Avila College acknowledges the Wurundjeri people, the traditional custodians of the land on which the College is built.

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Our college is still mourning the loss of one of our teachers, Rita Samson. Rita had worked at Avila for 16 years when her life came to a sudden and unexpected end on April 28.

Rita was a gifted teacher who taught Year 7 Red General Studies and supported many of our students in her role as a Learning Support Teacher. Over the years many of our students saw Rita as a teacher who believed in the ability of every student to succeed, no matter what their capability. Her expectations of behaviour and rigour were high but she encouraged, helped, and cajoled students to believe in themselves and enjoy success. Many of our students, both past and present, expressed their gratitude to Rita on the Facebook tribute pages that they created. Some of their comments included:

*She was like my Mum away from home when I was in Year 7.*
*I knew that you were an intelligent woman of faith and integrity which Avila women strive to be. Her red lippy and her blazer folding techniques are two traits that will never be forgotten.*

Many of our parents have also expressed their sadness at Rita’s passing:

*The Avila community was a better place because Rita was there.*
*Rita was able to find the good in everyone and would smile and greet everyone who crossed her path.*

As a colleague Rita is sadly missed by those who worked with her. Rita was very generous with her time and was always willing to support any activity that benefited staff and students alike. For many years Rita was our staff union representative. She took this role seriously and on a number of occasions was a support to individual staff members and regularly attended union meetings on behalf of the whole staff. She was a true professional. She was always positive to new initiatives and was a long standing member of the curriculum committee. She was also a committed supporter of the Reconciliation Group.

Through her involvement with the Reconciliation Group Rita visited Santa Teresa, an aboriginal mission near Alice Springs. This was probably the highlight of Rita’s time at Avila. The desire to transform the world and make it a better place was embedded in Rita. Her first trip was as a member of the team but last year she was the leader. During this time the ten Year 10 students, our Principal Liz Gleeson and Miss Darcie Kane-Priestley saw Rita in her true colours. She loved being there, and was in her element taking classes at the mission school. If Rita had her life over she may well have chosen to spend part of it as a teacher at Santa Teresa.

Rita was the essential virtuous woman from the Book of Proverbs. She was loyal, hardworking, loving, kind, just, methodical, generous, practical and visionary. She was a motherly teacher who believed strongly in the power of education.

Rita is survived by her husband Bob, children Scott, Katelyn and Amy and grand-daughter Mia.

To conclude, I, like many of you, will miss Rita.

Mrs Maureen Adams
-a long-term friend and colleague
Kiara to attend canonisation

Year 10 student Kiara Goldsmith has been selected to represent Avila College at the canonisation of Australia’s first saint, the Blessed Mary MacKillop, at the Vatican on October 17.

Kiara described her selection as a great honour and believes the experience will not only further enrich her own faith but help her to encourage other students in their own spiritual journeys.

According to Kiara, Mary MacKillop was a great role model because of her tireless work and support for the poor and underprivileged, her commitment to Catholic education and her unwavering faith that God would provide for her.

‘The trip will help bring me closer to God and help me gain a better understanding of life’s journey and also how the Catholic religion impacts on people from all over the world,’ said Kiara whose own sense of faith is ‘very much part of who I am’.

Born in Melbourne, Mary MacKillop was the founder of the Sisters of St Joseph and established her first school in the tiny South Australian town of Penola in 1866. She died in Sydney in 1909.

The Director of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Mr Stephen Elder, said Mary MacKillop left an indelible mark on Catholic education and her elevation to sainthood acknowledged all that she achieved in her lifetime.

At just 15, Kiara herself is also making an impact in the way she lives and shares her faith with others. At Avila she is a Peer Helper and has been involved in the Building Bridges through Interfaith Dialogue in Schools Program – both of which she has written about in this issue of Avila Matters. Beyond Avila, Kiara is very active within her local parish youth group at St Jude’s and also the Knox Deanery.

Partly sponsored by the Catholic Education Office, Kiara will be among an estimated 100 or more senior student representatives from secondary schools in the Melbourne Archdiocese expected to attend. They will be in Rome for eight days.

College Principal, Ms Liz Gleeson described Kiara as a wonderful ambassador for Avila College and an outstanding young Christian woman who lived her faith through her involvements within and beyond the Avila community.

Past students shine

Members of the Class of 2009 are continuing to shine as they embrace the opportunities post Avila ...

Our 2009 College Captain, Caitlyn Petrie performed in the prestigious Top Acts concert at Hamer Hall on May 28. Each year, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority’s Top Acts showcases the very best performing arts exam pieces from Music, Drama, Dance and Theatre Studies. With 1,500 students studying Year 12 Drama last year, Caitlyn’s solo performance was ranked among the top three. She was the only female student representing Drama to be selected for Top Acts and performed beautifully before an audience of 2,600 people. Caitlyn already had enjoyed success in December 2009 with a study score of 48 for Drama, bettered by only five students in the state. This is the second time in five years Avila College has been represented by a Drama student at the Top Acts concert. In May, Caitlyn was a special guest at the 2010 Creative Arts festival where she captivated her audience with her award-winning performance, Grand Duchess Anastasia Romanova of Russia.

Other Class of 2009 achievements include:

- Hoai Thí ‘Amy’ Duong (excellence) and Hannah Phillips (merit) – Monash Uni Scholarship for Semester One. Amy is undertaking a double degree in Biomedical Science and Economics while 2009 College dux Hannah is undertaking a Science/Arts double degree.
- Estelle Griepink. RMIT Inaugural Achievement Scholarship. Estelle is studying Journalism.
- Emma Steel, 2009 Music Captain. VCAA’s Top Sounds.
- Talisa Trantino, 2009 Art Captain. A place in the incredibly competitive RMIT Fashion course.

Another high achiever, Rachelle Welti has shared some of her tips for subject selection on page 6 of Avila Matters.

TAFE success

Emma Gregory and Julia Lentini were among 10 Avila students to graduate from Box Hill TAFE recently with their Certificate 11 Business.

It was a proud occasion for the students and they looked every bit the part in their academic gowns. Read more about the girls’ achievements on page 5 of Avila Matters.

Caitlyn as the Grand Duchess Anastasia Romanova of Russia.

Kiara Goldsmith
The culture at Avila College aims to develop the whole person – spiritually, socially, academically, emotionally and physically. To not do so would not do justice to our College Mission Statement.

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) aligns perfectly with the aims and philosophy of Avila College:

... [we want] all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens ... to develop personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others...

The richness and variety of the curricular and co-curricular offerings aim to provide opportunities for students to attain success in many fields. When one reads any edition of Avila Matters in detail, it is not difficult to be impressed by the talents showcased by our students. They excel in so many arenas - the various areas of academia, sport, the Arts, public speaking and debating, social action and leadership, to name a few. This occurs largely due to the commitment of a very capable and dedicated staff, and their generosity in offering so many extra-curricular activities. I am constantly in awe of the level of participation of so many of our students, whilst at the same time, balancing school and home life, and often, for many senior students, part-time work.

Developing such a culture can only occur over a long period of time. It means involving our students in work that is meaningful, relevant, challenging and enjoyable; it involves guiding our students to develop the necessary skills and understandings to be successful citizens in a 21st century world; it involves making conscious decisions to optimise teaching and learning practices; it requires of us to on their strengths but to address their weaknesses; it involves identifying fundamental gaps in knowledge for individual students or for a class as a whole. The data provided does, in part, inform our decision making on additional support programs, and extension / enrichment activities.

Measuring our students’ performance is a multi-faceted exercise. It involves listening, observing, planning, motivating, assessing, challenging, trusting and of course, in depth testing. Measuring student performance

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Measuring our students’ performance is a multi-faceted exercise. It involves listening, observing, planning, motivating, assessing, challenging, trusting and of course, in depth testing. It requires of teachers to know their students.

