**Parent Newsletter**

**Issue 6**

**Principal’s Message**

Last week was the most amazing week. Students and staff, in numbers too great to list, brought our school to life on Open Night. It was a magnificent event where everyone stepped out to show their best and in so doing showed our facilities and programs at their very best. Many “out of area” parents and families were amazed at what was on offer. I repeatedly had people say things like “the boat program is amazing”, “we have not seen a school with a farm, let alone alpacas”, “I can’t believe you have golf, an auto bay and building and construction options”. “Wow, that Marine Studies lab is great”, “the music was wonderful and then there was ice cream as well” and “I was so impressed with the Visual Arts opportunities, they are amazing”. What I really loved was the confidence, courtesy and informed guidance delivered by many many students offering to be guides and helpers. Madison and James were outstanding speakers sharing their own journey into high school. It was a fantastic, “feel good” night that saw over 1200 visitors exploring our school. I was once again a very proud principal. Many thanks to all participants. A very special thanks goes to Sylvia Domincs Pizza for their kind and generous donation of 15 pizzas and soft drinks for students assisting in the HSIE area. Everyone agreed that they were simply “delicious”.

The 25th Anniversary celebration at Revesby Workers was another wonderful night of fun, good stories and shared memories. Ex student Michael Etheridge was the MC. He graduated in 2002 and has gone on to be a well known breakfast radio host also known as “Mikie The Edge” on 96.1. He was a great student who gave as much joy as he obviously got on this trip down memory lane. We enjoyed a birthday cake and formally presented our “Gift to the Future” of the solar panels that will be installed during the next school holidays. The organising committee did a great job and I have shared the gratitude felt by all with Rob Lindsay, Robynne Challinor, Narelle Lewry, Di Cooper, Jon Smith, Rena Hatzi, Craig Mundy, Lynne Kerr, Sue Summerfield and Raeleine Allen.

Our F1 Challenge team ‘Prometheus’ included Tristan, Riley, James and Lewis and they have just returned from competing in the national championships in Geelong. They faced many challenges but won through to be declared the Australian Team Marketing Champions and the team with the most energy efficient design. They were not the overall winners but they did a great job and brought honour to themselves and Menai High School. They are planning to progress to the Professional Class and compete for the regional, state and national titles in 2014. Congratulations to a great team and we wish them well for the future. They are such gracious young men even thanking me for the great opportunities and support given by the school and their teachers. Our futures are assured with youth like this.

Don’t forget, Australian Mobile Dental Care will be at our school next term. This fully equipped operating clinic will be located in the staff car park, just outside of the community hall. Students who have returned the consent cards will be able to see the dentist from the 1st May 2013. In the first instance this will be for a check up and assessment of work required. Families can also choose to have the work done in the clinic. Time poor families can’t ask for better than this. This is a fantastic opportunity for our students to receive a full range of oral health care without leaving the school grounds. More information, including the consent forms, can be found in the ‘Parent Information Packs’, which were given out to students in Week 4. Feel free to contact Mrs. Hatzi in the English staffroom if you have any questions or require another pack. Please return the completed consent forms to Mrs Hatzi by 8th April.

Congratulations also go to Breanne who has successfully auditioned for the 2013 NSW Public Schools Drama Company. This ensemble is a select group of gifted and talented actors that will be nurtured and mentored through the Arts Unit. The 24/7 Parenting Support Service shared some really good advice about parenting recently. They reminded me that the transition to adolescence isn’t easy but there are a few factors that can help guide this process:-

- Aim for influence not control. Create a conversation around the big issues and brainstorm ideas rather than demanding obedience.
- What is negotiable and what is not? If a teen wants to stay at a friend’s house an hour later than planned, he calls (or sends a text) rather than simply not arriving home. It may be better to drive him home rather than have a row over his safety at night.
- Give a little freedom at a time. The first time a teen begs to go into the city on the train with friends, collect her on the way back and offer her friend a lift too. That way she gets used to responsibility in manageable portions.

Overall, stay calm and use communication as the tool to help both parent and teen feel heard and understood. In this way, the relationship you build over the holidays will be a great strength for when the new school term begins.

The service provides free, confidential, professional counseling to families across NSW, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you would like to discuss your relationship with your adolescent with a counselor or discuss any other parenting issue, please call 1300 1300 52 or visit website www.parentline.org.au

I need to remind everyone that the bike bay is an unsupervised convenience for students. Valuables should not be left there as the school accepts no responsibility for bikes, skateboards or other items left there. Staff and students walk by this facility but it is not formerly supervised and does not offer secure parking for bikes.

