June, 2013

Excellent 2012 results

Avila College has commenced the new school year, buoyed by some excellent results achieved by our Class of 2012.

Sixteen of our students achieved an ATAR of 95.00 and above with the 2012 College Dux, Laura De Rango securing an ATAR of 99.5. (See page 2.)

Laura, together with other high achievers 2012 College Captain Sarah Genovese and Emily Rebbechi, was awarded a scholarship of considerable monetary value to study engineering at Monash University. Laura is undertaking a double degree in engineering and science while Sarah and Emily are undertaking double degrees in engineering and biomedical science and architectural design and civil engineering respectively.

At the scholarship presentation at Monash University, Laura, Sarah and Emily, thanked Avila staff for their guidance and pedagogy while the university acknowledged the welcome level of interest in engineering by such competent young women.

Equipped with some exceptional results, the Class of 2012 is well underway with the next exciting chapter in their lives. Many have commenced tertiary education in a diverse range of studies and institutions while others have deferred, to travel and/or work or undertake volunteer positions in Australia and across the globe.

Most of our students gained their first preference for tertiary studies which covered many disciplines in the faculties of arts, science, health sciences, commerce and business, law, education and hospitality. The institutions selected varied with Monash and Deakin still the preferred universities and a number of students enrolled in TAFE courses.

The broad range of destinations and aspirations reflect the diverse interests of Avila students and the college support for all students, regardless of their interests, ambitions or ability.

In February about 15 students returned to address the current Year 12 cohort. They unanimously agreed that success requires a consistent effort, independence in study, excellent organisation and maintaining a good life balance. They encouraged students to be involved in extra curricular activities and to maintain a positive and enthusiastic attitude in all that they do.

They also acknowledge the exceptional effort and support offered to them by their teachers.

We wish the graduates of 2012 every success in all their future endeavours and hope they will continue to maintain a close link with the college.
Fiona takes aim in Turkey

Champion archer Fiona Guest (nee Larkins, Class of 1979) is about to represent Australia on the international stage for the second consecutive year.

Fiona has just left for Turkey for the World Cup in target archery from June 10 to 16. Last year, Fiona finished a very credible 16th in the World Field championships in France.

“This year, I was very excited to be picked to compete for Australia at a World Cup. It is a target archery event rather than field and tougher to qualify for,” said Fiona who achieved a gold and silver at the nationals earlier this year.

At the 2012 World Field Championships Fiona finished 16th. Of the 13 Australians competing in Open divisions Fiona was one of only two who finished the qualification rounds in the top 16 of their divisions and moved on to the elimination rounds.

Fiona took up archery about six years ago as an activity to share with her youngest son who subsequently decided the sport was not for him but Fiona became hooked. Fiona is a member of the Waverley Archers.

College high flyers

Avila’s current students, as well as staff, continue to achieve across many disciplines both within school and beyond. Some of these achievements include:

- Evangelia Diamantopoulos, Year 11, was among 124 Year 11 and 12 students selected to attend the 18th national Schools Constitutional Convention in Canberra in March.
- Isabelle Wright, Year 12, was a member of the School Sport Victoria Triathlon Team who competed at the Australian championships in April in NSW. Isabelle placed in the top 25 overall in the senior age division.
- Sarah Papadimitriou, Year 9, was a member of the School Sport Victoria 17 years and under softball team who competed in the Australian tournament in Perth in May.
- Rebecca Andrews, Year 11, has been granted a training agreement for water polo with the Victorian Institute of Sport for the next two years.
- Avila Health and PE teacher, Ms Jenny Brown, will compete in the 11th World Dragon Boat Racing Championships in Hungary in July. Jenny also represented Australia in 2012 at the Asian championships in South Korea where she is pictured (left) with some of her team mates.