High quality teachers, supportive professional learning for all staff, placing our students ‘front and centre’ in their learning, encouraging independence in inquiry-based learning, and a mutually trusting and co-operative classroom environment all contribute to quality education for our students. They deserve nothing less – at all times, Avila endeavours to provide nothing less. This is our ongoing challenge as 21st century educators.

Measuring student performance

Supporting the publication of My School: an ambitious, informative and well intentioned online tool designed to encourage and support informed decision making on the part of parents, students and educators alike. This tool of course is aimed at all students, and provides families with a wealth of information about a school’s progress at a given point in time. The challenge is not to rate schools on the basis of particular test scores. Published such data to compare and rank schools can be very risky indeed. We at Avila, like most schools, do not take the results of these tests as a sole guide to the progress of our students. Likewise, the presentation of this data on the My School website in no way captures the learning culture of our school, the diverse background, personalities and talents of our students. Nor does it take into account the ‘added value’ - spiritual guidance; creative teaching practices; strong student wellbeing policies and practices; emotional support in times of crises; and a myriad of extra and co-curricular activities.

Avila Matters cover - St Patrick’s Day

The celebration of the Saint Patrick’s Day Mass is an impressive occasion in Melbourne when hundreds of student representatives from most of the Catholic primary and secondary schools in the Archdiocese gather together at Saint Patrick’s Cathedral.

This year was no exception and Avila was well represented by a group of Year 9 students who chatted with Archbishop Denis Hart and Director of Catholic Education, Melbourne, Stephen Elder, after the Mass on March 17. The Avila students, from L-R, are Beth Coffey, Ruby Robertson, Carlie Saunders and Annabel Rohson and front L-R, Lauren Trantino, Tahlia Guneratne, Caitlin O’Keeffe and Carla Jurdana.

Liz Gleeson
Principal

Avila Matters publication
Editor: Sandra Bucovac
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Whipping up muffin magic

Avila has again been a culinary force at the Home Economics Victoria Food Design Challenge with Grace Rodrigues and Carla Timi securing second place over more than 900 entries in the statewide competition.

Eighty of our students competed and indeed rose to the challenge with some very impressive results including Grace and Carla’s award-winning and unique savoury muffin, ‘Meal in a Muffin’.

Avila students have enthusiastically embraced the Challenge over the past few years and the Food Technology Department has now incorporated it into the Year 8 Food Technology curriculum.

The task requires students to work with a partner to adapt a recipe and design an innovative and healthy sweet or savoury muffin. Once the design process is complete the muffins are produced, photographed and evaluated. This year our girls came up with some amazing combinations.

Judging is completed independently by Shirley Cameron who is one of the authors of *Cookery The Australian Way*. Judging is based on creativity, recipe and product presentation, and the evaluation of the muffin and the task. This year’s award winners were presented with their prizes at an Awards Presentation at Werribee Secondary College.

NZ principal impressed

Avila’s reputation stretches far and wide as evidenced by a recent visit from New Zealand secondary school Principal, Mr Paul Daley and his wife Robyn.

Avila was one of three Catholic schools in Melbourne that the Daleys visited at the recommendation of the Catholic Education Office. Mr Daley is the principal of a 970-student strong Catholic co-educational secondary school in Auckland. The College is relatively new being established in 1974.

‘You get a sense of what a school is like, the moment you walk in,’ said Mr Daley. ‘Avila is a wonderful school and so welcoming ... the students are relaxed and happy to come up and say hi to the principal which says a lot about a school and the way it is run. The uniform looks terrific and the girls wear it with pride.’

TAFE GRADUATES

On Monday May 31 our final group of Year 12 girls who had completed the Certificate I in Business through Box Hill TAFE had the opportunity to formally graduate at Box Hill Town Hall.

Due to changes in curriculum, the course is no longer offered at Avila.

The night was a big occasion with an academic procession and all the graduates wearing academic gowns. The ceremony was inspiring for all those who attended.

The Business Certificate was commenced in Year 10 and completed in Year 11. It was a just reward for a significant effort.

The College congratulates the following Year 12 students: Rebekah Antonucci, Gabriella Da Campo, Lauren Delbridge, Emma Gregory, Meaghan Hegarty, Julia Lentini, Aimee Molnar, Adriana Neville, Sacha Pinto and Jessica Ruffolo.

Avila Principal Ms Liz Gleeson proudly takes visiting New Zealand principal, Mr Paul Daley, and his wife Robyn on a tour of the campus.

Muffin maestros Grace Rodrigues and Carla Timi with Mrs Sue Rowell after the presentation of awards at Werribee Secondary College. The award winning ‘Meal in a Muffin’ muffin pictured left.
Three Year 10 students who attended the Rotary Youth Program of ENrichment (RYPEN) Camp in May found it extremely rewarding.

The three-day weekend seminar focused on teamwork, personal skills, leadership and fun. We completed a variety of activities that tested different skills like the flying fox, human pyramid and an Amazing Race. We learned to continue on and persevere when things start to get tough because in the end the reward is great. The days were long and we were mentally and physically challenged but we had an extremely enjoyable time.

The new friends that we have made are people that we would have passed in the street without a second glance. These are the people that brought out things in us that we didn’t know we had.

RYPEN was loads of fun and we would like to thank the Waverley Rotary for sponsoring the three of us to attend and to Year 10 Co-ordinator Miss Rebecca Cetrola for choosing us to represent Avila.

Timely advice from high achiever

Choosing the subjects you enjoy is timely advice at this time of year from high achiever from the Class of 2009, Rachelle Welte.

Rachelle, who was our 2009 Public Speaking and Debating Captain, gained a Tertiary Entry Ranking of 97.6 which has positioned her well to pursue her ultimate dream of becoming a surgeon. She is currently undertaking degree studies for Bio Medicine at Melbourne University with the intention of progressing to post graduate studies in Medicine and then Surgery.

‘It is really important to choose the subjects that you enjoy and to not be influenced by what your friends do or be pressured by others ... If you do subjects you enjoy, the learning will come more easily,’ Rachelle said, noting the value of extra curricular involvements and how her public speaking and debating helped her enormously in English to write clearly and concisely.

Rachelle emphasised the importance of establishing good study habits in early secondary school, to be well organised and consistent throughout Year 12, to maintain a balanced lifestyle and not be too distracted by social pressures such as the inevitable string of 18th birthday celebrations, and to make the most of the expertise and support of the teachers.

Rachelle gave herself a headstart to VCE by undertaking Biology Units 3 and 4 in Year 11. She gained invaluable experience and insight into the requirements of VCE and was also able to focus on gaining as high a mark as possible.

In her final year, Rachelle studied English, French, Mathematical Methods and Chemistry. From a French speaking family, she considered French to be her ‘enjoyment’ subject and a refreshing break from the heavier Science subjects.

With her sights firmly set on a career as a surgeon, Rachelle’s first semester at university saw her studying Bio Chemistry, Bio Molecules, Calculus and Finance as a breadth subject. Her second semester will focus on Genetics, Statistics and Analysis, Physics and International Politics as a breadth subject.

And, drawing on skills she honed at Avila, Rachelle has become an adjudicator for Debating Victoria so will assist with adjudicating the junior debates at Wesley College in which Avila competes.

Whilst Rachelle is enjoying university life, she said she missed the tight-knit community of Avila and has realised how easy it is to take for granted the support of teachers and friendship groups. One of the keys to a smooth transition to tertiary education, Rachelle concluded, is to realise early that it is entirely up to the student to make the effort, whether it be with their work or networking with new friends and interests.
A stunning mosaic, boasting an underwater theme, has been unveiled in the Old Lecture Theatre.

