Dear Families and Friends,

Farewell 2012! It's time to take a deep breath and look back over another huge and fast year. So much has happened; I'm not about to recount it all - you've been part of the journey. What I do see are often the intangibles:

- The calmness that permeates most of each day;
- The growth in student confidence as they speak at assemblies, deliver messages, speak up in class, form new social groups and generally have a go;
- The quiet busy atmosphere in class times;
- The exuberance when something new or exciting happens;
- The care and support offered at both student and staff levels;
- The happy greetings every morning;
- The creative play evident in and out of the classroom;
- The fun in the morning 'wake and shake” sessions;
- The growth in self expression through music and art
- And finally - the humour that is mostly a constant across every context.

The year has been good! It has been good because so many added their spirit and energies to making it so.

We thank:
- EREA and the ongoing support they provide. This year we experienced Renewal; the outcome was that we are very well grounded in and living our Edmund Rice heritage and expectations;
- Our ERSES Board under the leadership of Paul Waite who continue to offer their wisdom and support to all that we do. Their generosity is exceptional;
- Our community which extends beyond families, friends, corporate, church and school systems – wherever there has been a need immediately a hand was extended, always with great generosity and sensitivity;
- Our volunteers who continue to turn up faithfully, giving their energy and time with no tangible reward other than our gratitude;
- The taxi drivers who once again have delivered our students safely and happily each day. It is their interest and care of the students that puts them in the “special” category;
- You the parents, who have taken up the support role with great enthusiasm and love. Now when we say “our” school we really mean it!
- St. Gabriel’s staff who rise to every occasion with love, energy, creativity and generosity;
- The students who give us the excuse to be on the journey – their gift is to be themselves. They challenge, delight, frustrate, worry, excite and entertain – some package!
Children's Awards

The following Awards were presented at our School Assembly:

Week 9 Term 4 2012 (Monday, 3 December to Friday, 7 December)

Student of the Week: Blake W for always working hard, following instructions and being a kind friend

Class Awards

Junior N - Shari-Anne for using polite words
Junior L - Blake M for working hard on his fine motor skills
Middle W - Asher for being a good friend in the playground
Middle S - Ryan for being a happy and cheerful class member
Upper R - Emma for her delightful sense of humour and caring for her friends

Do Your Best Award: Joshua
Be Safe Award: Jayden
Care and Share Award: Aaron C
Uniform Award: Kian

Principal’s Message (cont’d)

It is Christmas and once again we are challenged by the message of Christ’s humble birth. There was no special treatment, no gold trim, no party – just the warmth of God’s creatures, the beauty of the night sky and the love within that stable. Hopefully we can withstand the material hijacking of this wondrous event and reclaim the spirit of peace, hope and goodwill. We have been given the formula - my prayer is that we can recognise what our true gifts are and know how to put them to lifting spirits, mending what is broken and creating a strong, positive society.

Just to finish as always:

I wish you all a most beautiful Christmas where all you have to worry about is the weather and eating too much. I hope you spend time with your families who reassure you that you are cherished and important. I hope the true joy of Christmas is that you can find peace and space in your lives and that allows you to be the best person that you know you can be – and, finally, forget the food and wine – overindulge in fun and laughter.

May God bless you all
Kathy Freeman
Primary school children just love everything to do with Christmas! St. Gabriel’s has been buzzing with the children’s talk of Christmas trees, decorations and presents, of course. Wishing each of you a happy and safe holiday season and the joy that Christ’s birth brings to us all. Enjoy time on the beach, in the pool and with one another or just the sheer luxury of doing nothing for its own sake. Look forward to seeing you again in 2013.

Warm regards ~ Dianne

St. Gabriel’s News

Thank to everyone who so generously sent in donations towards St Vincent de Paul’s Food Hamper Collection. Several baskets in our reception were overflowing with food items and Colm Farrell from Vinnies came along to our assembly on Friday to accept our donations. Colm told us that they would be used to fill the hampers for 20 families which was wonderful to hear. Thank you, everyone!

School Banking Dates for Term 1, 2013

- Thursday, 7 February
- Thursday, 21 February
- Thursday, 7 March
- Thursday, 21 March
- Thursday, 4 April

Kindly diarise these dates for sending in deposit books, money and completed deposit forms. Please remember that families may open accounts for new students and siblings and more details will follow in Term 1.

Happy birthday to those children celebrating birthdays throughout January

- Joshua who will be 7 on 2 January
- Corey L who will be 10 on 7 January
- Olivia who will be 6 also on 7 January
- Logan who will be 7 on 18 January
- James who will also be 7 on 24 January

Farewell to Ethan

Our very best wishes go to Ethan as he moves on to a new school next year—we will miss him and his mum, Sibel
Our Wonderful End of Year Celebration
Tuesday, 4 December
Thank you to Lions Hearing Dogs Inc for sponsoring our sound field system!

We were delighted to be visited by three members of the Castle Hill Lions Club of Castle Hill who were here to see the sound field system which had been sponsored by the Lions Hearing Dogs Inc, being used in one of our classrooms. Our visitors spent some time in the classroom, presented us with a plaque and then joined us for morning tea. We are so lucky to have such wonderful supporters.
ACCESS All Areas Film Festival

St. Gabriel’s celebrated ‘Don’t Dis my Ability’ day earlier this month by coming together as a whole school to watch short films from the ACCESS All Areas Film Festival, all with captions and audio description, for those who preferred that mode. We munched on popcorn and enjoyed the experience of being an audience together. At the end of each short film, we became critics and decided whether we liked the film - 😊; thought it was ok—😊; or didn’t really like it—😊.

It may not surprise you to discover the results of our research – about 99% of us loved every one of the 7 films!

Reminder to Parents

Please do not send in cans of food with pull ring lids for children’s lunches. After the ring is pulled, the can has been found to be quite sharp and therefore dangerous for our children.

The staff of St Gabriel’s would like to wish all our families a lovely Christmas and a very happy and healthy 2013.

Thank you for your wonderful support of our school.

TERM DATES FOR 2013

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<td>Thursday, 31 January - Friday, 12 April</td>
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<td>Term 2</td>
<td>Tuesday, 30 April—Friday, 21 June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term 3</td>
<td>Monday, 15 July—Friday, 20 September</td>
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<td>Term 4</td>
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It is the policy of St Gabriel’s to distribute information when requested regarding activities and information concerning disability. This does not imply that St Gabriel’s endorses these activities or the information contained therein in any way.