



Newsletter

Term Two, June 2008

NORTHCOTE COLLEGE

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Principal's Comment

The 2008 academic year seems to be passing with almost unbelievable speed. As I write seniors are finishing their first set of exams for the year and will soon have received the valuable feedback that these critical assessments provide.

The challenge of formal assessments is central to student

success at Northcote College. Parents play a key role reinforcing the expectations for performance established at school. Students must be constantly reminded both at school and home of the relationship between effort and success.

Opportunity, experience, expectation and support provide an increasingly rich fabric of school life for students at Northcote College. The current year is packed full of opportunities; academic, sporting, cultural and social. We are delighted with the growing strength and success of the school in traditional sports, the development of new sports and the consistently high performance of students in cultural pursuits. This would not happen without your support. Volunteers and sponsorship are the hidden strength of the school.

Without exception opportunities at Northcote College are dependent on or enhanced by the goodwill, energy and resources of staff and parents. Sports teams, Stage Challenge, Writers Group, the Talent Quest, the Junior Social, Debating, the Choir, the Jazz Band, Kapahaka, Pacifica Groups, the Affair of the Heart Art Exhibition, the Careers Expo, Cocoon, the Young Enterprise Teams, Outdoor Education Camps and Drama Productions have become key features of the Northcote College school year. They rely on staff, parent and community enthusiasm and support.

Our ability to provide opportunities, experiences and support is limited only by the limits of our imaginations and our resources.

A new opportunity for involvement has presented itself in 2008. Northcote College will enter a team in the First Robotics Competition in 2009 and significant preparations are already underway. This is an international competition offered for the first time in NZ. To be successful the Northcote College team will need to draw on the physical, intellectual and financial resources of the whole school community. The article later in this newsletter provides more details.

Operational funding

It is likely that you will have seen the recent publicity surrounding the hopes schools had for a significant increase in operational grants from the 2008 budget. The disappointment felt by North Harbour Principals in response to the budget announcement on operational funding was unanimous.

Collective frustration and desperation has led North Shore and North Harbour Secondary Principals to take action to draw attention to the unsustainable funding situation schools find themselves in. A copy of an open letter sent to the Hon Chris Carter, Minister of Education is reprinted in this newsletter.

As an example of the underfunding compared to the costs of providing for teaching and learning, we are currently struggling to provide a much needed server to store the work of Media Studies students. The current server exposes students' media studies work to risk of loss and is

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CALENDAR

- 19 June Senior Careers Expo
- 27 June Junior Reports Issued
- 29 June Matariki Concert 1-4pm
(at North Shore Events Centre)
- 4 July Senior Reports Issued
End Term 2
- 21 July Term 3 Begins
- 26 July Open Day 12noon-3pm

PPTA Meeting - Students Released 2.30pm Friday 4 July

clearly unsatisfactory. Providing ICT to meet the growing demands of the curriculum in the 21st Century is obviously very necessary yet there is an impossible gap between requirements and available funds.

Schools should be concentrating on educating students. The reliance on locally raised funds exposes schools to financial risk and diverts the energy and focus of boards, principals, teachers and communities away from teaching and learning.

The financial stress on schools continues to grow as information technology requirements rise, compliance costs increase and the curriculum changes.

The Northcote College budget is tighter this year than ever before. Much of this is spent on additional teaching staff, beyond that funded by the government. The benefits of this are smaller class sizes (an average in the senior school of 21 students per class), the ability to offer a broad range of option subjects and special programmes.

Thank you to all parents who continue to support us through the school donation and payment of other fees. Do not underestimate our need to meet budgeted income targets from parent donations. If you have not yet paid your donation and are in the position to do so we desperately need your contribution.

New Curriculum

The new New Zealand Curriculum document was made available to schools in November 2007. The implementation must be complete by 2011. Curriculum review and the implementation of the new New Zealand curriculum is Northcote College's major school-wide goal for 2008.

The immediate focus is the junior curriculum. We are currently reviewing the academic challenges and opportunities in the junior school across the curriculum. Success in the senior school is very much dependent on the foundation built in earlier years.