**Deputy Principal’s Message**

Year 10 Parent Information Night on Assessment

A reminder to Year 10 parents and careers. The assessment information is on Wednesday 13th March in the school hall. Year 10 Students are required to bring their laptops to the meeting. I have sent Year 10 an email with a copy of the Menai High Assessment Policy and Assessment Schedule.

**Literacy and Numeracy**

During our recent staff meetings teachers have been learning strategies to help teach and improve the skills of literacy and numeracy. In the area of literacy the school is focusing on Reading. The teachers will be undertaking training in teaching strategies such as before reading, when a student doesn’t know the word, during reading skills and after reading skills. In the area of numeracy teachers will learn how to use a strategy called Newman’s prompts. These are questions that teachers will use to help students attempt any numeracy question.

**Year 12**

Exam timetables have been handed out to Year 12 last week. Please ask your child to write the exam dates on the family calendar. This will help you to plan and support your child. At this point in Year 12 students should be starting to make summary notes of the units or topics they have studied. These help with up and coming exams and will also be useful later in the years when they study for their trials and the HSC exams.

**Important Dates & Coming Events**

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<td>Monday 11/3</td>
<td>Year 7 Camp (3 days), Regional Swimming, P&amp;C Meeting</td>
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<td>Wednesday 13/3</td>
<td>Year 10 Assessment Information Night</td>
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<td>Friday 15/3</td>
<td>World’s Greatest Shave</td>
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<td>Monday 18/3</td>
<td>Year 7 Finger Scanning, School Council Meeting</td>
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<td>Friday 22/3</td>
<td>Formal Assembly; Earth Hour at MHS</td>
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Earth Hour 2013
Saturday 23rd March—8.30-9.30pm
School Earth Hour
Friday 22nd March—12.30pm-1.30pm
SEC Green Team

Free Graduated Licensing Scheme Workshops for Learner Driver Parents in the Sutherland Shire
Young drivers are three times more likely to be involved in casualty crashes. That's why the Roads and Maritime Services has introduced a new licensing scheme, with more supervised driving practice for learner drivers. To help parents in supervising learner drivers, the Roads and Maritime Services has set up a FREE 2 hour workshop for parents that offers practical advice on how to help learner drivers become safer drivers. A FREE parents’ workshop will be conducted by David Riches and hosted by Sutherland Shire Council on Wednesday March 27 at Sutherland Shire Council Offices in Eton Street from 7.00 pm – 9.00 pm. Early bookings are essential, by phoning Council on 9710 0341 to reserve your place, or email mstuart@ssc.nsw.gov.au

Year 9 Laptop Parent Meeting
A meeting will be held in the school library on Tuesday 12th March at 6.30pm to provide parents of Year 9 students with information about how the 2013 laptop program will operate at Menai High.

Laptop user charters will be issued on the night and these need to be signed and returned to school by the 19th March.

Mrs Cooper, Learning Support Head Teacher

New Signage
For Menai High’s 25th year the school has given itself a birthday present of new signs. The school has been so impressed with the service we have had from the company we are putting the company’s details in the newsletter.

Orientation Dinner 2013
Friday 22nd February saw the school host the Annual Year 7 welcome dinner, in the school hall. The night was a roaring success, which was well attended by Year 7 students and families. I am always amazed by the talent shown by our students as they perform various musical numbers, in a variety of styles to entertain those who attended. These performances would be impossible to present without the dedication of their teachers Mr Smith and Mr Bradney, and without the VET students who manage the Audio Visual Equipment on the night. The raffle prizes which were donated by Year 8 families, enabled us to raise over $500 on the night! Events like these are so successful - largely due to the support we receive from staff and families within the school. My thanks to the Year 8 Advisers, Mrs Ferraro and Mr Mitchell who coordinated the donations and the volunteers, and also thanks to Mr Lindsay and Mr Sanders who organised students to setup the hall.
A very special thanks goes to Lisa, Deanne, Janene and Deb and Clint - who kindly volunteered their time for the duration of the evening. Clint was the star of the raffle tickets. Thanks also to Olivia, James, Cody, Brayden and Kurtis - who accompanied their parent(s) as they helped out. These students were invaluable as they took charge of the drinks station. They worked as a team, behaved responsibly, and were happy to take on any of the requests I threw at them. All in all - they were a great representation of the type of students we have at Menai High. They were rewarded with a mini Pizza party from their parents - which I think topped off the great fun they had 'working' at the school.
On behalf of the P&C - we welcome the students and families of Year 7 2013/2014 to Menai High. They were rewarded with a mini Pizza party from their parents - which I think topped off the great fun they had 'working' at the school.

Robynne Challinor, President P&C

Senior Seminar Program Schedule—14th March, 2013

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