



AUTUMN 2024 VOLUME 17 NO. 1

Flame



A welcoming spirit

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Reflections: A welcoming spirit



Big Sisters making pancakes for their Little Sisters

We place great value on having a welcoming spirit. It is something that we articulate in our OLSH pillar, *We are Heart people who reverence relationships*, and it is at the heart of our Big Sister Little Sister program. This program was introduced in 1995 to support Year 7s transitioning to secondary school.

The Big Sisters helped the Little Sisters find their way around the College, encouraged them to join sporting teams and clubs and organised special days such as a pancake morning tea. In these early years of the program, the Little Sisters said they liked "having someone to look up to" and it was "like having a real big sister". The Big Sisters found the friendly greetings from their Little Sisters a comforting break from their busy year of study and were thrilled to receive cards wishing them well for their exams from their Little Sisters.

After nearly thirty years, this program remains a valued aspect of how we support our new Year 7 students to ensure they feel welcome at the College.

Editor's message

During the first few months of this year, we have had many reasons to celebrate and a highlight of those celebrations has been sharing them with others in our OLSH community.

In March, we celebrated the 200th birthday of Father Jules Chevalier who established the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in France in 1874. We recognised our 2023 VCE achievers in a special ceremony and our second generation students in our Generations assembly on International Women's Day. These opportunities to connect with our wider community and welcome them to the College are treasured and remind us of the connection we have to the OLSH story.

Cath Ewart

*Director of Development
and Community Relations*

Principal's message

*"The love of the Heart of Jesus will be our light,
our strength, our guide and our support."*

Jules Chevalier, Meditations I, p.25

Our theme for this Flame Newsletter is 'A Welcoming Spirit.' The spirit of hospitality and welcome at OLSH College Bentleigh is woven into the fabric of who we are as people of Heart, living our charism to the fullest. Hospitality and welcome—actions that define these words—were ever present in the life of Jesus. His heart was filled with love for all he met and this love was evident in his deep care for people. From the Samaritan woman at the well to Zacchaeus the tax collector, the man born blind and the feeding of the five thousand, the Gospel is filled with stories of Jesus reaching out to others with a spirit of welcome and hospitality. This is total acceptance and inclusion, deep care and friendship, strong compassion and great love. Each of us who belong to the community of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College are called to follow the example of Jesus. If we do this in our school, our families, our places of work and in the wider community we could truly sing again and again...*What a wonderful World!*

In this special 150th year of the OLSH Sisters foundation and the 200th anniversary of Fr Jules Chevalier's birth, we continue to live our tradition of welcoming all to our College. It is a privilege we enjoy often and wholeheartedly as we open our doors on this sacred land of the Bunurong people to share the spaces and celebrations with all who join us.

As you will read in this edition of *Flame*, we have welcomed OLSH College alumnae returning for reunions, families and friends for concerts, presentations and sporting competitions and new families who have chosen OLSH College for their daughter's secondary education.

At a time when the world presents challenges in our own lives and in the lives of those across the globe, we take joy in bringing people together to share refreshments and recognise the talent, warmth, and work of those in our OLSH community. As Heart people, we seek opportunities to touch the hearts of others and are enriched by it—"whoever refreshes others will be refreshed" (Proverbs 11:25). It is not just through hospitality that we can show welcome. It is in the smiles and greetings we see when students walk through the gate, in the act of welcoming a new friend to a group at lunchtime, and in the openness to new ideas and fresh mindsets.

Our relationships are strengthened when we share our lives with others and find opportunities to offer a Welcoming Spirit. *To be on earth the Heart of Christ!*

Anne O'Loughlin
Principal



Generosity makes a difference

The generosity of our OLSH community spans decades and generations. The act of making a sacrifice to assist others in need is at the heart of this generosity, driven by the desire to make a difference.

Each year our OLSH community raises around \$30,000 to support a range of projects including the work of the OLSH Sisters through their overseas aid, Caritas Australia, the local chapter of Vinnies Australia and the St Kilda food van. From providing food for a stall or working to plan an activity, to buying a raffle ticket or making a donation – these combined efforts create such a wonderful capacity to support others and for this we are grateful.