A task force has been set up for this purpose. The Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Taskforce (TLCT) is leading the school in the review and decision making process in relation to the new NZ curriculum.

The taskforce will explore the curriculum, options, assessment and reporting, timetable and class structure.

As always I invite and welcome feedback from parents. All suggestions, ideas and comments can be emailed to principal@northcote.school.nz

Vicki Barrie

Comparative Scholarship Results

The table below shows that the percentage of Northcote College Year 13 students with successful scholarship examination results in 2007 was close to 10% and the highest percentage for a state school on the North Shore.

	2007 Total scholarships and outstanding scholarships	Number of students in Year 13	% of Year 13 cohort with successful results
Northcote College	35	232	9.91
Rangitoto College	66	563	7.46
Westlake Boys High School	46	311	7.07
Long Bay College	18	198	6.57
Takapuna Grammar School	25	282	6.38
Westlake Girls High School	26	325	5.85
Glenfield College	7	169	4.14
Birkenhead College	5	141	2.84

Source: nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications/ssq/statistics/scholarship-results

Admin Notices

NZQA Fees

All Year 11 - 13 students need to pay their NZQA entry fee to the Accounts Office by Friday 22 August. For most students the fee is \$75 (includes entry to up to 3 Scholarship subjects). Overseas students pay the higher rate of \$375 and an additional \$100 per Scholarship subject.

Financial assistance is available on application to those domestic students whose main caregivers hold a Community Services Card or are in receipt of a benefit or families with more than two students entering NZQA qualifications in one year. Application forms are available from the Deans' Office and our school website.

Students are encouraged to make the payment in advance of the August deadline, as a fee of \$50 applies to all late payments. Please note that these payments are collected by the school on behalf of NZQA.

Open Day & 2009 Enrolments

2009 Enrolment Applications will be accepted from 21 July 2008.

Out of Zone applications close on 5 September and a ballot, if required, will be held on 15 September 2008.

Families who are considering secondary schools are encouraged to attend the Open Day on Saturday 26 July when there will be opportunities to speak with current students and staff and view the learning opportunities offered within each subject area and school-wide.

Reports

Half year reports for all students will be issued at the end of this term. If you have any questions arising from the written report you are encouraged to contact the appropriate Dean. Parent Teacher Interview Evenings are scheduled for 7 and 12 August in Term 3.

Health Education Programme

Every two years Northcote College parents are given the opportunity to provide feedback on the Health Education programme offered at this school. The Northcote College programme aims to promote health and physical activity through the school and encourages participation of all students in a wide range of learning opportunities that help to develop self worth and foster life long wellbeing.

The current programme delivered to all Year 9 and 10 students will be reviewed as we introduce the new National Curriculum and we welcome your input. At the Parent Teacher Evenings on 7 and 12 August survey forms will be available and Mr Chong, the Teacher in Charge of Health Education at Northcote College, will be available to answer your specific questions between 6 and 7pm in the school library. If you are unable to attend one of these evenings and would like your responses included in this consultation process please contact the Office and we will send you a survey form as soon as they are available.

Uniform Reminders

The winter weather is upon us so the need for students to stay warm and dry is a priority. Please remember that the rule is that t-shirts are not to be worn under school shirts. Navy blue v-neck, polypropylene vests are available from Yarntons in Birkenhead, along with a variety of warmer layers. Only Northcote College regulation school jackets are acceptable. Look out for the new fleecy lined jacket and polar fleece scarf.

New uniform items are available from Yarntons, 18-22 Mokoia Road, Birkenhead, phone 418-4011 or email birkenhead@yarntons.co.nz. For second hand items (as available) please contact the school shop on 481 0141 ext 744 or email shop@northcote.school.nz.

Lateness to School

Your help is required. As the colder weather hits it would seem that students are finding it more difficult to get to school on time. Recently excessive numbers of students are arriving late on a daily basis.

