Since our last newsletter the state of Victoria has experienced one of its worst disasters in recorded history, the 'Black Saturday' bushfires. The Echuca College community would like to extend its deepest sympathy to those families that have lost loved ones and our thoughts are with those communities where homes and properties were destroyed. It was heartening to have our students request permission to raise money for fire victims soon after the tragedy and as a consequence the College held a casual dress day last Friday, as did all government schools across the state. Our VCAL students also organised a cake stall and BBQ as part of the activities to raise funds on Friday. Students also brought items of clothing to school for donation to the appeal. The College would like to thank our students and their families for their donations and support and I’m proud to announce that our College community was able to raise more than $3600 from the activities organised for the fire victims.

In January, our Year 12 students from 2008 received their VTAC offers for university and further education courses. We were very happy with the offers received by our students, with 55% of students who put in a VTAC application gaining their first preference. Of those who got offers 83% received offers within their first 3 preferences and overall 81% of those who applied got an offer. We had an increase in the number of students getting into Melbourne University and generally the offers made (wide range of courses) reflected the good results obtained by students. We also had 8 students receive a second round offer, but it would appear that less than 15% of students will take up their offers this year. There is a growing trend for students to complete a ‘gap’ year before taking up their further education option. I would like to acknowledge the work our Careers/Pathways and Year 12 Team did with the students last year on their course selections and clearly their support contributed to our students gaining some excellent offers.

Our Council Election process will start next week and this year we have four positions available for the election. Three Councillors have completed their two year terms and may choose to renominate and one Councillor will not be seeking re-election. Our Council has eight parent representatives and four DEECD representatives (staff). There is an opportunity for parents interested in supporting their child’s education to join our Council team and if you are considering joining our College Council, please don’t hesitate to contact me for more information. Parents on College council provide important viewpoints and have valuable skills that can help shape the direction of the College. Those parents who become active on a College council find their involvement satisfying in itself and may also find that their children feel a greater sense of belonging. Nominations Forms will available for parent members at both campus at the general office. I believe it is important to acknowledge the work our College Councillors do each year and the many achievements that have taken place in the last 12 months under their governance. In particular, the College community would like to thank Mr Mark Inglefinger for his work as a Councillor and also as College Treasurer for the past three years.

College Council Elections 2009 Timeline

- Notice of election and call for nominations: 23rd February 2009
- Close of nominations: 6th March 2009
- Display list of candidates, nominator & seconder: 6th March 2009
- Prepare ballot papers and distribute on or before: 13th March 2009
- Close of ballot: 20th March 2009
- Count votes & declare ballot: 20th March 2009

Continued Page 2....
Motivational Speaker

Last Friday our College was extremely lucky to have Mr. Lorin Nicholson come and speak to our staff and then speak to students on both campuses at assemblies. Lorin is legally blind and is an 8th Grade Classical Guitarist. He delivered a very strong message to our students about what it was like to be blind at school and how he overcame many hurdles in his career.

Fundraiser for Bushfire Appeal

Last Friday our student council organised a Casual Dress Day to raise funds for the bushfire victims throughout Victoria. The response from the students was outstanding. Our VCAL students also organised a cake stall and BBQ on the day. The College raised in excess of $3600.00 for the bushfire Appeal. I would like to thank all students for their tremendous support.

Year 12 English Night

On Wednesday 25th February 2009, our Year 12 English teachers will be conducting an information night for parents to gain some understanding of what is required in English at Units 3 & 4.

Sun Smart Policy

Just a reminder to all students and parents that Echuca College is a Sun Smart school and that students must wear a broad brim hat during recess and lunchtime. With the excessive heat over the last few weeks, it is essential that all students abide by this rule for their own wellbeing.

Year 7 Camp

The Year 7 camp to Harrietville that was due to depart this week has been postponed due to the bush fire threat in the North East of the state. Whilst this is disappointing, the camp has been rescheduled as a three day camp from March 23rd to 25th. Of paramount importance is the safety of our students and staff. Given the circumstances of the last two weeks, it was felt that the camp was too much of a risk. Parents who have paid for the camp will be given a $50 credit at the general office as the camp is one day shorter. This money can be used for future expenses such as excursions, sports trips or rock eisteddfod. If parents would like the money back in cash they can contact the general office.

