

Dear Parents, Friends and Guardians

Happy Mothers' Day

On behalf of our school community, I would like to wish all of our mums, grandmothers and other women who play a significant part in the lives of our children, a very Happy Mothers' Day for this coming Sunday. As a school we look at Mary, Jesus' mother, as being a very important person in our church. We talk about the qualities of Mary – being a community builder, being kind to others, saying 'Yes' to difficult challenges, praying to God, and being a loving family member and we recognise these traits in our children here at Marymount through our Mary Amongst Us awards. Our children would not have these traits if they had not seen them modelled by their parents and in particular, at this time, we recognise our mothers for helping to instil them in our children. Being a mum isn't easy. I know from my mum who had six boys (not all good like me either!!) and life wasn't always easy but she kept soldiering on because she wanted to give us all a great start in life. As a school we send our prayers of intercession to Mary asking her to have her son Jesus bless the lives of all mums. Thank you for all that you do and I hope that you enjoy your Sunday and that your children get the chance to spoil you for a time.

P & F May Meeting – Monday, 12 May

Our next Parents and Friends Association meeting is being held this coming Monday evening at 7.00pm in our school staff room. We will have our usual Treasurer's and Principal's reports and then move on to the General Business section of our meeting. Part of the meeting will be an update on the building projects happening around the school like the new church and the upcoming new College classroom block. Our meetings are usually finished by 8.30pm and all parents are most welcome to come along.

Art Show Committee Meeting – tonight at 6.00pm

Our next Art Show meeting is scheduled for tonight at 6.00pm in the College Board room. Parents are most welcome to come along to our meetings which usually go no longer than an hour. I would like to remind you that if you were interested in being a major or minor sponsor then package information was sent out with last week's newsletter. The various sponsorship packages are a great way for our local businesses to support the Art Show and get your name out to over 1500 families. Our primary school focus for this year's Art Show will centre on the theme of "What the Gold Coast Means to Me". All classes will be developing their art around this theme and then displaying them at the show. Mrs Deb Cronin has again agreed to be our school's co-ordinator for the Art Show and I thank Deb for volunteering for this role. Deb will be helping with our school's artwork and will help with the hanging / display of them during the days leading up to the weekend.

Cross Country Success

Last Thursday we were greeted with beautiful weather for our annual Cross Country day and the day ran very smoothly. We had a lot of families turn up to cheer the children on and our children did themselves proud with some fantastic efforts in all year levels. From this carnival we will select our squads for the Catholic (8 to 13 Yrs) and District (10 to 13 yrs) Cross Country meets. Notes will be sent home with those children selected in the next few weeks as both carnivals are being held before the end of May. Today at our assembly we presented the medallions to our place-getters for each year level and age group. It was a very successful day and I would like to thank our Senior PE teacher, Paul Hill, for his co-ordination of the day. Well done also to our children who supported each other and who ran extremely well. We had three parents as well who were our race guides for the younger children in the early part of the day. Thanks to Jenny, Paul and Robert who were tremendous in their roles.

NAPLAN Testing – 13 to 15 May

Our children from Years 3, 5 and 7 will be involved in the NAPLAN series of tests in Literacy and Numeracy during the above dates of next week. These tests are nationally recognised tests which are administered and marked externally to all schools. They look to provide school-level, systemic and state-wide data in order to help plan for the future. Our children have been practising for these tests through sample tests provided by ACARA (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority). The results of these tests are usually returned to schools and parents via a printed report format around the middle to end of September. If you have any queries in regards to these tests please contact your child's class teacher.

Parents please be aware there will be NO SCHOOL ASSEMBLY on 14 May.

Beachathon Date Claimer – Friday 13 June

Our annual Beachathon is set down for the above date at the same venue as we used last year. We will set out from Tugun Beach near the SLSC and go south to various markers depending on the year levels and return to our start. We have decided to hold our walk a little later in the day so that more parents may be able to come and walk with us. Full details will be forthcoming over the next few weeks but parents may wish to note this day in their diaries.

