

FLAME



Leading and inspiring

From the Editor

When we take on a leadership role – in either a formal or informal capacity – we take on a commitment to serve and empower others. Through leadership, we can bring people together to deliver a collective outcome that reflects a range of views and inputs. We can share wisdom and skills, that those around us take with them on their journey. And we can empower others to develop their voice and their desire to make a difference.

We recognise leadership in many forms in this edition of *Flame* and we celebrate those who put themselves forward to make a contribution. Our current student leaders have shared their insights about what their role means to them, and our Alumnae reflect on their journey as leaders in their fields.

Cath Ewart
Director of Development and Community Relations

Reflections: Serving others

Our College is built on the service that student and staff leaders have contributed during their time here and we could select any of the past 84 years to provide an example of that. The Student Representative Council of 1975 demonstrated great insight by reflecting on the lessons of their predecessors and setting themselves goals to achieve during their tenure. They sought to bring junior and senior students closer together by holding fortnightly SRC meetings where suggestions from all year levels were considered.

They were responsible for introducing Student ID cards that students could use as proof of age for public transport and the cinemas to obtain a reduced fare and they supported the introduction of a new winter uniform.

We take great inspiration from these leaders who chose to serve and leave a legacy for future generations.



The 1975 Student Representative Council

OLSH College Bentleigh acknowledges the Bunurong people on whose ancestral country the College stands.

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Front cover photo: Our 2023 College Leaders – Aria Pisano Senior Prefect, Halle Schroor College Captain, Terri Wong College Vice Captain and Lily Hughes Senior Prefect.

Rear cover photos: Highlights from all aspects of College life in 2022.

Disclaimer

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From the Principal

*To be enlightened is to know that heaven is not “coming”.
Heaven is here.*

Joan Chittister osb

Leadership is everyone’s responsibility – we are called to be leaders by the way we live. Leaders shine a light on the goodness that is our humanity. What does that humanity look like? It is generosity of heart, kindness, authenticity, forgiveness, compassion, joy, honesty, faith, hope and love. To strive always to live life with these heart qualities is to be a leader – for the “life of each one of us has its influence on others.” (Romans 14:7) Specific positions of leadership form part of the structure that enables our society to function. People in these leadership roles are fired by a desire to be of service to others, to the community. It is here that we often witness people who in the words of St Ignatius ‘*give without counting the cost.*’

In our OLSH community, students, staff, alumnae, families, College Board and OLSH Sisters we find our hearts are constantly touched by the leadership of others in our midst. From the Year 7 students who volunteer to perform a musical item at assembly through to our elected student leaders who forge creative ways to engage the entire community in the Vinnies Christmas Appeal and raise over \$5000 across the last week of the school year. These experiences form part of our journey together as part of

the OLSH story. For when we enter into every aspect of this story we come face to face with the truth that yes, - “heaven is here.”

*Regnet Christus,
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Pray for Us*

Anne O’Loughlin
Principal



Grateful ... so very grateful

When we came together to celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, we marked this very special day with a farewell for Mr Michael Renwick, former OLSH College Board Chair and inspirational leader to us all.

Michael was appointed to the College Board by the OLSH Sisters in 2006. As Board Director he was instrumental in the work of the College Finance committee and the Building and Facilities committee. In 2011 Michael was appointed Board Chair and continued in this role until his retirement from the Board at the Annual General Meeting in 2021. The work of the College Board is one that is not readily visible to the College community – these generous people bring their expertise and wisdom to the important role of governance of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College on behalf of the OLSH Sisters.

Michael and Bernadette Renwick have been associated with the OLSH Sisters since 1986. With Bernadette joining OLSH College staff and their three daughters, Nicole, Erin and Carla educated at St Paul's Bentleigh and OLSH College, the Renwick's have been an integral part of the OLSH College Bentleigh story. Michael served on the Parents and Friends committees of both St Paul's and OLSH College significantly contributed to the organising and running of the many fundraising and social events.

