



The John Berne School  
Hope Always

CELEBRATING **25** YEARS  
*Acceptance. Hope. Change.*

Hope Always

Issue 3 2023 Newsletter

Dear parents, carers, and friends of Berne



As we bid farewell to the bustling activities and adventures of Term 3, let us take a moment to reflect on the journey we have embarked upon together. The past few months have been filled with fervour and dedication and our students have engaged in various extracurricular activities and excelled in their pursuits.

In thinking about the term and the year so far, I would also like to reflect on how Jesus and Mary have been constant sources of strength and comfort, guiding our students, staff and Berne community through the busyness of the term. Term 3 is renowned for its vibrant energy, with students actively participating in academics, sports, arts, and work experience and feeling the end of the school year fast approaching. Our school community thrived this term as our students embraced all the challenges and opportunities that came their way. However, in the midst of this whirlwind of activities, it was crucial for our staff to remember the importance of finding balance and seeking solace in our faith. At these times, we felt Jesus and Mary provided us with the strength and guidance necessary to navigate through the busiest of times, reminding us of the values underpinning our mission statement and our community.

Jesus' light in the midst of chaos offered us solace and peace during the most demanding moments of the term. His teachings reminded us to trust in His plan and to find rest in Him when burdens weighed heavily upon us. Through prayer and reflection, our students also found strength in their faith, allowing them to face challenges with resilience and grace. In the Gospel, Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). This verse serves as a reminder to our students they are not alone in their struggles and by turning to Jesus and seeking His guidance, they will find the strength to persevere, knowing they are supported by His unconditional love.

Mary, our Blessed Mother, was also a constant source of inspiration and comfort to us throughout the term. Just as she cared for Jesus with unwavering love, Mary provided a nurturing presence for our students, reminding them of the importance of compassion and gentleness in their interactions with others. Through her example, Mary teaches our students the value of selflessness, reminding them to extend a helping hand to those in need. Her intercession

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## Upcoming Events

**10 October**

Students return Term 4

**17 October**

John Berne Day Mass

**23 October**

Parent/Staff/Student Interviews

**8 – 10 November**

Stage 4 Camp

**16 – 22 November**

Year 10 Work Experience

**20 – 24 November**

Year 9 Work Experience

**23 November**

Year 10 at school

**24 November**

Year 10 Graduation

**29 November**

Charity Golf Day

**30 November**

Years 7, 8, 9 Picnic Day

**1 December**

Years 7, 8, 9 last day of Term 4

**31 January, 2024**

Students return Term 1

and prayers offered comfort and guidance to our students as they faced the challenges and demands of Term 3.

At The John Berne School, we believe faith is not confined to the four walls of a church. It is a living faith, one that permeates every aspect of our lives. Jesus and Mary serve as beacons of inspiration, guiding our students through their educational pursuits and encouraging them to live out their faith in action. I encourage you all, as the term draws to a close, to reflect on the teachings of Jesus and the example set by Mary by integrating prayer and reflection into your daily activities and approaching challenges with grace, kindness, and integrity.

So as Term 3 ends, let us acknowledge the blessings Jesus and Mary have bestowed upon us and be grateful for their guidance and love which has sustained us through the busiest of times, reminding us of the true purpose of our education and the importance of nurturing our faith.

Hope always!

James Le Huray  
Principal



## Welcome new students

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to the students who have joined our school this term – Dillon in Year 7; Angelina and Thomas in Year 8 and Mizuki in Year 9.

## Congratulations Eoin



Congratulations to Year 9 student, Eoin, who represented The John Berne School in The Sydney Carnival, CCC event. His specialty events were the High Jump and Discus. Eoin received a Gold medal in high jump with a new Sydney event record of 173cm. He also was also honoured to receive the all-age medal for Sydney as the best athlete.

# Stage 4 Activities Week

There's something very special about this time of year, and Stage 4 made the most of it by getting out and about in our beautiful city during their Activities Week. The Sydney Zoo at Eastern Creek was their first excursion, and students had a great time exploring every corner of the zoo and its aquarium.

Their next destination was Clifton Gardens at Mosman. Here they enjoyed lots of activities, including swimming, fishing, and field sports. The highlight of the day was jumping off the wharf into the harbour and competing to make the biggest splash then swimming to shore, racing each other to see who could swim the fastest. To top it all off, students were treated to a delicious picnic lunch prepared by staff.