Our recent Lenten Appeal raised nearly \$6,000 for the OLSH Sisters Overseas Aid and Caritas Australia's *Project Compassion*. Many of the activities contributing to these funds were led by students, planning and organising the logistics of each activity and generating support to ensure their success. As well as making a difference for others, these activities are a great opportunity for students to work together, developing their leadership skills and building our OLSH spirit.



"Our recent Lenten Appeal raised nearly \$6,000 for the OLSH Sisters Overseas Aid and Caritas Australia's Project Compassion."



Celebrating our VCE achievers

We welcomed back our 2023 VCE students for the VCE Ceremony of Excellence, recognising achievement and growth by students who completed a VCE subject in 2023.

We celebrated the sixteen students with ATAR scores of 90, including our College Dux Mary Moss (98.95) and Proxime Accessit Halle Schroor (97.85). Mary's perfect subject scores of 50 for Art Creative Practice and Art Making and Exhibiting were also recognised.

Six students whose ATAR represented significant academic growth were recognised with the Principal's Award and the fifty-eight study scores of 40 and above were celebrated.

We were grateful to hear from College Dux Mary Moss and VCE achiever Amelia Melita, who shared their wisdom and reflections on their VCE experience. They spoke of choosing subjects that ignited their passions and inspired them to achieve excellence, and of taking with them their connection to being people of Heart as they pursue new pathways.

"Your genuine enjoyment of a subject causes you to work harder at it, which improves your scores... a subject might require long hours, but your passion will drive you to work those long hours." – Mary Moss

"My experience at OLSH has given me many skills and life lessons I hope to take far. I will forever remember to work hard, play hard, and pray hard through my endeavours...being a heart person is something I will take with me forever." – Amelia Melita

We thank all in our OLSH community who supported our 2023 VCE students – staff, families and friends – during their final years at the College and send our blessings to all 2023 VCE students for their ongoing learning and growth.

2023 College Dux Mary Moss; VCE students with an ATAR of 90 or above; Amelia Melita speaking about her VCE experience; VCE Principal's Award winners; Principal Ms Anne O'Loughlin with VCE students



"We celebrated the sixteen students with ATAR scores of 90, including our College Dux Mary Moss (98.95) and Proxime Accessit Halle Schroor (97.85)"



Student leaders

Student leadership is an important aspect of day-to-day life at OLSH College. Our leaders have an authentic and valued role in leading initiatives, representing the College and role modelling behaviours to the student body.

The student leadership team meet weekly to discuss upcoming activities and smaller sub-groups meet outside of this to progress initiatives they are involved with. We support our student leaders with externally facilitated leadership sessions, opportunities to develop their skills and advice to support their projects.

The student voice is represented by a theme, set for the year by the Student Executive, to express their values and aspirations for the year ahead.

Our 2024 Student Executive (College Captain Mia Karvounaris, College Vice Captain Emilia Brusco and Senior Prefects Chanelle Abdulkaki and Alexandra Tzimourtas) created the theme 'Nurture the seed, grow and succeed' – drawing on our roots in history, traditions and values, and building connections in an environment where everyone can flourish.

We love the positivity and insight of this theme and asked the Student Executive to share a little about themselves so our OLSH community can get to know them.



Mia Karvounaris
College Captain

It is with such great enthusiasm that I undertake this year as a leader working with my peers to make a positive difference in our OLSH community. I am excited about my final year of high school; one that I know may be a little challenging, yet so memorable, transformative and fun.

I love the simple things in life – taking my dog for walks, board games with my family, heading to the beach and reading. I love to have fun and enjoy quality time with the amazing people I am blessed to have in my life.

The advice I would give to my younger self is dare to be different, follow your heart and flourish from within. I see individuality as a superpower, making us all inherently beautiful and special in our own way. Embrace your own unique strengths and characteristics – when you are your authentic self and believe in yourself, you can do anything!



