



SPRING 2024 VOLUME 17 NO. 2

Flame



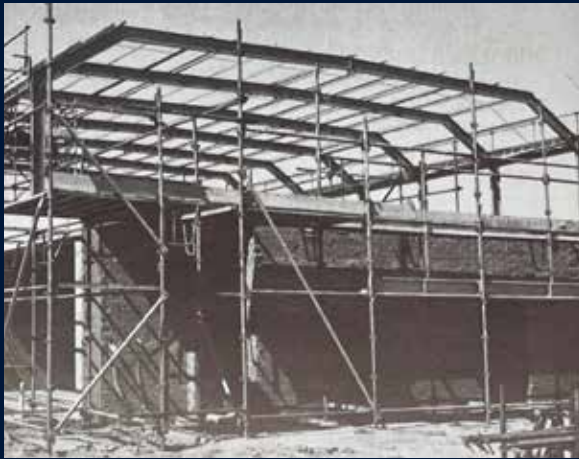
A spirit of reflection

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Reflections: A spirit of reflection



New buildings planned in the 1980s for future students

The 150th anniversary of the foundation of the OLSH Sisters is a milestone that gives us cause for reflection. In 1988, the College celebrated its Golden Jubilee in the same year that Australia marked its bi-centenary. The message from Principal Sister Elaine Troy for that year spoke of the need to “understand our country’s history... have an awareness of Aboriginal culture and live in harmony with the land as we grapple with ecological problems.” Her message also reminded us of the small beginnings of the College and the spirit of those first families who helped the College to grow.

These are themes that resonate with us today and are spoken of by our own students and staff when they articulate what the OLSH spirit is for them.

Tellingly, Sr Elaine’s message said “only time will tell if we have planned well for the future”. As we reflect on the work of the OLSH Sisters, the achievements of those in our College community and the education facility that is OLSH in 2024, we can attest that the planning and spirit of those who have come before us is valued and cherished.

Editor's message

This year has been one of celebration as we mark the 150th anniversary of the OLSH Sisters foundation. It has been an opportunity to bring together past and current staff, students and parents to share in a couple of special celebrations with the OLSH Sisters. We were thrilled to have OLSH Sisters from Tonga, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and various parts of Australia join us for a special Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart mass and our Missions Carnival.

The OLSH spirit runs deep and was spoken of frequently as we reflected on the courage, sacrifice and ingenuity of the OLSH Sisters. Their example and values have been passed on to all who have had a connection to our OLSH community and we are grateful to them for their role in providing education to more than 10,000 young women over the past 86 years at OLSH College.

We can also see the OLSH spirit in the way our senior student leaders have shared their vision and legacy with us as they prepare to move on to life beyond secondary school, and in the way our Issoudun students embrace our unique Hartzer program.

Cath Ewart

*Director of Development
and Community Relations*

Principal's message

Our spirit of reflection these past few months has focused on the history of our OLSH story. As the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart – our OLSH Sisters - celebrated the 150th year of their foundation we joined with them in giving thanks to God for their story and the blessings of these 150 years. Importantly, the story of the OLSH sisters is our story too. Our lives have been drawn into their story because of our connection to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College Bentleigh.

Exactly how did this story become our story?
Here are some fast facts...

- It all began in 1874, when Fr Jules Chevalier founded the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart – the OLSH Sisters - in Issoudun, France. Their mission was to spread the love of Jesus' heart all over the world.
- Mother Marie Louise Hartzler was the first leader of the OLSH Sisters, and courageously sent five young sisters (only one could speak English) from France to Papua New Guinea in 1884. They landed first in Sydney – and so the OLSH Story in Australia began.
- In 1934 the OLSH Sisters arrived in Bentleigh and in 1938 Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College Bentleigh was established.
- Over the past 86 years, 98 OLSH Sisters have worked here at OLSH College Bentleigh. Their mission was, and is, to let all of us know that God loves us yesterday, today, tomorrow, always.

With deepest gratitude to the OLSH Sisters with us here in Bentleigh and across Australia; to those who have gone before them and to all those throughout the world now and into the future – we thank you for making the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere Loved!

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart pray for us.

Anne O'Loughlin
Principal

*We sing for you,
For your love, courage and truth,
Love is your way,
Today, forever, always.*

(Words of the song written by Ms Megan Donohue, Deputy Principal Faith and Mission for the OLSH Sisters 150th celebration)



Celebrating 150 years of mission

We marked the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the OLSH Sisters with several events, celebrating the history, mission and contribution the Sisters globally and their special contribution to provide education for young women at OLSH College Bentleigh for 86 years.

