



The John Berne School
Hope Always

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

Hope Always

Issue 4 2023 Newsletter

Dear parents, carers, and friends of Berne



As we come to the end of the school year, we share with you our final newsletter for 2023. Term 4 has been a very busy one filled with a variety of activities and special occasions for our students.

Our Year 10 students were farewelled at a wonderful Graduation Mass and Celebration on 24 November. I gave the following address at the ceremony which is repeated here for the wider community:

Well, you have made it to the end of Year 10!! Some of you sitting in front of me may have wondered if you would ever make it to this day or perhaps it was your parents and carers who were wondering.

Today is a very special day because you are about to experience one of the most important changes you have made in your life. When you and your parents made the decision to come to The John Berne School you changed the course of your educational experience. Change can be a scary thing, but you did it and here you are - and now you are ready for another change as you head off into a new world and a new set of experiences.

As you think about finishing your time here at Berne and how much you have achieved I would like to share a true story with you about a man called Charlie Plumb.

Charlie grew up as a farm kid from Kansas with dreams of becoming a pilot. After graduating from the Naval academy and completing his training, he became a part of the program which is now known as "Top Gun".

During the course of his career Charlie flew 74 successful combat missions over North Vietnam and during the Vietnam war Charlie became known as the "Top Gun" of the skies by his fellow pilots.

Charlie was 5 days away from the end of his tour in Vietnam when he took off on his 75th mission and this time the mission did not go as planned. Charlie was shot down somewhere over Hanoi and was taken prisoner where he was tortured and spent the next 2,103 days of his life (around 6 years). Remarkably, Charlie survived and once released continued to fly for a few more years before retiring.

Continued next page

Upcoming Events

1 February

Students return Term 1, 2024

12 February

Parent Information Afternoon

13 February

Opening School Mass

26 February – 1 March

Stage 5 Camp

13 – 25 March

NAPLAN Testing

18 – 22 March

Stage 5 Work Experience

25 – 27 March

Stage 4 Activities

28 March

Stations of the Cross

29 March

Good Friday

31 March

Easter Sunday

1 April

Easter Monday

12 April

Students last day of Term 1

30 April

Students return Term 2

"I packed your parachute", the man replied. Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man put his hand forward to shake Charlie's hand and said "I guess it worked".

Charlie assured him, "It sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today".

That night Charlie could not sleep. He kept thinking about the man. Charlie says " I kept wondering what he might have looked like in a navy uniform. Charlie wondered how many times he might have seen him and not even said "Good morning? Or not even looked at him because he wasn't a Top Gun fighter pilot.

So what has all this got to do with your Year 10 graduation day? Well, Charlie Plumb's parachute was packed by a man he barely knew and it saved his life. He didn't need his parachute on every mission but when he did it was there. In the same way, you are leaving here with a parachute that has been packed for you by people you may not even be aware of and it has all the essential components to ensure you a safe landing. Like the parachute, you may not realise you have these components until you need them but your Catholic Marist education has equipped you with a set of traits and skills that will help you navigate the challenges and uncertainties of the future.

The first is resilience. You have faced numerous obstacles at school and in life but you have shown tremendous resilience by persevering, adapting, and bouncing back from every setback. Life will present its own set of challenges, but with the resilience you have developed, I have faith you will have the strength to overcome them.

Secondly, curiosity. Your time at Berne has fostered a thirst for knowledge and a desire to explore the world around you. Embrace this curiosity as you step into the next phase of your lives. Seek out new experiences, ask questions, and never stop learning. Curiosity will be your compass, guiding you towards new discoveries and opportunities.

Another vital trait you carry with you is empathy. In a world that often seems divided, your ability to understand and share the feelings of others will be invaluable. By practicing empathy, you can build bridges, foster understanding, and create positive change. Remember to listen, be kind and stand up for those who need your support.

Creativity is another trait that has been nurtured at Berne. You have learned to think outside the box and approach challenges with innovative solutions. Embrace your creativity and let it guide you in finding unique and impactful ways to make a difference in the world.