2012 top achievers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>School/Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laura De Rango</td>
<td>99.55 College Dux Eng./Science Monash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoebe Tapley</td>
<td>99.05 Arts/Law Monash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demi Tsironis</td>
<td>98.90 Biomedicine Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Berlangieri</td>
<td>98.50 Architectural Design RMIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Genovese</td>
<td>98.00 Eng./Biomedicine Monash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nishanthi Duggan</td>
<td>97.95 Science Advanced (Honours) Monash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veronica Hogan</td>
<td>97.54 Law/Arts Monash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sashika Harasgama</td>
<td>97.40 Science Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li-Chun Chen</td>
<td>96.10 Science Monash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine Pacheco</td>
<td>96.70 Human Services/ Social Work Latrobe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Rebbechi</td>
<td>96.15 Architect. Design/ Civil Engineering Monash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Boxall</td>
<td>96.10 Science Monash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiara Goldsmith</td>
<td>96.10 Science Advanced (Honours) Monash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Woods</td>
<td>96.00 Radiography/ Medical Imaging Monash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriela Cincotta</td>
<td>95.45 Commerce Monash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasmin Coghill</td>
<td>95.00 Biomedical Science Monash</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the greatest tributes to Avila College as a provider of quality education is the number of past students who choose to send their daughters to their alma mater. Each year there is a steady flow of ‘Old Cols’ daughters commencing at the college and this year is no exception with 19 new Year 7 students whose mothers attended Avila. Currently there are about 100 students at the college who are the daughters of past students.

To celebrate, and record, the continuing tradition of mothers sending their daughters to Avila, group photographs are taken on their daughters’ first day at Avila. This gathering always proves to be quite a social occasion where the Avila spirit is alive and well. The conversation flows freely as the ‘Old Cols’ recognise faces from their own year levels, or those of their sisters’, and share memories and swap stories.

Without exception the past students are full of praise for the modern campus and the excellent educational and co-curricular program available to students.

Established in 1965, Avila College has grown tenfold from 110 students to 1123 in 2013.

And, as the college approaches its 50th anniversary, it does so confidently. Over the past five decades it has built up a tradition and a solid reputation as the provider of quality Catholic education for young women.
Thriving Avila sisterhood

The years have passed and life has taken many twists and turns since these women were the pioneering foundation students at Avila College. Fortunately, the friendships they made as teenagers have endured the test of time and their shared Avila spirit is alive and well when they gather for regular catch ups.

Long-serving staff member, Ms Vivienne Hughes and Mrs Barb Woods, a retired long-serving staff member who was back at the college in semester one to fill a long service vacancy, help keep members of the Class of 1969 up-to-date with a very modern Avila College of the 21st century.

In the following paragraphs, Margaret Gifford (nee Bickham) shares some of her memories of the early days of Avila when staff and students had to be extremely resourceful to make the most of their limited facilities.

“I was the only student on the first day of school to get her shoe stuck in the mud... one of the nuns tucked up the skirt of her habit and balanced off a wooden plank to retrieve my shoe, much to my embarrassment.

“I remember the way the nuns and teachers made us feel so special and encouraged us. I was not sure about my career until one of the teachers suggested I might like teaching. I applied to Christ College and secured a place much to my surprise! Subsequently, I thoroughly enjoyed 30 years of teaching both primary and junior secondary. Thanks to the nuns and staff at Avila who saw my potential and encouraged me to do teaching. I have had a very rewarding career.

“I am now retired and have a lovely grandchild to keep me busy. I keep in touch with a few of the girls from my year and look forward to the college’s 50-year celebration.

“I am off to Spain later in the year and plan to visit Avila.”

Pictured at a Christmas 2012 gathering from left Alison Froud (nee Lawless), Lynette Klavins (nee Gibson), Vivienne Hughes, Susan Evans (nee Whelan), Barbara Woods (nee Nicoll), Margaret Gifford (nee Bickham) and Helen Caldwell (nee Billing).
Avila ‘old boy’ show

The far reaching legacy of past Avila principal, the late Sister Raymonde Taylor, was evident at a recent exhibition by ex Avila “old boy”, Mr Tony Sowersby.

Mr Sowersby attended the Saturday morning Art classes conducted by Sister Raymonde at Avila in the 1970s. Such was Sister Raymonde’s passion for art and her love of teaching, and preparedness to operate outside the square, that she opened up her class to boys, as well as Avila students.