For the 15 years of service and leadership Michael Renwick has given to the OLSH College Board we

are *Grateful...so very grateful*. His drive to care for the tradition and charism of the OLSH Sisters has been and continues to be tangible and unwavering. Michael worked with the Board Directors to ensure that the very best educational experience was offered to all our OLSH students and staff. His expertise and wisdom ensured that the refurbishment of the OLSH Convent into the new College Administration area, the building of the OLSH Centre, the newly created Performing Arts Centre and the Senior Hub were completed to the highest of levels.

Thank you, Michael, for being inspirational and steadfast in your commitment to the mission and spirit of the OLSH Sisters and OLSH College Bentleigh. We have been, and are, truly blessed.



Past and present OLSH College Board Chairs – Kevin Burke, Sandra Diafas, Anne O'Loughlin, Barbara Bretherton and Michael Renwick



Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart

We had a full day of celebrations for the Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart on Friday 9th September. It has been three years since we have been able to celebrate this feast day together as a whole school community. The OLSH Feast Day is one of the highlights of the year.

The day started with a special whole school Mass, celebrated by Father Alo Lamere msc. With wonderful singing and music from our choir and band, we listened to God's word together, prayed prayers of intercession in a variety of languages and then shared Eucharist together.

As part of the traditions of our OLSH Feast Day we announced the new College Student Executive Leadership Team for 2023.

After Mass, our celebrations continued with our OLSH Mission Carnival. It was a feast of colour and activity with students and staff dressed up as people who inspire them. There were rides, carnival games and an array of delicious food to enjoy. The weather was perfect and the crowds were entertained by some great tunes from our College bands. The day finished with a 'best-dressed' competition and closing words from Ms O'Loughlin.

Thank you to all the staff and students who helped prepare this special day and who led activities on the day. We are grateful to everyone who contributed so generously to our fundraising for the work of the OLSH Sisters in Angola, South Africa and Papua New Guinea.

Our OLSH community raised more than \$21,000 which will go directly to the OLSH Sisters mission fund, [OLSH Overseas Aid](#).



Pursuing Excellence and living our OLSH Spirit

In November, after three years, we returned to our traditional celebration of Regnet Christus Day.

Fired by our Heart Spirit, we reflected on our journey through the past year and on the importance of Regnet Christus Day as a celebration of who we are as Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College.

It was a wonderful way to tangibly celebrate what our OLSH Proclamation so clearly states - that we are Heart people called to live life to the full.

Our day began with a celebration of excellence – the formal awards ceremony recognising the outstanding achievements of our students in the academic, cultural and sporting fields. We also acknowledged students for their leadership, school spirit and service to our community.

Later in the day, we recognised student achievements at individual House Assemblies. Congratulations to all our staff and student recipients who are Heart people and who are faith filled, who reverence relationships, pursue excellence and touch the hearts of others.



In the same week, we recognised students who have achieved on the sporting field and in Art and Design. Our Sports Awards celebrated students participating in 16 sports, resulting in wonderful individual and team results, great skill development and growth in our OLSH spirit. Art and Design students were recognised at our annual Visual Arts and Design exhibition for their creativity across the areas of sculpture, textiles, painting, drawing and visual communication. Congratulations to all students for their hard work this year. We are proud of you all.



Farewell to the Class of 2022

In October we had the privilege of farewelling our Year 12 students as they headed off to complete their exams and final assessments, before starting the next chapter of their life's journey beyond the school gates.

The series of farewell events capped off a year that has seen our Year 12 students experience a full year on campus, joining together for the hallmark activities of their final year including Year 12 Formal, their return to Hartzer Park in NSW, receiving their Year 12 jumpers, joining together for assemblies and our two Feast days and celebrating the rituals of farewell with the whole College.

