

# S.M.O.C.A

SANTA MARIA OLD COLLEGIANS' ASSOCIATION



**SANTA MARIA COLLEGE**  
A YEAR 7 TO 12 CATHOLIC GIRLS' COLLEGE

## Dear Past Students,

It was such a joy to welcome so many of you to the annual reunion in February. The depth of connection and the strength of the Santa tradition is always an inspiration to behold.

In the following pages you will glimpse this tradition—alive and well—in the Santa community as we traverse the new ground of COVID-19, as we celebrate the achievements of current and recently graduated students, as we acknowledge and farewell significant women from our community, and as we take a major step in reducing the school's carbon footprint.

It must be said that events like pandemics do have a way of focusing the mind and returning us to what is essential. What has been very clear to me is the vital nature of girls' schools and all-girls education, especially in the light of predictions that COVID-19 will disproportionately impact the ambitions, careers and lives of women.

Educating girls to be fearless in their learning, to stand together on issues of equity and justice and to take their rightful place in society is central to what we do here at Santa. This was the vision and example of the Good Samaritan Sisters when they established the school 116 years ago, and it is at the heart of what we do today. This work takes on even deeper significance as our society shifts and contracts.

Our mandate, passed on to us from the dynamic generations of women who have gone before us, is to instil and develop confidence so that every Santa girl feels empowered and motivated to be the very best version of herself, to feel at home in who she is and who she is called to be.

May we carry this tradition forward so that, in the words of the Good Samaritan Education foundation document, the 'full participation of women' in the 'life and mission of the Church' and in the 'academic, cultural, economic, social and political life' of our community is vigorously realised. Only then will the 'fullness of the Divine' be better reflected in our world.

I leave you with the words of one of our graduating students of 2019 as she reflects on her participation in the Duke of Edinburgh



Gold Award and the moment she pushed through a fear that had dogged her for years. These words embody all that is powerful and joyous about educating girls.

*'I took a deep breath, went into a place of peace and comfort, absorbed the encouragement and support of my peers ... and took a step over the edge'. —Holly Gardner.*

Abundant blessings,

**Deborah M Barker**  
*Principal*

## Opportunity to join the Santa Maria College Board

Now accepting expressions of interest to join the Santa Maria College Board as a Director. Given the purpose and responsibilities of the Board, people with the following backgrounds/competencies are particularly sought as Directors:

- Tertiary Education
- Strategic Business Development

It is important to recognize that Directors, as well as having some core competency as listed above, need an understanding of the ethos of Catholic education and are able to understand how this ethos has a fundamental impact on the decision making of the Board. For further information, please refer to the College website.

## Happy Birthday

Turning 90 this year!

**Wilma Hangan** | Class of 1949

**Norma Morrison** | Class of 1947





# Hope in a Time of Pandemic

Staying calm, being hopeful, remaining confident and connected—and even finding some joy in change and adversity—were some of the goals of the Home Learning Program at Santa Maria during the 6 weeks of lockdown in term 2.

One beautiful and powerful expression of this was the Wall of Hope that took shape along the Separation Street fence. Students and staff sent messages, sayings, bits of poetry, inspirational quotes and pieces of personal wisdom through to admin staff who remained on site. These messages were printed and then hung along the fence of the college to encourage and lift the spirits of all who passed by. So taken with this initiative were observers, that an article on Santa Maria's community spirit appeared in the Herald Sun on 6 May.

Lots of other ways of staying hope-filled and connected emerged. Senior students developed a podcast series based on ABC Radio's Take 5 where guests were invited

to select and discuss songs that have a special meaning for them. Our Principal, Deborah Barker, was first up, along with the college music captain, Nicoletta Zorbas.

Moments of Contemplation were written and shared, with staff reflecting on the isolation experience. This format was taken up by students and Village leaders and Fridays from the Heart were posted on Village classrooms each week. Students reflected on things like World Environment Day and the Black Lives Matter protests.

Of course, there were fun things, like competitions to see who could create the best digital version of their favourite album covers, online bake-offs, and even a version of Santa Maria's Got Talent. Sr Glenys featured in a great video that incorporated students and staff and an elusive roll of toilet paper. The creation was titled 'The Great Toilet Roll Debacle'. Girls at various year levels put together

a series of 'shout outs' to one another and posted them online, thanking and supporting one another during 'iso'.

Hopes were fulfilled when students finally returned to the college, with bells sounding throughout the grounds, and bright streamers flying from gates and trees. Part of the welcome back liturgy for each returning year level was to tie a ribbon of gratitude on many of the trees in the beautiful college grounds. These bright ribbons of thanks have been flying for the remainder of the term.

All of these supportive initiatives were enabled and enhanced by a dynamic Home Learning Program, great facility throughout the college in digital technology, and creative, up to the minute leadership. We are very proud of all we have achieved through this 'unprecedented' Covid event, and are thankful for all the hard work, flexibility, and care shown by students, staff and parents. The Santa spirit continues!







