From the Editor

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the new college magazine Avila Connect which will be published twice each year. It has been a pleasure to work on the first issue of the magazine which commemorates the past fifty years and looks forward to the future. Many of the Golden Jubilee events held so far this year are covered in the magazine and they have provided a wonderful opportunity for the community to reconnect with the college.

I hope you enjoy reading about the innovative learning programs at Avila as well as the exciting building plans in development. There are two staff profiles for you to enjoy and they highlight one of the strengths of the college, namely the high calibre of teaching staff. Avila students excel in a variety of fields and some of their achievements and highlights are included in this edition. The dedicated members of the Parents and Friends Association have made a great contribution in creating many events and activities to involve families in the life of the school.

Reconnecting with past students seems especially important in the 50th year of the college and the recently formed Alumnae Committee is committed to strengthening ties going forward. I invite all Alumnae to email me (apopray@avilacollege.vic.edu.au) with any news and photos for the next edition of the magazine.

I would like to thank all members of the Avila community who contributed articles, information and photographs for this edition of Avila Connect including:

Louise Gunther, Sally-Anne Petrie, Madeleine Franken, Catherine Spurritt, Phillip Cornell, Madelaine Scott-Jones, Pauline Catrice, Marina Kelly, Loretta Stapleton, Christine Valladares and Simon Fox.

I hope you enjoy reading Avila Connect.

Annie Opray
Director of Marketing and Development

Contents

Message from the Principal 1
Message from the Chair of the Board 2
Golden Jubilee Eucharist 3
Learning with Technology 4
Building for the Future 5
Going the Distance 6
Joie de Vivre 7
Making the Move to Secondary School 8
Leading the Way 9
Discovery Learning 10
Achievements and Highlights 12
Parents and Friends Association Report 14
Avila Alumnae 16
Welcome to the first edition of our new publication – Avila Connect and what a most appropriate title as we celebrate our Golden Jubilee year and make connections with our Avila College community members over the past fifty years. We have an abundance of accomplishments from our Alumnae, both students and staff, to recognise and celebrate as we reflect on those who have helped shape the college from its humble beginnings to where we are now, proudly placed in Mount Waverley. As we commemorate our past fifty years, we are planning and thinking ahead to the next fifty years. The college has developed a Master Building Plan and we aim to establish and build flexible learning spaces that will continue to see Avila well placed to provide leading educational opportunities for current and future students.

Throughout this publication you can enjoy reading about current programs in the college; profiles of current teaching staff with some unique links to Avila; and a special section dedicated to Avila Alumnae and information on reunions. I encourage all past Avila Alumnae to make contact with the college if they would like to organise their class’ milestone year. We would be most pleased to host you at the college and provide you with a school tour for a two-fold purpose – firstly, to reminisce about past Avila days and, secondly to learn about our plans for the future.

The celebrations that have already taken place to mark our Golden Jubilee year have been most successful. Our Opening of the Year Eucharist held at St Patrick’s Cathedral was led by Bishop Mark Edwards OMI and we were fortunate that he spent time at the college in the lead up to this Eucharist.

The weather was on our side when we held our Jubilee Carnival on 21 March – with food stalls, rides, musical entertainment and tours of the college. We welcomed close to 3,000 people throughout the day. I urge all Alumnae to avail yourselves of events to come that are part of this significant year in the life of our college.

Coincidently, 2015 also marks the 500th anniversary of the birth of St Teresa of Avila: 1515 – 2015. She was known as a woman of faith and action – an inspiration for the women in our community both past and present. Declared a Doctor of the Church for her writing and teaching on prayer, her philosophies are as relevant today as they were 500 years ago. Teresa believed that the most powerful and acceptable prayer was a prayer that combines a love of Christ with compassionate action – and this prayer has certainly been lived out by Avila women. In an era of fast-paced living it is pleasing to note that St Teresa and her works can still inspire our students of today into becoming women of tomorrow.

Louise Gunther
Principal

“Christ has no body but yours, No hands, no feet on earth, but yours, Yours are the eyes with which he looks, Compassion on this world, Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good, Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.”