The Class of 2022 were instrumental in building back up our traditions, after a two year absence of some of our key events such as the Performing Arts Spectacular held on Sacred Heart Day and the Mission Carnival held on the Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

They leave a wonderful legacy with their example of facing the challenge of a year that was not without uncertainty as we navigated life back in the face-to-face setting, and demonstrating gratitude for opportunities presented to them throughout the year.

Their final farewell activities were a celebration of joy, ceremony and tradition as we marked the end of their time as students at the College. House farewells, Graduation Mass, Valedictory Dinner and a Farewell Assembly from the entire school community were key events in their final days at the College. Our College Captains, Joanne Bradshaw and Emily Collins addressed the school and spoke about the OLSH Spirit that was at the heart of the friendships they developed and the activities they participated in, and expressed their gratitude for their fellow students, staff and their families. The assembly featured a guard of honour for students to file through led by a bagpiper, a blessing from the College staff, a final roll call and singing the College song one last time.

With gratitude in our hearts, we wish our Class of 2022 God's blessings on their journey.



From our Student leaders

OLSH College is committed to building leadership skills in our students and to providing opportunities for every student to have their voice heard. Our student leaders play a valuable role in our College community, working together to deliver activities, representing the College at events and introducing new ways of thinking and decision making.

Our Specialist Captains provided their insights into what their leadership role has meant to them this year.



helped me grow as an individual. I have learned a lot and developed many skills throughout the year by being involved in planning and organizing a range of activities such as Sports Week and SCSA competitions.” – Demi Lambiris, Sports Captain



of properly planning and communicating initiatives, as well as leading from the heart. I am very excited to continue my leadership journey next year and I know that I will carry the lessons I have learnt this year with me.” – Halle Schroor, Environment Captain

“Through this role I have developed many new skills such as learning how to organise and help run the Masses and Prayer Liturgies in the Regnet Christus Chapel. I have become better at public speaking, and it has given me the opportunity to meet lot of different students from all year levels.” – Iris Morphett, Faith and Mission Captain



“The leadership opportunities I have had this year have shown me that being a leader takes a team, not a just a single person, and the value of teamwork. The OLSH staff are a critical part of our leadership team and are always there to support us and encourage us to pursue our leadership goals. These opportunities have allowed me to further develop my skills in working with a team.” – Lauren Rossi, Regnet Christus Leader

“This role has taught me so much this year; behind the scenes of holding a concert, public speaking and performing to a wider audience than I was used to, working with likeminded leaders to plan events and so much more. The skills and experience I have gained from this role are something I will carry with me well beyond high school.” – Aria Pisano, Performing Arts Captain



“This role has taught me so much about adapting to situations given to me as well as how to motivate and encourage the student body to enjoy public speaking, an activity that is so often feared. Through this role, I have developed my own public speaking skills and I have assisted girls in younger years build their skills as well. I have encouraged and motivated younger girls to represent the College in debating and inter-school public speaking competitions.” – Amelia Melita, Public Speaking Captain



“Being Sports Captain and moving outside of my comfort zone by speaking at OLSH events, assemblies, carnivals and to the girls on the bus on the way to competitions has really



“Working closely with the Year 12 leaders, specifically the Senior Executive team, has truly been an insightful experience. From them, I have learnt the importance

Alumnae Profiles



Gwen Finnigan (nee Rozario) (1980)

After leaving OLSH I commenced a career with Telstra in 1981 which spanned across 30 years. My first role was in Administration as a Clerical Assistant, delivering mail in the Computer Operations Branch. I moved into other roles including Computer and IT Support, Purchasing, Programming, Network Monitoring and finally ended my career as a Major Incident Manager.

My greatest passion was always to help others and be where God wanted me to be. I became an accredited Chaplain in 2012 doing work as a School and Hospital Chaplain. In 2019 I was contracted to assist in the Aged Care sector in Melbourne as a Pastoral Care Counsellor, supporting healthcare workers from interstate. I am currently working as a Chaplain in Villa Maria Catholic Homes in Mulgrave and as a Pastoral Care Counsellor at PACCAR in Bayswater who manufacture Kenworth Trucks. My parents live at VMCH Mulgrave so it is a privilege to work and support their community.