A trip to the Reverse Garbage Centre at Marrickville was on the agenda for day three. 'Choose to Reuse' is its motto, and it aims to inspire people to reduce waste and change the way we look at and use resources. Berne students had a ball rummaging around the Centre and learning lots along the way too. On their return to school, everyone pitched in and had a fun time making delicious pizzas.

The final excursion for the week was to Treetops. Despite the inclement weather, Berne students and staff were courageous and thoroughly enjoyed themselves on the ropes courses and zipline. Climbing up the ladder of one of the courses proved difficult for students, but once they did, they zoomed easily through the trees on zip lines. This activity was definitely the students' favourite highlight of the week.

Activities Week was a great success, encouraging students to be active and try new things together.





# Love of Learning Day

This term our focus for LOL Day (Love Of Learning Day) was on PDH (Personal Development and Health) and wellness. To engage our students in activities which encompassed wellness we focussed on the six domains of wellness:

1. Emotional wellness
2. Physical wellness
3. Spiritual wellness
4. Environmental wellness
5. Social wellness
6. Mental wellness

Staff created activities which matched each domain and students, with the support of Year 11 students from St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill, moved from activity to activity. They engaged in cooking crepes, in art, running a fun dress-up sponge relay and mindfulness in the garden and yoga. Students and staff had a fantastic day, laughing and having fun building on their wellness and exploring new ways to improve their wellbeing.



# Positive Paws Program



The Positive Paws Program has kept the eight participating students very engaged and busy. This report outlines what the program involved on a day earlier this term.

Students evaluated a group of eight, seven-week-old puppies who, though small, were like pocket rockets. They had to assess whether each puppy was confident, would walk through a tunnel, would walk over different surfaces, would take food gently, and had a host of other qualities necessary to be a guide dog.

The students also had the opportunity to help train a five-month-old puppy called Hector, who was at the Guide Dog Centre due to a recent illness. He revelled in the attention and was very happy to sit, stay, drop, and heel for treats and praise.

They also practiced their advancing training skills on Stella, a two-year-old female. The students used their body language and hand signals only to get the dog to complete various tasks.

Jayne Layland  
Stage 4 Coordinator



# Stage 4 Science

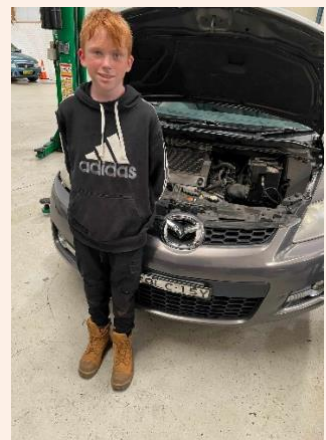


This term, Stage 4 has been studying Elements, Compounds and Mixtures. The students were excited to be using laboratory equipment for their experiments. They were required to take a laboratory safety test to ensure they could use Bunsen burners safely. All students took this test very seriously, and they passed with flying colours. They carried out a series of experiments testing the conductivity of various materials. The students worked extremely hard setting up the apparatus and measuring the results accurately.

Jayne Layland  
Stage 4 Coordinator

# Work Experience

This term Stage 5 students undertook work experience placements in a wide range of fields including construction, hairdressing, skateboard manufacturing, car sales, education, art design, hospitality, fitness training, farming, retail, PCYC youth services, religious institution, veterinary services and electrical trades. The John Berne School Work Experience Program can be challenging for our students. It necessitates students travelling to sometimes unfamiliar locations, working with people they might not know, possibly starting early in the morning or working long hours and being expected to perform tasks they may not enjoy. Students are well monitored and supported at all stages of their work placement by their teachers and the program can play an important role in building self-confidence and learning valuable work and life skills. Congratulations to all our students who successfully completed work experience this term and thank you to the many employers who gave them the opportunity.



# Snow Camp



Students from Stage 5 were invited to snow camp in Week 5 this term. The final group included twelve students and five staff members. We started our journey on August 15th, leaving Sydney and heading to Perisher. The students were kept entertained on the long drive by music, sing-alongs, and even a nap or two. It wasn't long before we arrived in Goulburn, where students enjoyed a cheeky takeaway lunch and a visit to the Big Ram. When we arrived at our destination, we were able to pick up our snow gear and settle in.