Year 7 Parent BBQ. Tuesday February 24th 6.00pm

The Year 7 BBQ will continue as scheduled at 6.00pm on Tuesday February 24th. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet teachers at have a tour of the college facilities including the Year 7 neighbourhood and the new science wing which has just been completed. Letters about the BBQ have been sent home to families of Year 7 students. If you have not replied to these it is not too late. Please let Mr Trehwella know how many people from your family will be attending. There is no cost to families.

Alpine School - Gnurad Gundidj campus

Our best wishes go to four Year 9 students who depart for the new Alpine School, Gnurad Gundidj campus which is situated on the old Glenormiston Agricultural College campus near Noorat in Victoria’s Western District. The students attending are Rachel Whelan, Jason Grundy, Mitch McMullan and Jackson Wentworth. These students will spend 5 weeks at the campus with 45 other students from The Loddon Mallee region and Eastern Metropolitan regions. The participating students will undertake a range of activities that will develop leadership skills and challenge students in many unfamiliar environments. Students will have several expeditions when they will ride, hike and canoe. They will also learn to surf at Warrnambool.

Uniforms/Books/Requisites

There are plenty of uniforms left in lost property from last year. Thousands of dollars worth of jumpers and shorts have been left unclaimed. If you have lost any items of uniform, please see Mr Robinson
**Year 7 News**

Life at Echuca College has started smoothly for our year 7s. They are finding their way around and trying lots of new subjects with lots of new teachers.

Due to the continuing bushfires burning across Victoria the year 7 camp has been postponed to March 23rd. The camp will be a day shorter but will still give students and teachers an opportunity to get to know each other better.

On Tuesday 24th of Feb all year 7 families are invited to a barbeque tea at the year 7 neighbourhood. Families and teachers will have the opportunity talk and the neighbourhood will be open so families can have a look through.

Immunization forms are due back, even if the student is not having the immunizations, the forms must be returned.

If you have any questions about year 7 and or Echuca College, don’t hesitate to give us a call.

**Tracey Burton**

**Year 7 Team Leader**

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**Year 9 News**

The Year 9 team has been working really hard to settle students into the new Senior Learning neighbourhood and establishing positive work habits for the year. Most students are doing their best and working in a positive way.

A big thank you to the parents that made the effort to attend the Year 9 Information Evening Tuesday February the 10th. Student attendance is a big issue and parent support is welcomed. The Duke of Edinburgh award program was also discussed and explained. If parents who were unable to attend the session want information regarding the Duke of Ed award they should contact Paul Challis at the College.

Most of our students are wearing the uniform with pride and are following the guidelines in their organisers. Some footwear is still an issue. Parent support with our drive to have students in full uniform would be appreciated.

**Year 9 Home Group contacts and Assistant Team Leaders….**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9T1</th>
<th>Mr Kevin Remilton</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9T2</td>
<td>Mrs Dianne Dunstan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9T3</td>
<td>Ms Yana Ferrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9T4</td>
<td>Mr Kevin Morgan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9T5</td>
<td>Mrs Katrina Shirley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9T6</td>
<td>Mr David Armstrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9T7</td>
<td>Ms Rhonda Clarke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9T8</td>
<td>Mr Scott Hore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assist Team Leader: Mr Andrew Hewitt**

**Melissa Gould**

**Year 9 Team Leader**

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**Year 10 News**

The Year 10s have settled in really well at Crofton Street with the two week step-up program at the end of last year setting the scene.

The year 10 team consists of David Pearson, (Team Leader), Chris Jennings and Leigh Carroll, (Assistant Team leaders), and Tute Teachers David Mitchell OT1, Troy Ferrier OT2, Debbie Dunn OT3, Sandy Roberts OT4, Cheryl Watson OT5, Ali Grenfell OT6, Ben Holl OT7 and Stewart Cheal OT8.

The Beacon Program, Bogong camp and Gold Coast trip are all going to be highlights this year.

In Tute groups at present Tute teachers are working through the School Planner with the students. Part of this is a requirement that all students make a study plan to enhance their learning. This is vital as a number of students are doing VCE and VET subjects this year.