My fondest memories of OLSH were my sewing classes with Sr Leah, playing table tennis in the basement and science classes with Mr Liston. The greatest lesson for me was to respect one another and do the best you can even though at times I was a little rebellious.

I have travelled to over 30 countries around the world including doing volunteer work in the slums of Mumbai working with children in poverty. For my 60th birthday this year I completed a Holy Land Tour of Israel, a riverboat cruise on the River Nile and visited Petra in Jordan. I also attended the Passion Play in Oberammergau (Bavaria) which is held every 10 years to honour a pledge made to God since 1633 by the people.

I have been married to my husband Michael Finnigan for 30 years and have three children and will welcome my third grandchild early next year. I play the keyboard, guitar, netball with my two daughters and love motorbike rides with my husband on his Harley Davidson.

My advice to current students is learn new things everyday, travel and be curious and always be kind and compassionate to people you encounter.



Elizabeth Rocha (1990)

When I left OLSH, it was clear to me that my career was in mental health and psychotherapy so I completed a Bachelor of Behavioural Sciences at La Trobe University followed by Post Graduate Studies in Social Work at Melbourne University. At 23, I started my career in social services and for the next decade I took on roles including assisting Asylum Seekers in Greenwich in the United Kingdom, working for Oz Child in a Foster Care role in Dandenong and worked as an Intercountry Adoption Assessor and Report Writer for couples wanting to adopt. My advocacy for vulnerable children grew over this time and I was drawn to the complexity of family relationships and how entangled and distressing they can be.

I went on to complete a Master's Degree in Couple and Family Therapy at Swinburne University and then set up Glen Eira Counselling in Elsternwick as Founder and Director Elsternwick in 2006. For the next 16 years I supported fellow female clinicians to balance their practice and family responsibilities.

My husband is a St James/St Bede's alumni and we have three children – a son who is studying Business at Monash University and two daughters who are still at school.

My fondest memories are times spent on the bus with teachers and students singing, pitching our tent after a day of hiking on our way to Uluru and our adventures in Coober Pedy. We loved to play cricket on the sports ground and enjoyed lunchtimes developing friendships.

I have been inspired by Sr Mary Ward who was an advocate for girls' education and Sr Susan Shannon, an OLSH sister, has also been a wonderful influence in my life. My Mum has been an Associate of the Little Company of Mary at Bethlehem Hospital in Caulfield for 12 years and my sisters, Julie and Carmen are OLSH alumnae who still live the core values that underpin an OLSH education.

I acknowledge the past generations of women who were open minded and valued girls' education, calling us to have the *"Courage to fall. Trust to fly. Be Free to grow."*



Stacey Zuluaga (nee Powles) (2001)

After leaving OLSH College in 2002, I studied at Monash College and Monash University, graduating with a Diploma in Business (Commerce) and a Degree in Bachelor of Business and Commerce (majors in Accounting and Management). I went on to complete a Diploma in Australian Taxation Law and my Certified Practising Accountant qualification with CPA Australia.

I started my career as a Graduate Accountant in public practice in 2005 and have progressed through several roles in three accounting firms, leading me to my current position as Partner. It was my career goal to be the first female Partner in my accounting firm and I was thrilled to achieve that last year.

Throughout my career, I have trained many accountants and have mentored people, sharing what I have learnt and assisting them with their development. I was a Finalist in the 2022 National Women in Finance awards in the area of mentoring.

I love the fact that my role is more than just crunching numbers and preparing financial statements. I have the opportunity to make a difference for clients through the advice I provide to them, by understanding their goals, working with them to plan for those goals and providing valuable, accurate advice. Over the years I have seen the value in explaining complicated concepts in plain language to empower my clients to make key decisions, and it is very fulfilling to see them achieve their goals.