Period 1 classes start promptly at 9am and students are expected to be lined up outside the classroom by 8.55am. Please ensure that your children leave for school in good time to arrive by 8.55am.

Student Achievement

Prefects 2008

At the beginning of Term 2 six additional outstanding year 13 students were confirmed as Prefects.

Congratulations to:

Bianca Bettini

Leah Boyle

Kirstin Reade

Robert Richmond

Gregory Smith

Wilson Shen

This brings the total number of 2008 Prefects to 24.

Senior Debating Team Win

Congratulations to the Senior Debating team of **Rick Zwan, James Gibb** and **Sharon Ryan** (*pictured left to right*) on



their recent win against Kristin School. The team negated the moot that the government should provide free school meals for all public schools. The round was 'limited preparation' which means that the teams were only given the moot an hour before the debate. The students had to think on their feet and all three were confident and articulate. Sharon was awarded 'Best Speaker' for her particularly convincing rebuttal.

Past Pupil Update

Julie Cao (2004-2007) has been awarded a Sasakawa Undergraduate Scholarship. Julie will receive \$1,000 each year of her undergraduate degree while working towards her Japanese studies at university.

Ashleigh Tunui and Laura Turner (2003-2007) have been awarded Waikato University Scholarships of \$3,000 each toward their 2008 studies.

Community Education

A wide range of courses are available from Northcote College Community Education. Pick up a copy of the Education for Life Brochure. Call 481-0144 to book your place or e-mail learn4life@xtra.co.nz or pop into our office at 6 Kauri Glen Road - we're open from 9.30am-4pm.

We look forward to meeting you.

Liz & Lorraine - Community Education

Student Activities

AYDEO Discussion Forum

Two Northcote College students, **Wilson Shen** and **Rick Zwaan**, are part of a small group of self-directed students from across Auckland who have come together as AYDEO (Auckland Youth-Directed Environmental Organisation) to promote environmental sustainability.

The group has organised an all day Discussion Forum to be held on 20 June 2008 in the Dorothy Winstone Centre, Auckland Girls' Grammar School. The aim of the forum is to provide Auckland youth an opportunity to share their views on New Zealand and the planet's stance on the environment, and on how human behaviour is affecting it; on both a local and a global scale. Invitations have been sent to colleges across the Auckland Region inviting teams of 3-4 senior school delegates to attend. The planning, funding, guest speakers, media coverage, invitations etc for this event have been a huge undertaking for this dedicated AYDEO group.

If you would like to know more about the Discussion Forum or the group please email aydeo.nz@gmail.com.

Stage Challenge

This year's performance of the well known Alfred Noyes poem 'The Highwayman' is a culmination of months of hard work by the 140 students involved as well as staff, parents and community members. Directed by Ms Olliver and Mr Edge, the production has also benefited from the creative skills of Ms Truesdale, Ms Thomas and Mr Rive. The show is generously supported by Yarntons and Birkenhead Transport.

Performance night on 12 June saw us up against several other North Shore schools including Carmel, Orewa, Rangitoto, Takapuna Grammar and Westlake Girls and we placed 3rd. See back page for full results.

Orange Week

Each year the Student Council has chosen to support the Auckland City Mission appeal for food blankets and warm clothing to distribute to needy Aucklanders. In 2008 we will run an inter-form class competition from 16-20 June with a hot lunch as the prize for the most generous form class. Please help by clearing out your cupboards of unwanted clothing and bedding. Donations of canned and dried foods are also most welcome.

Talent Quest

The annual celebration of Northcote student talent is scheduled for Thursday 31 July with auditions underway late this term. Come along to see a vast array of musical and dramatic skills ranging from the traditional to the radical.

This year's proceeds will go to World Vision.

SADD

A recent assembly presentation by the Students Against Driving Drunk committee had most students on their feet. Increasing numbers of students were asked to stand during an exercise based on a hypothetical crash affecting 4 young people. The point of the exercise was to show how vast the impact of a drink driving accident can be - from the immediate family members and friends to those who attended the accident and their support group.