– Teresa of Avila
Message from the Chair of the Board

The dreams of a full secondary education for the daughters of Catholic families in the Waverley area became a firm reality as Avila College began in humble circumstances in two classrooms at St Leonard’s Primary School, Glen Waverley, in February 1965. From the beginning, the growth of Avila College as an educational and faith community, has been inspired by bold and visionary leadership from the foundational parishes and the founding order, the Presentation Sisters. Over the years, the foresight, determination and energy of all those entrusted with leadership of the college has been embraced by staff and families as they have worked to create learning spaces and opportunities that meet the educational needs of Avila’s students; often despite a significant shortage of funds and resources. In the classrooms Avila teachers, inspired by the example of Teresa of Avila and drawing on the charism of the Presentation Order, have offered students quality education that has opened both their ‘minds and their hearts’.

So today, as we celebrate 50 years, we gratefully acknowledge our grace-filled past and its role in shaping our present Avila community. The commitment of the college’s current leadership team; teaching and administration staff; families and students – continues to be reflected in a college that offers girls, from a wider circle of parishes and communities, an education that recognises their uniqueness and human dignity by nurturing the whole person. In true Avila tradition, Avila girls respond creatively, courageously and compassionately. As a student body they are connected to our Christian faith story; deeply respectful of and wholeheartedly committed to each other and the Avila community; keenly aware of injustices in the local, national and international community; and passionate about working to make a positive difference. It is no surprise then, that beyond school, Avila girls are now contributing significantly in every professional field and, notably, those that have been previously dominated by men – namely, medical and scientific research and practice, business, politics, construction and law.

As we move towards the future, Avila leadership is deeply committed to offering Avila girls education and faith opportunities that will nourish and prepare them for an increasingly complex, unpredictable and, moreover, secular world. Wisdom from our past teaches us that, despite the unknown challenges ahead, drawing deeply on our traditions and the Presentation charism we can continue to shape ‘Teresa’s women’. With this knowledge we can; therefore, be reassured that with the presence of Avila girls in the community, the future is indeed in safe hands.

Sally-Anne Petrie
Chair
Avila College Board
On Sunday 8 February, the Avila College community gathered at St Patrick’s Cathedral for a special Eucharist to celebrate the Golden Jubilee year of the college.

Bishop Mark Edwards OMI was the principal celebrant and he was joined by concelebrants: Rev Pat Jackson SAC, Rev Brendan Dillon, Rev Hien Vu, Rev John Papworth, Rev Michael Twigg OMI and Fr Kaz Trawicki CR. The Rev Paselio Lemalu (who has a daughter at the college) was the deacon for the mass.

A few days prior to the Eucharist, Bishop Edwards visited the college and met with both staff and students. Bishop Edwards toured the college and visited students in their classrooms. He noted that they were fortunate to be at Avila College during the Golden Jubilee year.

Honoured guests on the day included past principals Patricia Ryan, Maureen Thompson and Liz Gleeson as well as numerous past staff and Avila Alumnae. Current Avila College students with their families, along with many people who have an affiliation to the college, made up the large numbers at the celebration.

The college hymn, written by Sr Joan Marshall pbvm and Sr Josepha Dunlop pbvm, was sung with great gusto at the conclusion of the Eucharist.

The Eucharist was a wonderful celebration of the many blessings bestowed upon the Avila community, both in the past and in the present. The readings, prayers and homily inspired the congregation to give thanks and the music soared to the heights of the Cathedral. It was commented on by many that the Avila students sang like a choir of angels.

Principal Louise Gunther thanked guests for sharing in the celebration and reflected on the value of an Avila education and the opportunities it has provided to students over the last 50 years.

The Eucharist was a joyous start to the Golden Jubilee year. Throughout 2015 many valued members of the Avila community will be welcomed at special events to reconnect and celebrate the rich and proud history of Avila College.
Learning with Technology

Whilst teaching and learning methods may differ today from those employed in 1965, students’ desire to learn is as keen as ever. Fortunately Avila’s teachers are committed to learning and adapting too, which means that they are highly creative and skilled in using the latest tools available to maximise student achievement.

One of the biggest changes from 1965 to 2015, evident when you walk into a classroom, is that students and teachers use personal computers for their learning much of the time. The computers are utilised as learning tools in various dynamic and innovative ways.

