

Junior School Newsletter 3 Wednesday 10 March 2010

DATES TO REMEMBER

Wed 10 March	Grandparents Day
Wed 17 March	'Conversations' Evening
Fri 19 March	Belconnen Zone Swim Carnival
Fri 19 March	Harmony Day
Thurs 24 March	Thinkfest

Contact Numbers for Junior School

ELC Reception	6162 6298 8am- 4pm
1 - 4 Reception	6162 5330 8am- 4pm
5 - 6 Reception	6162 6290 8am – 10.30am

The Canberra Day holiday provided me with a pleasant surprise as 'the one year old' took 2 steps – and I was there!

Reading Challenge

Another year, another loss. Despite changing the rules and finishing three days early, despite leading for the first week – another loss!

A fantastic effort from all our families – our students and you wonderful people who combined so well over these past three weeks. The school suddenly transforms into a reading frenzy – VERY WELL DONE.

The target of 500 000 pages was well beaten with a final tally of 554 643.

As a result of this further Reading humiliation, I will suffer my punishment next week 15-19 March. Each morning I will welcome the cars – dressed as ??? on Friday 19 March, a slimy afternoon appears to be on hand. I refuse to go alone this year, however, as the staff have been supporting this reading too well. If you might enjoy witnessing me and the Junior School staff receiving a 'refreshing' sliming, join us at 2.30pm on Mackinnon Oval March 19.



'Conversations' Evening – each term we host an informal 'Conversations' evening, where we welcome Junior School parents to join us in discussing a topic of interest. Over the past few years, we have chatted about reading with our children, Inquiry Teaching and Learning and Philosophy for Children, to name a few. We try to encourage it to be an active evening with a relaxed tone. I welcome all interested parents to join us on Wednesday 17 March at 7.00pm in the Junior School hall for our first 'Conversation' evening of the year – our topic is very current in a strategic planning year – 'Our Future'. The Principal, Mr Phillip Heath, will also be attending.



Yr 6 Class Captains

I congratulate our Year 6 Class Captains who were invested with their badges at last week's Celebrations. Our Year 6 Captains will lead Celebrations and our Student Representative Council (Tribal Council). Nominations for other year level representatives will be held in the near future.

Walking School Bus and Parking Update

In a previous Newsletter article relating to parking, I mentioned about supporting a Walking School Bus. At this stage I have been contacted by two families interested in this project.



I would like to move Year1-4 students who wait to be picked up in the afternoons, from their present location on the stairs, to lining up at the 'kiss and go' strip – thus perhaps allowing drivers a quicker pick up. At present this isn't possible, however, as cars are parked in this section. I will continue to pursue this option if possible.

PYP Meeting

Nick Martin and I attended the NSW/ACT Primary Years Program Coordinators meeting in Sydney last Friday. The Head of the Asia/Pacific region spoke about the many exciting possibilities which lie ahead for schools such as ours – in fact, I was quite surprised at her knowledge of our school in particular. We also discussed initial reactions to the new National Curriculum Drafts, which were made available last week. Interestingly, all four drafts have a strong Inquiry focus and approach. We felt very comfortable in being able to utilise this new Curriculum.

Grandfriends Day

We have a very busy Wednesday this week as we host Grandfriends (Grandparents and or significant family members – as it's not always easy for our Grandparents to join us in Canberra). We will also welcome the ACT Minister for Education later that morning, hold our Pre Kindergarten prospective parents 2011 meeting, as well as a Phonics for Kindergarten parents event that evening.



Sport this Friday

Junior School sport returns this Friday (House Shirts). The sport tabloids support our Physical Education program, as well as our student pastoral program for our Year 6 leaders.

'Word Work'

Did you know that many children spell words correctly in the weekly spelling test, but misspell them in everyday written language?

The students in Year 5 were recently asked what the word "spelling" made them think of. The following comments were shared: "words, boring, corrections, learning, tests, syllables, attempts, alphabet, sounds, writing, sore hands!" When asked to stand up if "spelling" was their favourite subject at school, only one brave student initially stood up.



The Year 5 and 6 staff have been working collaboratively this term to approach the teaching of Word Work, where the students are learning 'how' to spell, rather than learning lists of unrelated words. The program is focused on making the study of words fun, interesting and challenging, using an inquiry approach to help students correctly hear and represent the 44 phoneme sounds of the English language.

We believe that in order to help our students become proficient spellers, they need to know the way sounds work, know strategies and rules, see words as interesting, care

about the reaction and needs of their audience, want to solve spelling problems themselves and need to become good at recognising spelling attempts in their work. The newly found “buzz” in the Year 5 and 6 classrooms during these Word Work sessions has been amazing. As a staff, we are so excited to see their enthusiasm and participation in discussions within our classrooms, where once considered “boring” lessons have now come alive for our students!

Finally two things – Firstly I do truly thank you for your support of our annual Reading Challenge. Your excitement and support does ‘rub off ‘ on your sons and daughters – I was also thrilled with the responses from our Year 5 and Year 6 classes, as they displayed great leadership by example.