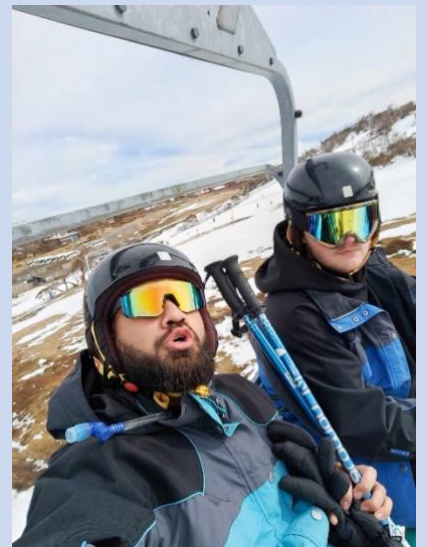
The next day was difficult but rewarding as we battled the snow. We spent half the day learning the fundamentals of skiing and snowboarding from snow school instructors. Our students got the hang of it with a little patience and perseverance. The rest of the day was spent developing and honing our new skills. We returned to our accommodations after a day of skiing and snowboarding, where we shared a meal and discussed the highlights of the day.



We had more lessons with the instructors on our second day of snow activities, who gave us tips on how to perform better. Then we returned to the slopes after our lessons. Some of us had snowball fights; others continued skiing and snowboarding, going up chair lifts to shred down the mountain side; and others decided to take breaks here and there to take in the scenery. We were also able to watch the mighty Matildas vs. the England soccer team after a jam-packed day of skiing and snowboarding. Despite the fact that our team lost, it was a great opportunity for us to bond while watching the game that night.

When you're having fun, time flies, and before we knew it, it was time to head back to school and endure a long drive back. I'd like to thank Tanja, Sharon, Phoebe, Michael, and Declan for a successful snow camp on behalf of the entire group.

Supi Taufa'ao  
Teacher Assistant



## RUOK? Day

The logo for RUOK? Day, featuring the text "RUOK?" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is replaced by a yellow smiley face with a black outline. A small trademark symbol (TM) is located to the upper right of the question mark. The logo is set against a solid yellow rectangular background.

R U OK? Day was on September 14<sup>th</sup>. "I'm Here, To Hear" is the theme for 2023. At our Term 3 school assembly this was the main focus. We were fortunate to have Natalie Nickson, a Beyond Blue ambassador, who kindly offered to speak about her struggles with mental health. Natalie shared her own experiences in an effort to raise awareness of anxiety and depression, reduce the stigma associated with them, and encourage others to seek help. Natalie reminded us that at Berne, we are here to hear!

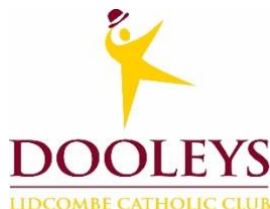


## Thank you for your generous support

Our sincere thanks to Clubs who have given us financial support through the ClubsGrants program. We thank them, not only for their financial support, but also for their encouragement and acknowledgement of the worthwhile work we do at The John Berne School. Many Clubs around Sydney have provided help to this school over many years.

We especially appreciate this year the sponsorship of Ashfield RSL Club for our Outdoor Education Program; Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL Club for sporting equipment for our Active Kids Program; Club Ashfield for our Skills for Living and Active Kids Programs; Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club for our Breakfast Program and Earlwood Bardwell Park RSL Club to purchase Focus Fidget Kits for our classrooms. Thank you to everyone associated with these clubs from our whole school community.

**Ashfield RSL Club**





# Stage 5 Science Experiment



This term, Mel and Craig's class has been working on an experiment using the absorbent polymer (sodium polyacrylate) found inside nappies, to sustain plant growth. The purpose of this study was to observe if sodium polyacrylate mixed with soil had any impact on the growth of sweet corn as compared to using just regular soil.

Firstly, students designed and painted their compostable paper pots, adding a personal touch to the experiment. Next, the students dissected disposable nappies and carefully removed the sodium polyacrylate from the lining. The budding farmers then planted their two corn seeds, one in a pot containing a mixture of soil and sodium polyacrylate and the other with only regular soil. This allowed them to compare the growth patterns of both plants over four weeks with watering

restricted to once weekly. The sodium polyacrylate, which can retain large amounts of water, served as an excellent medium for the plants to stay hydrated for extended periods.

The students monitored the growth of their plants, recording any observable changes and noticing that plants with the polymer-enriched soil exhibited consistent growth with robust, greener leaves. In contrast, the soil-only plants, in most cases, barely sprouted.

The experiment provided our students with a practical knowledge of the use of science in assisting farmers in drought-prone areas as well as instilling a sense of responsibility and care for living organisms.

At the conclusion of the experiment, the students planted their corn sprouts in our school vegetable garden where, hopefully, they will harvest their corn crop later in the year.

Craig Fraser  
Stage 5 Teacher



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