Initiated by Art teacher Mrs Giovanna Khalil, the 2009 Semester Two Year 10 Ceramics class was involved in the planning, design and creation of the wonderful mosaic. They embraced the project with great enthusiasm and many hours of hard work. Thousands of pieces of glass had to be cut and glued into position on a background of white tiles, which had in turn been positioned onto sheets of craftboard.

Once the glass was in position, a dark grout was used to fill the spaces and the mosaic then had to be cleaned of all the excess and given a coat of sealant. By the end of 2009 the mosaic was still unfinished. Despite many hours of class time, students helping between and after their end of year exams, and even some help from staff and their family members, the grouting had proved to be an enormously time consuming job. Six of the students continued with the project early this year, spending a lunchtime each week in Term One completing the grouting, cleaning and fine tuning of the mosaic. The result is a beautiful work of art featuring a mermaid, sea horses, turtles, fish and octopi on the ocean floor. It looks terrific in the refurbished Lecture Theatre, adding colour and interest to the room.

Special thanks and congratulations to the ‘finish team’ of Hayley Cameron, Jessica Delaney, Veronica Coad, Natasha Gibney, Laura Clark, and Leah Wickenton.

Mrs Marjolyn Willis
Art/Ceramics teacher

Historic ring to acquisition

Professional artist and past student, Veronica Caven Aldous (Class of 1974) has donated one of her works to the College.

Titled 'Mobilephone Strips', the piece reflects the technological influences on today’s students. The colours also have an ‘historic ring’ as they are similar to those of the College uniform worn when Veronica was a student, but they are featured in more vibrant proportions.

Principal Ms Liz Gleeson was delighted to accept the artwork from Veronica on behalf of the College community.
Term Two is a significant period on the Church calendar as we celebrate some very important events on our Church calendar.

We are in the Easter season which culminates in the Feast of Pentecost - the birthday of the Church. It is a joyous time, after the fasting of Lent and despair of Good Friday, as we are reminded of the eternal life promised through the Resurrection. Pentecost and the Feast of the Holy Trinity focus our attention on the Holy Spirit and the gifts we receive which help our journey of faith. This was particularly meaningful for some of our Year 10 students, who are parishioners at Holy Saviour, who celebrated their sacrament of Confirmation during the term. These events linked into our classes with the Year 9 study of Catholic Beliefs, a central one being the Trinity, whilst the Year 8 girls looked at the history of our Early Church and the important role St Paul played in spreading the good news.

Mrs Rita Samson’s tragic death caused great sadness throughout our community. Her strong faith was a witness for us all, and she lived a life of love, compassion and caring to all she met. She taught Year 7 Religious Education for many years and was an active and passionate member of the RE Department. Whilst our own loss is great, we know she is with her God. We continue to keep her family and friends in our prayers. I would particularly like to thank the wider community who sent so many messages of support to the staff and students at Avila.

A highlight for our Year 9s was their Christian Living Day in the middle of the term. The theme was ‘Family’ and each student shared some of the joys and challenges that we all experience with families.

Year 10s enjoyed their week of Community Service at the very end of term. The girls spent a morning preparing for their week’s experience by reflecting on what ‘service’ means in our world today. They participated in role-plays and activities that identified the needs of those who are struggling or need some help in our world today. The session concluded with a liturgy which focused on the importance of service as Christians. We look forward to reading about their Community Service experiences in Term Three Avila Matters.

Once again, this term, we participated in our ‘Tinnies for Vinnies’ Campaign for St Vincent de Paul which the Avila community so generously supports. It is a very sad fact that we need agencies like St Vincent de Paul, in Australia today. Fortunately the Holy Family Conference is very active and chaired by John King, a dear friend of the Avila community who works tirelessly for the families in our area.

Our students and staff have continued to live the faith in numerous other practical ways throughout the term such as the Year 9s raising money for Mellica’s Mission in India, the Year 10s packing birthing kits for women in Third World countries, a team of Year 10 students participating in the Relay for Life and staff putting their best feet forward in 2010 Oxfam Trailwalker. It is wonderful to witness such a strong sense of commitment to reach out to the wider community.

As this long term draws to a close I wish all our families a happy holiday, and our students and staff a good rest.

May God bless you all and keep you safe.

Mrs Marie Stuart
Faith Development Co-ordinator

Cheeky challenge for ‘Tinnies for Vinnies’
‘Tinnies for Vinnies’ became a double-edged challenge for Year 11 Green students. Their homeroom teacher Mr Paul Ekers cheekily challenged the girls that if they exceeded his weight in donations of food to the St Vincent De Paul Winter Appeal, he would buy them lunch. Day one saw 30kg of food pour into the classroom! In total the girls donated almost 100kg in food. Mr Ekers was relieved that he did not have to disclose his weight as his students had clearly won the challenge, but he will now be relieving his wallet for lunch for 24 young ladies, a menu and venue yet to be determined.

Pictured Loren Bender, Josie Dwan and Grace Mundy with part of their homeroom’s haul of almost 100kg for ‘Tinnies for Vinnies’.
Building bridges across faiths

Avila has been privileged to be involved in the Building Bridges through Interfaith Dialogue in Schools Program.

The program is aimed at students in years 10 and 11 and involves schools of the Catholic, Baptist, Jewish and Islamic religions. In our region we work with Xavier College, Carey Baptist Grammar, Strathcona, Bialik and East Preston Islamic College (EPIC). The schools share the hosting of the evening sessions for the 60 to 70 students involved.

The aim of Building Bridges is to establish dialogue between teenagers of different faiths, backgrounds, cultures and religions. Throughout the sessions, we enjoy the experience of meeting new people, talking about our different faiths, playing games, sharing a vegetarian meal and then talking in small girls’ or boys’ groups about our lives in terms of past experiences, our lives today and what we are aiming for in future. In our groups we are encouraged to ask questions about other people’s cultures and religions, and also to share our beliefs and views as Catholics.

This program is definitely a once in a life time experience and so far, many of us have established friendships with people of many different faiths. It is such an amazing feeling, to know that these Building Bridges evenings may, because of our increasing knowledge of other cultures and faiths, help make the future that we are stepping into, better, safer, less violent and more understanding for all.

Kiara Goldsmith, 10 Orange

The program has made me more confident about sharing my thoughts with people from other religious backgrounds. It is interesting to learn more about other religions.

Hajarr
East Preston Islamic College

It has been great meeting new people and making new friends and hearing and learning more about other religions and talking and communicating about the differences.

Lakmen
East Preston Islamic College

I have really enjoyed meeting young people from other religious backgrounds and cultures and learning more about the different ways we think about things. The program has helped me to be more open to other religious beliefs and to have a greater respect for people from very different backgrounds.

Kelsey
Strathcona

Students enjoy sharing information about their religions, cultures, values and beliefs during the Building Bridges session attended by about 70 representatives from six different schools at Avila.

Every five years a Parliament of World Religions is held. This is a major world event which draws religious leaders and followers, from all over the world to engage in inter-faith dialogue.

Melbourne was the host city for the last Parliament, from December 3 - 9, 2009. On the special student activity day, Avila was represented by Liturgy captains, Sara Cincotta, Cassie Valadon and Claire Weegberg. During this day, the students attended a presentation of a film which looked at relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in America, and a student forum on the role of religion in the contemporary world. Later they attended a session with eminent Catholic theologian, Hans Kung on the ethical dimensions of the financial crisis.

Held at the Melbourne Convention Centre, the Parliament featured many displays and opportunities for prayer and performances across the week, some of which our students witnessed. This was a wonderful opportunity to participate in dialogue with some of the most important leaders of world religions, and a very tangible way to bring peace and understanding among many different people.

Parliament of World Religions
Shoah memorial service

Eight Year 10 students were privileged to attend a moving Shoah Memorial Service at St Michael’s Uniting Church in Collins Street on April 15.