Please take the time to plan homework and study sessions around part time jobs, sport, leisure activities and family commitments. There is also a spot for a parent signature!

Feel free to contact any of the team about your child or any of the school programs.

**David Pearson**

**Year 10 Team Leader**

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**Year 12 News**

The Year 12 Flying Start Program in the first week of school was very successful.

It was exciting to witness the new Year 12 students open their minds and embrace many of the new ideas being introduced.

The program aimed to build teams, focus on the year ahead and motivate students for the upcoming challenges.

We were very lucky to have Josh Wanganeen conduct a workshop with the students, he spoke about overcoming challenges, facing adversity and accepting others differences. He illustrated how two people can interpret simple everyday words and comments very differently.

We encourage all VCE students to take advantage of The Age VCE Success Subscription that offers The Age delivered to school Monday – Friday. The Age has everything you need to succeed including VCE Express pages every Monday in Education dedicated to VCE. Here you’ll discover study tips, exam advice, reviews, outstanding examples of students’ work and all the content you need for your English issues.

The best part is the subscription price is just $12.50 for the whole school year. Just let Mr Ridge know if want to take advantage of this exceptional offer.

Shortly, we will setting up the Supportive Partners Program – a voluntary program set up for students to select a staff member to be their mentor for the year. The idea of the program is to give students someone they feel comfortable with, that they can talk to and ask for advice or just some support as stress levels rise throughout the year.

Most students have settled very well into classes and are completing all set work and managing to find a balance between school, work and social commitments.

I encourage any parents or guardians with any queries in regards to their students school work or wellbeing issues to contact Carlie Jones, Jeff Ridge or Melissa Gould. The Year 12 team is there to support your student through the year ahead.

**Melissa Gould**

**Year 12 Team Leader**
Wednesday the 11th of February saw the 2009 Echuca College Swimming Carnival take place at the Echuca Memorial Aquatic Centre. Students made a great effort to dress in their community colors, with some of the year 12’s entertaining us with their super hero and teenage mutant ninja turtle costumes. There were some outstanding individual and team results on the day, with Kanyapella continuing to dominate the swimming, winning their fourth Swimming Carnival!

Special mentions to Brock Norwood, Brad Mellington & Emily Begley. Brock broke four individual records, with Brad breaking three individual records. Both boys were part of the U/16 freestyle relay team which also set a new record. Emily broke records; 50m freestyle and 50m backstroke.

This year we introduced a new event to our Swimming Carnival; the Fastest Male & Fastest Female in the College (50m Freestyle). Jordana Pellegrino and Brad Mellington both claimed this title.

Congratulations to all competitors on their efforts and behaviour on Wednesday and we wish the Echuca College swim team well when they compete in Nathalia on March the 2nd.

**Individual Age Champions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U/13</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emily Begley - Kanyapella</td>
<td>Shaun Haffenden - Moira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U/14</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greta Pearson - Kanyapella</td>
<td>Brent McGrath - Moira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U/15</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tameka Branch - Wharparilla</td>
<td>Bryce Keech – Kanyapella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U/16</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Libby Pellegrino – Kanyapella</td>
<td>Brock Norwood - Moira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U/17</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jordana Pellegrino – Moira</td>
<td>Luke Hubbard - Perricoota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charles Vagg - Wharparilla</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U/21</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ella Givney - Kanyapella</td>
<td>Jacob Campbell - Moira</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**New Records set at Swimming Carnival**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>NEW RECORD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brock Norwood</td>
<td>U/21 100m Freestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U/16 50m Butterfly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U/21 100m Butterfly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U/16 50m Breaststroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tessa Mellington</td>
<td>U/13 50m Freestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brad Mellington</td>
<td>U/16 50m Freestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U/16 50m Backstroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella Reid</td>
<td>U/13 50m Butterfly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Keech</td>
<td>U/15 50m Breaststroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zara Pearson</td>
<td>U/17 50m Breaststroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Begley</td>
<td>U/13 50m Breaststroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U/13 50m Backstroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wharparilla</td>
<td>U/13 Female Relay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanyapella</td>
<td>U/14 Female Relay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moria</td>
<td>U/16 Male Relay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sport Dates 2009 – Term 1**