I have been married for ten years and have two primary-school aged children. When I was at OLSH, I loved Textiles and continue to sew as a hobby, when time permits! I am a volunteer with CPA Australia on the Victorian Public Practice Committee and continue to mentor people in the industry.

As I reflect on my career and the decisions I've made, I'd advise current OLSH College students that the decisions you make now do not have to lock you in to a path for the future. There is more room for change and flexibility in careers these days and different pathways to the same sector. What does matter is that you enjoy what you are doing and that you're challenged by what you do.



Cody Thomas (2011)

After graduating OLSH in 2011, I completed my Bachelor of Science at Monash University majoring in genetics and developmental biology. I was unsure of which direction to take next, so my partner and I took a gap year to travel. We backpacked across Europe for seven months, exposing ourselves to as many different cultures and experiences as possible. This adventure cemented a love of travel that has resulted in my now fiancé and I having visited over 50 countries across the world.

I returned to study, using my background in science combined with a desire to work in women's health, which resulted in pursuing reproductive health. I completed my Graduate Diploma of Reproductive Science and Masters of Clinical Embryology at Monash University.

In 2018, I started my career as an Embryologist (IVF scientist) at Melbourne IVF. Most recently there has been a huge increase in the number of women coming through to freeze eggs. Although there are no certainties, there is a tremendous amount of fulfilment and joy associated with helping patients build their families. It is also extremely exciting to be working in an industry that is continuously evolving and at the forefront of modern science.

As a past OLSH School Captain, I have a sincere love of the College and value all the experiences I was afforded. Some of my best memories include Rock Eisteddfod, Duke of Edinburgh, World Challenge, playing in every inter-school sport team I could and of course, Hartzler winning every PAS! OLSH College is a place that will set you up with the skills to learn about the world and provide you with lifelong friends to experience it with.

My advice to current students is to truly learn what your passions are and take all opportunities presented to you. It's important to study hard to give yourself the best opportunities but don't put too much pressure on yourself to have everything decided and remember to have fun. You will make mistakes, change your mind and explore different options but that is what makes it an adventure. Enjoy it!

Reunions

We've had a huge year of reunions, catching up on those that were missed in 2020 and 2021 to bring eleven alumnae groups back to the College for their 10, 20, 30, 40 and 50 year events.

We delight in seeing former students reconnect and share stories of the past and to hear where their journeys have taken them in the years since they left the College.

With every reunion, more stories are recounted and pieces of our history shared. This year, we've heard stories about the opening of the new Hall, singing the newly penned OLSH song, the transition from the Higher School Certificate (HSC) to the VCE and adventures on trips to Tasmania and Central Australia.

We're grateful for the continuing interest all our alumnae take in the College and we look forward to welcoming more of you back next year as we celebrate our 85th year.



Class of 1981 – 40 Year Reunion



Classes of 2011 and 2012 – 10 Year Reunion



Class of 1991 – 30 Year Reunion



Class of 1982 – 40 Year Reunion

Class of 1980
40 Year Reunion



Class of 1990
30 Year Reunion



Class of 1992
30 Year Reunion



Class of 2001
20 Year Reunion



Class of 2002
20 Year Reunion



Leaders in their field

It is always a great joy to hear stories of our students striving for excellence in their chosen field. This year we have celebrated students competing at the state and national level in many areas including skiing, athletics, soccer, equestrian, dancing, life-saving and artistic swimming.

We take great inspiration from these students who put in many hours of hard work and training to take them on the path to these competitions, and we know they are supported by family and community clubs and associations on their journey.

These opportunities provide much more than the chance to compete and represent a club or state. They build independence, confidence, resilience and collaboration – skills that can be applied in all aspects of life and that provide a wonderful foundation for leadership in all forms.

In this edition of *Flame*, we celebrate three of these stories of achievement.

