World Teachers' Day

Australian school students are amongst the best educated in the world, according to recent international surveys of student achievement. They also have more positive attitudes to school and better relationships with teachers than most other western countries.

This doesn't just happen. It reflects the work of teachers and principals, the involvement of parents and the commitment of students themselves.

As a community we need to acknowledge how much our young people benefit from the skills and knowledge, care and understanding and sustained commitment of teachers.

World Teachers' Day reminds us of the importance of all teachers who have touched our lives in some way. We should all take a moment to say thank you.

Gregor Ramsey, Chair, National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership, October 2005
From the Principal

** REMINDER – Staff Professional Development Day (Student Free), next Wednesday, 9th November. **

This Friday our Year 12 students conclude their formal classes at Xavier College. Over the next three weeks they will complete the most demanding assessment of their schooling and I ask all members of the College community to keep the intentions of these students in our thoughts and prayers. A whole school assembly on Friday will celebrate and acknowledge the contributions and achievements that the graduating class has made to the life of the College and this will be followed by a final Mass of thanksgiving.

Last Friday was the UNESCO proclaimed World Teachers’ Day and a letter from the Chair of the National Institute for Quality Teaching, printed on the front of the Newsletter, is an appropriate reminder of the commitment that so many make to the well-being of future generations. The candid photos of members of the teaching staff, also featured on the front page, capture something of what teachers give of themselves on a daily basis. The teaching staff is also fortunate to have the support of a dedicated group of Educational Support Officers who provide invaluable assistance in all aspects of school operations.

At our teachers meeting on Wednesday 29th October, I was reminded of the significant part that heritage plays in building community and establishing who we are as a people. The immediate past College Captain, Sasha Houthuyse returned to Xavier to talk to teachers about her own indigenous heritage and to make us aware of a range of programs provided by the Catholic Indigenous Council to support indigenous students. Sasha spoke emotively about her own family and the struggle her father has experienced in striving to reunite his family after it was forcibly fragmented a generation ago. She alluded to the sadness she had experienced in not knowing grandparents and her longing to know and understand her rich cultural heritage. Twelve months ago Sasha spoke eloquently at the Annual Catholic Education Indigenous Dinner on behalf of all the indigenous students who were graduating from Catholic schools.

On Friday 23rd October I was fortunate to attend the presentation of all the indigenous students who will graduate from Catholic schools in 2005. Three Xavier College students, Peter Curtis, Sam Farren and Joshua Gauci were recognised during the evening.

I have much pleasure in congratulating each of these students on their achievements.

Mr Lynn Martin
Principal

Gawler Town Council Youth Achievement Awards

Several students from Xavier College were recently nominated for the prestigious Gawler Town Council Youth Achievement Awards.

The award ceremony was held on Friday evening, 28th October and awards were presented during dinner. These awards are to recognise local young people who have excelled in the areas of sport, visual and performing arts, business and in their own life choices.

Nominees included Lisa Johnstone, (Performing Arts) Daniel Havelberg and Albet Alba (Sport) Adam Knott (Visual Arts) Jess Malycha and Josh Gauci (Life Choices). All Xavier College students who were nominated were runners up and received a certificate presented by the Mayor of Gawler, Tony Piccolo.

Year 11 student Jess Malycha received the winners plaque and a substantial cheque for the award of “Life Choices”. An overall award was presented for the Mayor’s female winner and male winner. Jess went on to win this award as well which topped a great evening for her. During the Mayor’s presentation speech he read from her nomination; “Jess attributes her success to a positive attitude under all circumstances”. Tony Piccolo commented that with such an approach Jess would continue to experience success and be an inspiration to us all.

Congratulations Jess (left) and all the runners-up who represented Xavier College extremely well.

National History Challenge Winner

Naomi Tucker (who recently won the State History Challenge) has won the National History Challenge 2005 award in the “Special Category of Using Primary Sources: Junior” A wonderful achievement. Congratulations Naomi.
My teenager and Sex

As children reach puberty, a new dimension enters into the parent-child relationship...Sex.

Despite all the jokes, most parents wish that this was a phase of their child’s development that they didn’t have to be involved in. It can be confusing and embarrassing for any parent.

Parents will respond to the psycho-sexual development of their children in varying ways. Culture, religious beliefs, fears, moral values and the personal sexual experience of the parent will influence how families will deal with a child’s emerging interest in sex and their sexual behaviour.

Some of the common questions that parents wrestle with are:

- Without being embarrassed, how do I talk to my adolescent about sex?
- What do I do if my Year 10 daughter asks me if her boyfriend can stay and sleep in her bed?
- Is masturbation normal?
- What do I do if my son or daughter is infatuated with someone and has lost all concentration and focus on studies?
- At what age, in today’s society is it appropriate for my child to be sexually active?

Over the last four decades, in western society, the median age of first intercourse has been falling. Young people are sexually active younger and younger. Studies show that 25% of Year 10 students in Australia have had sexual intercourse and 50% of Year 12 students are reported to be sexually active.

The problems associated with teenage sexual activity are well documented. Becoming infected by a sexually transmitted disease is a major concern. In the USA, it is reported that 1 in 4 of that nation’s sexually active teenagers have been infected by a sexually transmitted disease.

The problems of pregnancy and out of wedlock child-bearing are also severe.

Psychological and emotional problems associated with teenagers who are having The National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent’s Health in the USA found some disturbing things for teenagers (14 – 17 years old). The findings showed that:

- When compared to teens who are not sexually active, teenage boys and girls who are sexually active are significantly less likely to be happy and more likely to be depressed;
- When compared to teens who are not sexually active, teenage boys and girls who are sexually active are significantly more likely to attempt suicide.