- Feb 20th  Senior Cricket
- Feb 27th  Northern Zone Lawn Bowl
- Mar 2nd   CSSSSA Swimming
- Mar 20th  Northern Zone Swimming
- Apr 1st   CSSSSA Summer Sports Day
- Apr 2nd   VSSSSA Swimming

**Community Swimming Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Swimming Points</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kanyapella</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moira</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wharparilla</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perricoota</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any 12 year olds (born 1997) can qualify for VPSSA teams - check notice board in College Drive gym for details and nomination forms.

For all Victorian Secondary Schools Sports Association information visit the website: vsssa.org.au

(Echuca College are in the Northern Zone).

Petra Ogden  
Sports Co-ordinator

Bree Bennett  
Sports Trainee
Immunisations

Students in Year 7 and Year 10 are to be immunised on the 18th of March.

Immunisations cards have been sent home with these students. Parents are asked to complete and sign the cards and return them to the College asap. Please check with the campus office if you did not receive your child’s immunisation card. Please note: ALL completed cards MUST be returned to the College. You must return the card(s) even if you are choosing NOT to have you child immunised.

Year 7 students: Chickenpox - yellow card. This immunisation is recommended if your child has NOT had Chickenpox disease.

Hepatitis B - Red card. This is the first of a two dose immunisation.

HPV - Purple card. This is the first of a three dose immunisation for FEMALES ONLY.

Year 10 students: Diphtheria/ Tetanus/Whooping cough boostrix – Blue card is offered for all year 10 students.

Year 12 Students: Fluvox -The Shire of Campaspe immunisation team have offered the FLUVAX to our year 12 students. These will be available when they visit the school on 18th of March 2009.

‘Flu’ can thrive in the community as the virus is easily transmitted from one person to person in close proximity. Influenza is characterised by the rapid onset of fever, muscle and body aches, headache, sore throat, cough and fatigue. Such an illness can be reduce performance at school. Getting the ‘flu’ can also be a costly experience with the cost of doctors bills and medications. The cost is $23 per student. This amount can be paid to the school.

If your student is interested they should ask Mrs Gould, Mr Ridge or Mrs Jones for a parent permission form.

Year 12 English Parent Info Night

The final year of the VCE is a very important year for Year 12 students and it is important that staff, parents and students work together to assist students to reach their full potential.

With this in mind we would like to invite you to an English Information Evening at Crofton Street, commencing in the Library on Wednesday 25th February at 7.00pm.

The main focus of this evening is to allow you meet with your child’s English teacher to gain some understanding of what is required in English at Units 3&4. The English Group, (English or Literature) Units 3&4, is compulsory. The study score for this subject is included in the calculation of the ENTER.

School Photos

The college has contracted Arthur Reed Photos to be our school photographers this year. Year 10, 11 and 12 students will have their photographs taken on Wednesday the 4th of March and Year 7, 8 and 9 students will be photographed on Thursday, the 5th of March. ALL students will be photographed even if they are not ordering photos.

Ordering envelopes will be sent home with students approximately one week before photo day.

Parents and guardians should have received a letter this week outlining ordering information and uniform requirements please ensure that all students are in full and CORRECT school SUMMER uniform.

Debutante Commitee

Echuca College School Council invite parents who may be interested in forming an organising committee for this year’s debutante ball to attend a brief meeting on the 10th of March at 4pm in the Crofton Street library. Please call Robyn MacLean (Crofton St Campus Coordinator) if you would like to be involved but are unable to make this date.

Attendance

Across our state the DEECD and our schools are working hard to improve our students’ educational experiences. Literacy and numeracy are still key areas where we need to ensure that our students are developing their skills so they can have quality lives in a competitive world. Students with irregular and poor attendance often find that their academic achievement, and the value they receive from their education are greatly reduced as a result. Sometimes this creates a cycle of disconnectedness leading to more absenteeism and a further lowering of achievement.

Echuca College’s priority is to improve attendance rate and have developed the College Attendance Task Force to identify attendance issues and expand strategies to support the school in improving school attendance.