Coming Events

Wednesday May 7
Yr 3P - Whole School Assembly
6pm - Art Show Meeting -
College Boardroom

Friday May 9
Prep Mother's Day Liturgy
Yrs 5 - 7 Sport
Musical practice

Monday May 12
7pm - P & F Meeting

Tuesday May 13
NAPLAN Testing - Yrs 3, 5 & 7

Wednesday May 14
NO ASSEMBLY
Yr 6M - Ozanam Villa visit
NAPLAN Testing - Yrs 3, 5 & 7

Thursday May 15
NAPLAN Testing - Yrs 3, 5 & 7

Wednesday May 21
Yr 2M - Whole School Assembly
School Disco - Fluro Theme



Beach-a-thon Friday 13 June



Mass Times

Children Mass
(Doyle Centre - children read at Mass)
5.30pm 1st Sunday each month

Children's Liturgy of the Word
(Doyle Centre - children are withdrawn for brief lesson)
10.00am 2nd & 4th Sundays;
5.30pm 3rd Sunday
8.30am each Sunday (school term)
at St Benedict's, Mudgeeraba

Parish Mass Times
Sat—5.00pm Miami;
6.00pm at Palm Beach;
6.15pm at Burleigh Heads;
Sun-7.00am at Palm Beach &
Burleigh;
8.30am at Mudgeeraba & Miami;
10.00am at Doyle Centre;
5.30pm at Doyle Centre

I have attached a link to a video which I would recommend every parent watch. It is a story which will make you think twice about the amount of time you or your children spend 'communicating' with 'friends' on Facebook, or other devices. The message is simple and one that we have all heard before but seeing it in this format really hits home. For younger children I would say watch it together, if you have teenagers forward it to them and then have a conversation (face to face) about their reaction. You may be surprised. How did I come to view this for the first time? It was when my 23 year old forwarded it to me. He felt the message was so strong and relevant that everyone should see it.

<http://blog.petflow.com/this-is-a-video-everyone-needs-to-see-for-the-first-time-in-my-life-im-speechless/>

The cross country was held last week and I would like to thank the parents, grandparents and guardians who came along and supported the event. We have several very fit parents, Jenny, Paul and Rob, who acted as pacesetters... well done! It was also great to see a lot of team spirit among the children who clapped and cheered others around the course.

There has been a good response to leaving the Loom bracelets at home. However, there are still some around. Even if they are in Marymount colours they are not to be worn during school time.

We conducted a Lockdown and Evacuation drill on Tuesday. This is a mandatory requirement for us to comply with workplace safety. Teachers had discussed the procedures with classes to allay any fears and the children handled the drills in a very mature way. If your child has any concerns regarding this, please speak to the class teacher.

Enjoy the week

Diane Anderson

Curriculum News

NAPLAN TESTING- NEXT WEEK

On Tuesday 13, Wednesday 14 and Thursday 15 May, students will take the 2014 NAPLAN tests.

By now all parents who received letters offering alternative options (as described below) for their children should have returned those forms to me in the envelope provided. If you did not receive a letter and after reading the options below you feel that you want to request one of the options for your child, please contact me urgently on 55208408 to discuss this request.

If your child is absent during the testing period, make up tests can only be conducted during next week as all materials are returned for marking on Friday May 16th.

Children and staff have been preparing for these tests and we are confident that with a calm approach the children will be able to participate to the best of their ability. Please reassure your child that the tests are just a part of school life and whilst different from the normal routine, they are not something to get anxious about. Please ensure that your child arrives at school on time each day as the tests follow a strict time frame.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS: NAPLAN 2014 NAPLAN FORMS AVAILABLE FOR PARENTS

WITHDRAWAL – (no tests sat) - If this is chosen your child does not sit the tests and no report is issued.

EXEMPTION – (no tests sat) - If this is chosen your child receives a report with their name on it and it will only contain general school / state data.

APPLICATION FOR ADJUSTMENT FOR DISABILITY – If this form is used your child sits the tests under modified conditions. These can include: extra time, small group and/or individual.