In September people from across the OLSH College community came together to share an evening of connection, celebration, story sharing and gratitude for the OLSH Sisters. Nearly 200 past and current students, parents, staff and Board members joined 14 OLSH Sisters and three past Principals of the College for this special evening.

Our students played a special role in the evening with College Captain Mia cutting the cake with Sr Jeanette, Performing Arts Captain Zoe singing a beautiful song, *For Good*, and Mia and Charlotte (Regnet Christus Leader) speaking about the impact of the Sisters on their time at OLSH College. Memories were shared by past staff, Board members, students and parents, and we were treated to a beautiful rendition of the *Ametur* from our talented Music staff Kellie Mentlikowski and Erin Renwick-Shaw.

It was a wonderful celebration of the unwavering commitment of the OLSH Sisters to their mission - to bring to people everywhere the love of the Heart of Jesus - and a reminder that we all carry the OLSH spirit with us because of our connection with the OLSH Sisters story.

The celebrations continued with a special planting of an OLSH Sister jubilee rose in Hartzer Place, by our student leaders and visiting OLSH Sisters. We were blessed to have OLSH Sisters Annabella (Tonga), Vita (Samoa), Emma (the Philippines) and Freda (Papua New Guinea) with us for a number of days to visit classrooms, share their stories with students and join in our Feast Day activities.



Visiting OLSH Sisters in our classrooms



A wonderful evening celebrating 150 years of the OLSH Sisters



During our week of celebrations, we welcomed students and staff from OLSH Kensington and OLSH Enfield as part of the OLSH Links program, deepening the connection between our colleges.

A wonderful evening celebrating 150 years of the OLSH Sisters; Students from OLSH Kensington and OLSH Enfield joined us in our special week; Planting a commemorative rose with our student leaders

A very special Feast Day

Our Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart mass was made even more special as we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the OLSH Sisters, with 18 OLSH Sisters joining us.

Hearts were everywhere, with the theme 'Hearts all over the world' being reflected in costumes and the love for the OLSH Sisters who joined us for mass and all the fun of our Feast Day carnival.

During our Mass we experienced joy-filled singing, we heard prayers of intercession read in a variety of languages from countries where the OLSH Sisters live and work, and we saw and listened to Marie Louise Hartzler herself. We had a lovely exchange of singing, with our whole OLSH community singing *Sisi Ni Moja (We are One)* for the Sisters, and the Sisters in return singing the *Ametur* for the College community.

A highlight was the presentation made to the OLSH Sisters after communion. The Sisters were each presented with a sacred candle and a lavender bag made from the lavender grown in our College grounds.

It truly embodied the words we heard from our Student Leaders, "Sharing deeply in the love and mission of Jesus, each of us is OLSH!".

After mass it was on to the colour, food, music and stalls of our Feast Day carnival, raising funds for the work of the OLSH Sisters' overseas projects. There were rides, a giant slide, showbags, bands performing, carnival games and delicious food.

Our students, staff, families and local traders contributed greatly to make this a wonderful day for our whole community. We raised a record-breaking \$26,000 to support the work of the OLSH Sisters overseas projects, providing food, water and education supplies in the Philippines, PNG, Samoa and Tonga. Thank you to generous local businesses who provided vouchers for our silent auction and food contributions for our food stalls.

We finished the day with prizes for the best dressed and a final farewell to our friends from OLSH College Enfield (Adelaide) and OLSH College Kensington (Sydney).





Our special Feast Day mass attended by 16 OLSH Sisters; our gift of song to the OLSH Sisters; Hearts were everywhere on Feast Day; our record-breaking fundraising for the OLSH Sisters overseas projects

Five sell-out shows!

Our production of Mamma Mia!, presented in partnership with De La Salle College, was a show to remember, with all five shows being performed to a full house.

Audiences sang and danced along to the timeless ABBA hits, immersing themselves in the fun and energy of the show. There was a huge buzz in the foyer after each show and our student cast and crew were thrilled with how well the show was received.

The production was the result of a commitment to many months of hard work and rehearsals made by cast, crew and staff at both colleges.

They delivered unforgettable performances, capturing the heart and humour of the musical and showcasing the depth of talent in acting, dancing and singing at both colleges.

Year 11 student Maddie Di Conza, who played Tanya, said "The cast, crew, band and production team were all such talented people and I felt so privileged to work with and learn from them during the show. I can't wait to keep making memories in our next production!"

The onstage cast were supported by a wonderful backstage crew, front of house team and technical crew. The incredible live soundtrack was provided by our student band lead by our dedicated Performing Arts staff, showcasing their musical talent and adding to the overall magic of the show.