# Alumnae Feature

## The O'Farrell Girls

Three sisters, Kathleen, Joan and Helene O'Farrell, attended Santa Maria College in the 1930s/40s. All three lived into their nineties, with Joan and Helene dying last year and Kathleen in April this year. We thought the long association of these three sisters with the Santa community should be celebrated. Here is a little of their story, told by some of their daughters.

The O'Farrell girls grew up on a farm outside Benalla and attended the one-teacher Blind Creek State School before moving to Melbourne to continue their education at Santa Maria. They all loved their time at Santa. The move was a bit of a culture shock though. When Kath, the eldest of the sisters, turned up for her first day at Santa in her freshly pressed school uniform she was bewildered to find the place deserted. St Patrick's Day certainly wasn't a 'thing' in Blind Creek in those days, even though it was a mandated day off for students in Catholic schools across the city.

Each of the sisters made friendships that endured for many years beyond their time at Santa, and felt encouraged and supported by the Good Sam sisters. Sheila Kelly (Sr Gertrude sgs) became one of Kath's lifelong friends. It was in the sporting arena though, that the sisters excelled.

**The sports bug** Kath was excited by the range of sports offered at Santa, and was an enthusiastic participant in many of them. When Joan arrived, she revelled in the team sports – basketball (netball), tennis, hockey, softball, cricket – loving every minute of playing and competing. Joan was proud to be chosen as Sports Captain in 1942 and '43.

When Helene (nicknamed 'Billie') began at Santa Maria, Stewart O'Farrell, the girls' father, reminded his daughters that there was more to being at school than just sport. The 'sports bug', however, had bitten and all three girls played tennis and basketball, in particular, at every opportunity.

Helene did very well in team sports but was also a talented runner, completing her first ever

school cross-country barefoot. Helene was Form Captain for Intermediate in 1943.

**After Santa** On leaving school, the O'Farrell sisters all built lives of meaning and significance. Kath became a telegraphist at the Post Master General's Office (PMG) where, exceptionally, female pay was equivalent to that of males. It was here that she met Bill Dowling. They were married in 1948 and had six children, four of whom, (Bernadette, Christine, Kathryn, and Elizabeth Dowling) are also past pupils of Santa Maria.

Joan married Ray Murphy and moved to Mansfield and had two daughters, later moving to a farm in Bonnie Doon and enjoying every minute of farm life.

Helene worked at the Health Department, then married, becoming Helene Davis, and had 4 children. For many years, Helene worked as a professional curtain maker, and she made the velvet curtains for the Geelong Museum.

**The passion continues** The love of sports though, nurtured as it was during their time at Santa, remained a strong part of the sisters' lives.

Post-school the O'Farrell girls represented Victoria at the Australian Postal Institute sporting carnivals in a range of sports across several years. Joan was representative for basketball, tennis and table tennis. She held the Post Office Australian women's singles and doubles titles in tennis.

Helene remained a strong sportsperson throughout her life, playing tennis herself and encouraging her children to try tennis, athletics, football, netball, cricket, surfing & swimming. Her grandchildren were also much loved and encouraged by Helene in all their sporting endeavours.

**So blessed** We, the next generation, are so blessed to have had these wonderful O'Farrell girls as our mothers. We are also grateful for all the experiences, opportunities and friendships that were part of their years at Santa Maria.

**Kathleen Mary Dowling  
(nee O'Farrell)**

4/4/1924—20/4/2020

**Joan Frances Murphy  
(nee O'Farrell)**

29/10/1926—8/6/2019

**Helene Therese Davis  
(nee O'Farrell)**

14/4/1928—13/2/2019

Written by Elizabeth Dowling (Kath's daughter), Ann Lawless and Gay McSweeney (Joan's daughters) and Helen Davis (Helene's daughter). The full text of 'The O'Farrell Girls' can be found on the College website.

# COVID Files

While the college was profoundly impacted by Covid-19 with all face to face classes suspended for the first 6 weeks of Term 2, we were wondering how others in our alumnae community were faring. We invited Jane Opie (Class of 1979) and Loan Lu (Class of 2015) to give us a glimpse into their Covid experience

## Jane Opie (Class of 1979)

**What work are you engaged in and how has this been impacted by Covid-19?** As a GP – much of my work has moved to telemedicine – some of this is great, some is challenging.

As a University teacher – teaching has also gone to remote learning. Helping medical students learn hand-on skills remotely is frankly challenging for all.