Lastly, I want to emphasise the importance of community. The friendships and connections you have formed within these walls have shaped your journey and will continue to do so in the future. Cherish these relationships, for they are a reminder of the power of collaboration, support, and belonging. Remember to give back to your communities, both local and global, and strive to make a positive impact wherever you go.

So, as you prepare to spread your wings and embark on new adventures, remember that the traits packed within your metaphorical parachute will be your guide. Resilience, curiosity, empathy, creativity, and a sense of community will carry you through the highs and lows of life. Embrace these traits, and I have no doubt that you will soar to great heights and achieve remarkable things.

And there's one more thing I want you to think about. The man who saved Charlie Plumb's life was a perfect stranger to him. He owed this man his life but what struck Charlie the most after meeting him was that he couldn't remember ever acknowledging him or showing him gratitude. So I want you to think about who has packed your parachute. Think about all the people who have made sure you made it to this day and I want you to acknowledge them and show them thanks - not just in words or gifts which are important but also by using the skills and traits they have given you and making the most of the wonderful life they have prepared you for.

So Year 10 graduating class of 2023 - this is the end of your time at Berne. I would like to wish you well for whatever path you take. I pray that each of you remember the wonderful support of your loved ones, the tireless work of The John Berne School staff, the vision of St Marcellin Champagnat and the Brothers, the love of Mary and the love and acceptance God has for all of us. Your Berne parachute has been packed and in it is your knowledge of the love God has for each and every one of you. You have become aware of your emotions, you know how to make good choices, you have been prepared for whatever challenges come your way and you can face them with confidence, kindness and consideration of others. Your parachute is your connection to Berne because there are people here who love you and care for you. The John Berne community will watch you with pride as you endeavour to go places on your own and we will always be here to support you into the future. I feel privileged and honoured to have met each and every one of you - who are all unique and valued individuals. Goodbye and good luck. May God go with you always.

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Finally, on behalf of the Berne staff I want to thank you for your support of our school. I would also like to thank our staff for their tireless work and commitment to our students. May God's blessings be with all our students' families and friends this Christmas and during the holidays.

Wishing you all a happy, holy and peaceful Christmas.

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 – Tyla in Year 7 and Axel in Year 8.

John Berne Day



The John Berne School was named after Jean-Baptiste Berne, a young man who lived in France in the times of Marcellin Champagnat, founder of the Marist Brothers. Jean-Baptiste Berne was a very troubled young man. When Marcellin Champagnat met him, Jean-Baptiste was in a terrible situation, an orphan with no one to care for him and facing life on the streets. Marcellin took him in, cared for him and provided an education. Jean-Baptiste was a difficult youth, but with courage and perseverance, the efforts of the brothers and Champagnat prevailed, and the boy was turned around. He settled down to a normal life and accepted the help, love and the kindness being offered to him. In time Jean-Baptiste Berne became a caring and generous person who later joined the brothers as Br Nilamon. Sadly, he was to die of tuberculosis at the age of 21 in the arms of Champagnat, after thanking him for all that he had done for him.

We celebrated John Berne Day this year on 17th October with a morning Mass at school. Then, throughout the day, students engaged in a variety of athletic and competitive activities as part of our sports carnival. Well done to all the participating students. We would like to especially congratulate Morokai, Eoin and Patrick W. who were each awarded The John Berne Award for commendable effort towards personal improvement.



Annual Berne Luncheon



This has been a very special year for The John Berne School as we celebrated our 25th Anniversary. A luncheon was held at Doltone House, Pymont, raising much needed funds for our school. MC for the occasion was Mike Whitney (former Australian cricketer and television personality). Memorable speeches were made by former Berne Principals Br Michael Flanagan and Br Darren Burge and by Marist Schools Australia Regional Director, Dr Frank Malloy. Mike Whitney interviewed three past students who spoke warmly of their time at Berne and what the school and dedicated staff had done for them. We sincerely thank the many guests who joined us at the Luncheon and for the many generous donations we received.