When we entered the church the first thing our eyes were guided to was the colossal organ that covered the furthest wall of the church. In front of the organ was a table dressed in black and white, the black symbolising the darkness of the Holocaust and the white, the holiness and atonement as used in Jewish liturgical celebrations.

During the service we heard readers recounting the horrors experienced during this period followed by the singing of beautiful hymns led by a cantor.

For myself, and I am sure many others, the reflection by Mark Baker on his parent’s experience of the Holocaust in Poland, was one of the most moving and poignant narratives ever heard. It was truly an experience I wouldn’t trade for the world. Some of the Avila students were privileged to be participants in the ceremony, lighting candles of hope for the world.

Our thanks go to Religious Education Co-ordinator, Mr John Beekhof who organised this and even provided a snack pack – it was greatly appreciated.

Veronica Hogan, 10 Purple

Honouring Anzac spirit

A group of Year 9 leaders had the privilege of representing Avila at the Waverley Rotary Anzac Day Service at the Glen Waverley Cenotaph on April 20.

The service began with members of the army marching to take up their positions. Returned soldiers shared their experiences with us, and took us back to the days of World War 11. We were inspired by their touching stories which gave us a deeper understanding of what it was like to live in times of war. Lucy Moon and Emily Asker joined politicians and representatives from schools in the Monash district, to place wreaths on the memorial in memory of our brave soldiers. It was a great experience and enhanced our understanding of our brave soldiers.

Lucy Moon, Emily Asker, Yvanah Hernandez and Kimielle D’Mello

Birthing kits for impoverished

It was a case of all hands on deck when the Year 10s put together 600 birthing kits to be distributed to women in Third World countries to help reduce the labour-related infant and maternal mortality rates.

The kits are a Zonta International initiative and two of the organisations representatives talked about the project before the students formed their industrious production lines, organising into boxes materials donated by Avila College.

The students’ involvement is in keeping with the Year 10 focus on Community Service and the 2010 theme of ‘leaving our heart prints as we go’.

Veronica Hogan, 10 Purple
Avila Matters Term 2, 2010 - 11

The journey of 100 kilometres begins with a single step ....

The Oxfam Trailwalker Team Avila successfully completed its aim to walk 100km within 48 hours on a beautiful sunny weekend at the beginning of Term Two. With the assistance of family, friends and the ever-generous Avila community, we raised just over $4000.

We walked the first 60 km on Friday and, after an overnight break, returned, with feet appropriately bandaged, to complete the final 40 km on Saturday. In a time of 35 hours and 53 minutes and forty seconds – which is a time that can now be broken by any other Avila Staff team willing to take on this journey – the team of four happily met family and friends to take them home and literally put their feet up for a day.

We were very grateful for all the support from family, staff and students before the event and accepted chairs and support from the same people after the walk.

Team Avila - Allan Kennedy, Steven Francis, Sarah Macdonald, and Meg Gilfedder - set a goal to complete the trailwalk in two days and raise much needed funds for the work of Oxfam. Both goals were achieved without too many blisters and aching muscles. After 35 hours of walking together, we were still happy to talk with each other after the event but are not yet ready to discuss a return performance next year.

At the much anticipated 2010 Oxfam Trailwalker finish line, Team Avila members, from L-R, Meg Gilfedder, Sarah Macdonald, Allan Kennedy and Steven Francis.

Awesome and inspiring are just some of the words that come to mind to describe a team of Year 10 Avila students who participated in the 2010 Relay for Life event to raise funds for cancer research.

The team – comprising Jess Woods, cancer survivor Kelsey Sutherland, Mikaela Welti, Elyse D'Angelo, Georgia Gamble, Pamela Escobar, Bianca Ortalan and Liana Iaconis – raised $4,600 in just over two months. Many of the girls hope to participate in the 24-hour event again in 2011 and raise $5000 so they can have a research grant named in honour of someone they nominate.

Not only did the girls’ efforts translate into a wonderful donation for cancer research but they created a first because Jess Woods was the youngest person to captain a team in Melbourne. Jess and Kelsey were privileged to be involved in the opening ceremony.

The Avila contingent, Team HUGS (Helping You Gain Strength) was organised by Jess who had walked with an extended family team last year.

‘Cancer has touched so many people I know and also knowing Kelsey, I thought it would be great to have a team of friends from school,’ said Jess who, together with Mikaela, walked seven hours through the night and without a break.

Jess said the candlelight ceremony was particularly moving when candles were lit in memory of those who had lost their battles with cancer.

Past student, Nicolette Thein, Class of 1990, and two colleagues from the Royal Melbourne Hospital, raised almost $10,000 in the World’s Greatest Shave for the Leukaemia Foundation in March.

'It was a very humbling experience for all of us’, commented Nicolette pictured above right with her colleagues, Elfie Ho and Cheryl Boyd, a transplant recipient.
Avila's dedicated band of Peer Helpers has probably reaped as much enjoyment and fun as it has provided to the Avila community in Semester One.

The Peer Helpers, drawn from Years 10 to 12, have turned on action-packed activities to help make all students, and particularly the new Year 7s, feel welcome and part of the Avila community.

After welcoming the Year 7s on their first day and assisting them in any way possible, the Peer Helpers have fostered the ongoing friendships by hosting Thursday lunchtime games - the skipping, bubbles, ball games and general chit chat have been a big hit with other year levels and even staff. The Peer Helpers also visit the homerooms at least once a week to read out the daily bulletins and helping the Year 7s with a project to make ceramic totem poles to beautify the College grounds.

At a wider community level, the Peer Helpers donated $300 from a cake stall in 2009 to Avila's 2010 Oxfam Trailwalker staff team. Year 12 Peer Helpers Steph Daniels and Nicole Paulding have launched a French club for senior students to indulge in French food and good French conversation very second Friday lunchtime.

A highlight has been the launch of the new Peer Helper badge.

In Term Two, the Peer Helpers hosted the Avila's Biggest Morning Tea. Rubini Ball, aka Ms Chicken, provided the following report: There was an extremely sumptuous array of cakes and slices and mugs-a-plenty of Milo on offer. So tempting was the spread that a sea of Avila students queued, in a fashion, for something sweet. The day however extended beyond fund raising and was also about having some simple fun with skipping, pavement drawing with the chalk, and lots of bubbles. The Avila Spirit was truly alive and could be seen in the beaming smiles of every student. The day was a reminder to everyone that you are never too old or too young to simply have a little fun! To top it off, there was a surprise arrival of Mr Chicken who ran and skipped his way through the campus. He certainly had a fabulous time.

In all, the day was undeniably fantastic and certainly successful. Nobody could have asked for a better afternoon at the one and only Avila College.
On May 15, some of the students and staff from Avila’s Reconciliation Group attended a conference in Healesville about Aboriginal history.

The main focus was on William Barak, an Aboriginal man who was a leader at the Coranderrk Mission which was set up by the government to restrict the movement of Aborigines removed from their land. We learned about his life and what he went through to secure a future for his family and friends. He was a very brave man and was determined to get justice from the government.

The central guest speaker Joy Wandin Murphy, a Wurundjeri ngurungaeta (elder), spoke about her great, great uncle William Barak. We also watched a documentary from the series ‘First Australians’. The episode was about Coranderrk and we learned about the struggles faced by the people who worked hard to establish Coranderrk as a farming community; the sad death of Barak’s wife and son; of his courage and tenacity in repeatedly walking from Healesville to Melbourne to see political leaders. We heard about the special relationship that Barak and the community had with Reverend John Green, a Presbyterian minister who fought for respect for the Aboriginal people.

We then went through a smoking ceremony before a bush walk, following Barak’s footsteps, to visit Coranderrk and the cemetery where he and many other Aborigines are buried. It was a great privilege to be able to visit this special place with Aunty Joy.

This trip provided us with a lot of knowledge about Aboriginal history in Victoria.

