President’s Update – December 2012

The second half of 2012 has been busy but rewarding for the small but very active Mercedes Ex-Students’ Association (MESA) committee. Not only have we enjoyed each other’s company, but we have also enjoyed some of the new MESA initiatives; such as the lunch for the Year 12s and the promotion of the inaugural recipient for the Year 12 Award for a student who best demonstrates the Mercy values (presented at the Mercedes Presentation Night). The MESA Year 7 Scholarship continues to be well supported; and from all accounts to date, the reunions for the leaving classes of 1962, 1972, 1982, 1992 and 2002 all went well, with many also beginning with tours of Mercedes.

Through MESA membership, the committee has also been able to support a school initiative through the donation of five swags to help the homeless. We have also enjoyed connecting with some of the committee members from St Joseph’s Victoria Square. We are really looking forward to our combined heritage being recognised and shared more often through the newer Alumni structure for Victoria Square. Of course, such a connection would also be welcomed with any former members of Our Lady’s College.

A key aim of MESA is to enable former students to reconnect with the College in whatever way best suits individual needs. As ex-students of Mercedes College and current committee members, it is rewarding to be involved in activities that assist with nurturing new friendships and strengthening existing ones. Given some former students (and some current committee members) now have children and even grandchildren at the College, they/we know that there are many parent support groups to involve themselves/ourselves in, under the guidance and direction of Jackie Stacey in her Parent Liaison role.

Some more recent graduates have been involved in professional mentoring programs or have assisted with coaching in the various sports on offer to the current Mercedes students. If you feel you have special skills that could be of benefit to the students, you are always welcome to offer your services by contacting Tanya Finch: mesa@mercedes.wa.edu.au; Also, remember that next year is the Mercedes College school fete, so volunteers are always welcome. Jackie Stacey is the ‘go to’ woman in this regard: jstacey@mercedes.wa.edu.au; Some former students may prefer to maintain a social connection with their former classmates (look at some of the reunion photos), while others may also enjoy a professional link. Whatever the choice is, it is evident that there are many ways that former students can maintain their link or reconnect with the school and their peers.

Given the wonderfully rich heritage of our ‘School at the Square’, opportunities also exist for former students from St Joseph’s Victoria Square (SJVS) and Our Lady’s College to also reconnect. Some members of the current MESA committee had another opportunity in the second half of this year to enjoy morning tea with members of the SJVS committee. These lovely ladies are undertaking the enormous task of filling the gaps in the history of St Joseph’s. If you have family members that may be able to assist in this regard with photos or even personal recollections, please contact Helen Rogan rogans1@westnet.com.au. In September next year, we look forward

An inaugural Year 12 MESA Lunch was held in August this year to inform Year 12 students about MESA and a new Year 12 Service award (full report on pg. 2.) (L to R) Keely Errington, Chiara Zaffino (’02), Amy Rossbach (’01), Gabrielle Slack-Smith and Carol Mitchell (nee Mettam), MESA President.
to sharing our combined history at the Victoria Square Alumni Mercy Day Mass. On that note, I wish all members of our combined Victoria Square Alumni and Mercy heritage a safe, happy and Holy festive season.

As current President of the MESA committee, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the committee members for their dedication and good humour for this busy yet enjoyable year. Thank you to Rita Panebianco (nee Lombardi); Dani Wares (nee Harper); Rita Mola (nee Romeo); and Lydia Bordoni (nee Vieceli); Best wishes for finalising your PhD Kate Ringvall; and blessings to Sharon Fletcher’s loved ones.

Thanks also to Sheena Barber and Tanya Finch for your active support of MESA throughout this year. Finally, we hope to see many of you at the MESA AGM on Wednesday 20 February 2013.

Blessings.

Carol Mitchell (nee Mettam ’82): President (2012)

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**Year 12 MESA Lunch**

*By Rita Panebianco (nee Lombardi ’85)*

On Friday 31 August MESA hosted a Lunch for the Year 12 students to inform students about MESA and to launch a new service award - The MESA Year 12 Award, ‘Living the Mercy Values’.

The MESA committee members banded together with the assistance of Jackie Stacey, Parent Liaison Officer and the wonderful canteen ladies to provide the girls with a memorable lunch. We busily cooked and prepared hamburgers, made fruit platters and ordered in cupcakes to make the lunch special for the girls.