Highlights from our production of Mamma Mia!

Our unique Hartzer program

Our Issoudun (Year 9) students have just completed their Issoudun rotations which includes a four-week residential experience in Bowral in the southern highlands of New South Wales.

Delivered in a regional setting, the program is made up of classroom learning, inquiry tasks, personal training, physical challenges and immersive learning in Canberra and Sydney.

The program includes sessions on social and emotional learning, such as goal setting, conflict resolution and managing emotions, as well as community outreach opportunities, outdoor hikes and camping. Students have their own rooms and come together for learning, meals, study time, outdoor activities and free time. The weekday program is largely technology free, with students having access to mobile phones for just two hours a day.

Students continue with classroom learning at Hartzer Park and the learning has an experiential focus, delivered in an immersive environment. This helps connect students to the content they are learning and supports engagement.

While on Gundungurra country, we spend a day with an Aboriginal elder onsite, experiencing a welcome to country, smoking ceremony and learning about Indigenous customs and language of this region. They also spend time with the OLSH Sisters and deliver meals on wheels to the local community.

We love hearing the feedback from students when they return to understand what they have taken from the program.

"I enjoyed Hartzer as I created new friendships and I learnt new skills all in a very hands-on independent learning structure that I enjoyed very much."

We are proud to have run this program for 12 years and to be the only Catholic secondary school in Victoria to offer an interstate residential program.



"Going to Hartzer helped me grow as a person away from my family and helped me find what I like and dislike. It also helped me strengthen relationships with my friends"

Grow and succeed: Leaving a legacy

On the last day of Term 3, we planted a new student garden. This garden was the idea of the Student Leaders, to represent their 2024 theme, Nurture the Seed, Grow and Succeed.

The garden contains native plants which will create a sustainable, habitat area as it grows. Our Student Executive spoke about their vision for the theme and the garden and what it means to them as a representative from each Learning Mentor Group, the Leadership team, teaching and administration staff planted their plant.

"This year, our vision was to focus on our OLSH community - our strong foundation of heritage, spirituality, legacy and tradition. Our House patrons, OLSH Sisters, past educators and alumni are all part of our rich College history; inspirations who spread their passion for education and shaped OLSH into the heart-filled place that it is today. These are our roots; what grounds and reminds us of who we are." - Mia

"Our College radiates incredible warmth and support that provides the resources and opportunities to allow students to grow, just like the trunk of a tree. Our roots and trunk form the basis of who we are as OLSH girls, providing our lives with a sense of meaning, understanding and belonging." - Emilia

"Growing our plants in homeroom has been a physical embodiment of our College theme - our vision of flourishing from our planted seed and blossoming into the beautiful, unique individuals we all are! It provided us with a shared purpose and goal, so together we could recognise the power of teamwork, collaboration, love and care." - Alexandra

"We are leaving a symbol of our legacy and vision through leadership- and we hope that the planting of these natives marks both the end of the incredible growth we have achieved in 2024, yet also the beginning of new growth beyond!" - Chanelle



Our Student Executive with Ms O'Loughlin and Ms La Greca planting their garden; students planting their plants in the native garden



Reunions

During May we welcomed two groups of past students back to the College for reunions - the Class of 1974 for their 50 year reunion and the Class of 1964 for their 60 year reunion.

Each group brought with them their own stories and memories of their time at OLSH and the strong connection they had with the College and with each other was a joy to observe.

The Class of 1964 remembered playing Beatles music over the loudspeakers and throwing their velour hats in the air on the final day of school. For the Class of 1974, the influence of the OLSH Sisters in the classroom and the opportunities they provided, such as new learning spaces and interstate camps, were recalled with gratitude.

These special days when past students return remind us of the many people who have a connection with the OLSH College community and the contribution they have made to our story.

We have two more reunions scheduled for this year - the Class of 1984 and the Class of 2004. Find out more on the Reunions page of our website - we'll be publishing the dates of our 2025 reunions for the Classes of 1965, 1975, 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2015 soon.

Class of 1964 60 Year Reunion



Class of 1974 50 Year Reunion



*The Class of 1964 celebrated 60 years since their graduation;
Reconnecting with the Class of 1974*

Alumnae profiles



Michele Linossier
(Boyle, Class of 1976)

"For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also." As an OLSH College student and then staff member (1982 to 1985), and coming from St Peter's East Bentleigh, the influence of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart continue to have a strong presence in my life.

I always wanted to be a teacher and have absolutely loved this ongoing journey. At the heart of it are the people, the expertise in learning and the delight in matching these meaningfully for students, providing them with opportunities for learning and greater understanding. This love of learning was nurtured by many of my teachers, my opportunities and the encouragement to get involved which was key to life at OLSH in the 1970s and 80s.