Mr Sowersby is the older brother of Year 9 Co-ordinator, Mrs Anne Stephens, who is a past student of Avila. Having attended Salesian College, Mr Sowersby commenced a law degree at Monash but soon realised Art was his real passion.

“... Sister Raymonde asked me if I’d like to join the Art class. Anne was doing Matriculation (Year 12) at the time,” said Mr Sowersby who subsequently studied Fine Art at CIT (now Monash Caulfield). “Raymonde was an inspiration.”

Mr Sowersby said he shared the sentiments expressed by iconic feminist Germaine Greer, who was taught by Sister Raymonde at Star of the Sea, Gardenvale and who wrote a poignant tribute in *The Age* newspaper following Sister Raymonde’s passing on October 30, 2012.

The following is an excerpt from Ms Greer’s tribute: “Everywhere I have gone to see great art, Sister Raymond (sic) has come with me. It was because of her that I drove my elderly Triumph Herald across the wheat fields through the mists of dawn to Chartres and tiptoed to stand before ‘La Belle Verriere’, glowing blue and red in the dawn twilight... I’ll be walking among the columns of Luxor and there she’ll be... I wouldn’t have even been in Luxor if it weren’t for a woman who never had the chance to go there. Sister Raymond may have left this world but she will be with me for the rest of my life.

For more than three decades Mr Sowersby has worked continuously in the fields of both community and public art mainly as a muralist, but also as a cartoonist and comic book writer and artist. He has painted and directed hundreds of murals especially on the Mornington Peninsula, other parts of the state and in Tasmania, New South Wales, South Australia and Papua New Guinea.

He has won the People’s Choice for the Bald Archy Prize for satirical portraiture three times [1998, 2004 and 2005] and in 2005 he won the prize with his portrait of George Pell and Tony Abbott entitled “The Cardinal with his Abbott”. He has been a finalist in many art prizes including the 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2012 John Glover Prize for landscape painting.

Mrs Vadi continues her support

Acknowledged as the “mother of Reconciliation” at Avila, Mrs Anne Vadiveloo, continues to be a keen supporter of college initiatives.

Mrs Vadiveloo was among special guests earlier this year for Avila’s “Proud Race Day” which commemorated the fifth anniversary of former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s historic Apology. Students across Victoria made bollards of Aboriginal people to celebrate their gifts. The bollards were displayed on Proud Race Day. Avila’s bollards were also displayed at the Mullum Mullum Festival in April.

Avila’s archives

A reminder that Avila’s archivist, Mrs Marion Wilson, is always on the lookout for items to add to her collection.

If you have anything from your time at Avila that you may no longer want to keep or would like to loan to the college, then please consider having in included in the college archives.

With the college’s 50th anniversary fast approaching in 2015, Avila is keen to expand its collection of memorabilia even further.

Items of interest include uniforms, reports, minutes of meetings, assignments, photographs (dated and named), Avila publications and stationery, videos, letters, speeches, programs, newspaper cuttings.

For further information, please contact Mrs Wilson at the college on 9831 9600.
The phrase about being “between a rock and a hard place” could not be further from the truth for Class of 2007 graduate, Helen Taylor.

Helen is a geologist, so rocks and all that make up the earth, are what she loves and thrives on. And as an extension, so too is contamination remediation.

Helen, 24, has had a “thing” about rocks since she started collecting them as a four-year-old and whilst she planned to become a sports teacher, she has no regrets about a last-minute decision to change focus.

“During the holidays at the end of Year 11, Dr Sue Liston (Head of Science at Avila) sponsored me to go on a trip with the AusIMM (Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy) which is what truly inspired me to follow my passion for geology,” said Helen who completed an undergraduate degree in Science at Monash University, with a double major in geoscience and geography and environmental science. Helen then completed an honours degree in geosciences in 2011, researching the issue of acid sulphate soils in west Gippsland.

Currently working as an environmental geologist with Senversa, a small environmental consulting firm in Melbourne, Helen’s brief has been groundwater and soil contamination and more recently she has been assessing the impacts of asbestos contamination.