Emilia Brusco
College Vice Captain

I am excited to bring connection and love to our school community, as part of the Student Executive. One of my favourite OLSH memories was the Issoudun Hartzler Experience, where we had the opportunity to make new connections with the girls in our year level and really get to know one another. I loved how vulnerable and comfortable the space was between us, and I was able to get to know many new people.

One of the things I am most looking forward to this year is making long-lasting and quality memories for my last year of secondary school, that I will take with me as I journey through life!



Leadership workshop for our Student Leaders



Chauelle Abdulbaki
Senior Prefect

Since I started at OLSH in Year 7, I have developed many skills and values that equipped me to be a part of the Student Executive this year. I love playing sports and spent a lot of time on the school teams, especially before VCE.

This year, my goal is to maintain a balance between sport, work, school and family, so I can build valuable connections with the people around me.

I am looking forward to reaching out into our community to help individuals feel valued and empowered to put themselves out there and pursue what makes them truly happy. Let's create a year filled with love, connection and joy!



Alexandra Tziourtas
Senior Prefect

My time at OLSH has been filled with many wonderful opportunities, but by far my favourite memory would have to be the Year 11 retreat. I had a fabulous time with my friends, learning about how to find our passions in life and uncovering what we wanted our future to look like.

As someone who loves so many different aspects of life, like science, the literary world, the legal system and the power of culture and heritage, I find it hard to pick just one subject that is my favourite. I truly am open to learning anything and everything from all walks of life.

My advice to younger students is do not take life for granted, live in the moment and observe the blessings, big and small, all around us! Remember to enjoy the year ahead, focus on yourself and your passions and take every opportunity that comes your way.

International Women's Day inspiration

Our International Women's Day celebrations were made very special this year as we celebrated our OLSH Generations, welcoming back mothers and grandmothers of our current Year 7 and 8 students.

This celebration of second generation families at the College is a lovely way to recognise that the connection that spans generations and welcome past students back to the College during those first weeks of their daughter or granddaughter's OLSH journey.

It was lovely to recognise three mothers and two grandmothers on stage and have them join us for morning tea.

During the assembly, we reflected on the many generations of OLSH students who have come before us who are out in the world making contributions in so many ways, and on the need to continue to strive for inclusivity and empowerment of girls and women across the world.

On the same day, eight of our Student Leaders went into Parliament House for the International Women's Day breakfast in Queens Hall.

The students heard from guest speakers Professor Katie Allen and Ms Georgie Crozier MP on the inspiring topic 'Invest in women: Accelerate progress'.

In the 150th year of the OLSH Sisters, we are looking forward to celebrating the achievement and contributions of OLSH College alumnae and strengthening our connections with them.



Our student leaders
at Parliament House



Top image: International Women's Day morning tea
Recognising our OLSH generations (bottom image)

Sharing a special milestone

Our very special celebration for Jules Chevalier's 200th birthday was a day of joy, music and gratitude. The morning started with commemorative badges for all students and staff as they arrived, balloons and ribbons and French party music soaring across the grounds.

We had a wonderful assembly and cake cutting and were blessed to hear wisdom shared by Sister Elaine who reminded us to replicate the values of Jules Chevalier – have dreams and pursue them with determination and those who share them to change the world. Our youngest and oldest students cut the cake along with our Principal Anne O'Loughlin and Sister Elaine.

The day continued with opportunities for a selfie with Jules, near his statue and with our life-size cut out of him who made it to morning tea and a few classes! There were French-inspired snacks available at the canteen and a lunchtime concert under the Jacaranda tree. Happy Birthday Jules...we were so grateful to be a part of this special anniversary.



"The day continued with opportunities for a selfie with Jules, near his statue and with our life-size cut out of him who made it to morning tea and a few classes!"



Six decades of friendship

When past students return to OLSH for reunions, we often hear of friendship groups that have remained strong over decades or that have been reconnected through reunions, life events or chance meetings. Recently we heard from a group of six students from the Class of 1964 whose friendship spans six decades.

