



'THE POWER OF THE PEN'

"The power of the pen!" is an old saying many of us would be aware of; this truism exploded into action recently here at St Joseph's Primary School, Warrnambool. Students of E3 focusing on improving their writing recently wrote to the Sydney Daily Telegraph. Their writing, beautifully and compassionately, expressed their concern for the plight of drought affected farmers. The students were particularly concerned for the farming families of outback NSW. They were conscious of the impact on livestock, community, young people and the local environment.

Gemma Jones, the new sub-editor of the Daily Telegraph in Sydney, responded by announcing six of the students as the winners of "The Adopt A Farmer" support program. Gemma offered to fly the six students published to Dubbo to visit farms and the local primary school. Qantas and News Corp funded the trip and visit. Students - Sophie Jellie, Nicholas Russell, Hannah Van de Camp, Daisy Shiells, Amelia Harris and Neave Black - travelled with Qantas, stayed overnight at St Vincent's Girls Boarding College in Potts Point Sydney and then flew to Dubbo for the day to visit farms and tour areas devastated by the conditions. They made the trek to Trundle, about 1.5 hours from Dubbo. The students shared a BBQ and some time with the local school. Making their way back to Warrnambool, it was quite an adventure for all involved. Staff members George El-Hage and Catherine Lee supported the travellers.



To support this endeavour, the students from E3 coordinated a casual clothes day on Friday, June 21 with a gold coin donation. Generosity, empathy and a commitment to action by students, staff and the parent body ensured this day was successful in many ways. We discussed our environment and what droughts are, we talked about supporting each other and how small actions can make a difference in our world.

Our "Adopt A Farmer" ambassadors presented a cheque to support the community suffering from the drought. The cash donation of \$1,200 was generous and will be heartfelt by the local community. As important as money is, the symbol of people caring for each other is more so. I especially thank every family for your support of this message to our young people and thank everyone. An amazing effort by all.

Michael Gray - Principal



Photos

1. Nick presents a cheque from St Josephs to local farmers
2. Nearby silos are empty as crops haven't grown
3. Students with the Principal of St Vincent's College Sydney, Anne Fry
Anne was Principal at Loreto College Ballarat previously

Letter from Trundle Central School thanking St Joseph's Parish School for their visit.



TRUNDLE CENTRAL SCHOOL

Croft St, Trundle NSW 2875

A school that provides a professional, stimulating and challenging learning environment

Principal: John Southon

28/06/19

Attn: Michael Gray
St Joseph's Primary School
70 Botanic Rd
Warrnambool VIC 3280

Dear Michael and school community,

Our school reached out to our friends in other schools to help us through this crippling drought and associated rural decline. St Joseph's Primary School by coming to our town, listening to our narrative and making an effort to understand our culture, is now one of our special friends.

Our new special friends have rekindled our belief in the strength of human spirit and whilst we have massive economic, geographical and cultural diversity your actions have proven that in this country we still have a sense of community and a desire to help those who find themselves in times of need. Your schools generosity has confirmed to our students and staff that distance does not reduce human compassion. This is a lesson that will stay with our students for life and increase their willingness to be active contributors to this great country.

Our schools could not be more different in terms of cultural diversity, size and location. Your visit has allowed our students to start to break down the barrier that restricts many from embracing the opportunities of the city or coast. This fear is generated through lack of contact and understanding. Your gifts are uplifting and humbling and allowed the human element of our new relationship to shine through.

St Joseph's Primary School represents what is still good about public education. Schools are part of a community and model and teach students the values that maintain this community. Through your actions you have extended your community to include Trundle Central School K-12, 120 students located in the Central West of New South Wales. A true indication of the quality of your school community and the strength of compassion and leadership. Well done! Can you feel 120 sets of hands patting you on the back?

On behalf of the students and staff of Trundle Central School I would like to extend our hand of thanks and friendship and I hope it continues well after this terrible drought has finished.

Yours sincerely

John Southon
Principal