“Although I have a true passion for geology, my work has allowed me to follow another passion - contamination remediation.”

Whilst the female/male ratio is fairly equal at her workplace, many of the sub contracting companies - drillers, excavators, service locators - all are male dominated.

“In these situations, as long as there is a mutual respect when working together it is all fine. In the beginning I was quite intimidated by our subbies but now I have a good relationship with all of them,” Helen said.

In terms of her course, Helen considered her honours year to be the most challenging yet the most rewarding. She particularly enjoyed the field-based work and spent a lot of time looking at rocks, volcanoes, fossils, rivers and other geomorphologies.

And while her work as a geologist is a world apart from her days at Avila, Helen treasures her time at the college and the friendships made, especially with Mrs Liz Trembath. It was during her time at Avila that Helen’s mother passed away and the college community rallied to provide Helen with as much support as possible.

“Liz has been my rock and a true friend. When my mum passed away she was amazing and so supportive. Liz would pick me up for school in the morning and we would chat about how I was coping and how I could keep myself busy. Liz also would make me lunch everyday and make sure I had a good meal for the day. She and Annette Tynan (former college counsellor) were my rocks, they helped me through the year and also encouraged me to achieve my dreams and make my mum proud. Liz and I have continued this friendship, often meeting for coffee and lunch at least every six months.

“I would not have been able to finish school and get the marks that I did if Liz had not been there to help me along - she is my angel. Each birthday and Christmas I give Liz an angel as a gift to remind her how important she has been in my life and how I hope she continues to be an angel for other students like me.”

Helen herself was a widely respected student leader and contributed much to the Avila community during her time at the college. She was heavily involved in a host of school activities, volunteering and social justice. Her list of achievements include being a general leader, captain of cricket and football, peer support leader, peer mediator and Reconciliation Group member. Helen’s leadership qualities were further reflected in her being the recipient of the Sister Josepha Dunlop and Australian Defence Force awards for student leadership, and the Mulgrave Country Club Award. Although now working full time, Helen still makes time to volunteer, play sport and socialise.

“If I had one piece of advice for young students at Avila, it would be to get involved in anything and everything. I have become the person I am today because Avila offered so many amazing opportunities to me. I loved going to Santa Teresa, I enjoyed being a peer support leader, I loved juggling hoola hoops in the Avila school circus and I enjoyed choir. You should embrace everything that is offered to you.”

To work with asbestos and to reduce any associated risk, Helen is kitted up in a Tyvek suit with a half-face respirator.
Being a member of Victoria Police has enabled past Avila student Sophie Todorov (Class of 1992), a Leading Senior Constable at the Mooroolbark Police Station, to combine many of her passions in the one career.

A sports enthusiast with a love of reading, writing and learning, Sophie’s Year 10 work experience, including a week of her school holidays, was in the areas of sports journalism, kindergarten teaching and the police force. And, she loved them all!

Whilst she missed out on a coveted place in journalism at RMIT, and contemplated physical education teaching, Sophie followed the advice of her Year 12 career’s advisor and enrolled in a Professional Writing & Media course (Bachelor of Arts) at Deakin University.

However, after completing her degree course, she went cold on pursuing a career in journalism: “I dreaded the thought of having to sit in an office for most of the day and work hard to make a name for myself in such a ‘cut throat’ and ‘it’s who you know’ type of industry,” said Sophie who’s attention then zeroed in on a Victoria Police recruitment campaign.

“Policing looked like an exciting job and involved fitness. I graduated from the Police Academy in September 1996. As I marched out onto the parade ground at 21 years of age, Commissioner Neil Comrie asked me what I had done beforehand. When I told him, he raised his eyebrows and asked ‘And you’re doing this job?’ I said, ‘Yes, I’m really good at spelling!’ Awkward. I look back and laugh, because as it turned out, my writing and spelling skills were invaluable as 80 per cent of general policing was paperwork,” Sophie recalled.