Starting at the College in 1959, at a time when Patterson station had just been built and the footprint of the school was still expanding, Mary McSweeney, Bernadette O'Brien, Julie Hall, Kathryn Child and Patricia Phillips made the transition to secondary school together. Lesley Best joined them in 1964 for her final year of secondary schooling and the group of six were formed.

Their shared memories included the teachers who inspired a love of French, the arts and literature; creating their own version of hockey played on the tennis courts; wielding the industrial floor polisher around the hall at the end of term; and throwing their velour hats and gloves in the air on the last day of school.

During their final year at the College, they were all Prefects and House Captains, which afforded them privileges such as access to the loudspeaker. One day, with Melbourne in the grip of Beatlemania due to the band's visit to Australia, the girls took over the loud speaker at lunchtime to play Beatles songs. They watched as students swarmed the grounds to track down the source of the music and join in singing.

In the decades since leaving the College the group, who affectionately call themselves *The Frantics* reflecting their shared love of all things French, have stayed connected and shared a lifetime of family events, career highlights, interests and travel. They travelled to France together in 2000 and plan to return there in 2025 to relive some of the places they enjoyed together.

There is a mutual sense of gratitude for the strong bonds they have with each other and for having shared so much of each other's lives beyond the time they were at the College together. We're looking forward to welcoming the Class of 1964 back this year for a very special 60 year reunion.

"I feel we value these friendships even more now that we are in the twilight of our lives! In 2000 our trip to France was a highlight of these enduring friendships."

– Mary

"Looking back, I realise OLSH taught us to be strong, motivated and independent thinkers; but most of all, compassionate, kind and caring people. It instilled in us a value system we most likely didn't recognise (or even appreciate) at the time! But it's been a guiding force throughout our lives."

– Bernadette



Returning to OLSH for their 50 year reunion



The Class of 1964 in Year 12



"In the decades since leaving the College the group, who affectionately call themselves The Frantics reflecting their shared love of all things French, have stayed connected and shared a lifetime of family events, career highlights, interests and travel."

Travelling together in France in 2000

"We came together as a group in 1964 with Sr Maria giving us wise tutelage and guidance. Sr Maria remains one of the most influential and admired people in our College lives. She always respected our individual differences and capabilities. We were affectionately known as her 'Chosen Apostles!'"
– Julie

"My year at OLSH was my first year living in Victoria and it formed me in ways I now realise have shaped my life. The most memorable of my teachers was Miss Hazeldene, who inspired my love of French: the language, the country, French history and all things French from that time on."
– Lesley

"In Year 12 I entered a public speaking competition, sponsored by local Democrat MP Don Chipp and was surprised to win. Consequently, I had a plane trip to Canberra where I met Prime Minister Robert Menzies and Opposition Leader Arthur Caldwell. It sparked an interest for me in politics and social justice."
– Kathryn

"OLSH gave me a great start to what is an amazing life. I thank the Almighty and all who pointed to the path I should follow, and my fellow Frantics for their love and support."
– Tynna (Patricia)

Alumnae profiles



Melinda Paton
(Steele, Class of 1994)

After I left OLSH, I spent five years at Deakin University, graduating with a double degree in Education, Science and IT. I headed off to Tokyo, where I spent two years teaching English, exploring Asia and learning about Japanese culture. It was a fantastic experience that really broadened my perspective on the world. After that I spent a year living in Dublin and explored Ireland, Western Europe, Eastern Europe and South America.

When I returned to Melbourne, I taught as a high school teacher for three years, then made the jump into IT project roles. Since that time, I've had a range of roles within Telstra, leading teams working on large transformation projects. I'm currently a Product Owner at Belong, working on another large IT project.

I'm married and live in the inner western suburbs of Melbourne with my three beautiful children. I have very fond memories of my time at OLSH and the terrific people I met. I am still very close to many of my school friends and at our recent 30-year reunion it was fantastic to reconnect friends I hadn't seen for years.