If as a parent / caregiver you choose the withdrawal or exemption option you are able to keep your child at home whilst the tests are being conducted. If this is not an option, your child may attend school and be placed in another class while the tests are on.

Maree Wright

Patron Parent Events

*(Thank you to these volunteers who facilitate the building
and strengthening of networks at Marymount Primary)*

Prep OS - Thursday 8 May after drop-off - Coffee Club, Stockland - Danica & Lucy
Combined Yr 4 - Coffee and Chat - Monday 12 May after drop off Zarraffas (Stockland)



We welcome the Marymount Mob

Jingerrri Jingerrri (Greetings)

On behalf of the Indigenous Students of Marymount College we would like to tell you about our Indigenous Program and introduce you to the Marymount (MMC) Mob. Marymount College's Indigenous Program (MMCIP) offers academic, vocational and pastoral care to its Indigenous students through a range of programs and activities. This support and guidance helps students to thrive and builds self-confidence and leadership skills while encouraging students to take pride in sharing their heritage with the wider school community.

Some planned or proposed activities for 2014 MMC Mob (College) include:

- Minjerribah Camp, North Stradbroke Island – two days of cultural and bonding activities
- Indigenous Art workshop – learning the art of painting journey stones
- FOGS Indigenous Careers' Expo – industry advice on career pathways and further study
- Cultural celebrations – NAIDOC, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day

There are currently 22 students from Years 8 to 12, involved in the MMCIP, guided by Program Co-ordinator Mrs Kim Parker and led by Indigenous Student Captains Tyson Wilson and Amy Weatherall. Ten of these students from Years 10 to 12 fill the role of Peer Mentor to any new or younger students, offering support and encouragement to assist these Mentees on their journey throughout high school. These Mentees in turn will learn the skills needed to become Mentors themselves in the future.

Our goal is to extend our program to include and involve the Indigenous students of Marymount Primary School as well. We wish to establish a kinship between students that will enhance their sense of belonging within the Marymount community and lead to a smooth transition to high school. We hope to develop this connection through planned lunchtime visits at the beginning and end of each Term and through shared celebrations of significant occasions throughout the year.

We thank Marymount Primary for extending such a warm welcome to the MMC Mob and for their keen interest in our Indigenous Program. We look forward to sharing ideas and support that will provide positive opportunities and experiences for all students and to being good role models for our younger counterparts.

Amy Weatherall & Tyson Wilson
Year 12 Students, Co-Captains MMCIP

**Youth Mass, 18th May at 5.30pm, Doyle Centre, Marymount.****WANTED: ALL YOUTH AND FAMILIES**

the bread of life • the light of the world • the good shepherd

JESUS

the resurrection • the way the truth the life • the vine • I AM

All welcome to come along and celebrate mass with the young people of our parish. These nights are becoming increasingly popular with the youth from the Primary and College communities joining with others to celebrate the Eucharist. At the conclusion of mass, please join us for a sausage sizzle, table tennis, basketball and games.

Happy Mothers' Day

Happy Mothers' Day to all the mums, grandmas, aunts, sisters and other women who nurture and care for children. Students from 3P lead us in reflection this morning about the many roles Mums play and in prayers of thanks for their efforts. When it comes to love, Mum's the word!

One particular role model who is dear to our hearts here is Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary was open to parenting the Son of God, a daunting task no doubt! She agreed to God's request of her even though she thought it was impossible and lived a life full of challenges, heartache and tender moments with Jesus. While we may feel the pressure of parenting at times, Mary's dedication and persistence is a reminder to us to keep going.

- We thank you Lord, for Mary, the woman who said yes to life. Lord, hear us.
- We thank you Lord for all mothers who do so much for us. Lord, hear us.
- Please help our mums be the best they can even when it gets hard. Lord, hear us.
- Please help us to support our mum as they care for us. Lord, hear us.



Enjoy your Mother's Day and the week ahead.