Sophie’s policing career has been very rewarding because it has enabled her to help others and make a positive difference. Also, she has developed many diverse skills and qualifications because of the numerous career opportunities for both men and women in Victoria Police.

“No two days are the same in my job. I teach in schools, liaise with youth in the community, attend critical incidents, investigate accidents and crimes, resolve family conflict and enforce the law on the roads. I have a Certificate lll in Fitness to mentor other police members, I am a qualified peer support officer, have completed supervision and leadership courses and am a qualified detective,” she said.

The mother of an 11-year-old son and 10 year-old daughter, Sophie said her children’s keen interest in sport helped reignite her own enthusiasm and in March this year, she competed in the State Masters Athletics Championships, where she won two gold medals and three silvers!

Of her time at Avila, Sophie said the teachers and ethos of the College helped her to believe in herself and complete her secondary education as a confident young woman. The friendships she developed were particularly special.

The eldest of six, Sophie’s two younger sisters, Nadege and Emily, also attended Avila. Nadege (Class of 1998) is a solicitor for the Office of Public Prosecutions while Emily (Class of 2003) is a mental health consumer advocate.

Sophie said it was always important to keep options open and to consider all opportunities as learning experiences, whether they be part-time work, travel or tertiary education. Also, she advised students to choose the subjects they enjoyed.

And what about Sophie’s writing aspirations?

“I still hope to write a book one day about a police related story that recently made the media.”
Continuing the fight against poverty

The four young women featured on this page highlight how Avila students move into the wider world with a strong sense of social justice and a determination to effect change. 2011 College Captain, Mia Lentini and class mate Sally Redman and Phoebe Tapley (Class of 2012) were part of the Roadtrip to End Poverty in March this year. In May, Mia and Phoebe, and also Felicity Smith (Class of 2009), participated in the Oaktree Foundation’s Live Below the Line campaign where they lived on $2 a day for five days. The 2013 target is $2 million which will go towards sending children to school in Papua New Guinea and Cambodia, providing uniforms, scholarships, books and equipment required for teachers.

Three past Avila students – 2011 College Captain Mia Lentini, Sally Redman (Class of 2011) and Phoebe Tapley (Class of 2012) - were among 1000 youth ambassadors who undertook a massive road trip to Canberra in March to help fight global poverty.

The ambassadors travelled from all parts of Australia to build national momentum for the Movement to End Poverty, a joint petition of the Make Poverty History and Micah Challenge Coalitions, supported by the Oaktree Foundation. Along the way they collected signatures for the petition, calling on Australia’s political leaders to do Australia’s fair share to help end poverty by allocating 70 cents out of every $100 of Australia’s national income to foreign aid by 2020.

The road trip groups met in Canberra, where the Movement to End Poverty was launched at Parliament House.

Mia, Sally and Phoebe said it was social justice culture they had experienced at Avila which helped steer them towards becoming involved in the road trip.

“I met so many inspirational people on the Roadtrip to end Poverty… sharing the experience with other Avila girls made the journey so much closer to my heart. I have truly been able to commit myself to the movement to end poverty,” said Mia who is studying for a Bachelor of Business at Monash University.

“Being surrounded by so many passionate and genuinely inspiring young people on the road trip made me realise that we can and will make a difference. In the past 20 years we have halved the number of people living in extreme poverty, and within our lifetimes we hope to see it eradicated. This is something which I intend to commit myself to throughout the course of my lifetime and I am certain that the values and understanding I have gained from my time at Avila and my experiences on the road trip will continue to inform my choices and actions,” Phoebe Tapley (Arts/Law at Monash University, with aspirations to work in the humanitarian sector after graduation).

“The road trip highlighted that the only reason I have the life that I do, and the opportunities and the potential that I have is because I was born into it by chance. Poverty is an unnecessary part of life for millions of people within our world. No one should have his or her dignity stripped away just because they were born into a world impoverished by war or famine. Everyone has the responsibility to stand up for their fellow human beings and the rights of themselves and others,” Sally Redman (Health Science/Masters in Paramedics at La Trobe University Bendigo).