Sian Hope and Sarah Gill, 7 Blue

Walking in the footsteps of Barak

The Avila community has thrown its weight behind two significant awareness raising campaigns run by the Reconciliation Group in Term Two in the hope of influencing the government’s policies.

We participated in the Close The Gap Campaign and 745 people from the Avila community signed the pledge to send a message that the gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians was something they would not stand for.

A second petition was sent to the United Nations regarding the proposed re-instatement of the Racial Discrimination Act with discriminatory special measures attached – pointing out that this was breaking Australia’s obligations. This gained a staggering 795 signatures of which we are very proud and would like to thank those who signed up. Special thanks should go to the very enthusiastic group of Year 7s who are working so hard this year under the leadership of Mrs Jackie Benton and Miss Darcie Kane-Priestley.

Recently we focused on Reconciliation Week and the 10th anniversary of the ‘walk across bridges’ that about a million Australians undertook part in capital cities across Australia in the year 2000. We mimicked the ‘Sea of Hands’ by having a ‘Hands Across Avila’ afternoon, bringing the girls together to all put their hand prints on posters to show their support for Reconciliation and the Generation One ‘Hands Across Australia’ campaign. We are proud to say that there are hand prints hiding around every corner.

Beth Corkill, Reconciliation Group Captain

CLOSE THE GAP DAY

March 25 was National Close the Gap Day which provides Australians with an opportunity to let the Federal and State governments know that it is unacceptable to have a 10 to 17 year gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Members of our Reconciliation Group gained a deeper understanding of the issues from an excellent presentation by Deputy Principal (Administration) Ms Louise Gunther who teaches Health and Human Development. This year the Reconciliation Group has focused on Indigenous housing as a way of exploring the reasons behind the differing health statistics and educating the Avila community by addressing year-level pastoralis. The effectiveness of the students’ work was reflected in the number of people who signed the ‘Close the Gap’ pledge.

Mrs Christine Valladares, Reconciliation Group Co-ordinator

Mr John Rhynehart was one of the 745 Avila signatories for the Close the Gap petition.
Year 11 and 12 Drama students turned on their talents for their respective ensemble performance showcases on May 31 and June 3.

The Year 12 Drama class presented a dramatic investigation into the 2008 Mumbai attacks while the four Year 11 Drama ensemble pieces explored ‘Identity’ through the shoes of Indigenous Australians.

Year 11 Drama Captain, Alexandra Height and Drama teacher, Miss Catherine Ohlsen provided the following report on the Year 11 showcase:

‘Putting an ensemble performance together is no easy task. For the 17 young Year 11 Drama students involved, they spent eight weeks madly researching, script writing, rehearsing and creating effective multimedia to accompany their work. To say that the girls were busy in Term Two is an understatement! But their hard work paid off when they performed in Bunjil on June 3.

Delicately exploring Aboriginal spirituality, laws, community experiences and common issues facing many Indigenous communities, both the actors and the audience alike learned much. The girls should be proud of the way they addressed some complex concepts in such a creative and powerful manner. Many audience members commented on the maturity of the students and described how their dramatic works moved them with their messages of hope.

The Year 11 class would particularly like to thank Elizabeth Elliott and Josephine Dwan who assisted with lighting and multimedia.

They would also like to acknowledge the support of their family and friends who walked the journey with them.
Whoever said it’s not easy being green?

On May 14, 2010, the young women of Avila proved to be no testament to the words of the great Kermit the Frog. Once again, actresses, musicians, dancers and artists assembled harmoniously with the similar goal of ‘Going Green’ at the Robert Blackwood Hall.

The efforts of the orchestra, led by Ms. Roxane Lascaris, were absolutely phenomenal. Choirs, ensembles, duets, trios and soloists shared their musical talents in ways that were environmentally friendly. Drama ensembles and soloists suggested, through brilliant performances, that perhaps there is an alternative avenue to express a love of nature that does not require the green grocery bag.

We were in tears of laughter when drama overtook the stage with stories of German exchange students, farmers and everyday people green with envy. The artwork displayed as a backdrop on stage made the audience ‘wow’ at all the different shades of green, whilst jaws dropped when dancers jetted across the stage. To end an exciting evening, an ensemble of students went crazy on the golfing green.

A big thank you to all the staff who made the night possible, to the stage crew for their hard work, and most importantly to the performers.

Stephanie Mascetta
Year 12 Music Captain
& Meera Fernandes
Year 11 Music Captain
Public Speaking and Debating

Class act from public speakers

Avila's public speakers have enjoyed some great outcomes in Term Two, with excellent subject matter and research and strong presentations.

Both Rachel Natoli and Hailey Tait competed in the grand final of the Ainger Public Speaking Competition held by the Rotary Club of Richmond. Rachael moved the audience with her speech on foster care, while Hailey entertained them with observations about technology.

Our Year 12 captains, Steph Jenkins and Jessical Auld competed in the Plain English speaking competition providing sophisticated ideas concerning terrorism and internet filtering.

Meanwhile Alison Coffa (Year 12), Fiona Canny and Meera Fernandes (Year 11), Kathryn Elliott (Year 9), and Roshali Lokuge (Year 7) competed in the Rostrum Voice of Youth Competition. All of the students were outstanding with Kathryn winning not only her heat, but the semi-final. She will compete in the state final on June 26 at Avila. This event begins at 12.30 and you are welcome to come and support her.

Good luck, Katie.

Mrs Christine Valladares
Public Speaking Co-ordinator

At work and play at MUNA

Avila is fortunate to have the support of the Mount Waverley Rotary Club who again sponsored three of our teams in the Model United Nations Competition (MUNA) this year. MUNA is a wonderful learning experience for the students as it requires them to study a country in depth and develop some empathy for the position their country takes in both foreign and domestic policy. This year’s participants were: Georgia Harris and Leah Holt (Saudi Arabia); Li Chun Chen and Sashika Haragama (Poland) and Georgia Delaney and Krystel Ricardo (South Africa). Georgia and Krystal won the award for the best costumes!

Fleshing it out in lunchtime debates

Year 7s and 8s embraced the opportunity to flesh out some topical issues during Avila’s four-week lunchtime debating series in Term Two. Every classroom in the junior school was filled with teams from Years 7 and 8 debating the big issues - Should homework be banned? Is beauty better than brains? Should high school students be allowed to attend classes via Skype? And do we pay enough attention to our past?

Ms Amy Foster, Junior Debating Co-ordinator
Engaging semester

Semester One has finished on a high note for Avila’s English Department with both students and staff having enjoyed many engaging learning experiences.

A warm evening in the beautiful Botanic Gardens provided an enchanting setting for the year 11 Literature excursion to see the Shakespeare in the Park production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. The students, staff and some parents were delighted to join together in this celebration of summer love and dreaming – and some raucous humour and acrobatic antics as well. The year 12 English students enjoyed a lecture about their set film text *Look Both Ways* by Mr Josh Nelson from Swinburne University and Mr John Coulson spoke with our Year 9 students about the experiences of soldiers in World War I as background for their study of *Private Peaceful*. He remarked that our students were particularly engaged and interested in the Australian accounts of the time.

Najaf Mazari, the author of the year 12 English text *The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif*, visited Avila to address our Year 12 students at Pastoral. His humour and optimism impressed us all, especially his encouragement of our students to value their education and the opportunities it offered. His story of escape from Taliban Afghanistan, the perilous journey to Australia and his time at the Woomera Immigration Detention Centre also ensured we appreciated the trauma many asylum seekers suffer and their need for great resilience and determination when resettling in Australia.

