I always knew that looking back on the tears would make me laugh but I never knew that looking back on the laughs (and there has been plenty of them!) would make me cry. So whilst I am filled with great sadness to be leaving my students, my colleagues and my friends at Ashley I am excited to be heading on to new challenges and experiences at RADAR. I am very glad that I will still be working with some of our students in the community and will have the opportunity to come and visit Ashley regularly.

So as I prepare to say a very hard goodbye, I remind myself that it is not truly a goodbye, it is "until next time...”

Sarah Mott
Teacher - Senior Secondary
Student transition facilitator
2012; the year of the bat, the National year of reading, the year of the farmer, the year of living fearlessly, the International year of sustainable energy, and meant to be the year where our World as we know it comes to an end. And this is but a few of the themes. It is also the year where I clock up ten years working at “Ashley”, 3 and a bit years with the Department of Health and Human Services, and the last 7 years with Ashley School. Never in that time have I had a boring day at work. Each day has been a rewarding challenge and an opportunity to participate in the growth and development of our students’ and to contribute to the professional growth of our school. I’ve been a lucky chap.

Our woodwork/technology curriculum has continued to offer our students the opportunity to practice their knowledge and skills in a real world, purposeful setting. I am a strong advocate for schools to maintain a robust Vocational and Applied Learning (VAL) curriculum and have often supported the notion that the study of VAL subjects is for the purpose to prepare our students with the skills and concepts they need in order to negotiate, contribute and enjoy their lives beyond school. Projects have ranged from coffee tables to low-line entertainment units, and from jewellery boxes to toys made for members of our students’ family. We have been fortunate to secure some specialty timbers and the projects made can feature black heart sassafras, myrtle or celery top pine. A big thankyou to Mr Stanton (our Principal) for making this happen.

In addition to woodwork we are again growing four beds of Oriental Liliums and a number of students have embraced this program. This is a great syllabus that immerses our students in a practical line a study which connects them to a broad range of vocational possibilities. When the flowers have grown they will be cut and bunched exactly as one would do in a flower growing business and made available as gifts to community organisations and or sold to help recover some of the costs associated with the program.

I would like to congratulate all of my students for their excellent efforts during the year and wish them and all staff at Ashley School a happy Christmas and an exciting and rewarding New Year. If Miss Sarah finds herself in a new school next year then I would like to wish her all the best and hope she misses us as much as we will miss her and am sure the beneficiary school will be a better place with her talents. If she is with us next year, I deny having said any of the above.

Bruce O’Toole.
Teacher
Another great year passes us by, with lots of highly motivated students engaging in a number of educational and vocational courses. All students have been busily planning for their futures through the participation in: Barista Coffee Courses, Manual Handling Courses, White Card Courses, Grade 10 short Courses and RSA Courses. All students have really enjoyed the opportunity to be able to participate in a more constructive work load by engaging in online education. This term was an especially busy term for all students getting involved in a number of fundraising events as well as awareness weeks of particular interest to them.

Bandana Day is one of the biggest ‘not-for-profit’ fundraising and awareness events in Australia. This day was a great opportunity for Ashley School students and teachers to show their support for young people living with cancer. CanTeen supports young people aged 12-24 who are living with cancer and is based on the philosophy that no young person should go through their cancer experience alone. This year Ashley School had great success raising $200 for the noteworthy cause. Students participated by buying Bandanas and pens. Some students even purchased numerous bandanas as they believed it was a good cause to invest in and realise they could be affected by this at any stage of their life. We celebrated our success by having a friendly cricket match followed by the indulge in some lovely homemade ice creams made by some of the Work Life Skills students.

Save the Children Foundation had a fundraising gala dinner recently to sustain their ongoing support of the Hobart youth in need. All students became fully involved in the design and decorating of a number of stools for the Save the Children fundraising dinner where the stools were auctioned off to raise money to benefit Ashley students and their reintegration back into the community. The night was a great success with all stools being sold. A big well done to all who were involved in their decorating.

National Nutrition Week was a great way to raises awareness of how food and lifestyle choices impact on students' health. I broached the subject by showing students the film Supersize Me which is a documentary directed by and starring Morgan Spurlock. The documentary is based on a 30 day fast food challenge where he is only allowed to eat and drink what is available over the counter at a designated fast food outlet as well as water. The film documents this lifestyle's drastic effect on Spurlock's physical and psychological well-being and explores the fast food industry's corporate influence, including how it encourages poor nutrition for its own profit. Students found it extremely fascinating and were amazed by the drastic outcomes Spurlock encountered by participating in the challenge.

Remembrance Day this year was embraced by the study of history around the World Wars. Students enjoyed the detailed documentary of live footage filmed by photographer Damien Parer who sadly lost his life while filming in the Pacific Islands during World War 2. The documentary gave students great insight into what it was really like to be on the front line of war.

Overall it was a fantastic year and I look forward to an even better 2013!

Mrs Kostiuk
Teacher
A big thank you to all who have assisted Ashley School this year — Learning Services-state wide, DOE staff, Youth Justice workers, Family Services Case Workers, Community workers, Ashley Youth Workers, all AYDC staff and Management, Ashley School Association, and volunteers.

We wish you all a safe and enjoyable holiday season.