Of course, access to resources and information has changed significantly with the introduction of the Internet. All learners are now connected to rich up-to-date materials at the click of a trackpad. Most learning resources are online, including commercial textbooks, materials created by teachers at Avila and other experts, then shared via the World Wide Web. In a Physical Education class, students may film themselves throwing a ball and analyse their shots with powerful programs that provide instant feedback on speed, curve or distance of their throw. In Mathematics classes, students use graphics calculators to reduce time that would have been spent finding the relevant page and line in log books or with slide rules in the 1960s. In English, not only can students prepare professional looking publications, they can quickly locate multiple reviews of texts studied or converse with other readers or a living author about the theme, setting or stimulus for the novel or play being studied. Arts and Humanities students have ready access to the best museums and galleries in the world. Geography students can take virtual tours of far-flung places that would have not been accessible in the past. Science students can link into the very latest research and learning. Technology and Art students manipulate images and designs easily with their Macbooks in developing original and powerful designs.

Social media is also used to support and share learning. Twitter, Instagram and Edmodo are used for learning by various groups at Avila. Avila’s Food Tech students regularly share photos of mouth-watering cuisine creations. Students check their Edmodo pages to chat about learning, locate extra resources and complete quizzes or submit homework.

Google docs enable real time collaborative learning with multiple users able to contribute simultaneously to the same document, spreadsheet, presentation or website. Not only do students create professional looking publications, slideshows and videos to demonstrate their learning but teachers also use their computers to record video to provide rich authentic feedback to students on their work. Avila’s involvement in a video feedback project with Monash University’s Education faculty placed the school at the forefront of educational innovation and research.

It was a fitting tribute to 50 years of leading learning that Avila included in its Golden Jubilee celebrations a conference for educators. Teachers from schools across Melbourne came together with Avila’s teachers at the Spark, Amplify, Evolve conference held on 29 May. Teachers shared their stories of igniting student learning in exciting ways. They explored letting go to empower students to take charge of the learning process so they can evolve with the dynamically changing world of the 21st century.

Madeleine Franken
Deputy Principal
Learning and Teaching
At Avila College we recognise it is essential to provide students, both current and in the future, with an environment conducive to achieving their best academically.

Contemporary classrooms and excellent facilities have a significant impact on a student’s ability to concentrate on the subjects being taught and to maximise their learning outcomes.

Past students who visit the college as part of the reunion program frequently comment on how the school has grown since their time at Avila. They often mention how they would have enjoyed the great facilities they see when they tour the college today.

Refurbishments at the college in the recent past have included a renovated Year 10 area, a new Year 7 and 8 building, air conditioners in all classrooms and a redesigned St Teresa’s Garden.

A comprehensive Master Building Plan for the college has been developed in conjunction with the architects and it will be implemented in stages over the next few years:

**Stage 1**
New Gymnasium (pictured above)
Learning areas and a Gathering Space between Bunjil and the Food Technology building

**Stage 2**
New Administration and Staff area

**Stage 3**
College Chapel, Classroom Renovations and Discovery Learning Centre.

Stage 1 will be completed by the middle of 2015, which will provide another reason to celebrate in our Golden Jubilee year. It is anticipated Stage 2 will commence construction in 2017 and Stage 3 in the years to follow. All donations to the Avila College Building Fund are tax deductible. Please telephone (03) 9831 9600 to make a donation using your credit card or send a cheque made payable to Avila College Building Fund to 35 Charles Street, Mount Waverley, 3149.
Going the Distance

In his younger days, Phil Cornell completed the Melbourne Marathon; the preparation, hard work and commitment needed for this has been evident in his approach to all challenges throughout his life. When Phil commits to something he sees it through. In 2015 he celebrates 30 years of teaching at Avila College – an amazing achievement.

Phil was born in Preston, but grew up in Collingwood, explaining his long held devotion to his football team the Magpies. Phil grew up surrounded by strong female role models. The family lived together with his grandmother and great grandmother. They helped with the home duties as Phil’s mum had a very busy full time job as secretary to the Director of Manufacturing at General Motors Holden.

After finishing school Phil was not quite sure which career path to follow, but was impressed by his Uncle Bob’s love of teaching. He enrolled at Rusden Teachers College in a Bachelor of Education, majoring in History, Legal Studies and Politics. One of the drawcards of teaching was that it was relationship based and this appealed to Phil greatly.