Stage 5 Opera House Excursion ~ Dimanche

On Wednesday 18th October nine students, along with teachers and a counsellor, attended the Sydney Opera House to see *Dimanche*. This stunning performance of mine, puppetry and movement was a commentary on humans and their inaction towards climate change. Students enjoyed and were surprised by this quirky performance which challenged their minds and senses. Thank you to the Arts Assist Program for providing our tickets to this awesome production. It was unlike anything the students had ever experienced before and it gave them a lot to think about.

- Kristina Allan
Stage 5 Teacher



Thank you

Our sincere thanks to Petersham RSL Club for their grant enabling us to buy new camping equipment for our students. We are very grateful to Petersham RSL for their generosity and support of our school.

Year 10 Graduation

It was a great pleasure to warmly farewell our Year 10 students on Friday 24 November with a graduation ceremony. Congratulations to all our Year 10 graduates of 2023:

- Mia Adams-Birch
- Samarah Bryant
- Lucas Dockrill
- Emily Gheorghisor
- Nicholas Hardy
- Johnathon Likidis
- Morokai Mondo
- Laleitah Morris
- Rex Morris
- Jade O’Hea
- Braydon Price
- Charlie Rumble
- Augustin Tice
- Mia Vaiente
- Riley Vercoe
- Benjamin Wood

Many thanks to Father Gary Perritt for celebrating Mass with us. Sincere thanks again to our supporters, honoured guests who presented our special awards this year: Dr Frank Malloy, Dr John Robinson, Br Michael Flanagan, and Fr Gary and to The John Berne School staff, students and their families for making the graduation such a wonderful event.

Special congratulations to our major prize winners who were recognised for their achievements and contributions to the school community.

Reuben F Scarf Award

Presented for consistent effort and desire to improve
- Morokai Mondo

Graeme Ellis Award

Presented for outstanding application or achievement in a co-curricular activity
- Jade O’Hea

Geoffrey George Award

Presented for service to the school community
- Johnathon Likidis

David Hordern Award

Presented for outstanding application or achievement in Work Experience
- Benjamin Wood
- Mia Vaiente

Liza Adams Award

Presented for outstanding application or achievement in Mathematics
- Johnathon Likidis

Jenny Keys Award

Presented for application or achievement in English
- Mia Vaiente

Br Michael Flanagan Award

Presented for courage and perseverance in adversity
- Mia Vaiente

Jean-Baptiste Berne Award

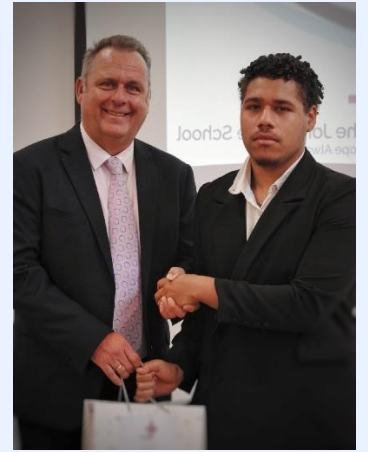
Presented for personal improvement
- Johnathon Likidis

Champagnat Award

Presented for character, stability, and good example
- Lucas Dockrill



Year 10 Graduation



More photos on The John Berne School facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/TheJohnBerneSchool/>

Sculpture by the Sea

Stage 5 had a fabulous excursion to see the Sculpture by the Sea exhibition. Staff and students enjoyed a lovely walk along the coast, admiring the various works of art. The exhibitions featured more than 100 sculptures by artists from Australia and across the world. Everyone especially liked the melting Mr Whippy truck, a sculpture titled 'Hot with the Chance of a Late Storm' which was awarded the Kids Choice Prize 2023. Despite the overcast weather, everyone had a great day and they also enjoyed a delicious lunch and ice cream at Clovelly Beach.



Stage 4 Gerroa Camp

On the 8th, 9th and 10th of November, nine Stage 4 students with four staff headed south to Gerroa for camp. We travelled down to Gerroa on Wednesday morning, stopping at Stanwell Tops for morning tea and the Kiama Blowhole for lunch, before arriving at The Discovery Park Caravan Park in the afternoon.