Bernadette Christensen



STUDENT TRAVEL REBATES

Semester 1, 2014



Bus Fare Assistance

- Does your child attend a school outside the Brisbane City Council boundary?
- Does your family spend more than **\$25/week*** on fares to and from school (* \$20/week if you hold a concession card)?
- Does your child travel on a **publicly available bus** not owned or associated with the school?

Students with Disabilities

- Does your child have a **verified disability** that requires **transport assistance** to and from school?
- Has your school's learning support teacher assessed your child's **travel capability rating** as 'semi-independent' or more dependent?

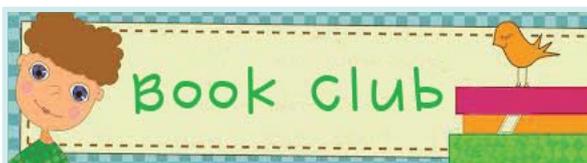
Visit our website to see if you qualify for financial assistance to help with the cost of transport and

apply at www.schooltransport.com.au by **31 May 2014**.

Late applications cannot be accepted.



Students working with author Loraine Wilson. Loraine writes AFL club themed children's books and flew up from Melbourne to chat with some of the boys about the Gold Coast Suns and Brisbane Lions.



Orders need to be in by **Monday May 12**.

Please return your order form and receipt to the library no later than **Monday**.



We have a new menu for Term 2, so make sure to check it out online or come and ask the ladies in the Tuckshop for a copy. We've added some new items to the menu this term as well as the Daily Specials, which have also changed.

This term we will be selling hot chocolate for \$2.50 each. It may be purchased online or over the counter. A voucher system is in place for this and children collect the hot chocolate from the tuckshop and drink it in the undercover area.

Coming up on May 28th is the First Game for the State of Origin. We'll be cooking up a Footy Fever Storm with a Sausage Sizzle for the kids and Steak Sandwiches available for the staff plus some YUMMY surprises. Orders for these are available from Monday 12th May until Friday 23rd May.

We will also be having a choice of Vegetarian and Gluten Free on the Day. Combo Deals will be available starting at:

- \$4.00 for a Sausage Sizzle Combo (Includes Drink, Sausage on bread with sauce and a Surprise)
- \$5.00 for a Gluten Free Combo (Includes Chicken Nuggets, Drink and Cookie)
- \$5.00 for a Vegetarian Combo (Includes Vegetarian Burger, Drink and Surprise)



The ordering process will only be through Munch Monitors on-line. So, please sign up before it's too late.

We are always on the lookout for Volunteers to help out in the Tuckshop. Should you wish to come and have some fun whilst meeting new people please contact the Tuckshop. We don't mind if you volunteer once a week/fortnightly or monthly. We appreciate the help!

ROSTER

Monday 5th

Lisa B

Tuesday 6th

Wednesday 7th

Trish Y
Louise G

Thursday 8th

Rebecca G

Friday 9th

Tracey S

Monday 12th

Tanya A
Bianca D

Tuesday 13th

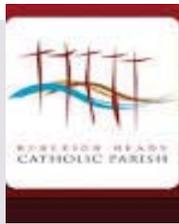
Wednesday 14th

Trish Y

Thursday 15th May

Friday 16th

Tracey S



NEWS FROM OUR PARISH

PARISH PASTORAL GOALS- 2014

Two emerging goals of the Burleigh Heads Parish Pastoral Council are:

- to grow in knowledge and awareness of what is happening in our parish
- to encourage and support the continuing good work of existing groups within our parish.

The Pastoral Council would like to invite each parishioner to join with us as we look at where we have come from and where we are on our journey to new possibilities with a new church almost a reality.

This week's focus is on the children of this parish – our future.

Are you aware of what OUR parish does? What would you like to see happening?

PARISH SCHOOLS:

Right from the start, our parish valued the education of children and, believe it or not, children attended school on the veranda of the old Infant Saviour Church in Park Avenue. This began in 1935 with the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. It was 1968 that the Franciscan Sisters started a girls' high school which was to become the first catholic co educational Gold Coast high school when boys were enrolled in 1972. All of this made possible by the generosity of the parishioners and the foresight of the priests at that time. Today with continued support of parishioners over the years and, finally in the late 70s, government assistance, we have the largest Catholic Primary School in the Archdiocese and one of the few Parish owned Secondary Colleges.