We had two ex-students, Chiara Zaffino (2002) and Amy Rossbach (2001) speak to the girls after lunch about their own Mercedes experience and their journey since leaving school. Chiara and Amy spoke fondly of their time at Mercedes and the opportunities they were provided with during their high school years. Chiara and Amy were inspirational as they spoke of their journey since leaving Mercedes – further studies, career paths, job and travel opportunities, and lifelong friendships that they cherish from their days at Mercedes. It was wonderful to have these two lovely young ladies encourage the students to follow their dreams and goals. At the end of the lunch there was such a positive vibe in the room as the students had the opportunity to speak with Chiara and Amy.

The MESA committee members were overwhelmed by the positive response from the Year 12 students. The students were so appreciative of the lunch and the opportunity that MESA would be able to provide to a student with the new service award. The success of the Year 12 Lunch has made this an annual event for MESA.

The lunch was as memorable for the committee as it was for the Year 12 students. It was lovely to have the opportunity to see the Year 12 students again on Presentation Night and at their Graduation. The Year 12 students are a credit to their families and Mercedes College.

We wish the Leaving Class of 2012 all the very best as they embark on a new and exciting chapter in their lives. We look forward to catching up with the Year 12 students in March next year at the ‘Mocktail Party’ for the 2012 Graduates.

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**Year 12 MESA Award - ‘Living the Mercy Values’**

*By Rita Mola (nee Romeo ’84)*

This year all Year 12 students were invited to nominate ONE peer they truly felt embodied the College Mercy Values of Compassion, Excellence, Justice, Integrity and Service during their years at Mercedes College, to receive the MESA Year 12 “Living the Mercy Values” Award.

At the Mercedes Presentation Night on Friday 19 October 2012 at the Perth Concert Hall, it was with much pleasure that we congratulated Janelle Thexeira as the inaugural recipient of the MESA Year 12 “Living the Mercy Values” Award for 2012.
One of the aims of MESA is to provide a link between past students and Mercedes College. Each year, MESA awards a scholarship to an incoming Year 7 student who is the daughter/granddaughter of a current MESA member. It gave me great pleasure to award the 2013 Scholarship at the 2012 Mercedes College Speech Night to Sophie Hamer.

Sophie is a very well deserving recipient of the Scholarship. She has been highly involved in her primary school, being part of the Student Council as Head Girl (Term 2, 2012), and participating in a wide range of activities including sport, writing and public speaking. Sophie, like her mother, is also a keen musician and is very interested in becoming involved in all things musical at the College. Many of us may remember Sophie’s grandmother, who worked for many years fitting us out in our uniforms at the Uniform Mart—I’m sure she will be there to see Sophie try on her first Mercedes uniform and will have plenty of advice on how it should fit! We hope Sophie enjoys her first term at Mercedes next year and we will be catching up with her in future editions of the Link to see how she is going.

Applications and further information regarding the MESA Year 7 Scholarship are available through the MESA link on the College website, or email Tanya Finch at the College on mesa@mercedes.wa.edu.au. Applications close at the end of August 2013.

Year 7 MESA 2013 Scholarship Winner
By Dani Wares (nee Harper ’89)

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Janelle was the leader of the Young Mercies and has been outstanding and dedicated in all her efforts. This year’s successful Fashion for Compassion is an example of her wonderful achievements.

‘Janelle has been selfless in her devotion to assisting others and has worked long hours on fundraising activities to benefit the disadvantaged. She is a compassionate girl towards her peers and is reliable in her completion of duties.’

‘Janelle has upheld an excellent image of herself presenting herself well and putting pride into everything she does. She is the definition and role model of what every Mercedes girl should strive to be, inspiring girls to follow in her footsteps.’

Congratulations for being recognised by your peers and endorsed by Mercedes staff as representing the Mercy Values so well. You are a very worthy recipient Janelle.

