

2017 VicSuper MENTAL Brekky

A heartbreaking tale of a family devastated by the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder was absorbed in stunning silence by the more than two hundred people in attendance at the 2017 VicSuper MENTAL Brekky, hosted by St Patrick's College Ballarat on October 20.

John Shanahan (SPC 1967-69), pictured right, told the tale of his son Nathan (SPC 1988-93) who succumbed to his high-profile battle with PTSD in the hours leading up to Christmas last year.

In a brave address, John spoke of his family's battles to find the right level of support for Nathan in his final days, and then of the frustration of dealing with bureaucracies following Nathan's death.



John's speech was followed by a keynote address by another Old Collegian and the current CEO of Headspace Jason Trethowan (SPC 1987-91), pictured below, who reiterated John's message of the importance of open, honest and transparent communication around the topic of mental illness.



Jason spoke of his organisation's desire to provide the youth of today with the necessary tools to recognise signs of mental illness in friends and family members and then the knowledge for how best to start the process of providing assistance.

Jason said much progress had been made in mental health awareness in recent years, but stressed that there remains much more work to do.

The 2017 MENTAL Brekky, was run under the auspices of the St Patrick's College Foundation and aimed to generate income for the Chris Yeung Fund.

Established in 2016, the Chris Yeung Fund aspires to raise awareness of and provide financial assistance for families in the St Patrick's College community where the father is suffering mental illness.

To date, and following this year's VicSuper MENTAL Brekky, more than \$70,000 has been raised and the fund is currently providing financial relief for several families, ensuring their sons can remain enrolled at the College despite their financial hardship brought about by illness.

Families wishing to know more about the fund are urged to contact the College's Development Officer Paul Nolan at pnolan@stpats.vic.edu.au