Whilst doing some emergency teaching, Phil noticed an ad for a Legal Studies teacher at Avila College. He had no idea where Avila was but applied anyway and soon found himself having a chat to Principal Patricia Ryan. All went well and Phil soon joined the college and was one of only three male teachers on staff. From the very start his colleagues impressed Phil with their welcoming nature; their generosity in sharing their knowledge; and their community spirit. He is happy to see that these qualities are still a hallmark of the college. Phil is a great supporter of worthy causes and can often be found manning the BBQ for the many fund raising sausage sizzles held at Avila.

A couple of years after Phil started a new teacher called Anna Ciampoli joined the staff. As Phil remembers it, their eyes locked across the Old Lecture Theatre and for him that was it. But it was not so simple, as Anna said no to going out on numerous occasions ... but she finally relented. They were a little worried about telling the principal that they were engaged, but all Maureen Thompson said was, “Well, it’s about time!” The rest is history.

They were married at Holy Family in 1989 and have two sons, Richard who is 21 and Nicholas aged 16.

Phil still loves teaching and is happy to come to work each day. The best reward for Phil is the relationships forged over the years with his students. It is the ultimate compliment for Phil when he meets his past students at conferences and they are now teachers.

Phil’s students of today speak about him in glowing terms. One of his Year 12 students says, “Mr Cornell is generous, caring and willing to make time to sit with you. He knows you well enough to know just how far to push you to do your best.” At the recent Golden Jubilee Carnival Phil was posted at the front gate and was showered with hugs and hellos from past students and their families.

Just after finishing this interview Phil saw a former student who came back to visit the college. As time ticked by they talked, laughed and caught up – vintage Phil. In his own words, teaching at Avila “has been an honour and a privilege.”
Joie de Vivre

You only need to be in Catherine (Davenport) Spurritt’s company for a short time to realise that she has been blessed with a love of life.

Cath is passionate about many things in life – family, students, career, community service and the importance of girls’ education.

Some might say education is in the genes, both her mum Faye and her dad John are teachers. Cath’s grandmother Eileen was an educational pioneer. Cath remembers her Grandma as a feisty lady with a great intellect who valued the idea of educating women in the context of faith. Fast-forward 50 years and we have a woman building on her grandmother’s legacy.

Cath grew up in Glen Waverley. She attended St Christopher’s Primary School and has very fond memories of those times. Holidays were spent enjoying long summer days at Rye with the extended Davenport family and friends.

Cath started in Year 7 at Avila College in 1998 and was passionate about learning, a quality she still possesses today. She was elected College Captain in 2003 and learnt from Principal Filomena Salvatore. She observed Fil’s impressive leadership style and looked to her as a role model. As a student Cath made the most of the opportunities that came her way: she learnt the trumpet, joined the orchestra, was involved in debating and competed in many sports.

Cath did very well in VCE and started her Arts course at Monash University intending to transfer to Arts/Law. But fate intervened and set her on another course... Cath was a volunteer with the Lord Somers Camp and PowerHouse and this association sparked her passion for working with young people. She continues to help out with the ‘Big Camp’ program in January and ‘Camp Diversity’ each year.

A family friend, who was a French teacher, had inspired Cath’s love of all things French and she studied the language from Years 7 to 12 with the dream of living in Paris. She took a break from study and travelled overseas, spending some time in her beloved France. She worked as an au pair and went on to enjoy the sights of Europe. Upon returning home Cath spent some time working in the corporate sector with an accounting firm where she was part of a team working in a high performance culture. The managing partner offered her an ongoing role but teaching French was her true passion.

In her final year of study Cath was offered a teaching position at Ivanhoe Girls’ Grammar where she worked for two years. She returned to Avila in 2011 after being encouraged to apply to fill a vacancy in the French department.

She appreciates the Avila sense of community and describes it as something very special. She was happy to return to the college as she could see it was moving in an exciting direction under the leadership of Principal Louise Gunther. In her five years at Avila, Cath has been a classroom teacher, French teacher, General Studies Coordinator, Languages Curriculum Leader and is presently the Year 7 Coordinator.