OLSH led me to Arts at Melbourne Uni and a Dip. Ed. at the pre-ACU Institute of Catholic Education. Studies in Theology, Gifted Education and First Nations Learning have been my focus and shaped my experiences. I have taught and been a leader in secondary schools, spent some years in primary teaching and have worked with families in a parish setting and in evening adult education classes.

People and their stories fascinate me. Travel is also a passion. I have been fortunate to travel widely with students mainly in the gifted education space and via my connection to the Presentation Sisters in my present role. We learn as a global community with responsibilities for the planet, peace and connection.

Teaching comes second only to family and I have been blessed with a great partnership, three wonderful children and one grandbaby. As an only child I loved school because it provided company and fun.

Advice from these years? Love what you do and do what you love. Be open to this changing and growing. Never underestimate the seeds you may sow and never see grow. Make them good and trust in the process... Fill your life with experiences. Have stories to tell. Therein lies your treasure.



Andrea McKenzie
(Class of 1981)

Only a few weeks ago I was asked to share a photo from my school days which led me to some quiet time reminiscing on my days at OLSH. The College was in many ways quite different to the present day. For one the brown uniform has gone, however the spirit and the passion in providing education for young women and celebrating success remains the same.

OLSH was where I developed a love of learning and was fortunate to feel supported and motivated by teachers and my fellow students. Importantly I was part of a beautiful community where we celebrated the wins and rose to every challenge together.

I completed a degree in Marketing at Monash University, then entered the world of Advertising and Communication. Before turning 30 I had established my own agency with offices in Melbourne and Sydney. I thrived on the excitement of working on fabulous campaigns for Australia's largest food and fast moving consumer goods companies. I was fortunate to have wonderful Art and English teachers who ignited my passion for creativity.

During this time I met my husband and we had two sons who are both now in their 20s. In 2005 we relocated to Saudi Arabia where we lived for six years. Our time in Saudi was an adventure. Our boys had friends from all corners of the world and I was fortunate to secure a Senior Management role in an advertising agency, where I led a new all-female division...a first for Saudi. I loved living in Jeddah and I thrived on immersing myself in the culture and diversity of the city.

We moved back to Sydney almost nine years ago when our boys were completing high school. I work part-time at a boys Catholic high school in Manly and at midday each day when we pray the Angelus I am reminded of my OLSH days. My advice to any school leaver would be grab every opportunity with both hands and run with it. Don't be afraid to fail and above all be happy.



Cristina Pase
(Class of 1984)

I left OLSH so excited to go to university to meet new people and learn new things. I completed a Bachelor of Education, Primary at University of Melbourne and later a Masters in Literature at Deakin University. It was during these studies that I discovered a love of literature for children, and this set the course for my future career.

After leaving university I worked in many different roles. This work included doing emergency teaching, working in bookshops both in Australia and Scotland, tutoring in children's literature at Deakin University and being a sales and marketing manager for a major publisher. Almost twenty years ago I got my dream job as Children's Publisher for Melbourne-based independent children's publisher, Windy Hollow Books. Being a small publisher means covering many roles.

My job entails everything from commissioning books, editing the text with an author, working with illustrators to develop a visual narrative and assisting with marketing once the book is published. I feel so lucky to help authors bring their best story to life and create beautiful reading experiences for young children. My career highlights include travelling to book fairs in Italy, UK, and China, winning the Bologna Prize for Best Publisher Oceania Region and publishing several prize-winning books, including last year's CBCA Book of the Year, *Early Childhood*.

I feel fortunate to have been able to travel widely and spend time living and working in other places. I share this passion with my partner and have hopefully transferred this love to our three adult sons.

When I completed my teaching studies, I wrote in my diary that I wanted to teach for a while and then become a Children's Book Publisher. Beside that I wrote 'not possible'. How wrong I was. So, my advice is, back yourself, work hard, be curious, critical and open to possibilities and never be afraid to challenge your expectations.



Rita Ciucotta
(Class of 1996)

I completed Year 12 at OLSH in 1996 and was School Captain which was a real highlight. I studied a Bachelor of Business and Arts at Swinburne University, with business majors in Human Resources and Marketing. My first role was in Marketing and I was fortunate to be exposed to the world of leadership development and coaching.

I went on to work in Human Resources in industries including health, financial services and higher education. I completed a Masters in Industrial and Employee Relations at Monash University.