Research has shown that once it was the case that students only missed school when they were genuinely ill, but that has changed. Parents are allowing their children to stay away and students are having their opportunities to perform to their potential adversely affected by parent-condoned absences such as:

- a day off for their birthday
- a day off because relatives are visiting
- a day off to be with parents
- a day off to go shopping
- a day off to look after younger children
- a day off to work at a part time job

A sobering fact is that the average student will lose one year of education (200 days) through parent condoned absences over their school career from Prep to Year 12.

We encourage parents to make every effort to get their child to school every day. We encourage you to be seen as an active influence in your child’s life. If there are issues to do with your son/daughter’s attendance that you think we should be aware or could help with, then please don’t hesitate to make contact with us.

We also encourage employers to support our efforts by ensuring they do not place demands on students to work during school hours. Also, by putting policies into practice in your workplace by discouraging service to children when they should be at school.

It is only when we see education as a partnership between the College, parents and the community that we can properly address this issue.

Is your child away today?

Please ring and let us know.
College Drive : 5482 1133
Crofton Street : 5482 3366
Echuca College Tribes Learning Neighbourhood.

Echuca College is implementing innovative learning strategies to create a safer and more caring educational environment for students, families, and the surrounding community. As a part of Echuca College’s 2009 Professional Development Program College teachers were taken on a rich journey through the Tribes Initiative founded by Jeanne Gibbs.

So what is Tribes?

Tribes is a process that creates a culture to maximise learning and human development. The Tribes ethos and underlying principles encourage schools, families, and the community to create healthier and safer learning environments.

It is based on the agreements or protocols of:
- attentive listening,
- appreciations (no put downs),
- mutual respect,
- participation / the right to pass,
- personal best.

Schools throughout the world have successfully incorporated this innovative program whose main focus is on cooperative learning.

Why was Tribes created?

Tribes’ was created to bring students, staff, and the community closer together to create school environments that are always safe and nurturing. Students and teachers undertake a journey together of developing inclusion within each group, building influence and establishing community. Building positive relationships within Echuca College will prepare our students and enhance skills for their whole lives. Using the agreements, setting goals, and incorporating lots of reflection as an integral part of the learning program, students and teachers are able to build a learning community where every student can achieve their personal best in all areas – academically, physically, socially and emotionally. If students feel happy and confident in the classroom, the schoolyard and travelling to and from school, then they are able to put their energies into learning and furthering their development.

Tribes gives strategies to make learning an active process instead of the traditional passive one. Often students are not able to get the best out of their learning in the classroom because they are bored, or not feeling safe, or the material is not appropriate for their learning. Tribes gives teachers the tools to create learning experiences that will address all the multiple intelligences, to teach students to problem solve and extend their learning, instead of just regurgitating information.

How do I as a parent get involved with Tribes?

The first place to check is with your child’s teacher at Echuca College. Tribes’ is an excellent tool for new and experienced teachers. It creates an environment that is safe and caring for all students and if a student chooses to act out, the repercussions are known in advance. Tribes can be just as effective as a parenting strategy. Use the language of the agreements (eg mutual respect, attentive listening), give lots of praise and appreciations for positive behaviour as well as having lots of discussions to enhance great relationships within your family. When your child is using these new skills at school they can be easily re-enforced at home by the family. So please contact your child’s teacher and find out the what, why and how of the Echuca College Tribes experience.

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ECHUCA COLLEGE
ROCK EISTEDDFOD 2009

“GREED”

AUDITIONS:
Crofton Street-start of lunch time 23rd Feb
College Drive-start of lunch time 26th Feb
There was a tremendous response from students and staff to do something positive for those affected by the recent bush fires. In response, several activities were organized across the college. The Student Council organized a ‘Casual Dress’ Day for Friday 13th, whereby all students could come out of uniform but must give a gold-coin donation for the privilege. Instead of a gold coin most students proudly emptied their pockets, many donating up to $20. This was a whole college event. Mr. Cheal’s VCAL Personal Development class (Crofton Street) organized a lunchtime Sausage Sizzle and a recess Cake Stall to coincide with the ‘Casual Dress’ Day. Everything sold, particularly the cakes. What a surprise!! As a result the VCAL students raised approximately $600. Furthermore, on both campuses staff had special morning teas, in which generous contributions to the appeal were made. Overall the generosity of staff and students far exceeded expectations. As a result the total raised was in excess of $3600. Well done to all those who gave generously and all students and staff who were involved in the activities.