At OLSH, I was allowed to follow my curiosity and I developed a love of learning. I also finally figured out that it was okay to be a girl AND be smart! I've since learnt, in my professional life, how critical creating a great culture is to a team's success. I think that OLSH did culture well; providing broad opportunities, celebrating our achievements and also supporting us with what could be learnt from our mistakes.

When I was in Year 11 we studied the movie *Dead Poets Society* in English Literature and the line, 'Carpe Diem' or 'Seize the Day' stays with me. Make the most of the opportunities you have, don't wait to start building the life you want or to be the person you want to be. Find whatever makes you happy and go for it!



Kylie Fitzpatrick
(Class of 1998)

I graduated from OLSH in 1998. I always wanted to be a lawyer and, loving maths and science at OLSH, thought I'd try my hand at a Bachelor of Laws/Engineering at the University of Melbourne.

Early in my degree I decided I wanted to work in construction law and started my career as an engineer in the public service which led to commercial and legal roles on various transport projects.

I went on to work in private practice and for a construction company, taking me to live and work in different states in Australia and on some of the largest, most complex infrastructure projects in the country.

I have returned to the public sector in Director roles with the Level Crossing Removal Project, and more recently for the Victorian Health Building Authority.

I was fortunate to receive a scholarship to study in Canada, providing the opportunity to spend time traveling around Europe and sparking my passion for travel!

When I am not working or travelling, you'll find me walking my dog, spending time with my family or pottering around my place fixing things or creating things (skills learned from my grandfather and mother respectively).

I have fond memories of OLSH. It was big enough to provide me with a great range of classes and extra-curricular activities and small enough that I felt valued as an individual. I love the sense of community and passion fostered by the sisters and staff, which has led me to joining the OLSH Board this year.

I'd encourage students to remember resilience is key – there are many paths to achieving your goals and often you find something you love on the journey. The relationships you build in life are as important as the lessons you learn along the way so invest time in those around you.



Natasha D'Souza
(Class of 2006)

'Be curious. Read widely. Try new things. What people call intelligence, just boils down to curiosity.' I came across this quote from Aaron Swartz while in high school and it's grounded me in the years during and since then.

As a young person who migrated to Australia in 2001, I joined OLSH as a 'new kid' not just for day one of high school but day one immersed in a new culture and way of life. While this came with new experiences and challenges, I reflect on my years at OLSH with thanks – grateful for the acceptance and belonging that was mine from the onset.

After leaving OLSH in 2006, I studied at Monash University, graduating with a Bachelor of Business – Banking & Finance and went on to complete post graduate Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) studies. I commenced my career while at university as a National Australia Bank (NAB) Branch relief teller in Melbourne's southeast and seventeen years later I remain a loyal 'Nabbie' having worked my way through the Graduate Program, Retail and Call Centre, Group Strategy and other roles before being appointed as the Head of Home lending Acquisition – Consumer & Business Bank.

I love what I do, but 'Year 12 me' would certainly never have thought this would be my future. I feel passionately about the small role my team can play in helping Australians into a home – their home.

While pursuing my professional goals, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to pursue my other passions – travel and family! I have been married to Lionel for nearly 10 years and we share a beautiful daughter Mia who started her own schooling journey this year.

As I reflect on my time at OLSH and journey so far, the words 'discipline, hard work, resilience and community' come to mind. My advice to current OLSH students would be to embrace all that this beautiful college and its community have to offer. You don't have to have all the answers today. Fail fast, learn quickly but always move forward.



Emma Sturt
(Class of 2014)

After graduation from OLSH College, I was accepted into the Bachelor of Science at Monash University. Before starting my tertiary education, I took a six month break to travel Europe with my family and work part time. This period was critical in helping me evaluate what I wanted to achieve at university.

With a strengthened passion for learning, I completed a Bachelor of Science (majoring in Pharmacology) and Diploma of Languages (Mandarin) in 2018. I travelled to Shanghai as part of my diploma, building on skills I developed in Ms Liu's Year 7 Mandarin class. This time exploring what tertiary education had to offer cemented my pathway to becoming a Clinical Pharmacist. I enrolled in the Bachelor and Masters of Pharmacy in 2019 and completed these in 2021.

