

School Newsletter

22 November 2010

Message from the Principal

Dear Parents, Guardians and Caregivers
 Tena Koutou Katoa



Mr E A Benton
Principal

Senior Prize Giving 2010

We enjoyed a wonderful evening on Tuesday November 9th at which we celebrated the academic successes of our best senior students for 2010. The evening was made more special with the attendance of Mayor Len Brown in just his second week of office as the Mayor of Auckland. The Mayor spoke of having dreams and creating an Auckland where our young people can reach their dreams. Quality music and quality students added to the evening. Our special congratulations go to our 2010 Dux, Soo Jin Han and the Proxime Accessit (runner-up), Adrian Mendoza.

Here is an extract from my speech that night for your information.

"2010 has been another good year for our school. Another year in which we have consolidated the good things that have been happening for several years now, embedding them into the culture of our school for many years to come. Things such as the positive way we treat each other. Relationships based on respect, trust and fairness. Things such as taking the business of learning seriously, of seizing the opportunity, being resilient, having a go, striving for excellence and never giving up. This is what you students said you wanted to achieve here in your time with us and I believe you are now doing so in ever increasing numbers. I think of the huge numbers of students who have come up on stage every Friday at assemblies this year for gaining excellence in their work, far more than last year and so too the numbers receiving industry awards last week. We are building the healthy learning culture that we all want. I love the way our students support each other and acknowledge each others' achievements right across all the diversity that we have in our school, the best example being the wonderful support that you give to every group that performed in International Week. We now enjoy a very good school. A gem. Two of the three members of the Education Review Office Team which visited in late May/June had been here previously when things weren't so good and were amazed by what they saw and experienced. They couldn't believe that this was the same school. Their report confirms that we are doing really well. Congratulations to you all for playing your part.

The highlights of this year once again have been the joy of seeing groups and individuals doing well, punching above their weight and getting noticed at the highest level. In sports, Pita Rona made the Black Sox Softball Squad along with his dad, Brad; and Ryan De Vries made the New Zealand U20 Soccer Team and headlined in yesterday's paper for Waitakere.

Kate Southee made the North Harbour U18 Hockey Team and North Harbour U15 Girls Cricket Team as well as inspiring our 1st X1 Girls Hockey to win the North Harbour 1st Grade competition. Casey Hewitt made the North Harbour Rugby U18 Development Team and Herman Ene made the U16 North Harbour Team and both helped the 1st XV to win the 1B competition and gain promotion to the top 6 round for 2011. 1st X1 Cricket made 249/2 on Saturday and lead their North Harbour competition. Remember, there are about 15 secondary schools in North Harbour and we are one of the smaller ones.

Key Dates

Year 10 Rostered Home
23 November

Junior Exams
26 Nov-1 Dec

Year 9 Rostered Home
1 December

Check-Out Day
2 December

Year 13 Leavers' Dinner
7 December

Junior Prize Giving
Last Day of Term 4
10 December

In Dance, I saw our Bollywood Group win the judges award at the Auckland competition for the second year running from 23 schools. We also had a fantastic dance concert showcasing a wide range of styles late last term.

In Drama, it has been a major production year and 'Beauty and the Beast' was all quality once again from Ms Whillans and her team and cast. Our International Week featured a wide variety of performances from traditional to modern and Kapahaka once again dominated the first six weeks of the year. Tonight is the academic highlight of our year and this has been made all the more memorable by having His Worship, our Mayor, join us.

Mr Benton's speech continues...

2010 has unfortunately also seen industrial action from teachers in support of their Collective Employment Contract negotiations. In difficult economic times, teachers probably did not expect much but negotiations began badly when the initial offer from the Ministry of Education sought to remove existing conditions of service. A Clayton's offer which has led to entrenched positions. A lot of the talking has been through the media and a lot has involved teacher bashing and half truths. In defence of teachers and teaching as a profession, it is worth noting that we rank 4th in the OECD list of developed countries for our students' literacy and numeracy levels off a per capita spend that ranks towards the bottom of the list. We give fantastic value for the taxpayer's dollar. An international report published just days ago rated our education system 1st. Yes, we do have a long tail of underachievement, so while we average 4th, we also have too many who fall well behind. This is the teachers' fault says the Minister. Not so say I when the overwhelming majority of these students who arrive in our schools already way behind their peers are the product of the dysfunctional underbelly of New Zealand. These children come from homes characterised by violence, abuse of drugs, alcohol and children, poor health care, poor nutrition and overcrowding. Most of these children are known to CYFS and have spent time in their care. For many of these children, the damage is already profound and it is too late to make a difference by the time they reach primary school, almost impossible when they are aged 13. Our primary colleagues are very concerned about the escalating incidence of verbally and physically violent children in our schools. Schools do make huge gains with some of these youngsters but it is impossible when the child returns each night to a violent and abusive home. We have these homes in Glenfield and right across Auckland. Your Worship, you are the closest person to the Beehive that we have here tonight and I know that you care deeply about our most disadvantaged, especially the children. My plea is that Government tackle the problem of our growing underbelly effectively. Children can't spend their first five years in such homes and be expected to cope with school. We need to work together to create an Auckland where people matter and kids matter most. Then our tail of underachievement will begin to shrink."

Since the Prize Giving, Ryan De Vries was named Auckland Soccer Player of the Year at the annual ASB Young Sportsman of the Year Awards and was also named in the top five sportsmen for secondary schools in 2010.

Contract negotiations for teachers have broken down again and the industrial action continues for Year 10 on Tuesday November 23rd and Year 9 on Wednesday December 1st.

Junior Exams

Exams for the juniors commence this Friday. The timetable is enclosed for your information:-

Session	Friday November 26 th	Monday November 29 th	Tuesday November 30 th	Wednesday December 1 st
Morning (9:10 – 11:10am)	9 Science	9 English	9 French 9 Catchup	
	10 English	10 Science	10 Japanese 10 Maori	10 Catchup
L	U	N	C	H
Afternoon (12:00 – 2:00pm)	9 Maths	9 Social Studies	9 Catchup	
	10 Social Studies	10 Maths	10 French 10 Catchup	

Please note that Year 9 and 10 students are required from 9:00am till 2:00pm on the 26th and 29th November but are only required on Tuesday 30th if they have been studying those option subjects listed or have missed an earlier exam and need to come in to do it. Wednesday December 1st is only for those Year 10 students called in to sit exams missed earlier.

Year End

The year ends on Friday December 10th with the Junior Prize Giving at 10:00am in the morning and students are free to go home afterwards once they have collected their reports from their Tutor Teachers.

Earlier that week, the Year 10 students will have an activity programme from Tuesday to Thursday while the Year 9 students have an integrated studies unit on 'The Hangi' which will culminate in a hangi on Thursday December 9th for all Year 9 students. **(Please send \$2 along to help with costs.)** Students will be able to go home at about 2:00pm on Thursday December 9th.