During the semester, our English Department teachers have also been furthering their learning. The Year 12 English team attended the VCAA ‘Meet the Assessors’ evening. Ms Liana Griggs and Ms Mary Thornhill attended the ‘Teaching Hamlet’ workshop conducted by the Bell Shakespeare Company at the start of the year, acquiring quite an appreciation for the active performance techniques rehearsed. Term Two has indeed been ‘electric’ with staff taking up the challenges and delights of the new Interactive Whiteboards, at times with the happy guidance of their tech-savvy students. Mrs Sarah Macdonald, Ms Amy Foster and Ms Thornhill achieved the ACER NAPLAN Writing Certificate, which assists in the technical aspects of teaching writing across all English levels. The Avila English Department has presented its response to the National Curriculum for English.

We are currently preparing for examinations, confident that our students have enjoyed a wide range of learning experiences.

Invaluable memories

Avila’s Foundation Principal, Sister Patricia Carroll, has taken a walk down memory lane to assist with the College’s oral history.

Sister Patricia, who was Principal at Avila from 1965 until 1970, has recently visited Charles Street where she was interviewed by College Archivist, Mrs Marion Wilson. Mrs Wilson described as invaluable Sister Patricia’s vivid memories of the early years of the College.

Mrs Wilson noted a number of past students now have daughters at the College. She invited anyone interested in sharing their memories to complete the form available on the College website at http://www.avila.vic.edu.au/html/pdf/memories.pdf

Sr Patricia and Mrs Wilson browse through a copy of ‘Teresa’s Women’, the College’s 40th anniversary history publication.
History comes to life

During semester one, a number of History classes visited museums and other historical sites to complement their classroom learning.

At Year 9, students had the opportunity to experience life on the goldfields at Sovereign Hill, debate whether Ned Kelly was a hero or villain after visiting the Police Museum, State Library of Victoria and the Old Melbourne Gaol and explore traditional Aboriginal life and the changes that occurred with European settlement at the Melbourne Museum.

At Year 10, the Challenge and Change class visited the Holocaust museum where they heard the stories of Holocaust survivors. (See report on page 20).

Trying to determine whether Ned Kelly was a hero or a villain by exploring the Old Melbourne Gaol, the State Library and the Victoria Police Museum was the task at hand for Year 9s studying ‘Our Commonwealth’.

To help us formulate an opinion, we re-enacted Ned Kelly’s trial and students playing all the vital roles. By the end of the day most of were still unsure if Ned Kelly was a hero or a villain. What do you think?

Ruth Smith, 9 Blue

Our class visited Melbourne Museum and Como House to learn and understand more about Indigenous Australians. We viewed Melbourne Story, an exhibition that displayed the history of Melbourne, then we went to the exhibition ‘Bunjilaka’. This looked at objects that have important meanings to Aboriginal people and Aboriginal laws and rights on property. My favourite room had hundreds of photographs that each showed deep emotions of an Aboriginal Australian. We returned to the bus and headed to Como House for a detailed history lesson and guided tour. The totally furnished house is amazing and gave us a head start to our next topic, ‘Women in History’.

Genevieve Townsend, 9 Green

The Year 9s studying the history of the Gold Rush travelled to Sovereign Hill to further enhance their studies. Victoria’s gold rush background was evident and exciting with many activities and hands-on experiences. Avila students experienced Sovereign Hill indoors, outdoors and above and below ground. The day consisted of dressing up as young domestic women of the 1850s and re-living their life. After completing domestic chores in the miners’ cottages, we explored an underground mine. It was interesting because we gained an insight into how hard it would have been to be a miner.

Ashleigh Negri
9 Blue

Hee Ra Kim
buses herself with ‘woman’s work’.
Masterpieces impress

A group of Avila’s Year 11 Studio Arts and Year 12 French students were among the 476,000 people to visit the spectacular Post-impressionist exhibition, ‘Masterpieces from Paris: Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne and beyond’ at the National Gallery of Australia.

The group flew to Canberra on the first weekend of the Term One holidays to view the exhibition which featured 112 of some of the best-known works of modern art from the Musée d’Orsay in Paris, one of the great museums of 19th-century art.

Year 11 Art Captain Sarah Chan and Gaby Carrasco, 11 Green said: ‘We Studio Arts students felt privileged to be able to see artworks that we had only studied in books and on the internet. Not only did we gain a greater insight into the techniques used in the paintings, but also what subject matter and morals were important at the time. We also visited the National Portrait Gallery where we saw a collection of portraits important to Australia’s history and the War Memorial where we saw portraits and landscapes documenting history and representing scenes of different wars. This trip was an amazing experience.

Year 12 French student, Aisling Burke said the weekend provided an incredible insight into French culture and history. She described the exhibition as ‘incroyable’ and the focus of much oral work once back in the classroom. Aisling also noted that the War Museum provided students with a better understanding of the connection between the French and the Australians in World War 1.

The students thanked the teaching staff who made the visit possible through their organisation and their accompanying the group.

Art Department gigs

It has all be happening in the Art Department in Semester One with highlights including Art Week, the re-launch of Art Club at lunch times, and, in keeping with the 2010 Creative Arts Festival ‘Going Green’ theme, a green costume tea party, and a ‘Going Green Day, as well as the making of some striking stage props for the festival.

Our much anticipated lunch time Art Club was launched in Term Two by the Art captains. The first activity met with great enthusiasm as students created posters, featuring animals from throughout the world, to help brighten up the campus. The Geography rooms particularly look a lot more exciting!

Thank you all for coming along to share your creativity. Anyone is welcome to come along on Tuesday lunchtimes to join in the fun.

Demi Tsioumanis, 8 Green

CREATIVE ARTS

Avila’s 2010 Creative Arts Festival, ‘Going Green’, featured the creativity and talent of the Art Department in many forms ranging from an impressive Powerpoint display of art work to stage props and masks for costuming.

Magnificent ‘fish props’ were created using the many different textures of paper, CD’s and fabrics, all which helped make the fish look sophisticated and elegant.

On the first day of Art Week, many students participated in mask making. The materials that were used to make the creative masks were green feathers, sequences and shiny green contact. These simply decorated green masks were worn by Avila’s great orchestra at Creative Arts. Melissa Perez, Year 9 Art Captain
Sombre reminder of Holocaust

The Year 10 ‘Challenge and Change’ class, together with the VCE ‘Religion and Society’ students visited the Jewish Holocaust Centre in Elsternwick on May 3 to deepen their knowledge of the affect Adolf Hitler and the Nazi’s had on the Jews during World War 11.

The visit further enriched our studies this semester which focused on the build up to World War 11 and the Hitler regime. Many of us had not fully realised the reality of Hitler’s beliefs and the destruction and horror it led to for many Jews and their families. At the Holocaust Museum, we were fortunate to hear from Mr David Prince, who is a Holocaust survivor. He shared his heartbreaking stories of the ghettos and the concentration camps. Walking around the museum not only taught us many things but also motivated us to make sure this never happens again. We realised the importance of visiting the museum, hearing the stories and sharing them with others.

Mikaela Welzi 10 Blue

L’amour est Bizarre

Bonjour! On Friday May 28, all French students from years 8 to 11 were privileged to watch the French play L’amour est Bizarre (Love is Strange).

It was an engaging performance with many catchy French songs which, afterwards, many could be heard happily singing or humming. The play was very easy to follow no matter how much, or little, French was known as the actions were convincing. There was a good balance of both French and English.

It was great to be able to be exposed to hearing some French and the performance was a positive and enjoyable experience for all.

C’était très bon! Au revoir!

Rubini Ball and Elaine Pacheco

Miam, miam! Students in Madame Willee’s Year 9 French class have recently bonded over French food.

Each lesson a student brought a French treat to share. Mousse au chocolat, crème caramel, croquenbouche and French donuts to name a few! Thank you Britt, Andrea, Ellie, Oshani, Rachel, Rebecca, Ruby, Kat, Emily, Annabel, Shalyn and Bella for keeping us motivated to learn our verbs while we feasted on your delicious desserts.