My last corporate role was Vice President of People and Culture at Swinburne University, back to where my higher education journey commenced. These days, my area of expertise is leadership development. I have run my practice for six years and feel fortunate to work with amazing Australian and international businesses. I am a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and joined the Board of Peninsula Health in 2018. I am on the Board of Left Write Hook, an organisation that supports women survivors of child abuse. I feel very fortunate to serve on these Boards as it provides me with a way to contribute to areas I am passionate about.

I am a proud mum of three - Matthew, Siena and Noah - and my husband Darren and I are very fortunate to have been blessed with these three awesome humans who are also our teachers.

My favourite memories of OLSH are of friendships and fantastic teachers. I appreciate that OLSH guided us to follow our strengths which has led me to a career that I love. Stand out memories for me are our outback Australia trip in 1995 and our rigorous debating competitions with local schools. OLSH taught me to have compassion for others and a love of learning throughout life. My advice for current students is choose a vocation that you are genuinely passionate about. It's normal to not know what that might be. If you are stuck, think about your strengths and what are you naturally good at.

News in brief



1 **Tournament of Minds**

Congratulations to the three teams that recently competed in three divisions of the Tournament of Minds. This competition is an Australian wide competition where participants respond to a creative question presenting their interpretation as a team. This competition demonstrates teamwork and collaboration working to solve a literature, social science, arts or STEM problem.

We congratulate the three teams, especially Team 2 Social Science who were awarded Honors and Team 1 Arts who were awarded Honors and were also given a wild card entry to the State Finals. Congratulations to all participants in this program and we wish the Year 10 students all the best in the upcoming state final.



2 **High energy wins the day**

It was all about precision, timing and working together when six Aerobics teams represented OLSH College at the Catholic Girls Sports Association of Victoria (CGSAV) Aerobics competition in Heidelberg. The teams worked hard during training sessions in the lead up to the competition to improve their fitness and polish their performances.

OLSH College were winners overall and the individual teams came 1st in Divisions A, B and C and 3rd in Division C.



3 **Opening the doors to Discover OLSH**

We welcomed 68 primary school students to our OLSH Discover Day, providing the opportunity experience life at OLSH College. The students spent time in our classrooms, working on textiles, science, art and sport activities and then came together for get-to-know-you games and singing. Our Year 10 PE students planned and led each of the sport sessions, putting the theory they have been learning into practice.

Our Student Executive popped in to meet the students and our performing arts students entertained them while they enjoyed morning tea together.

The morning finished with a rousing Just Dance session, leaving everyone buzzing before a final farewell from our Principal Anne O'Loughlin.



4 **Deepening our awareness of the challenges of homelessness**

A group of our senior students participated in OLSH's second Winter Sleepout, to raise awareness for challenges of homelessness. They were joined by representatives from the St Kilda street community who spoke about their experiences with homelessness.

Volunteers from the St Kilda Soup van shared their stories of being volunteers and joined the students for dinner. The students and staff raised more than \$400 to go towards the great work of the St Kilda Soup van. The experience deepened the students awareness of the hardships faced by those experiencing homelessness and provided them with the opportunity to spend a night in solidarity with those who are struggling.

5 **Junior Choir wins Platinum award**

Congratulations to our Junior Choir who were awarded Platinum, the highest award, at the Victorian School Music Festival. The choir performed to a panel of two adjudicators and schools from across Victoria and participated in a workshop with immediate feedback on stage from the Chief Adjudicator.

Our junior choristers spent many morning rehearsals preparing for this competition with their accompanist Kate Denmead and conductor Kellie Mentlikowski. The opportunity to perform on a professional stage and to receive feedback that can be put into practice in future performances is extremely valuable in developing these students' musicianship.

6 **Science Week activities**

This year's Science Week activities included an elephant toothpaste demonstration, lunchtime science quiz and a poster competition. Congratulations to Year 7 student Bridie and Year 8 student Lola who won the poster competition.

The theme was 'endangered species' and the students had to research their species and present the content in an informative and engaging way. Bridie chose Hawksbill Turtles and Lola chose Eastern Quolls. Their effort in creating informative posters that dynamic impact was most impressive.

Well done on letting your bright OLSH spirits shine brightly as you show care for all creatures on Earth.



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Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College Bentleigh stands on the lands of the Bunurong people and we acknowledge them as Traditional Owners. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging.

Front cover: College Captain Mia and OLSH Sister Jeanette with the 150th celebration cake

Back cover: Highlights from our OLSH Sisters 150th anniversary celebrations

Disclaimer All care has been taken to verify that the information contained in this edition of *Flame* is correct. However, we apologise if any inadvertent discrepancies have occurred. Please contact the College if you would like to reproduce any of the material in this edition of *Flame*.

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