Cath is a master juggler who, with her husband and the support of family, manages to fit a lot into every day including being mum to her two-year-old son, Will. Cath loves working with young people and is especially passionate about the importance of girls’ education. She sets very high standards for herself and her students. She tells her students to, “Focus on what you can do, not what you can’t” and to “Do your best, plus 10%.” Clearly Cath leads by example.
Making the Move to Secondary School

It can sneak up on many parents, one minute their child is in primary school and the next they are in the secondary school uniform shop convincing them that the bigger blazer is the way to go.

The Transition Program at Avila College has been developed to ensure Year 7 students feel comfortable in their new environment. The Transition Coordinator, Mrs Pauline Catrice, liaises with the students’ Year 6 teachers to gain an understanding of each new girl. Parents are asked to complete a questionnaire to provide information about their daughter’s strengths and the family’s expectations. There is an Information Evening, a Welcome to Avila Day and an Orientation Day.

The Year 7s spend a half-day at school on their first day. Year 10 buddies greet them at the gate, help them find their classroom and answer any questions they may have. Friendship skills are actively promoted at Year 7 and the camp in Term 1 provides excellent opportunities for students to move outside their own circle and make other friends. Gianna from Year 7 says “I like that there are so many different subjects to study at Avila, especially Science and Languages; and I want to challenge myself to learn new things and do well.”

Mrs Catrice says, “We acknowledge that transition for students and their families is a journey. It is a process of change and, so, we help by fostering continual personal growth and academic rigour in a supportive and innovative environment.

Our Living and Values program is an integral part of pastoral care at Avila. It instils values, positive mindfulness, a sense of belonging and friendships.” Year 7 student Alessandria says, “I was a bit worried about changing friendship groups, but now I really enjoy being with my new friends. Year 7 camp was actually one of the best days of my life. I plan to join the Reconciliation Group soon.”

At Avila, transition is a shared responsibility between all of the teachers who care for each student. Homeroom teachers work in partnership with parents to ensure the students’ wellbeing. Alice from Year 7 was concerned that, because she is a shy person she might not fit in and she might be in the shadows at secondary school. She says, “I have become confident after a short time at Avila. I feel like I can do anything and I shouldn’t be afraid to make decisions and try new things because the staff and students support me. I would tell new students to take the chances when you have them.”

Catherine Spurritt, Year 7 Coordinator says, “The aim of the Transition Program is to help us to create students who are engaged and connected. We have the systems, structures and mentors in place to assist new students. A key indicator for connectedness is a student’s involvement in school life through participation in sports, drama clubs, debating and other pursuits. I find that this equates to a successful experience at school both in learning and in a relationship sense. Another key consideration is a student’s ability to be independent. We strongly encourage this as it gives the girls the power to be problem solvers; and with this comes resilience.”
Leading the Way

“Dear Young People, Do not bury your talents, the gifts that God has given you. Do not be afraid to dream of great things.” – Pope Francis I

An effective leader has vision and the ability to inspire others to make their dreams come true. Pope Francis encourages young people to make the most of their God given gifts, including the ability to lead. Some people are born with this skill and others develop it throughout their lifetime.

At Avila College students are given every opportunity to develop and grow in leadership roles. The leadership structure at Avila was modified in 2014 in order to reflect the Catholic ethos of the college and to increase the sense of House Spirit. There is a process that aspiring leaders are required to go through before being appointed, including a letter of interest to the Principal, a speech to fellow students, a staff vote and a student vote. The Principal and the Student Leadership Coordinator interview students applying for the College Captain and Vice Captain positions.

Madelaine Scott-Jones, the Student Leadership Coordinator says, “Leaders at Avila College are brimming with enthusiasm and have a strong sense of confidence in their role at the college.” There is a vast range of leadership opportunities available at the college, both formal and informal. They provide students with invaluable experiences to help them develop into strong and articulate women.

The student leadership structure at Avila consists of a College Captain and two Vice Captains, one for “Faith and Mission” and another for “Community”. The 2015 College Captain, Angela Stapleton, defines leadership as “having the ability to empower others to be leaders ... to wear a badge doesn’t necessarily define a leader; it is passion and creating a positive change that encompass what it is to be a role model”. Leadership can be challenging, but Angela sees it as a “never ending lesson that will inform her actions long after she has graduated from Avila.”