Secondly, we are highlighting welcoming adults, welcoming each other, not pushing through doors, but standing back or holding it for others as our manners focus this fortnight – let us know if it lasts past school hours!



From The Directors of Studies

On the 11, 12 and 13 May, all Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students will be taking part in the National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). Federal government regulations require that all students in these Year levels participate. The tests provide the College with valuable diagnostic data that helps us design our academic programs. A brochure that provides parents with further information has been produced by the testing agency. This will be sent home during this week.

Please do not schedule medical (or any other!) appointments before lunchtime on the testing days.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from some or all of the tests. While we would encourage you not to, if you wish to consider this option, please contact the appropriate Director of Studies (Mr Peter Dodd for Years 7 and 9 or Mr Nick Martin for Years 3 and 5.) Withdrawal forms have to be completed by 12 March.

Peter Dodd
High School

Nick Martin
Junior School

Australian Mathematics Trust Mathematics Challenge for Young Australians

The Mathematics Challenge for Young Australians is a problem-solving activity organised by the Australian Mathematics Trust. It is open to students from Years 5 to 10.



The Mathematics Challenge for Young Australians takes place over three weeks in Term 1 or Term 2. Students receive a problem booklet containing 6 problems (Years 7 to 10 – Junior and Intermediate levels) or 4 problems (Years 5 to 7 – Primary level).

Students are required to present written solutions to as many of these problems as they can. The problems are challenging and require time and persistence, but are based on mathematics which should be known at that level. Students in the Primary level may work in groups of up to 3 students on all problems – individual solutions must be submitted.

Students are allowed to seek help from any resources other than human ones – textbooks, encyclopaedias, etc., and use calculators and computers. Note that websites offering help with problems are really human resources and not allowed, but the use of a computer-based encyclopaedia or a website providing information of a general nature is acceptable.

Any student interested in entering must register mathschallenge@radford.act.edu.au
This is a voluntary competition for very capable students. Cost \$33.55 yrs 5 to 7, \$39.60 yrs 8 to10. Closing date: 12th March 2010.

Year 4 Migrant/Multicultural Forum

Due to the overwhelming number of parents and grandparents of our Year 4 students who have migrated from a different country to Australia, Year 4 will be hosting a **migrant/multicultural forum**.

This forum relates to the Year 4 *Unit of Inquiry* – titled “Who packed your bags?” **Transdisciplinary Theme:** Who we are,

Central idea: Personal identity is influenced by multicultural factors. **Key Concepts:** Perspective and Causation

On Thursday 25 March, Year 4 parents will congregate in the RA Young Hall from 11:30am to 12.50pm. Afterwards, the forum speakers and parents, will enjoy a ‘multicultural feast’ provided by the Year 4 students based on their ‘*personal - multicultural background*’.

The forum will involve a panel of speakers (Year 4 parents) who could provide exciting and informational insights into the lives of people who have experienced the journey of migrating to Australia. The forum speakers will present a brief (5 minute maximum) discussion about their personal experiences and memories of migrating to Australia. After listening to all presentations, there will be a (2 minute) question time where the students can ask questions regarding the experiences encountered.

Looking forward to seeing the parents of Year 4 at our migrant/multicultural forum.

Regards

Marnie Lehmann & Claere Scroope



LEARNING SUPPORT

SPELD NSW Conference in the ACT!

Another exciting development we can bring you is the details of is a conference that SPELD NSW (Specific Learning Difficulties Association) is holding here in Canberra for ACT Parents, Teachers and other Professionals. 'Understanding and Assisting with Learning Difficulties' Lectures and Workshops for Parents, Teacher and other Professionals. An exciting program of workshops relating to Literacy, Numeracy, Organisation, Memory and Dyslexia.

Friday 26th March, 2010

Canberra Rex Hotel

8.45am-4.05pm

Cost: \$185

For further information, please pick up a registration form from reception or the Learning Support Roo.

Social Skills Program for Gifted Students

In Canberra: Sunday 28th March and Sunday 2nd May. For more information, go to: <http://www.australiangiftedsupport.com/gpage9.html>

TUNING IN to the PYP

Welcome

to another exciting episode of 'Tuning In.' In the last newsletter I asked a question... 'What is the PYP?' This is a very complicated question which will take me the rest of the year to explain fully...so today I will give you the short answer.

"PYP" stands for "Primary Years Program"

The PYP is part of the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO). The IBO is a non-profit educational foundation offering the Diploma Program (DP) - final 2 years of school, the Middle Years Program (MYP) - 11- 16 years of age and PYP (3 – 12 years of age). There are more than 778,000 IB students at 2,823 schools in 138 countries.

What does the PYP mean for Radford Junior School?

- The PYP gives us a framework to structure our curriculum.
- They provide guidelines, based on research and best educational practice, to assist us in bringing our curriculum to life.
- They evaluate our practice on a regular basis – this keeps us on our toes!
- They give us access to excellent professional development for our teachers.

Over the coming editions of 'Tuning In' I will go into more detail about the specific elements of our curriculum.



Go to the IBO website and have a look at the information about the IBO and the PYP (www.ibo.org).

Nick Martin
Director of Studies Years 3-6