Sample mocktails (non-alcoholic cocktails) were served to students during the lunchtime that followed and many students took away a 'Will to Live' contract to discuss with their parents. These contracts are between a parent and teenager and state: "I will not drive when I have been drinking, or travel in a car driven by someone who has had too much to drink. . . . It is understood that if called, a parent would; go and collect a teenager at any time, any place, with no questions, no arguments at the time, or would organise safe and sober transportation home. A teenager would respond to any similar request from a parent."

World Environment Week

World Environment Day was the 5th of June, but due to exams, Northcote celebrated a week later. This year our theme was; 'reducing our carbon footprint'.

The Ministry for the Environment provided a \$1000 grant to commemorate the day. Events started on Wednesday 11th June, Cocoon, the school environmental group, kicked off the celebrations with a scavenger hunt and quiz; Thursday was a bottle toss (not as violent as it sounds) and tree planting; on Friday a band entertained the students and we promoted carpooling and walking to school. On Monday 16th was the presentation of the Silver Enviro-schools Award at Assembly and on Tuesday 17th a plastic recycling time-trial.

There were prizes galore and fun all round in an action-packed week of environmental fun!

Laura Halliwell Year 13



Tango Festival

The sights and sounds of the streets of Buenos Aires came to life for Year 12 Spanish students at the annual Wellington Tango Festival at the end of May. A fabulous weekend was spent feasting on

Latin American cuisine, learning the intricate dance steps of the traditional chacalera form of the tango, conversing in Spanish and being dazzled by the amazing professional tango dancers at the show 'Another Night in Buenos Aires'. It was an amazing insight into the heritage and culture of Argentina and inspired many students to improve their Spanish skills even more.



Term One Camps

The Te Whanau o Te Kakano annual Marae Trip was the first group away in Week 4. The group of 55 stayed at the Te Kiri Marae in Leigh for three days undertaking team building activities,

including snorkeling at Goat Island and an 'Extreme Challenge' at Matheson Bay, along with Kapahaka practices during the evenings to prepare for their Festival performance. The main purpose for the camp was to help the new Year 9 Whanau students integrate and adjust to Northcote College and all agreed that it was a fantastic and rewarding experience.

In Week 5 the Year 13 students departed for three days based at the Mangawhai Forest Camp at Te Arai. The camp provided leadership opportunities and a chance to foster and strengthen the relationships



between students as well as between staff and students. The camp provided only very basic services so students were required to take their own tents, food, cooking equipment etc for their survival. Co-operation was a necessity and all returned home healthy and happy ...

The last group to venture on camp during Term 1 were over 200 Year 10 students in Week 11, who attended the MERC Camp on Motutapu Island. Despite the thunder,

lightning and occasional torrential rain, the camp was a huge success and both students and staff remained in good spirits and undertook all the challenges faced with enthusiasm and energy.



Careers Department

Careers Day at Northcote College happens biannually – and this is the year! It is a superb opportunity for your child to hear some great keynote speakers (Mr Chris Moller and Mr Nathan Rarere) as well as attend three workshops.

Students have been issued with a complete list of options for the workshops, and have been asked to choose for themselves what they would like to attend. You may even have been asked to consider their choices with them – if you do have the opportunity to discuss this with your child then it would be helpful for them. We will endeavour to place students in their first option choice in each workshop.

Our workshop presenters are coming from industry, private training providers, universities and polytechnics. The traditional 'polytech' is almost gone now, and they have been replaced and renamed as 'Institutes of Technology' which tend to offer courses with more practical components than the universities.

Students will be given a carry bag on the day (many thanks to Career Services rapuara for their sponsorship with this) which will contain a handbook prepared especially relating to this event. It will contain information on the workshops, job hunting and interview tips, as well as where to go for help with student allowances and loans. Keep an eye out for this useful handbook.

If you have any queries relating to our Careers Day or about careers in general, please call Miss Philippa Leask, Careers Advisor, on 481 0141 ext 712.