Christiana David, the Faith and Mission Captain for 2015 uses her leadership position to help students bring their ideas to life. Her leadership role has helped her to improve her communication, time management and organisational skills. Christiana’s ambition in her leadership year is to support the Christian ethos and values at Avila College. She encourages students to put their faith into action to make a difference in the community through programs such as The Red Cross Door Knock, Rosie’s Van and the Young Vinnie’s Group.

There is also a captain for each House from Years 8 to 12. The four Houses are named after notable women in history: Caroline Chisholm, Julia Flynn, Mary MacKillop and Nano Nagle. The House Captains work closely together to foster House Spirit and create a special bond between students from different year levels. Captains are also appointed in the key areas of Art, Drama, Music, Sport, Public Speaking and Debating, Fire Carriers and Stage Crew from Years 9 to 12. Ongoing training is provided to the elected student leaders at Avila College to help them with their roles of responsibility. A Leaders’ Day for students in Years 8 to 12 takes place once a semester.

As one of the world’s great leaders, Pope Francis says, “Ask Jesus what he wants from you and be brave.” For some the answer is to be a leader and a fair degree of bravery is required. Having a position of responsibility in the supportive environment at Avila College helps to create students who lead the way.
Discovery Learning

The Discovery Learning Program is a dynamic element of the curriculum at Avila College and it facilitates experiential learning beyond the walls of the traditional classroom. The program consists of camps and a city experience. It is sequential and students build on their skills throughout the years.

Marina Kelly, the Discovery Learning Coordinator says, “The Discovery Learning program at Avila seeks to provide students with learning experiences that complement, but cannot be replicated by, classroom learning. The overall aim of our program is to develop students’ independence and resilience whilst giving our girls the opportunity to experience Victoria’s unique urban and rural environments first hand.”

The Discovery Learning Program provides students with an opportunity to explore new surroundings and to be challenged both mentally and physically. They develop confidence as a result of their experiences off campus. They learn about their surroundings and become problem solvers and team players.

Students are often assigned to groups with girls with whom they do not necessarily mix on an every day basis. This has the benefit of allowing them to get to know other girls and widen their friendship circles. Alyss from Year 9 commented, “I got to know girls I’ve never spoken to before and I now feel comfortable approaching and talking to them back at school.”

In 2015, Year 7 students visited Marysville and the Year 9 group went to Lake Eildon. The Year 7 camp took place in Term 1 and it focused on sustainability and sustainable living. Each evening, following dinner, the waste or leftovers were “weighed” to encourage the students to be more respectful and appreciative of food. Some students were surprised at the amount left over. Amy from Year 7 said, “It taught me to take what you need and eat what you take.”

Both the Year 7 and 9 camp itineraries contained a variety of physical challenges like rock climbing, cycling and abseiling. There was also reflection time at the end of the day when the girls shared their experiences and feelings about camp with fellow students. Amy from Year 7 has some great advice for others going to camp, she says, “Push past your limits so you don’t regret anything.” Alyssa from Year 9 recollects, “the most challenging part of the camp was probably climbing the steep hills on the last day. I overcame it by having a lot of support from my camp leaders, my group and loads of encouraging comments. We helped each other a lot.”

The Year 8 girls participate in the City Experience program that familiarises them with inner city Melbourne and the transport network, while exposing them to some important social justice issues such as homelessness.

The Discovery Learning Program at Avila College provides connections with the Australian curriculum and it makes cross-curricular links with traditional school subjects. It also demonstrates to students how fortunate they are in their everyday lives. Some miss the comforts of home while away and return vowing never to take them for granted again.

The final word belongs to Katia from Year 9 who said, “I actually got energy from nature and camp revived my spirits. I thought it was freeing to be so far from technology and the meaningless things that we usually give a lot of our time and energy to. I now appreciate being close to my family more.”
Achievements and Highlights

Avila Squad
Wins Division 2
SCSA Athletics Championships

All of the hard work and training has paid off for the Avila College Athletics Squad as they were declared the winners of the Division 2 SCSA Athletics Championships. Held at Lakeside Stadium in May the Championships were closely contested by eight schools in a range of track and field events.

The Head of Athletics at Avila College, David Bullock, said he could not be more proud of the team. “The way they supported each other was fantastic. I asked each girl to go out and do her best, to focus on the process and let the outcome take care of itself.” There were consistently excellent results throughout the day and many of the athletes recorded personal best performances.