Live Below the Line Campaign

In the Live Below the Line Campaign, Mia and Phoebe raised more than $1700 while Felicity Smith raised more than $1700. Felicity shared the following:

“I had hunger pains, caffeine withdrawals and followed strict meal plans. But that’s nothing compared with what those living in extreme poverty go through on a daily basis. I think that if we each tried to see what it’s like to survive on almost nothing we would all understand in a very real way what some people are living through.

While on the surface poverty is often defined as a lack of income or assets, in the day-to-day lives of the very poor, poverty becomes a network of disadvantages. The result is generation after generation of people who lack access to education, health care, adequate housing, proper sanitation and good nutrition. They are the most vulnerable to disasters, armed conflict and systems of political and economic oppression and yet they are powerless to improve their circumstances. I guess I view poverty as a lack of hope, and Live Below the Line is providing hope to people who need it most. I was shocked that in countries just north of Australia such as Cambodia and Papua New Guinea, people live without running water or access to schools and medical care.

This year’s Live Below The Line is providing education to thousands of young children, breaking the extreme poverty cycle. But it’s still only the beginning. The challenge of surviving on $2 a day may be over, but the battle to end extreme poverty isn’t.

Avila College played a significant role in giving me a broader sense of community and providing me with countless opportunities for social justice pursuits and awareness. In particular, a driving force in allowing my passion for social justice to flourish was Mrs Christine Valladares. Since leaving Avila, I feel I have a responsibility to continue raising awareness and helping others because together I believe we can eradicate extreme poverty.

In the future I plan to do my Masters of Education and hope to be a secondary school teacher specialising in Drama and English Literature.

8 - Old Collegians, June 2013
Determination, passion make Bryony unstoppable

Faith and determination by the bucket load and a passion for the performing arts have been the key driving forces for past student Bryony Balaton-Chrimes (Class of 2003).

In April Bryony graduated from Monash University with a degree in Performing Arts, with a double major in Performance Studies and Drama and Theatre Studies and a minor in Philosophy.

Such an achievement is all the more significant for 27-year-old Bryony because she is legally blind due to Albinism.

“Whether you have a disability or not, if you are determined and passionate about achieving something, you will always find a way… it just might take a bit longer for some,” says Bryony who also draws much from her faith in God.

“When things get a bit overwhelming, I remind myself that God has a plan for me and that things happen for a reason. Also, that my proudest achievements have all been the result of very hard work.”

Bryony credits Avila for helping instil in her a strong sense of faith and also providing excellent role models during her young adulthood. She feels privileged to have been at Avila during the era of past Principal, the late Ms Filomena Salvatore, and the late Mrs Chris Dalwood.

“They, and others, helped teach me to be strong and tenacious and to simply ‘go for it’ in terms of what I wanted in life … Avila has always offered so many opportunities for girls to excel and discover where their talents lie … no area was undernourished or undervalued.”

Bryony stressed the importance of “pursuing the things you like, that make you happy even though it may not seem like the most practical or safest thing to do”.

“If you have faith in your passion and ability then when challenges come your way they are easier to handle.”

Having undertaken an arts-oriented VCE course, Bryony followed her passion directly to Monash University because she considered it offered the best all round course in the performing arts. Monash exceeded her expectations in terms of what she learned and opportunities such as co-directing a performance of *Julius Caesar*, a true honour for a Shakespeare buff.

Now armed with her tertiary qualifications, Bryony would ultimately like to use her skills to direct and produce audiobooks and possibly undertake a masters or doctorate in performing arts. In the meantime, she is keen to source other directing work.

One of Bryony’s greatest loves is her guide dog, Nancy, who she has had for just over 12 months.

“It is absolutely wonderful having Nancy. I had not realised how much confidence and mobility I had lost until she came into my life. We trained together, at the Guide Dogs Victoria residential facility in Kew for a month. When training had finished I felt reinvigorated, like the world was at my feet and I was ready to go and get it!” said Bryony whose eyesight further deteriorated about four years ago.

She paid tribute to the work of Guide Dogs Victoria for whom she does volunteer promotional work.