What a legacy!

What do you see for the future of our parish schools when they finally have access to a major church?

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM:

Initially parents of the parish focussed on prayer at home with their children and brought them to the church on weekends where the sisters would help to prepare the children for the sacraments. Once the schools were built, this preparation with the sisters was done in the school and parents were left out.

Twenty years ago, the sacraments went back to parish based rather than school with the focus once again on families as the first faith educators of their children. Hence the mass cards for families to meet with priests after mass and to determine the children's readiness. To support parents, the parish provides some information nights for parents and volunteer catechists work with small family groups to help parents prepare children for the sacraments. This year a parish co-ordinator was appointed to review the current program and look to the future.

What support do you think parishioners could give to these families? What possibilities will the new church provide?

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD:

We have larger numbers of families with primary-aged children attending the 10am Doyle Centre Mass; the 8am Mass at Miami; and the 8.30am at Mudgeeraba, where children's Liturgy of the Word is offered. Generally the children leave the community and listen to the readings of the day taken from the children's version and then, instead of the homily, the children explore what the Gospel stories mean for them in a variety of relevant ways. In these groups, children are involved in the readings and in the prayers and this prepares them for participation in children's masses, where they take an active role in ministry- reading, praying, altar serving - during a Sunday mass. Sunday mass is the heart and soul of our parish and the reason for the sacraments so children can participate fully in the Eucharist. Sacraments without Sunday mass, don't really make sense, so as a parish we want to encourage families to come to mass and support them in any way we can.

What support would you like to see provided for families at our masses?

What would you like to see included in the new church that would encourage families to come to mass?

- Responses can be emailed to burleigh@bne.catholic.net.au or posted to PO Box 73, Burleigh Heads, 4220.

ELECTRIC FLOURO DISCO

Wednesday 21 May

FLUORO THEME

Wear your coolest and brightest FLUORO gear!
Please wear appropriate footwear

5.00pm to 6.00pm—Prep to Yr 3 ONLY

6.30pm to 8.00pm - Yrs 4 to 7

Entry cost \$3

(Parents must collect students at door and we ask that parents be punctual in respecting finishing times)

Please refrain from sending older children (Years 4-7) to the junior disco with their younger siblings until 6.30 as this creates a supervision and safety concern.

Chips and drinks are available for purchase at \$1 each

Disco is strictly for students of Marymount Primary School.



Year 3P recognised all the mums at today's special Mother's Day themed assembly.

LOST

One of our staff has lost a silver ring whilst on duty on the Year 1 grassed area on Tuesday. It has a dark sapphire with small diamonds surrounding it and has great sentimental value. If found please return to our Administration office.



THE VOX

Students from "The Vox" music group performed at today's assembly. These students meet each Wednesday morning before school with Mr Wilkins, to practice and rehearse for these performances.



Sports News

Marymount Cross Country Champions 2014

Last Thursday saw the running of our school cross country. The event produced some outstanding competition and sportsmanship. The age Champions are listed below. Well done to you all on your fantastic efforts.

8yr Boys

1st Jack O'Connor
2nd Zane Stevens
3rd Flynn Wasson

8yr Girls

1st Millar Brosnan-Ball
2nd Alexis Smyth
3rd Brooke O'Brien

9yr Boys

1st Luke Rana-Smith
2nd Ty Sawyer
3rd Ben Radler
3rd Tom Cervenak

9yr Girls

1st Zali Williams
2nd Olivia Marshall
3rd Samantha Marchmont

10yr Boys

1st Jaden Wood
2nd Whitlam Smith
3rd Luke Williams

10yr Girls

1st Kiana Young
2nd Hayley Weise
3rd Nalani Beckley

11yr Boys

1st Jayden Wright
2nd Ben Inglis
3rd Max McCulloch

11yr Girls

1st Ellie Beer
2nd Shae Rooney
3rd Shannon Nolan

12yr Boys

1st Monte Ruff
2nd Harry Tonks
3rd Conall Crowley

12yr Girls

1st Megan Banner
2nd Angela Williams
3rd Jasmyn Glegg

13yr Boys

1st Jyle Bradford
2nd Zac Biddle
3rd Jarman Wilson

13yr Girls

1st Dayna Sullivan
2nd Chloe Riley
3rd Elise Burke



District Cross Country

District Cross Country will be held on Wednesday 21 May at Pizzey Park, Miami.