The Principal Louise Gunther acknowledged and thanked the dedicated staff involved in preparing the girls so well for the meet.

Excellent 2014 VCE Results

Avila College proudly congratulates the Year 12 students on achieving excellent VCE results. Monica De Rango achieved an ATAR score of 98.90 making her Dux of the college. We congratulate Stephanie Halliday, Deanna Apostolopoulos and Tahlia Spano who achieved excellent ATAR scores. Tahlia was awarded a perfect score of 50 for Health and Human Development.

Over 42% of our graduates were placed in the top 20% of the State and we congratulate all students on achieving a 100% pass rate; it is a testament to their hard work and dedication and to the commitment of their teachers.

Conversation with the Archbishop

Avila College Captain Angela Stapleton and Vice Captains Sophia Elliott and Christiana David joined 200 other student leaders within the Archdiocese of Melbourne to gather for a conversation with his Grace, Archbishop Denis Hart. The Archbishop spoke about the impact faith has had on his life. He shared memories of his childhood; his love for his parents and the sadness at the death of his sister. He encouraged the students to value friendship and to engage with God on numerous levels including the ordinary. The Archbishop spoke of St Teresa of Avila as a source of inspiration and of knowing that God loves us and will never desert us.

Proud Race Day

Avila celebrated Proud Race Day in February this year. Proud Race Day celebrates the achievements and culture of Aboriginal Australians and commemorates the apology Kevin Rudd made to the Stolen Generations in 2008. The Reconciliation Group conducted activities to build on the school theme for 2015: “Remembering the past, Creating the future”. There was an exhibition of posters made by Year 8 students showcasing important events in Aboriginal history and significant dates in the calendar for Reconciliation. Students took part in a quiz based on Aboriginal heritage. There was a display of bollards featuring Aboriginal people who have shaped our nation and our community.
Lions Youth of the Year Award

Year 12 student Sophia Elliott and and Year 11 student Catherine Pagliaro (pictured above) represented Avila College at the Lions Youth of the Year award for 2015.

This competition is unique in that students are required to attend a half hour interview with a panel of three where they are questioned on their knowledge of current affairs, involvement in community and their academic and sporting accomplishments.

Students are then required to present a prepared speech on a topic of their choice and two impromptu speeches with no preparation time. Both students were well prepared and presented excellent speeches.

Catherine progressed to the zone final where she spoke passionately about Constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Catherine was declared the zone winner and was presented with the trophy for the Waverley Lions Youth of the Year at assembly.

Creative Arts Festival ‘Sisters reAct’

The reviews are in and the 2015 Creative Arts Festival was judged to be the best ever.

There was a full house at the Besen Centre in Burwood for the show on 7 May.

The student led production was called ‘Sisters reAct’ and the plot featured a greedy property developer closing the college to sell off the land. Upon hearing the news students became disengaged and it was up to Sister Teresa to rally the other nuns to save the college. In the end they were victorious with the help of the Avila girls whose true spirit shone through.

The performance featured over 300 students, acting, singing, dancing and rapping to the delight of the audience. Archival footage featured in the audio visual displays throughout the evening, which was a trip down memory lane in the Golden Jubilee year of the college.

Melbourne County Court Excursion

Year 12 Legal studies students visited the County Court in April.

An important component of Unit 4 of the VCE Legal Studies course is an examination of the jurisdiction of the courts that make up the Victorian court hierarchy.

Students observed Judge Richard Maidment deal with two offenders who had breached correction orders and who were in court for the beginning of an appeal.

The group then had the opportunity to meet Judge Maidment in a more informal setting and His Honour generously answered questions from the girls, giving them an excellent insight into the court system in Victoria.
Parents and Friends Association Report

I have a very clear memory of joining a small group of other Avila parents at the first “Parents and Friends” meeting nearly two years ago. Principal Louise Gunther expressed a strong desire to have an active Avila College PFA and so she had convened the meeting.

Now we are some way down the track I think it would be fair to say that the PFA has managed to strengthen community ties through a range of special events and activities. I am pleased to report that from the initial small group of parents the PFA now has nearly 20 active members. One thing we all have in common, aside from having daughters at Avila, is a commitment to giving something back to the college that has given our girls so much.