Bryony’s two older sisters also attended Avila. Jessica, 32, who left Avila in Year 9 in 1995, has launched her own children’s clothing label, Mumboo, while Samantha, Class of 2000, has completed her doctorate in political studies and is currently a research fellow at Melbourne University.

REUNIONS

**CLASS OF 1973**

THE Class of 1973 is coming up for its 40-year reunion with tentative plans for a gathering in September. Anyone interested, please contact Cathy Anning (nee Deveney) catha56@gmail.com/ 0419 350 152 or 03 9700 2383 or Sue Ball spb1108@gmail.com.

**CLASS OF 2012**

A reunion for the Class of 2012 will be held in the College dining room from 5.30pm on Tuesday, August 13. This is always a fun gathering for our recent graduates to share their post Avila journey thus far.
Graduate nurse and midwife, Sophie Landells, is a perfect example of how disappointment can sometimes open windows to even more rewarding opportunities.

The Class of 2008 graduate had her sights set on a career in medicine and obstetrics. While she was just under the superscore required to get into medicine, she shifted direction slightly and enrolled for a double degree in nursing and midwifery at Deakin University. She has never looked back.

“I love it … From my very first placement in the first year of the course, I knew I had made the right choice,” said Sophie whose passion is midwifery and women’s health.

Her love of her chosen career path was reflected in her graduating with distinctions in the double degree course earlier this year, and excelling in her practical placements. Also, she landed a coveted graduate position at the Royal Women’s Hospital, the leading specialist in women’s health in Australia. About 300 applicants were received for the 12 positions in the nursing/midwifery graduate program.

“As a midwife, I love supporting women and helping them to believe in themselves so that they can go home knowing they can care for and breastfeed their new baby; to believe in themselves so that they can deal with the pain of giving birth,” Sophie explained.

And, while she has already attended more than 50 births the “miracle” of birth amazes her every time. “It is absolutely stunning,” she said.

Sophie found the Deakin course prepared her well for full-time work, however it has still been a steep learning curve and also emotionally challenging given the extra responsibilities as a graduate nurse and no longer a student.

Looking to the future, Sophie would like to become involved in clinical education to support students interested in nursing/midwifery and new graduates. She is also keen to work overseas and in rural settings.

She recalled fondly her time at Avila and the strong friendships she made and urged students to select subjects that they enjoy because it makes learning so much easier.

“And, if things don’t work out quite how you would like then use it as a stepping stone to something else … sometimes the alternative can be the better pathway.”

Meanwhile … Hannah Bartos, who is undertaking the same double degree at Deakin, had the opportunity to participate in a study tour in the Philippines earlier this year.

Hannah shared the following thoughts:

“When I graduated from Avila, I was unsure about which career path to take. After considering everything from Arts to Business, I decided that I wanted a job where I could help those in need. I enrolled in nursing/midwifery at Deakin University and I couldn’t be happier.

“In February I travelled to the Philippines with a group of nursing students. We conducted health clinics and provided health education for local adults and children. We were also lucky enough to spend some time exploring the beautiful, tropical country.

“I returned to Australia feeling like I had made a difference, however small, to people who aren’t as lucky as we are here. I would encourage everyone to jump at the chance to have a similar experience if the opportunity ever presents. Avila’s caring culture should be shared with the rest of the world!

“One thing I learnt on my trip, it’s that giving a little really does go a long way.”
During their summer break, three members of Avila’s teaching staff travelled overseas to further their professional development.

Miss Maraya Robinson undertook a course in Ancient Greek archaeology and history in Greece; Mr Paul Ekers was part of an Asia Education Foundation study tour to Myanmar (formerly Burma) and Mrs Angela Patterson spent time in Bali as a recipient of an Endeavour Language Teachers’ Fellowship. The following is an edited version from their reports of their experiences:

**Miss Maraya Robinson - Greece**

The course was run by the University of Sydney in conjunction with the Australian and British Archaeological schools in Athens. Returning to study was both exciting and challenging.