Once the tents were set up there was time for a walk around the campgrounds and a wonderful hamburger dinner prepared by five students and staff. The next day we were welcomed by sunshine so we took the opportunity to have a ride on the go karts, swim in the pool and enjoy a great day fishing in Crooked Creek and swimming at 7 Mile Beach. The weather was great both days except for some afternoon rain which we made the most of by taking the opportunity to play board games and chill out undercover. Once the weather cleared the group enjoyed the jumping pillow, a great game of cricket and some students prepared a beautiful Spaghetti Bolognese dinner. Both evenings we all enjoyed endless, fun games of spotlight on the beach which were really fantastic. As one student exclaimed "I wish we could play this till midnight". The nights ended with ice cream and chocolate sauce for dessert and showers for some.

Well done to Tom, Tyler, Patrick W., Patrick K., Zach, Sam, Ewan, Axel and Dillon for being such a wonderful group of students to spend the three days with and, of course, a big thankyou to Jayne, Alex, Tara and Emily for their perfect presence and support.

- Nicole Arathoon
Stage 4 Coordinator



Marie Byrne Scholarship



Marie Byrne was the single mother of three boys from Greenacre. She worked hard at the TAB to ensure they received a good Catholic education - which they did. Her eldest son is a school Principal and her youngest son was a renowned entertainment manager and performer. Sadly, her middle son suffered addiction issues and clashes with the justice system with resultant mental health challenges. Marie always valued education and this annual scholarship is to encourage and acknowledge two students at The John Berne School who also really value their education and give their best effort to be the best person they can be. Congratulations to Dillon Kennedy and Tyler Mason who have been awarded the 2023 Marie Byrne Scholarship receiving \$250 each towards their school fees at Berne next year.

CHARITY Bounce.



Kate Savage from Charity Bounce has been supporting some of our students here at Berne this Term with their career goals. Charity Bounce is a not-for-profit organisation that exists to build resilience and positive job futures for young people at risk, using innovation through basketball. Kate has a background in career coaching and is really passionate about finding and supporting each student's individual pathway.

Kate has been working one to one with students on Wednesday mornings, in addition to providing follow-up telephone support. From finding part-time jobs, work experience to higher education to future careers, she has been helping students with their goals. This has included identifying future career paths and understanding workplace requirements, writing resumes, interview skills, job applications and supporting students once they have been employed. Kate has already assisted three students secure roles at the local Woolworths. We look forward to Kate continuing to support our students here next year.

If any of our Year 10 graduating students would like further assistance from Kate, please contact the school office for her contact details.

Congratulations Patrick



Patrick Nalty graduated from The John Berne School in 2013 after being a student here for two years. Recently he achieved his Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award which was presented by Prince Edward. Patrick was the first person living in out-of-home care to achieve this award. We are very proud of Patrick and congratulate him on this wonderful achievement.

Carving Pumpkins

Stage 5 students marked All Hallows' Eve, the vigil of All Saints Day, by carving some pumpkins, dedicated to remembering the dead, including saints (hallows), martyrs, and all the faithful departed.

- Michael Muranty, Stage 5 Teacher



All Souls Day

On All Souls Day we commemorated and remembered our departed loved ones. During our liturgy at school, we each lit a candle and offered up prayers for the special people in our lives who we have lost. We wrote their names on slips of paper which we placed in the ground under a new rose bush we planted in our memorial garden. May their souls rest in eternal peace. It was a solemn and beautiful occasion, and our students are to be commended for their reverence and respect.