During 2020 and 2021, I was at the forefront of the COVID-19 pandemic working across two major Victorian hospitals. As a pharmacy technician and clinical pharmacist, I used my knowledge of novel treatment options to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the community. This was an unprecedented time for everyone. I strived to maintain gratitude and compassion during this time, often leaning on reflective practices we were taught during Dr Brown's pastoral care classes.

By far the most valued thing I've taken from my time at OLSH has been the friendships I formed. I often catch up with these close friends and rely on their support, encouragement and friendship.

I live in the Bayside area and enjoy the summer months by the beach. I find time to unwind from work by running along the beach trails and going out on the stand-up paddleboard.

I would encourage current students to seize opportunities for growth, remain adaptable in the face of challenges and always pursue your passions with unwavering determination.

Reunions

We stepped back in time to the nineties when we welcomed the Class of 1994 for their 30 year reunion in February.

The past students enjoyed time together in the OLSH Centre, reminiscing and looking at photos from their time here, then had a tour of the College to see what has changed in the three decades since they were students.

Their stories reflected the connection these past students had with the College and each other, and milestone events that occurred during their time here. They were in the cohort that moved from the brown to the teal uniform and they recall being told by Sister Jenny Christie that the 'world wide web was on its way'! Great memories that add to the story of our OLSH College community.

More recently, the Class of 2014 returned for their 10 year reunion. For most, it was the first time they'd been back to the College since they left so it was a chance to see the major building works, that had been in the planning stages when they were in their final years at OLSH, complete.

Visit our website www.ols.sh.vic.edu.au/community/alumnae for more information about upcoming reunions and ways to connect back with the College.

The Class of 1994 in St Joseph's garden; Reconnecting with Class of 1994 classmates; The Class of 2014 reconnecting after 10 years

Class of 1994 30 Year Reunion



Class of 2014 10 Year Reunion



News in brief



1 Welcoming our new students and staff

We welcomed all new students and staff to OLSH College at our Opening Mass. The blessings of our new Year 7 students, new students in Years 8 to 12 and our new staff are always highlights of this first OLSH College community mass.

Our Year 7s were presented with their House badges and their Year 12 Big Sisters prayed a special prayer for them to begin their journey at OLSH. After communion, the 2024 Student Leaders were presented with their leadership badges and then commissioned for their year of service to the school community.



2 Walking together with an open heart

We were privileged to have a Welcome to Country at a recent assembly, delivered by Traditional Custodian and proud Bunurong Palawa man Josh. Our FIRE Carriers renewed their commitment to their role in reconciliation and we welcomed two new FIRE carriers, Sophie and Kiara. Josh's message to us all as we think about our environment and interactions with each other was to "walk gently, walk softly and walk together with an open heart".



3 Reflection and conversations at the Year 12 Retreat

Our Year 12s spent time at Hartzler Park in Bowral and Sydney recently for their Retreat, which was a time for reflection, setting goals for the year ahead and celebrating their connection as they start their final year at the College together.

'The Deep Speak and affirmation sessions were the highlights of my time on retreat. It was interesting to hear the stories and opinions of people I don't know well. It was heart-warming to read the personalised messages of affirmation and admiration that people had written for each of us.' – Charlotte



4 Success for our Diving Development Team

Our OLSH Diving Development Team have had a great season, with all divers learning new skills and improving during their training sessions. A team of nine students put their training to the test when they competed in Division 1 of the CGSAV Diving at MSAC. We are very proud to report that OLSH College were winners overall.

'This diving season was fantastic! The OLSH girls have been training with our coach, four-time Olympian Jenny Donnet who has helped each diver improve throughout training.'
– Abby and Zara



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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: Cutting the cake for Jules Chevalier's 200th birthday

Back cover: Highlights from OLSH College life in Semester 1, 2024

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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