Each day consisted of a series of lectures, introducing us to a specific topic, site or collection, then visits to sites and museums. I have a real passion for the subject matter I teach, so to visit the sites we study, to handle the pottery and sculpture we explore, to walk down the same roads, sit in the ancient theatres and visit the temples the ancients did every day is something that has brought this world alive to me.

**Mr Paul Ekers - Myanmar**

The Asia Education Foundation, a federally-funded organisation based at the University of Melbourne, conducted a study tour for teachers and principals to Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). It included a tour of many famous sites such as Inle Lake and Bagan and an opportunity for teachers to work in schools and discuss educational issues in both Australia and Myanmar.

The opportunity to find out more about a country that has, until recently, been closed to the outside world has enriched my perspective of Asia and further deepened my understanding of the diversity of this region. Myanmar is a country of fabulous potential and its education system is developing as quickly as the country itself.

**Mrs Angela Patterson - Bali**

During my three week homestay as a recipient of an Endeavour Language Teacher’s Fellowship, I was able to develop a greater appreciation of not only the natural beauty of this island but also the warmth, grace and spiritualism of the Balinese people. The highlight of my experience in Bali was definitely the generosity and care bestowed on me by my host family.

I undertook advanced language lessons at the Indonesian Australian Language Foundation in Denpasar, as well as cultural study classes.

I also went on field trips which included visits to schools, a youth club, a sheltered workshop, and a Kopi Luwak plantation (Kopi Luwak is the most expensive coffee in the world and is made from civet droppings!).
Big welcome to little Will

Congratulations to former College Captain Catherine Spurritt (nee Davenport, Class of 2013) and her husband Andrew on the arrival of their first child, William John Spurritt. Will was born on April 20 weighing 3.72 kg. Catherine has been teaching at Avila since 2011. She is currently on maternity leave from her role as Languages Curriculum Leader.

Glorious day for autumn wedding

Melbourne turned on a glorious autumn day for the wedding of former College Yearbook editor, Manjuni Fernando (Class of 2001) and Adam Gregory at St John’s Anglican Church in Toorak on March 10, 2013.

Many of Manjuni’s Avila friends joined the couple for the occasion, with Dominica Yuen attending the bride, Sarah Hinchliffe reading during the ceremony and Beata Kirk (nee Brosz) and Laura Wood (nee O’Dea) presenting a joint speech during the reception at Rippon Lea Estate and Gardens – a Year 7 excursion haunt! Guests also included past Avila students Simone Daniels (2001), Natasha Maben (2001), Kay Nguo (2001) and Eloise Zoppos (2004).

The couple are with the Australian Public Service in Canberra where Manjuni works in risk management and Adam in mental health.

Can you help...

Avila values greatly the resource it has in past students who have found their career/vocational niche in a diverse range of fields in all corners of the globe.

Year 9 co-ordinator, Mrs Anne Stephens, a past student herself (nee, Class of 1976) has appealed to past students who would like to further enrich the education of current students by sharing their experiences.

“It would be great to hear from anyone who would like to be added to our register of guest speakers to share stories about their work, travels or life-experiences. This is a great way to inform our students of what opportunities are available if they are prepared to work hard.”

Anyone interested could email Anne at annens@avilacollege.vic.edu.au. Please include your contact details and the subject about which you could speak to the students.

MEMORIAL: Joanna Puohotaua

Joanna (Class of 1998) passed away on March 14. Joanna was the daughter of Eleanor and Jim and sister of Susan (dec.) and Vicki.

After Avila, Joanna studied Law (Honours) at Monash University and then proceeded to gain her Masters degree.

The Puohotaua family has been very involved in the Avila community. Mrs Puohotaua operated Avila’s uniform shop for many years and Mr Puohotaua was involved in the parents association.

Avila Old Collegians
subscription/change of details

Name: ............................................................
(please provide maiden name, and if applicable, married name)
Final year at Avila: .... Year started at Avila: ....
Postal address: ..................................................
..................................................
Email address: ..................................................
SUBSCRIPTION: $100 for life
Please send your subscription to:
Avila College Old Collegians,
35 Charles Street, Mount Waverley 3149
or contact Avila on 9831 9600.