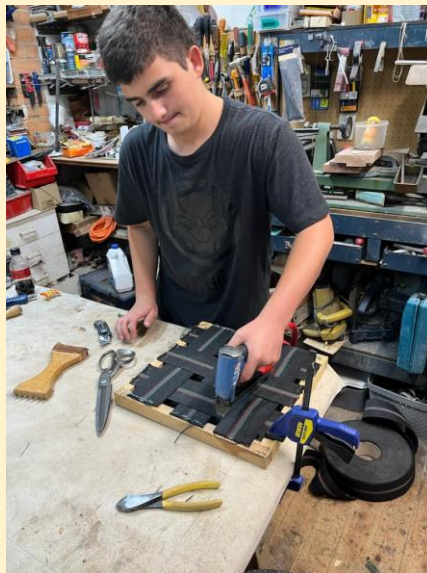
Work Experience

Our Stage 5 students had the opportunity to have hands-on work experience again this term. Work experience placements provide valuable insights to help them choose the right career paths and make informed decisions for their futures. Some of the industries and workplaces our young people were lucky enough to be able to work in included: childcare; hospitality (cafe and restaurant); cinema; education; gym; carpentry; painting; plumbing; upholstery; Charity Organisations; PCYC; retail (hardware, motorbikes, clothing, toys, supermarket) and Aboriginal Arts.



While working in these industries students were able to make meaningful connections with the local community. These connections opened up opportunities for some of our students who have been offered employment outside of school.

The **YES (Youth Engagement Strategy) Program** offered through TAFE NSW was another great opportunity offered to Stage 5 students. These six week practical TAFE taster courses gave students another avenue to explore various career opportunities. Seven Berne students attended courses in Electrical Trades; Gaming and Animation; Health Services (Nursing); Film and TV; Digital Photography Processes and Automotive Trades.



Picnic Day

Picnic Day is a Berne tradition where staff and students have a fun day out together to celebrate the successes of the year. It is a time where we, as a community, join together sharing a picnic meal and enjoy outdoor activities at Clifton Gardens overlooking the beautiful Sydney Harbour. Below is a student's recount of the day.

Clifton Gardens Adventure

Yesterday Stages 4 and 5 went on an outing to Clifton Gardens in Mosman. This was our end of year picnic to recognise all the efforts from students and teachers throughout the year. We left in the morning around 9am and set off with everyone excited and looking forward to going swimming, fishing and playing sports in the nice weather. Once we got to Clifton Gardens we found a spot where we put our stuff and some people set off to go swim and some relaxed or played sport. Eventually after some sport, I headed off to go and swim, as soon as I jumped in the water the temperature was perfect and refreshing. We all jumped off and were having fun in the water, after some of us got out we went off and played a big game of cricket and then lunch had arrived. We had nice plates of chicken and chips in the hot sun. After lunch we played some sport and jumped in the water one more time before we headed off back to school. We packed up all our stuff and jumped in the cars. Once we left we had music on in the van and were all tired from a big day in the sun. After a fun day in the sun everyone was tired but overall it was a good day with everybody behaving and all coming together as a community.

- Patrick Whelan, Year 8 Student



The John Berne School Golf Day



On Wednesday 29th November at St Michaels Golf Club over 60 people gathered to raise funds for Berne. The Golf Day has become an annual event and this year we were pleased to have some special guests attend the day. Josh Hazlewood (Australian Cricketer), Nick Davis (Sydney Swans Premiership winner) joined Year 8 student Patrick Whelan and his father Stephen for a round of golf.

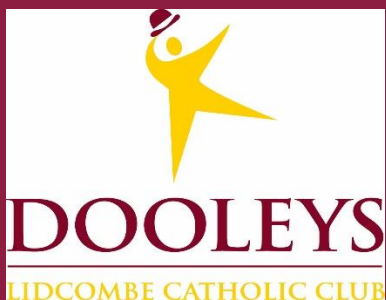
The day was a success in raising funds for Berne, however the highlight of the day was when Patrick was interviewed by Gary Dawson on how he came to be at Berne and his experience of the school. The day would not have gone ahead had it not been for the wonderful ongoing support and organisation by long-time

supporter and friend of Berne, Gary "Smokey" Dawson and Matthew Laverty.

A very big thank you to all who braved the rain and challenging conditions on the day and for the generosity of all those present. Once again thank you to "Smokey" who has been a supporter of Berne for over 15 years.

Hope Always

James Le Huray
Principal



Thank you

Thank you to Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club for their grant towards our Outdoor Education Program next year. We are very grateful to Dooleys for their generous and continuing support of our school.



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