"The Careers Maze" - Dr Heather Carpenter

August 26th 7.00pm-8.30pm

Rosmini College Auditorium

Free, open to the general public, targeting parents of teenagers!

Every year hundreds of young people become lost in the career maze and swamped in information overload. Research shows that it is the parents who are the primary influence on young people's career decisions and are best placed to give them help. In this workshop participants will hear about how they can assist young people in their career decision making, gain tools and suggestions and gain snapshots of relevant research.

An Atlanta Robotic Reconnaissance

Terminator and RoboCop, those were the images in my mind when I heard about the *FIRST* Robotics competition in the United States. I was highly interested, but still had some doubts about high school students making robots – I thought they must be stone-age models. It didn't take long to completely change my view.

In the April holidays with the support of Massey University and Smales Farm, Northcote College sent three students and two teachers along with 46 students and teachers from ten other schools to the *FIRST* Robotics final in Atlanta, Georgia. The purpose of the trip was to check out the competition in preparation for the New Zealand regional competition in early 2009.

The kiwi contingent arrived at the competition final – held annually at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta – after several time-zone changes and a brief stopover in San Francisco. The first place we stepped into was the pit area – where the atmosphere and scale of things simply blew our jet-lag away. After a brief tour of the facilities we attended a private training session on the competition; its purpose and how it is run. Following this, the group was broken down into twos or threes and assigned an experienced team to shadow throughout the finals. Our students fitted in immediately and were even given the privilege of being allowed to work on the robot in preparation for the competition. Luckily, they've got good skills so I didn't need to pay for anything broken!

There were over 320 robots in the finals and they were all unique. It was amazing to see so many different designs and approaches used to develop solutions for the same game, all resulting from the creativity of high school students. Some robots were high-tech, using cutting-edge technology whilst others were “no. 8 wire” with PVC piping and bungee cords making up the core structure. Both were effective but participation was the main theme – not which team had the fanciest robot.

After having been there in person, I can say that this is no ordinary competition. The teams function as clubs, interacting like a big robot family and the competition is a sports tournament. People from all over the world are here to celebrate science and technology and the success of working together to build something that achieves its goal.

This event is like nothing you've seen before. I cannot tell you how mind-blowing it is, you just have to be there.

We are assembling a team right now and we need people from all subject areas with different skills. **Richard Couprie, James George and Hamish Rogerson** proved

themselves to be excellent ambassadors for the school. They learnt a lot and enjoyed the trip and are more than happy to talk to you about their experiences and about the boot camp happening during the term break which will give a taste of what exactly this competition is about.

The *FIRST* Robotics Competition challenges teams of young people to solve a common problem in a six week time frame using a standard kit of parts. The six week period starts on 10th January 2009. The NZ Regional Final will be held mid March 2009 and three teams will be selected to attend the world final. We need technical expertise from the community. If you would like to help please email melaniet@northcote.school.nz. An information evening is being planned for early in Term 3.

Andy Yang

Affair of the Heart

The 4th Annual Northcote College “Affair of the Heart” Art Exhibition held at the School from Friday 7 March–Sunday 9 March was an excellent success raising \$25,000. The School owes a debt of gratitude to all sponsors, volunteers and supporters. The 2008 event will be remembered for both the fine weather and superb jazz in the courtyard courtesy of the Jazz Combo. Thanks again to the extraordinary Affair of the Heart Committee members and Chairperson, Margot Richmond.

A proportion of the funds raised from the 2008 event will go to fund increased hours for the school's media technician Mr David Madjar. Other projects now possible in 2008 include an amplifier and keyboard for the music department as well as new microphones to further enhance the hall sound system.

Help required for Affair of the Heart 2009

Planning for the 2009 event is already underway. The committee is looking for a volunteer or volunteers to take on the Sponsorship portfolio. This position on the committee is currently vacant. It offers a new volunteer the chance to be involved in a wonderful team. There are not too many meetings and there are good contacts and records from previous years. Please contact Margot Richmond by email at magoo@xtra.co.nz if you have, or know of, anyone with the skills and enthusiasm to take on this important role.