Catholic Cross Country

Catholic Cross Country carnival will be held on Thursday 29 May at St Brigid's Nerang.

Congratulations

Ellie Beer (6R) was selected to play in the Qld side for Oztag in her age group in Canberra last weekend.

Paul Hill

Thoughts from your School Counsellor

This week we have an inspiring story titled "A mother like no other" from our Parenting Ideas Insights article. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all Mothers a Happy Day this coming Sunday.



Mary Sanders

msanders@bne.catholic.edu.au

BURLEIGH HEADS CATHOLIC PARISH

Parish Office Hours 9.00am to 5.00pm
Parish Manager: Mr Jim Littlefield
Parish Pastor: Fr Ken Howell

3 Sunlight Drive, Burleigh Waters (Postal PO Box 73, Burleigh Heads)
Parish Pastoral Team
Associate Pastors: Fr Huong Van Nguyen & Fr Lucius Edomodi

Phone: 5576 6317/5576 6466 FAX: 5576 7143
EMAIL: burleigh@bne.catholic.net.au
Pastoral Associates: Sr Patricia Tomlinson

Parenting *ideas* INSIGHTS

Building parent-school partnerships

WORDS Karen Fontaine

A mother like no other

Seventeen years ago, Cheryl Koenig was a typical young Sydney mum celebrating Mother's Day with her husband Robert and their two sons, Jonathan, 12, and Chris, 10. One week later, Jonathan was involved in a car accident that left him with a severe traumatic brain injury. Since that day, Cheryl has worked tirelessly to help not only Jonathan but also other sufferers of brain injury. Here, New South Wales' 'Woman Of The Year' for 2009 – and the recipient this year of a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to people with disabilities, their families and carers – shares her extraordinary story.

I grew up as one of five kids in a close-knit family, and from an early age I wanted nothing more than to be a stay-at-home mum. I'd met Robert when I was almost 16 and, after nine years together, starting a family seemed as natural as night following day.

I gave birth to Jonathan two days before Christmas in 1984. He was an adorable baby and as a toddler he was boisterous and creative. I enjoyed every minute of those years at home with him and Chris.

Becoming a mother defined me. How can you not change when suddenly there exists something that is more precious than your own life? I discovered new things about, and deeper levels within, myself – because I held so much more in my arms. Of course the boys took my time, my space, even my patience – but they gave it all back with a smile.

Now that my boys are men, it's not the fancy holidays or big events that are my most golden memories. It's the ordinary, everyday things. Bedtime stories were a special time because they opened up their imaginations. Music: playing their favourite songs and dancing crazily with them. Dinner times: every night, without fail, we ate at the dining table together – the same meal for everyone, too. This was, and is, an important

ritual in the milieu of our family life. It's where we partake in each other's day, share thoughts and exchange memories. I often call the dinner table 'my altar table' – it's like a religious conviction, I guess, where I get to nurture and nourish my family.

On Sunday, May 18, 1997, I was cooking one such dinner for us when everything changed. Jonathan was 12 and I was 37. He'd been playing outside with the boy from next door and I was making nachos. Just after 5 pm I called Jon inside, and minutes later I heard a huge bang.

Jonathan didn't see the car coming. The car took him out and sent him flying for 20 metres. I found Jonathan lying on the street, his leg all twisted, with a horrible amount of dark-red blood coming out of his mouth and nose. There were two voices in my head – one telling me to scream hysterically and the other telling me to stay calm because my baby needed me calm. That was the voice I chose to listen to.