Anita Coffa, 9 Blue

Feasting in the name of French are from L-R, Emily Pupic, Andrea Goussis, Elysia Wylie, Ruby Robertson, Annabel Robson, Brittany Rowden, Sanduni Liyanage, and Katarina Rogic.

C’est l’heure de dejeuner en classe!

Pictured outside the Holocaust Museum from left, Sarah Genovese, Gabi Cincotta, Tessa Blight and Grace Ziino.
Cows create fun

Year 9 students undertaking Environmental Science in Term Two were lucky enough to work with two baby calves by the names of Rosie and Coco for three weeks.

Rosie was a particularly special guest being a descendent from stock that arrived in Australia on the First Fleet.

It was a great experience to watch them grow and being able to take part in feeding and nurturing was amazing. Their playful antics were a handful at times, especially when they escaped on the oval and decided it would be funny if they ran around making us chase them for an hour!

We took full responsibility for the calves with morning, lunchtime and after-school duties to feed them, clean their pens and, of course, give them lots of TLC.

We would like to thank the Cows Create Careers program, and Avila, for making such an experience possible. It was a unique hands-on experience that taught us a lot about the dairy industry.

We would also like to thank our teacher Mrs Lisa Moloney for all her help to ensure our ‘babies’ were as happy as possible. All in all everybody enjoyed the experience and would happily do it again.

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Year 7 Forensic Frenzy

As part of the Year 7 Science program, students get to be forensic scientists for a day with the help of visiting specialists from the CSIRO.

This year was no exception with the Year 7s experiencing a range of fascinating activities. Pictured from left, Aisling Dew, Monica Bellizia and Rhiannon McCorriston analyse fluorescent oils; Chloe Murphy and Jorja Horo ‘model’ a skull; and Nyree Campion and Pauline Maderazo explore soil analysis which links soil to a crime scene.
Finishing at 1pm on Friday, April 16, the Year 11 corridor was filled with madness as the day had finally arrived for the Year 11 Formal.

The rest of the afternoon was dedicated to grooming and finishing touches before the Year 11s boarded limousines and party buses ready for a night to remember. By 7:30pm the Powerhouse Function Centre at Albert Park was filled with the dazzling Year 11s, attractive young men and, of course, some of our wonderful staff.

The venue was beautiful and the views from the balcony overlooking Albert Park Lake helped make the evening all the more magic. The food was very interesting, and the music had everyone, even the teachers, up dancing, to their favourite songs and styles.

A big thank you to all the staff who attended and to the Year 12 VCAL Class and VCAL Co-ordinator Ms Jenny Dunn who did such a wonderful job organising our special night.

Emma Liston and Celeste Fisher
11 Purple
Juggling legal career with parenthood

Armed with the Avila ‘can-do’ belief that girls can do anything they are passionate about and prepared to work towards, Sharon Johns has carved herself a successful career as a Melbourne barrister specialising in family law and de facto relationships.

And she is quick to highlight the power of Avila’s ‘can-do’ philosophy by adding that some of her closest friends from Avila are strong, independent women who are making their mark professionally in diverse fields ... Catherine McLaren (nee Culhane), 1985 College Captain, is a neurological physiotherapist, 1985 College Dux Anna Catanzariti (nee Domine) is a solicitor and Daniella Casamento is a successful interior designer.

‘One of the greatest advantages of attending Avila was that the teachers and my peers gave me the confidence and self belief that I could achieve my goals,’ said Sharon, a Class of 1985 graduate who studied Arts/Law at Monash University.

For Sharon, like so many past students, the enduring friendships she made at secondary school were what made Avila particularly special. While each of her Avila friends has pursued her own career and personal life, they provide each other with a strong support network during the twists and turns of life’s journey.

At Avila, Sharon was a diligent student who also embraced the wider community life through her involvement in music, drama and sport. She was the Nagle House captain for music and drama and represented Avila in inter-school swimming.

In one of those quirks of life, her Year 11 role in the 1984 Avila Mazenod Musical, Oliver, has had an ‘encore’ at a professional level. One of her instructing solicitors is a Mazenodian and was a Year 8 performer in the show.

The ‘can-do’ culture of Avila held Sharon in good stead as she pursued her career in the highly competitive legal profession. As a young lawyer the challenges at times seemed overwhelming however Sharon believes her years at Avila equipped her well with the skills to meet those challenges, including a preparedness for hard work and confidence in her own ability. She believes that women have much to offer the legal profession because they are naturally good communicators who can present a strong argument yet more importantly, can listen. They also have great empathy, an essential quality for any successful lawyer.

Sharon started off as an articled clerk with a local law firm before joining a city firm, Barker Gosling, where she advanced to senior associate before signing the bar roll as a barrister in 1998.

While it was quite a ‘scary’ step to leave the security of a law firm to work for herself, Sharon’s decision to become a barrister was fuelled by her desire to be more at the heart of the action and influence the law making process as well as her love of a challenge, work ethic and her expertise in the area of family law.

‘I love being in court. I have always been a bit of a performer and enjoy the adrenalin rush of having to think on my feet, the intellectual challenge of presenting a case and being an advocate for clients,’ said Sharon who has been involved in several high profile cases which have led to what Sharon considers to be positive changes in family law.

For those interested in a career in law, Sharon said that a preparedness for hard work and the ability to work consistently at a high level, diligence, well-honed research skills, good judgment and knowing when to ‘hold them or when to fold them’ were essential. Work experience with a law firm or a barrister was an excellent way to get a feel for the day-to-day practices.

‘But at the end of the day, you have to have a passion for whatever it is you want to achieve in order to succeed,’ said Sharon whose work as a barrister has not only given her professional satisfaction but also the flexibility to pursue her passion for family. It has enabled Sharon and her partner to share the parenting of their 16 month old son who no doubt will put some of Sharon’s skills to the test as time goes by ...
Olympic dream in water polo

Water polo gun, Rebecca Andrews will represent Victoria in a national competition in Brisbane during the upcoming school holidays.

She recently gained selection into the 14 and under Victorian squad to play in the East Coast Challenge which attracts teams from Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia.

The 13-year-old Year 8 student has enjoyed quite a meteoric rise to elite level water polo after taking up the sport just on 12 months ago at the encouragement of her swimming coach.

She has been training up to seven hours a week with the State squad and her club team, the Nunawading Dragons. She plays under 14, 16 and 18 at club level and her opponents are often caught out by the determination behind her quiet demeanor.

‘I really enjoy the physical challenge of water polo because you are treading water the whole time unless you are swimming. It is also a great team game,’ said Rebecca who plays goal keeper.

A keen sportswoman who also enjoys netball, tennis and swimming, Rebecca has her sights set on one day representing Australia at the Olympic Games. She doesn’t mind in which code, but water polo is looking to be a promising pathway at present.

Rebecca’s sporting idol is Australia’s Samantha Stosur who proved that she is a force to be reckoned with after winning a place in the coveted 2010 Grand Slam finals.

Excursion stirs friendly rivalry

Our VCAL excursion to the MCG and the Melbourne Sports Museum on April 29 was very eventful.

During our visit to the Melbourne Sports Museum we completed a sheet on cricket, football and the Olympics, especially the 1956 ones held in Melbourne. While we were there Ms Dunn kicked a goal in the interactive area, simulating a goal by Nick Riewoldt. There were also activities simulating soccer, archery, netball, cycling and reaction times.

We then had a tour of the MCG and went onto the ground and sat on the interchange bench. Our tour guide spoke to us about the ground and much of its history. We visited the locker rooms which Carlton Football Club had used the previous Saturday which met with some mixed reactions.

VCAL Co-ordinator, Ms Jenny Dunn, decided we needed a cultural moment and took us to the Lexus/ Westpac Centre for lunch where the Collingwood Football Club is based. Mr Phil Cornell, who also accompanied us and who has black and white blood, informed us it is now the Westpac Centre.