Insight from Catherine McAuley: “God does not look at the action but at the spirit motivating it and He will judge and reward us accordingly”

L to R: Inaugural recipient of the Year 12 MESA Award for ‘Living the Mercy Values - Janelle Thexea; Year 7 2013 MESA Scholarship recipient - Sophie Hamer and Dani Wares (nee Harper) at Presentation Evening on Friday 19 October.
Reunions

10 Year Reunion (Class of ‘02)
By Chiara Zaffino (Deputy Head Girl 2002)

‘Our 10 Year Reunion was held on a sunny day in September on the school grounds. Mercedes has undergone a bit of a facelift since we were there - so the college treated us to a tour of the new facilities. Needless to say we were very envious of the current girls! After months of reconnecting through Facebook and the Whitepages it was fantastic to finally be together and catch up face to face. Despite many ex-students living across Australia and overseas we had a great response. Partners were also invited.. but were very much outnumbered. I’m sure it was an interesting experience for them to share with the women they had fallen in love with. Obviously a decade is a long time and our lives had taken different paths...but it soon became clear not much had really changed. As the sun went down we kicked on into the night. It was an amazing day which would not have happened without my right hand woman Julie-Anne McGuinness and the staff at Mercedes College including Tanya Finch, Julie Cameron and Leanne James. Thank you to them for their efforts, goodwill and time. And to the girls.. See you in another ten years!’

30 year Reunion (Class of ‘82)
By Carol Mitchell (nee Mettam; Head Girl 1982)

It was great to catch up with fellow classmates from the Leaving Class of 1982 to acknowledge 30 years since we left the gates of Mercedes; as well as to share this occasion with friends who left a few years earlier. Special thanks go to Deb Brayshaw (nee Piggott) and Frances Poliniak who made the trip from the east coast just for this occasion. I think Deb’s statement: “I have questions” with the corresponding answers provided much enjoyment for all in attendance. It is certainly a personal highlight among many great moments. Thanks to Tanya Finch for being our Mercedes College tour guide prior to our reunion at the Cocktail Bar 1907 (Queens St, Perth); and thanks to fellow organisers: Antonella Scalisi; Tara Hogan and Anna Scurria. I’m sure I’m not alone in looking forward to the next one!
Saturday 13th October, 2012 - What an afternoon! High Tea at the magnificent Duxton Hotel, was the setting for 30 beautiful ladies to share their memories of their High School at Mercedes College. There was much laughter and sharing of ‘their version of events that happened at school’.

Everyone was amazed how we all recognised each other - common phrase was ’you haven’t changed a bit’. Thank you to Tanya Finch from Mercedes for providing a ’token bag of goodies’ for the girls. We all left that afternoon promising to find more fellow students to join in our next get together.

Top - Leaving class of ’72; Top right - Lydia Bordoni (nee Viecelli and Margherita Principe, bottom right - Doris Anfuso (nee Genovesi), Monika Durr and Marie Ree (nee Partacini)
Ex–Students: Where are they now?

Chantal Oliver (2007)
Since graduating in 2007, I started my undergraduate degree in Medical Engineering at Murdoch University while working part-time in retail.

The course took a little over four years to complete including work experience at Royal Perth Hospital in the Medical Engineering and Physics Department and the completion of my thesis.

I recently graduated in September 2012 as the first Medical Engineering graduate in Western Australia and started working for Royal Perth Hospital (RPH) immediately.

Although working at RPH was fantastic and I was able to apply my university studies directly, opportunity was limited as the Medical Engineering field is relatively small within Australia. This led me to start a new career at Western Power as an Asset Strategy Engineer applying my knowledge learnt from university and RPH in the field of Asset Management within Electrical Engineering.

Mercedes College brings back many memories, mostly Physics and Calculus classes with Mr Mountford and Mr Mee. Mercy Day was always a big discussion in Term 3, deciding what we would wear on the only day of free dress for the year.

For the future I hope to be a mentor for young women in Engineering and help them understand what the role involves and know that they have someone to talk to. Although Engineering is still highly male dominated, there are more and more businesses trying to support women and help them excel in their areas of choice.

Elizabeth Parnell (O'Connor 1989)
Liz enjoyed a successful career as an orchestral violist, playing in many Australian orchestras. During her time in the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra she combined her musical life with studying law at the University of Tasmania. Liz now lives in Sydney with her husband Paul who is in the Royal Australian Navy and has two cheeky kids, Rachel and Tom. Liz works for the Australian Public Service Commission in employment law and is thoroughly enjoying the buzz of life in Sydney!

Johanna Coates (O'Connor 1987)
Jo has had a successful career as an orchestral violinist playing in the MSO, Bournemouth Symphony (UK) and WASO. She is now pursuing a career in Human Resource Management working in the State Solicitor's Office in Perth. She is married with two children and enjoys family get togethers and holidays down south.

Frances O'Connor (1984)
Frances has had a successful career in drama working in film, stage and television. She currently lives in LA with her husband and one child. She divides her time between LA and London, depending on where the work takes her.