At the hospital I didn't cry; I just felt numb. A doctor told us a CT scan indicated a brain injury; that Jonathan's clinical signs weren't good, and he couldn't tell us if he'd make it. I thought, 'You don't know Jonathan'.

Jonathan was in an induced coma for the first month and for four more months I didn't leave his

side. Some deep reserve of energy kicked in and I knew I was making a difference to his recovery. All day long I told him how much we loved him; that he was going to be all right. But Jonathan got worse before he got better and each day felt like a ghastly repeat of the one before.

Jonathan was in intensive care for three weeks and then his eyes started to open. From early on, I knew he knew me. I'd lie on his bed and cuddle him and tell him about his life and read him stories. I was completely driven in my mission to restore what little semblance was left of my family. I saw signs of positivity everywhere.

Around the two-month mark I knew I had something to work with. I wheeled Jonathan to a piano in the hospital music room. He had no neck control, he was still dribbling and not talking, but he was just starting movement in his right arm. He'd begun to reach up and touch my face and take my rings off and do little things he'd done as a toddler. At the piano he reached out and started playing 'Chariots Of Fire', which he'd been learning at the time of the accident.

more on page 2 >>

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Stay one step ahead of your kids with great ideas & expert advice from Michael Grose. Join Michael's **NEW Parentingideas Club** today at parentingideasclub.com.au. You'll be so glad you did.



parentingideas.com.au



... a mother like no other ...

2

Our kids learn through watching us

There were no doctors around but the teachers saw it and everyone was crying – me hardest of all. That’s his theme song now, and he played it at the launch of my book.

Jono had post-traumatic amnesia for about 10 months, which indicates the worst kind of brain injury and the unlikeliness that memory will be regained. But we didn’t listen to the doctors. I see his memory improving all the time and that’s because he has a full and active life.

It’s been a long, hard journey. At three months he started making moaning sounds. I saw that as positive – he was trying to communicate. And then he started making ‘mmmm’ sounds. I literally pulled apart his lips to get his mouth moving but I closed the curtains around us because people thought I was crazy. But then one day he looked at me and said ‘Mum’. I can’t describe the joy I felt.

The first day I left him, to go to the hairdresser because I was a mess, my sister stayed with him and gave him a drink of grape juice that hadn’t been diluted. He gagged and blurted out: ‘I want my Mum!’ I’d cried all the way through getting my hair done but I walked back into his room and he was talking! We called Robert and I said ‘Someone here wants to speak to you’. Without any prompting, Jonathan said in the softest voice: ‘Hi...Dad...I...Love...You...Dad’. We were all in floods of tears.

Jono’s accident not only changed who I was, it also changed the complete dynamic of our family. I had to wear so many different hats in my new role as mother to Jono. I was – and, to varying degrees, still am – his carer, his rehabilitation case manager, speech therapist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, tutor, social secretary, counsellor for depression, and by and large his navigator through life.

My mothering of Chris did a complete 360, too. Chris was only 10 at the time of Jonathan’s accident and I had to neglect him and his needs for the best part of five to 10 years because my entire energy was driven towards getting Jonathan better. To this day, I feel an enormous amount of ‘mother-guilt’ about not being there throughout probably the most crucial years of a boy’s life: adolescence.

I was also guilty of being overprotective because I was terrified something bad would happen to Chris too. But I learnt, with time, to let him find his own way and I’m so glad I did, because he has become the most extraordinary young man, with the right blend of compassion and empathy, integrity and humility. He’s a civil engineer and he married his girlfriend Danielle last year, with Jono as his best man. It was an incredibly happy day for our family. Jono made a five-minute speech he’d memorised, jokes and all, which brought the house down.

I’m enormously proud of both of my boys although Chris is probably my proudest achievement, because he’s done it all by himself. But our kids learn through watching us, in ways we don’t even realise at the time.



Stay one step ahead of your kids with great ideas & expert advice from Michael Grose. Join Michael’s **NEW Parentingideas Club** today at parentingideasclub.com.au. You’ll be so glad you did.