We spotted two of the best and most amazing players, Dane Swan and Harry O’Brien. They obliged us with photos and almost convinced me to change team. It was a great day, GO Lions!

Stapleton sisters cream it in pumpkins

There’s something about the soil, sun, and water at the Stapleton home with Georgie and Angela producing the largest pumpkins in the Year 7 weigh-in.

All the Year 7s received a pumpkin seedling at their Orientation Day on November 30 last year and their task was to nurture and watch the plant develop for the much anticipated Year 7 pumpkin weigh-in in Term Two.

Said Georgie: By April my pumpkin was fairly large, and bigger than my sister Angela’s! At the weigh-in on May 24, my pumpkin weighed 26kgs. 2.5kgs heavier than Angela’s! I think our secret to success was ensuring our pumpkins received plenty of sunlight and water. It was definitely a fun experience.

Sarah Withers, 12 Purple

Rebecca shows her style at Just Swimming Syndal.
Avila’s aerobics teams have again turned on impressive performances in the School Aerobics competition.

Six Avila teams - 28 excited Aerobics girls - competed in the School Aerobics competition at The Geelong Arena on Sunday May 16. It was a very early start for some of the girls, who were required at the venue at 7:30am!

With great enthusiasm and high energy levels the teams took the stage to see if they could make it through to the State Finals.

Bring It On and Silver Slash made it straight through to the Premiership Finals at the Kingston Arts Centre in Moorabbin on Sunday June 20.

Meanwhile Poison Ivy and Static Illusion competed in the championship finals in the morning in the hope of winning a wildcard entry to the premiership finals. Unfortunately the June 20 results were not available in time for this issue of Avila Matters.

Congratulations to all girls on their achievements.

Ms Nerida King
Head of Sport

Silver Slash. Standing from left, Jasmin Coghill and Steph Barcham, seated Katherine Konstantinidis and Fallon Smeaton, and front Hannah Renehan and Ruby Robertson.

Static Illusion. Standing from left, Melody Kin, Aisling Dew, Annabel Robson, Georgia Stapleton and Angela Stapleton. Kneeling from left, Jacinta Frizziero, Kate James and Ashley Lambourne.

Poison Ivy. Standing from left, Naomi Linossier, Mikaela Welti, Lauren Bregazzi, and Brittany Sculac, and front Katherine Eales and Yvanah Hernandez.

Bring It On. Back row from left Sophia Elliott, Brianna Davey, Sussanah Meale and Alice Whelan. Middle row from left Sabrina Quinn, Mirella Cuda and Samantha Antoniou at the front.
Avila team spirit shines through on and off the field

Avila showcased its team spirit in every sense of the word when it hosted, as well as competed in, the 2010 Division 1 SCSA Athletics Carnival at Olympic Park on May 17.

Hosting the event, which involved nine schools and more than 1500 students, was a massive undertaking but one that our Physical Education Department handled with aplomb with the help of students and staff. Even the weather was perfect. It was a day full of ribbons, cheering, new records and the occasional glimpse of a Collingwood player at Westpac Centre.

Our team was full of competitors from all year levels keen to put their skills to the test. The girls did an amazing job, competing to a high standard often against students who are State or National representatives. Our Juniors were 6th; Intermediates 8th; and Seniors 4th.

Thanks to the girls who participated and to the students and staff who helped run the day. Special thanks to all of the teachers who put in an enormous amount of time and effort into coaching us. Once again another great Avila team effort.

Mel Harrex 11 Pink and Mel Hoich 12 Gold Athletics captains

On May 24, a dedicated group of girls from Avila made its way to the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre in search of basketball glory. Pitted against rivals such as Mater Christi, Sion and Siena, the girls performed exceptionally well across all year levels.

After seven demanding games, the Junior girls managed a very respectable fourth place, while the Intermediates put in a magnificent effort to take home third. The performance of the day however, went to the Seniors who were the undefeated champions of their division, with Meg Withers being awarded MVP for the grand final.

A big thank you goes to Miss Sarah Tutchener, Miss Melissa Bower and Mr Allan Kennedy for taking their time to coach the three teams and who helped make the event so successful. Once again congratulations to all the girls for representing Avila proudly.

Elena Healey
Basketball Captain

Juniors from back L-R, Tayla Hope, Brittany Halford, Rebecca Mauger, Jade Carr, Yasna Cook and Sarah Welsford. Front L-R, Sarah Lamb, Yasmine Cook, Tamara Wolekins and Spencer Niania.

Intermediates from back L-R, Alex McLennan, Miranda Ludekens, Julia Lepore, Nisha Duggan. Front L-R, Grace Dungey, Beth Coffey, Fallon Smeaton, Ilena Gentile, Georgia Gamble and Amber Carr.
Seniors snare title in tight finish

Melbourne turned on all four seasons for the SCSA Tennis at the Boroondara Tennis Club on March 10.

All our teams played exceptionally well, making it through to the semi finals. Unfortunately, only the seniors made it through to the grand final and after an epic two rubbers to one win, the seniors took home the winner’s prize.

Congratulations to all girls for playing so well in such testing conditions. Thank you Mr Emilio Bernardo, Ms Carmela Marino and Mrs Anne-Maree Wise for coming along to help us.

Alex Bell
Tennis Captain

SCSA Tennis

Juniors


Intermediates


Seniors

From back L-R, Hannah Wright, Melanie Orvis and Samantha Walsh. Front L-R, Alex Rooke, Alex Bell and Briana Cable.

Photographs: Mrs Anne-Maree Wise

SCSA Swimming

Avila put on a great performance at the 2010 SCSA Swimming and Diving Carnival, coming fourth overall and winning the diving. With strong competition among the 10 competing teams, our Intermediates came first whilst the Seniors placed 5th and Juniors were 8th. The Diving team (Briannan Sutherland, Kate Townsend, Molly Stow, Ruth Smith, Rachel Engellenner, Beth Coffey, Naomi Riley, Teaghan Sutherland, Louise Murphy) performed extremely well and brought home the aggregate trophy! Thanks to Ms Jenny Brown, Ms Meg Gilfedder and Ms Nerida King for coaching the team.

Avila Matters Term 2, 2010 - 27
House spirit and participation levels were at an all-time high for the 2010 House Athletics Carnival on April 21.

In perfect conditions at the Bill Sewart Athletics Track, the girls competed with great spirit and determination to earn points for their houses whether it be by throwing, jumping, running or walking.

In keeping with tradition, the Year 12s looked particularly colourful dressed to their 2010 theme of ‘cartoons and characters’.

The enormous level of participation placed unprecedented workload on the recording of results so the final tally was not available on the day. The final results were announced and presentations made at a special assembly the following Friday.

Congratulations to Flynn Captain Nikki Paulding who spurred her house to a fantastic victory. Flynn finished with 2,458 points followed by Chisholm (2,260), Nagle (2,208) and then MacKillop (2,015). Chisholm won the Reynolds Memorial Shield.

A fantastic effort by the following girls who were named 2010 year-level champions and runners up:

- Yr 7: Champion—Isabelle Hanna
  Runner Up—Tamara Ludekens
- Yr 8: Champion—Sarah Welsford
  Runner Up—Kate Townsend
- Yr 9: Champion—Alexandra Forrest
  Runner Up—Madeleine Murphy
- Yr 10: Champion—Emily Ryan
  Runner Up—Ilena Gentile
- Yr 11: Champion—Kathryn Eales
  Runner Up—Emily Papadimitriou
- Yr 12: Champion—Meg Withers
  Runners Up—Michelle Esmore/Nicole Paulding

Thank you to Mrs Geraldine Esmore (my beautiful mum) for generously giving her time to present the awards and also to the parents who came to support the girls. Many thanks also to the staff, helpers and students for making the day so successful.

Michelle Esmore
Sports Captain