Alice O'Connor (1983)
Since leaving Mercedes, Alice has been enjoying life botanising in the gorgeous WA bushlands, travelling as much as possible, passionately gardening, indulging in long cups of tea with friends and family and bringing up two lively children with her geologist husband Kevin. The family are currently living in Rio, Brazil where Alice is having a fabulous time studying botanical drawing and wishing she had studied Latin languages more seriously during her years at Mercedes.
Mercedes College ‘Aladdin’ Production
By Rita Mola (nee Romeo, ’84)

Earlier this year, Mercedes ex-students from the years ’84 –’88 and their families were taken on a magical carpet ride at the Mercedes College production of ‘Aladdin’.

Many of the girls hadn’t been back to the college for many years and enjoyed looking around at the wonderful new buildings and facilities. There was much discussion and reminiscing around the Performing Arts Centre having been the typing room and Catherine’s Garden a netball court back in the ‘80s. How things change!

The show was amazing, showcasing a cast of extraordinarily talented actors, singers and dancers. In the interval Catherine’s Garden came alive as ‘The Market of Agrabah’, with a sausage sizzle, delicious home-made delights, refreshments, and Aladdin blue popcorn and fairy floss. The highlight for the young girls was meeting and having a photo taken with Princess Jasmine and the Aladdin characters.

A wonderful time was had by all and everyone left singing, It’s a whole new world…

L to R: Ex-students from years ‘84 and ‘85; Princess Jasmine with ex-student Toni Holmes (nee Mexted) ’84 with daughters Lucy and Abbey

Seeking Contacts

Jeanne Perera (now Butler) did her leaving and Matriculation at Mercedes in 1973, after being at the College from October 1971 until December 1973. She would love to make contact with students from her year group. She would particularly like to re-connect with the following ladies: Ingrid Steens, Anne Beale, Andrea Barclay, Leonie Hayes, Margaret Stewart, Rosemarie Martin, Anne Pickworth and Jenny Alderton. If you have contact details for any of these ladies please respond to mesa@mercedes.wa.edu.au.

Have you moved recently? Married and/or changed your name? Started a new job or changed your email address? Do you know of someone whose details have changed?

By updating the database we can keep you informed of the latest MESA and/or College events, benefits and developments.

To update your details, please email mesa@mercedes.wa.edu.au
**MESA Link Profiles and Class Contacts**

Do you have friends from your year group you think we could profile in MESA Link?
- They could be living the Mercy values by working in challenging areas
- They could be ‘movers & shakers’ on the state, national or international scene
- They could be some of the quiet achievers from your year group

Would you like to be profiled yourself?
Would you like to track someone down from your year group? Maybe they left school in year 10 or 11 & you’re not sure where they went next.

**Would you like to be a contact for your year group** to spread the word about smaller catch-ups, bigger reunions, MESA or school events?

Do you have Class reunion (or other) photos you would like to share with MESA to promote via MESA Link or the MESA section of the Mercedes website? (Please note the preferred size is 500KB)

If you have answered yes to these questions or want to know more, we would love to hear from you ASAP.

Help us to keep you connected to ‘the School at the Square’ Contact: mesa@mercedes.wa.edu.au.

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**2013 Events and Dates for your Diary**

**Wednesday 20 February**  
**MESA AGM Meeting / 6.15pm / Mercedes College Staffroom**  
All MESA members are welcome to attend.

**Friday 15 March**  
**Mocktail Party for the Class of 2012 / 5.00pm - 7.00pm / Catherine’s Gardens**

**Sunday 14 April**  
**Mercedes College Fete / 10.00am - 4.00pm**

**Sunday 19 May**  
**Mercedes College Open Day / 11.00am - 1.30pm**

**Friday 23 August**  
**Year 12 MESA Lunch**

**Sunday 22 September**  
**Victoria Square Alumni Mercy Day Mass**

**MESA Meetings / 6.15pm / Mercedes College Staffroom**

Wednesdays 27 March, 15 May, 27 June, 7 August, 4 September, 16 October and 27 November.

To know what's happening at Mercedes and/or MESA throughout the year, visit the College website: [www.mercedes.wa.edu.au](http://www.mercedes.wa.edu.au).

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**MESA Committee Members (L to R)**:  
Rita Mola (nee Romeo, ‘84), Rita Panebianco (nee Lombardi, ’85), Carol Mitchell (nee Mettam, ’82) and Dani Wares (nee Harper; ’89)