Steven Abramovitch

On Friday the 13th The Echuca College Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) students organized a cake stall and lunch time BBQ to support the victims of the Victorian bush fires. The VCAL class was able to ‘tap in’ to the kind generosity of the local businesses in Echuca, who donated many raw materials for the event. The students themselves organized the cake stall and prepared the cakes, biscuits, slices, etc. With the sausage sizzle and the cake stall the VCAL class were able to raise $600 which at such short notice was an amazing effort. The VCAL students planned these fund raising events in the span of 3 days. Their efforts continue to make Echuca College and the wider community very proud. The unity of purpose displayed by everybody during these tragic times is very heartening.

Natasha James
Year 11 VCAL student

Canteen News

Echuca College would like to thank Rods Meats, Kirkby Bakery, Moama Bakery and Caddell Trading for their generosity of goods for our sausage sizzle on Friday 13th to raise funds for the Fire Appeal. We would also like to thank all of the parents who volunteer at the canteens and are calling for more volunteers. So if you think you can help, please contact Jeanette Fabry 5482 1133 or Sue Teasdale 5482 3366.

Thanks Again
Sue & Jeanette
Denise  
Cheers!  
If you have any concerns about your child, please feel free to contact the wellbeing staff at the college.

Nurse’s News.

Michael Grose is frequently in the media with advice for parents. Michael has kindly made a list of suggestions about what we can do to assist our children to cope with all of the information that is bombarding us at this point in time.

If you have any concerns about your child, please feel free to contact the wellbeing staff at the college.

Cheers!

Denise

Help your children make sense of natural disasters

By Michael Grose

The Queensland floods and the Victorian bushfires continue to wreak incredible havoc on so many people’s lives and will no doubt leave an indelible imprint on our collective psyches. These two natural disasters will be brought into our living rooms via the media over the coming days and weeks.

As adults we all want our children to live carefree lives and keep them from the pain and even horror of tragedies such as natural disasters. In reality we can’t do this. So what is a parent, teacher, or other caring adult to do when the natural disasters fills the airwaves and the consciousness of society? Here are some ideas:

Reassure children that they are safe. The consistency of the images can be frightening for young children who don’t understand the notion of distance and have difficulty distinguishing between reality and fiction. Let them know that while this event is indeed happening it will not affect them directly.

Be available and ‘askable’. Let kids know that it is okay to talk about the unpleasant events. Listen to what they think and feel. By listening, you can find out if they have misunderstandings, and you can learn more about the support that they need. You do not need to explain more than they are ready to hear, but be willing to answer their questions.

Help children process what they see and hear, particularly through television. Children are good observers but can be poor interpreters of events that are out of their level of understanding. Sit with them. Ask them questions to ascertain their understanding.

Support children’s concerns for others. They may have genuine concerns for the suffering that will occur and they may need an outlet for those concerns. It is heart-warming to see this empathy in children for the concerns of others.

Let them explore feelings beyond fear. Many children may feel sad or even angry with these events so let them express the full range of emotions. They may feel sadder for the loss of wildlife, than for loss of human life, which is impersonal for them.

Help children and young people find a legitimate course of action if they wish. Action is a great antidote to stress and anxiety so finding simple ways to help, including donating some pocket money can assist kids to cope and teaches them to contribute.

Avoid keeping the television on all the time. The visual nature of the media means that images are repeated over and over, which can be both distressing to some and desensitizing to others.

Be aware of your own actions. Children will take their cues from you and if they see you focusing on it in an unhealthy way then they will focus on it too. Let them know that it is happening but it should not dominate their lives.

Take action yourself. Children who know their parents, teachers, or other significant caregivers are working to make a difference feel hope. They feel safer and more positive about the future. So do something. It will make you feel more hopeful, too. And hope is one of the most valuable gifts we can give children and ourselves.