What a different picture of life this study portrays, to that provided by adolescent magazines, fantasy and some television programs.

Interestingly, two thirds of teens in the survey who reported they had engaged in intercourse, stated they wished they had waited longer to become sexually active. Their expectations pre-intercourse had been unmet. Alerting your child to this adolescent regret could be useful as you speak to your child about sex.

There are numerous reasons cited in research studies for teenagers consenting to sexual intercourse, including:

- Seeking approval or acknowledgement from others.
- Desperately seeking warmth and love.
- Needing to feel special.

- Being compliant and non-assertive, ie: not having the skills to cope with being pressured.
- Believing that intercourse will lead to a sustained feeling of happiness.
- Not getting satisfaction from other areas of life.
- Boredom.
- Alcohol or drugs: in a Latrobe University study, 1 in 3 Year 10 students reported, being drunk or on drugs when they had sexual intercourse.
- Fear of losing a boyfriend or girlfriend if they don’t comply with a request for sex.

The teenage years are a very important time to safely explore relationships. Teenagers wrestle with defining themselves, working out what makes them attractive to others and defining what is attractive for them. At the same time, they are busy discovering their academic strengths and weaknesses.

Teenagers daydream and fantasize. It is much healthier to stay at this level than to strongly pursue the goal of turning fantasies into realities. Learning to relate to others, to enjoy time together and understanding how to recognise, meet and respect other’s needs should be encouraged.

Parents play a vital role in assisting their children through this important stage of life. Teenagers learn a great deal about themselves and others and establish the platform upon which they can build intimate relationships as adults.

Following are some ways parents can prepare their adolescents to have a healthy attitude to sex:

1. Teach your child that whatever they do in life, has a consequence and that their sexual activity impacts on their life and the lives of others.
2. Be a good role model.
3. Put the physical sex act into a context of wider behaviour. Giving sex a context is important.
4. Provide accurate information to your children in an age appropriate way.
5. Attend a parent-child sex information / relationship evening at your school.
6. Discuss values with your family and tell them what you believe in.
7. Discuss why delaying sexual intercourse until an older age is worthwhile and what the advantages might be.
8. Talk to your son or daughter about the high level of regret that adolescents experience when they have intercourse at a young age.

Not surprisingly, children unsupervised by parents are more likely to have sexual intercourse. Knowing and checking where your children are is a good first step to preventing an unwanted and later regretted moment for your child.

Most likely, you will be accused by your child of being old fashioned. “No other parent behaves like you” your child may tell you. Who cares? You are the adult! Negotiate safe and sensible boundaries with your child so that they can develop socially in age appropriate and safe ways.

John Cheetham is a psychologist, author and founding director of The Student Achievement Centre. For information about the Centre parents and students should visit: www.studentachievement.com.au
Cosmic Art Workshop

On the 28th October, Ashleigh, Naomi, Josh & myself went to Tanunda for the Cosmic Cluster Art program. We made lino prints using engravers, then we painted them and printed them with Christian (artist) and Graham (his side-kick). They taught us a few things we needed to know. I really liked it and had fun. The playground was cool!

By Leah Sissis

On the 28th October, Mrs Moore took us (Leah, Josh, Naomi & me) to Tanunda to etch and professionally print a picture of our choice. Artists showed up to help us – Christian and Graham, his helper.

By Ashleigh Trainor

On the 28th October we went to an Art thing and it was fun. We put ink on cardboard then rolled it with a special roller. It came out with the final product.

By Josh Sandell

We learnt how to make an engraved print, using oil paints and a colouring book picture. My prints were of Winnie the Pooh and a kitten. Christian and Graham, artists, were there to assist us with the printing.

By Naomi Tucker

Touch Football Carnival

Xavier College had the opportunity this week to submit a team in an inter-school Touch Football competition at Greenhill Road, Touch SA headquarters.

Touch Football has been an ongoing sport during the new Be Active program running all year. A large group of enthusiastic participants have been playing at lunch time, largely younger boys and girls, trying to beat the older more experienced (rugby playing) yr 12’s.

After a very impressive first up win against Sacred Heart College, the final results on the day certainly didn’t go our way. However, this was our first trip to the competitive field and many rules were still being learnt and some traps being set by more experienced teams were fallen for. I was extremely impressed with our teams attitude and fight on the day. Every team member was very encouraging and supportive of each other all day. Well done to all players.

Rebecca Ramsbotham, Matt Verrall, Justin Purcell, Terry Russell, Matt Gersch, Charlotte Berrill, Lachlan Greenhalgh, David King and Tom Farren.

Pete Thornton

Community Fair and Playford Gift free fun day

Saturday 19th November

In recognition of the 50th Anniversary of Elizabeth a free fun day will be held on and around Elizabeth (NAP) Oval

At Goodman Road/Fremont High At 1 pm

cutting of a large birthday cake with samples for all

Between 1 - 4 pm - free entry to the Aquadome

Between 1 - 6pm - free fun rides, food and wine festival, stalls, and entertainment by local groups to suit all ages

stop press - guest band: Saa Rock and roll all stars including Graham Cornes

Elizabeth Oval, 1.30 - 3pm - various sports clinics including: athletics - special coach Nova Peris - athletics and field hockey Olympian and star of Channel 9’s Celebrity Overhaul - football - netball and baseball

3.00 - 7.30 pm - Playford Gift Athletics carnival - SA’s elite athletes competing in races from 70 - 1600 metres

“a school of the future in the present”