As a Board and subcommittee member – meetings held remotely. The Boards I'm involved in have a key role in ensuring the health of the community during the pandemic. This has required re-thinking aspects of “clinical governance” to ensure a nimble and flexible response alongside a response that ensures safety and standards are maintained

### Good bits about isolation?

- Perhaps “the revenge of the introvert”.
- Less pressure to do as much socially; a less frenetic pace overall.
- The need to be more self-directed with work, study – builds valuable life skills.
- Galvanising the community to think as a community - protecting each other rather than thinking as individuals in isolation – the volunteerism that resulted.
- Putting more time into the home environment – cooking, gardening, pets, people – my new quadruple aim!
- Attending meetings in a dressing-gown including having a consult with my GP this way!

### Challenging bits?

- Too much on-line shopping!
- Having more than one person working/learning-from-home – internet overload, space and noise issues.
- Living in shutdown with extroverts.
- Not being able to see family and friends up close.
- Giving in to the relentless call from the snacks in the pantry.
- An expanding waistline!
- Lack of a hairdresser!

### The virus has made me think about?

- The important role of public health and preventive healthcare overall.
- The fact we are all at risk from emerging diseases. Novel viruses by definition – ie novel – attack us all without fear or favour.
- The distressing way some in the social media space have said this virus is not as important as it predominantly affects the elderly.
- The concerning images and words around the world misrepresenting this virus – its origins, how we protect ourselves from it etc. How can social media be a force for good?

### The virus has made me much more appreciative of?

- The people in my life. The simple things – a shared meal out with friends and family.
- The work I can still do that provides meaning and purpose for me and hopefully value for the patients and students I want to support.

### Things I would now like to let go of?

- The previously frenetic pace of life.

### Things I would like to maintain after the virus crisis is over.

- Health literacy around infectious diseases – hand hygiene, cough etiquette, understanding when masks are of value.
- The opportunity for people to consult their Doctor via Telehealth.
- Increasing flexibility within work environments – facilitating working from home (a geologist friend has said this would minimize the need to keep building more roads).
- Examples such as the Turkish police force delivering food packages to vulnerable elderly people in Istanbul during the crisis.

### From a distance, what's one special thing you value

**about school days at Santa?** The enduring friendships and connections especially through music, choir, school plays. Also, a learning environment that helped me feel comfortable expressing my views which enabled a successful transition to University and a belief in the value of life-long learning.





## Loan Lu (Class of 2015)

**What work or study are you currently engaged in, and how has this been impacted by Covid-19?** I am in my final year of studying a Bachelor of Commerce and Law at the Australian Catholic University. I also work as a paralegal at a telecommunications company.

This pandemic has changed the way I learn and interact with lecturers via online learning platforms. It's definitely challenging, but I think everyone's adapted really well.

Completing my final year online was definitely something I never imagined. The last year always is the most hectic, especially with finding graduate jobs and putting yourself out into the corporate world to find the best fit.

**Good bits about 'isolation'?** An amazing opportunity to bond with my three younger siblings. This has brought us closer than ever. My eyesight has taken a hit though, considering the increased screen time with work, uni, Netflix and TikToks.

The chance to take care of my well-being and reassess my goals for the year. Not so much running around.

'Iso' has allowed me to really reach out to those I've lost connection with over the years such as old high school friends or even connecting with my family overseas.

**Challenging bits?** Finding motivation for work and university. It can be difficult to separate work and play when I'm in the comfort of my own home, especially when I'm in my bedroom, where my work/study station is set up.

**This virus has made me think about?** World issues and how various countries have dealt differently with the pandemic. During times like these, being a humble and helpful neighbor is more important than ever.

**This virus has made me so much more appreciative of?** Access to a great healthcare system here in Australia. Those who have risked their lives for the greater good during this time. Also, I've been reminded that sometimes in life, there are things we can't control so perhaps we should really just focus on the present and take each day as it comes.



# Santa Students Supporting Women

Over the last three years, the Year 9 students have participated in an Interdisciplinary Unit on Reproductive Health and Technology. Teachers from Health and Physical Education and Science collaborate on this unit and students learn about Reproductive Health from a health behaviours and scientific perspective.

As part of the Unit, students learn about the very high risks that women in low-economic countries experience when giving birth.

To reduce some of this risk, the students assemble birthing kits which involve the packaging of plastic sheets and gloves, a piece of string and a bar of soap into a small kit. These kits can truly save the lives of women and new-born babies.

The following table shows where the kits were distributed to this year.

Thank you to all the Year 9 Science, and Health and Physical Education teachers who teach this valuable unit.

### Moira Leavold

Learning Leader MYP:  
Health and Physical Education

### Kit Distribution Report

Country	Partner Organisation
India	Development Society for Poor
DR Congo	Green Ark Committee
Papua New Guinea	Living Child Inc.
Papua New Guinea	No Roads - Health
Ethiopia	SHAPEthiopia
DR Congo	Mission in Health Care and Development



# Excellence in the Arts: the tradition continues!



Santa Maria has a long tradition of outstanding achievement in Arts and Design. Our 2019 graduates did not let us down!