Children’s worlds can be affected in ways that we can’t even conceive of so adults need to be both sensitive to children’s needs and mindful of what they say and how they act in front of children.

In difficult times, it is worth remembering what adults and children need most are each other.

Bushfires and Asthma

With the devastating Bushfires that have occurred throughout Victoria and with fires still burning across the State, there is an increased risk of asthma. Parents and carers of children with asthma should remain alert and ensure the child carries their blue reliever medication with them at all times.

Tips to minimise the effects of Bushfire smoke:

- Smoke and increased air pollution from fires can cause people with asthma to experience increased symptoms, such as wheezing, coughing, chest tightness or shortness of breath.
- Children are one of the first to feel the effects of smoke and particle pollution for this reason extra care needs to be taken.
- Always follow the child’s written Asthma Action Plan.
- Ensure the child has access to blue reliever medication and continue use of preventer medication.
- When smoke is in the air, but fire is not directly threatening, keep children indoors, and close all windows and doors.
- Avoid doing physical activities outdoors.
- If a child develops symptoms, seek medical assistance immediately.
- If the child’s blue reliever medication is not reducing asthma symptoms, start Asthma First Aid and seek medical attention without delay.

For further information, please call the Asthma Telephone HelpLine on 1800 645 130 or visit The Asthma Foundation of Victoria’s website.
Echuca United Football Netball Club Inc

We require Under 14 footballers for the coming season. Echuca United is affiliated with the Murray Football League and has achieved regular finals success at this level.

With a large number of boys moving up to the next age group, season 2009 will create many opportunities for new and existing players.

Training commences Tuesday 10th Feb at the High Street Oval 4.30pm, then Tuesday & Thursdays thereafter.

CONTACT: Mark Elliott (Coach) 0413 777 069
Tim Jeffreson (Junior President) 0409 518 137

ECHUCA & DISTRICT NETBALL ASSOCIATION INC

SATURDAY NETBALL REGISTRATIONS ARE AVAILABLE NOW All PRIMARY & SECONDARY Students grade 1 to year 12. Enquiries Netball Office 54801725. Closing date Wednesday 18th March. NO LATE ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Representative Squad Selections 2009
Selection dates Sunday Feb 15th, Feb 22nd, Mar 1st.
13/U 9.00 – 11.00am.
15/U & 17/U 6.00-8.00pm. Players must attend two selection dates to be eligible.

Notice to be submitted in writing for any non-attendances addressed to Rep Team Convenor P. O. Box 559, Echuca. All enquiries to the Netball Office on 54801725.

ECUHCA JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB

U14 & U12 TRAINING COMENCES WEDNESDAY 25th OF FEBRUARY 4.00-5.30PM at Vic Park.
Enquiries Jim Cosgriff Ph. 0407 110 764
David Bruns Ph. 0418 597 330

ARCO Parenting Young Adolescents

Guiding your child through early adolescence can be a challenging task!!

If you are a parent of an adolescent, then you may wish to join other parents in this week programme. Talk with other parents to gain understanding of some of the developmental changes and learn some strategies to help with the challenges of this stage of development.

Kyalram Community & Learning Centre

Where: Tuesdays 5th, 12th & 19th March
When: 10.30 am – 1.30 pm
Time: Ev Holzer & Norelle Williams
Facilitators: BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL R.S.V.P Fr 27th Feb
To register your attendance or for further information please contact Ev Holzer: 0427 439 576 OR Kyalram Community & Learning Centre 58 520000

Youth Endeavour Youth Scheme

share the experience of a life time.

A VOYAGE ON THE YOUNG ENDEAVOUR IN 2009

A voyage on the tall ship, Young Endeavour, as a member of a youth crew is a unique challenge. It inspires teamwork, communication, leadership and a sense of community responsibility.

Over twenty 11 day voyages are conducted each year exploring the Australian coastline by the Young Endeavour Youth Scheme, a non-profit, non-government organization, in partnership with the Royal Australian Navy, Onboard, young people participate in a dynamic development program that can be a life-changing experience.

Students aged 16-23 can now apply for a berth. Applications for the ballot (for voyages in the second half of 2009) can be obtained from Mrs Carter. But hurry, applications need to be made by 1 March 2009.