It has been an absolute pleasure to work with my fellow PFA members and they can be justifiably proud of their efforts, as can those who volunteer their time when they can.

We have hosted a range of events including:
• parent social evenings including a Trivia Night and BABBA
• welcome picnic for new families
• Mother’s and Father’s Day Breakfasts
• gift stalls
• student and parent presentations from high profile role models and
• teacher thank you events.

Throughout the year the PFA has:
• presented at information evenings
• attended open mornings and
• assisted with seminars conducted by the college.

But perhaps the most important work so far has been our involvement in helping with the Golden Jubilee Program. It was a pleasure to be involved with the Eucharist at St Patrick’s Cathedral earlier in the year and to help in organising the amazing carnival day in March. We look forward to the upcoming Gala Dinner on Friday 7 August at the Riversdale Golf Club.

The Golden Jubilee celebrations have made this a year to remember, one the PFA will look back on with immense pride.

To all of the Avila parents who have become involved thank you. To the dedicated members of the PFA thank you. To the Avila staff who assist the PFA, thank you. To Principal Louise Gunther and the Director of Marketing and Development, Annie Opray, whose unwavering support we could not do without, thank you.

We are all looking forward to the second half of this our Golden Jubilee year; please join us in the celebrations.

Loretta Stapleton
President
Students provided the entertainment on carnival day.
Avila Alumnae

The Golden Jubilee of the college provides the perfect opportunity to reconnect with past students.

Many Avila Alumnae have attended one or more of the special events already held this year in celebration of 50 years since the establishment of the college. It has been a joy to watch them reconnect with old friends at the Eucharist at St Patrick’s Cathedral; the Golden Jubilee Carnival; the reunions hosted at Avila; the Past and Present College Captains’ Lunch and the Past Staff and Alumnae Eucharist and Afternoon Tea.

Many of those returning to Avila after some time are amazed at the growth of the college. It is wonderful to hear their positive comments about the facilities and how fortunate the students of today are; especially when some of the ‘original’ students recollect their days in the paddocks and the open-air quadrangle.

Another opportunity for reconnecting are reunions for milestone years and the college takes pleasure in hosting these at Avila. We would encourage all Alumnae to contact the college if you would like to organise a reunion.

The desire to create more opportunities for past students to connect with the college led to the first meeting of the Avila Alumnae Committee which was held in April this year. The Committee members are:

- Anne Bartlett (Class of 1969)
- Julie Pagliaro (Class of 1984)
- Megan Gidley (Class of 2001)
- Marlene Fry (Class of 1989)
- Chelsea O’Connell (Class of 2014)
- Shweta Tendulkar (Class of 2014)

The group identified the aims of the Committee as follows:

- To increase the connectedness of the Avila Alumnae in a variety of ways using traditional methods as well as social media
- To provide networking opportunities for Avila Alumnae, including a mentoring capacity and an advisory role i.e. past students to present students
- To promote job opportunities within the Avila Alumnae group
- To investigate the feasibility of an Avila Alumnae Careers Expo
- To develop an events program i.e. annual dinner, women’s breakfast with Alumnae guest speakers that is inclusive of all paths Alumnae have followed on leaving Avila College
- In due course, to incorporate the Avila Alumnae in fundraising for the college.

The first meeting was very successful and information will be provided about some special events and activities soon. If you would like to join the Alumnae Committee please email Annie Opray, Director of Marketing and Development at aopray@avilacollege.vic.edu.au

We hope to see many past students at the upcoming Golden Jubilee Gala Dinner from 7pm on Friday 7 August at the Riversdale Golf Club. Bookings, either for individuals or a table, can be made via the Avila College website, “News and Events”, “Bookings”. We look forward to the Avila Alumnae going from strength to strength in the coming years.
Alumnae Committee members: Marlene Fry, Megan Gidley, Anne Bartlett and Julie Pagliaro with Principal Louise Gunther, absent Chelsea O’Connell and Shweta Tendaulker

2015 Year 7 students with their Mothers who also attended the college

Alumnae Committee members: Marlene Fry, Megan Gidley, Anne Bartlett and Julie Pagliaro with Principal Louise Gunther, absent Chelsea O’Connell and Shweta Tendaulker

Past Staff and Alumnae Eucharist