As part of her Dance studies, **Harper Trounson** created a brilliant and powerful solo performance called 'Fire'. Harper was one of 24 students from across the state whose performance was selected as a Top Class Dance. Harper was invited to perform 'Fire' at the Melbourne Recital Centre in February.

In the field of Drama, **Daphne Gerolymou-Papadopoulos** created a 7-minute solo performance, 'The Gothic Spirit', for her

final external examination. This was an entertaining yet chilling piece demonstrating strong use of Gothic Theatre, caricature and mood. Daphne reprised her performance in February as part of Top Class Drama at The Playhouse, Arts Centre Melbourne. Daphne was also invited to study drama at the Victorian College of the Arts—an amazing achievement!

**Zavia Lingenti** achieved grades at the highest level in Visual Communication Design. Zavia had participated in the school's Immersion Program to the Philippines and been deeply impacted

by the work of the Good Samaritan Sisters in Bacolod. Her design folio gave expression to this experience and was exhibited at the Top Designs 2020 Exhibition at the Melbourne Museum.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Daphne, Harper and Zavia from the Santa Maria College Community. We are all very proud of you, for all the hard work and dedication you have shown to your studies in the Arts.

**Ms McMenamin, Mr Shannon and Mr Baker on behalf of the entire Santa Maria College Community**



July 2020

WINTER EDITION

## Santa Goes Solar

Current Santa students, Amy Thai and Violet Boltin, both from year 11, fill us in on a large roll out of solar technology at the college.

In a move to become more environmentally friendly Santa Maria has recently installed solar panels across 3 buildings – Polding, Benedictine and Maesbury. This initiative was kickstarted by the College Board and student-led Green Team who last year were heavily involved in the decision making processes. Three Green Team members sat in on the interviews of potential solar energy providers and we Goldilocks-ed our way through three companies before deeming Gippsland Solar 'just right' for the school. Gippsland Solar came out as winner for their high-tech monitoring systems, past experience with schools and preparedness in making information about the solar panels accessible to students.

These solar panels will greatly reduce the electricity consumption of the College. The 298 panels have a total power output capacity of 99.83kW. This is how much energy is needed to run an air conditioner for 33 hours, or charge a phone for 50 years, or have the TV on for 500 hours. The 99.83kW contributes to 31% of the school's electricity needs, equating to 146 tonnes of carbon

dioxide reduction per year. That's the equivalent to the weight of a blue whale worth of CO<sub>2</sub> NOT going in the atmosphere. These solar panels have the same effect of 32 less cars on the road, or 3 less homes using energy each year!

We are currently working with Gippsland Solar to install the Solar Analytics monitoring system which will have a smartphone app and laptop platform so that anyone at school can track how the solar panels are being used at any given time.

After seeing how these solar panels go and how effective they are, perhaps one day all the roofs will be covered in solar panels. Imagine how much less CO<sub>2</sub> we would be emitting and how long we could charge our phones for.





# 2020 Reunions



Class of 1950 - 70+ Year Reunion



Class of 1960 - 60 Year Reunion



Class of 1970 - 50 Year Reunion



Class of 1980 - 40 Year Reunion



Class of 2000 - 20 Year Reunion



Class of 1990 - 30 Year Reunion



Class of 2010 - 10 Year Reunion

## Vale

<b>Marie Moneta</b> (nee Evans)	Class of 1950	8 December 2019
<b>Joan Hoey</b> (nee Moffat)	Class of 1941	1 March 2020
<b>Mary Timbs</b> (nee Cox)	Class of 1968	30 July 2019
<b>June Spence</b> (nee Henderson)	Class of 1942	15 May 2020
<b>Kath Dowling</b> (nee O'Farrell)	Class of 1939	20 April 2020
<b>Joan Murphy</b> (nee O'Farrell)	Class of 1943	8 June 2019
<b>Helen Davis</b> (nee O'Farrell)	Class of 1945	13 February 2019

## Share Your News

We'd love to hear from you and publish your news. Whether it is a recent celebration, a photo with friends or family, or perhaps a significant award or milestone, please send us an email, [kylie.lawtey@santamaria.vic.edu.au](mailto:kylie.lawtey@santamaria.vic.edu.au)



# We Educate Girls!

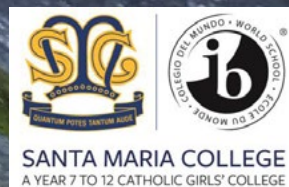


## APPLY NOW FOR YEAR 7 2022

Girls are strong. They are curious about the world. They love working together but also need time alone. When girls feel they belong, they find their voice, connect with others, flourish in their learning.

At Santa Maria we understand girls!

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[www.santamaria.vic.edu.au](http://www.santamaria.vic.edu.au) | @SantaMaria\_Melb



## Dare to Imagine

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