Gold medal on the slopes

In August, Year 11 student Mikaela Williams competed in the Interschool Snowsport Competition at Mount Buller in the multiclass skiing event. Mikaela came first in her division, receiving a gold medal and an invitation to compete in the National Interschool Multiclass event at Perisher.

At the Nationals event, Mikaela skied on a steeper, shorter run than the Victorian event and came 2nd in the Division 1 Female Multiclass event, recognised with a silver medal. Mikaela skied 10 seconds faster than her last event and improved on her second run of the course. Above all, she had fun and further built relationships with the Multiclass Snowsports community.



Soccer's rising star

This year OLSH College Year 10 student Eva Kokotis was named in the top 80 young women's soccer players in the state. Eva is a Forward for Football Victoria's National Training Centre Under 15 team and was described in the Leader News article as a 'quick winger who has a good eye for goal, sparked by runs in behind, good dribbling and deception when taking on players in a one-on-one'.

Eva represented Victoria at the Football Australia National Youth Championships for Girls in Coffs Harbour in September and has recently been offered a position in the Under 18 squad for 2023.

Eva competed in the SCSA soccer competition for OLSH College, sharing with the team her skills and talents and the experience she has had competing at the National level.



World championships on the horizon

Representation on the international stage is on the agenda for two of our talented Issoudun dance students, Zara Subasi and Lulu Cormack. Their dance troupe has been awarded a bid to compete in the Junior World Dance Championships in Orlando, Florida, in April next year.

The team will be competing in Hip Hop, Lyrical/Contemporary and Jazz, and will be the first Australian Junior team to compete in all three disciplines.

There is a huge commitment of time and training ahead of Zara and Lulu as they prepare for this exciting opportunity and we wish them well.



News briefs

Our 2023 leaders

We were thrilled to announce our 2023 College leaders in October. Congratulations to College Captain Halle Schroor, Vice Captain Terri Wong and Senior Prefects Lily Hughes and Aria Pisano. Congratulations also to our Regnet Christus Leaders Jana Halidas, Demi Lambiris, Iris Morphett and Charlotte Strom, and to our House Captains Sophie Fensling, Amelia Melita, Tahlia Mercuri, Daniella Olbinski, Eva Woodhouse and Amelia Mundy.

At our beautiful and symbolic Jules Chevalier Leadership investiture, the 2023 leaders pledged to lead through word and example, and to live our four OLSH pillars. Our 2022 leaders handed over the symbols of leadership and each 2023 leader was blessed with the washing of their hands and anointment with oil. We wish all our leaders well in their roles and thank the 2022 leaders for the example and contribution they have provided.



Instrumental music hitting the high notes

A big year of music and performance came to a crescendo in November with our Junior and Senior Instrumental Music Concerts. From our newest musicians who have taken up an instrument this year, to those who have recently completed VCE music, the work that the students have put into their solo and ensemble work was inspiring. Thank you to all our music tutors for their guidance and to all performers for a wonderful night.



Two Lorraine Francis Award winners

Congratulations to Claire Kinsella and Charlotte Bree who are this year's recipients of the Lorraine Francis Community Award. The Award is given by Bentleigh MP, Mr Nick Staikos and is named after the late Lorraine Francis, Principal of St Peter's Primary when Nick was a student at the school. Lorraine instilled in her students the value of strong leadership and empowering others to lead with empathy, and Nick said that both Claire and Charlotte were great positive role models who lead by example.

Claire was recognised for her work at the RSPCA caring for animals and training other volunteers and Charlotte was recognised for her contribution to Lifesaving Victoria's water safety programs and for working with children with disabilities.

Well done to you both and thank you to Nick Staikos MP for visiting the College to present the award to Claire and Charlotte.



Stay in touch

Do you have some news to share? Have you changed your contact details? Know someone who would like to be added to our Alumnae Register? Get in touch via email to alumnae@olsh.vic.edu.au.



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