

# S.M.O.C.A

SANTA MARIA OLD COLLEGIANS' ASSOCIATION



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

## From the Principal,

One of my favourite books is Jonathan Livingston Seagull by Richard Bach. Written in 1970, it is a simple story with a profound message, one that came back to my mind as a result of what we have lived through in 2021. The message is that we can all be so much more than we believe. It is a tale of independence, perseverance, resilience, altruism, devotion, dreams, and giving back to society. When the seagull took off into the sky, he decided to push his own boundaries and limits, and in doing so, became so much more than he ever thought he could be; the best version of himself. It was not easy or straightforward. There were many times he felt like giving up, he lost his place in society, and struggled to understand why.

Life is messy and often not easy. Unexpected and unplanned events can derail our best laid plans. 2021 has certainly dished up another year that has tried the patience and resilience of many. In spite of this, the Santa spirit has prevailed. Whilst my time here has only been brief, I have seen and felt the strength of that Santa spirit through the extended periods of lockdown; from staff, our amazing students and the supportive parents we are so blessed to have. What we have been able to achieve as a community of faith and hope is truly remarkable and

inspirational. As you delve into the pages of this SMOCA newsletter, you will see evidence of this tenacity alongside some moments of pure joy, incredible talent and wonderful events that will be stored in our collective memory. All of us should feel proud of what we have been able to achieve across 2021.

Our theme for the year: Stepping in, reaching out; a community of Courage has certainly been lived out in the Santa community. Thank you so much for the warm Benedictine welcome I have been afforded from so many. I have had a number of Santa alumnae come forward and warmly welcome me. Also, I did not realise that many of my friends and colleagues across the years have a connection in some way to Santa Maria College! This has been a source of strength for me during these difficult first months at the College, and reminded me that in spite of the things around us we cannot control, when kindness and patience are extended to one another, anything is possible.

As you reflect on your 2021, on what you have learned about yourself and others, and as you prepare for 2022, remember this:

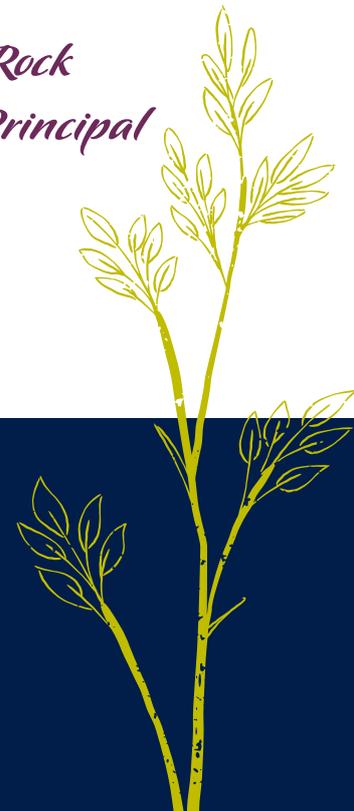
*You have the freedom to be yourself, your true self here and now, and nothing can stand in your way. Jonathan Livingston Seagull.*



As another year concludes and we enter the season of Advent, know my blessings for Christmas and the New Year are with all our past students and families.

Happy Christmas and Peace to All.

*Joanne Rock*  
*College Principal*



# Alumnae News

## An Atmosphere of Strength



### Pat McInerney (Mitchell)

Pat McInerney (Mitchell) is an 81 year old ex-Santa girl who was also the captain of Carmel. Under her watch in 1956 Carmel House won all five cups that year: Religion, Studies, Discipline, Sport, Cleaning Duties! She loved her time at Santa and continues to be proud of the school.

I arrived at Santa in 1953. My two sisters, Margaret and Judy, had preceded me and after hearing their stories about their days at school, I couldn't wait to get there!

During my four years at Santa, Sister Rita Mary was Principal. I still consider her to be one of the great women I have met during my lifetime. Miss Eileen Costigan was the only full time lay teacher at the school. She taught me Australian History in Matric. She was a fabulous teacher, knowledgeable, entertaining - a vibrant addition to our exposure to interesting women. As pupils

we were immersed in an atmosphere of strong women leaders who were dedicated to working with us so we could become the best we could be.

Other lay teachers came in once a week. Mr. Van Baer on a Wednesday night tried to enlighten us to the wonders of Chaucer and the Canterbury Tales. Madam Gaya came for French conversation and Dictee lessons. Simon Meredith taught ballroom dancing and we were fascinated to see him and Sister Rita Mary trip the "Light Fantastic". Miss Hollyoak came for elocution and drama classes.

I loved being at school and I relished all the extra curricular activities, especially performing in the concerts, the inter and intra school sports, the YCS groups run by Sister Jacinta, the Legion of Mary meetings run by Sister Rita, the Friday movies in the hall to raise money for the new buildings.

In 1956, the year I did Matric, there were 17 in our class and Sister Rita Mary was ecstatic. The year before there were only 4! Five from our year went on to university, many others became teachers. This was a huge achievement as most in the grade were from working class families where the higher education of girls was a new phenomenon.

One legacy I value from my time at Santa is the lasting friendships made at school. The Santa connection has been a constant feature throughout my many life stages. Another legacy is my admiration for the current nuns of the Good Samaritan Order who continue to make a difference to the lives of many women and children through their work in the many and varied areas of under privilege both in Australia and several overseas countries.

I hope the spirit of the Good Samaritan Order continues to influence the direction of the school in these days. Compared to my era, the opportunities offered current students to reach their full potential as young women fills me with pride as I see the school progress from strength to strength in every area of education.

## A 'Worthwhile Job'

### Dorothy Butler (Lambert) (Class of 1941)

The college seeks to acknowledge the passing of all ex-students. Along with Pauline Hewatt (Hargreaves), Diane Hubbard (Lyons) and Sr Glenda Bourke SGS, in this SMOCA we pay tribute to Dot Butler who was not only a student at Santa, but also a teacher from 1971 to 1989.

Dorothy's career in teaching reflects the historical flavour of Melbourne during World War 11 and the post-war boom. Jeanette Butler, one of Dot's three daughters who attended Santa, shared with us an excerpt from the family history related to Dot's teaching career. It is on this excerpt that the following is based.

Dorothy received a scholarship to attend Santa Maria College and graduated in 1941 having completed the Leaving Certificate. She was 15 years old and too young to apply for teacher's college, so she took a job at the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories in Parkville until she was able to accept a place at Melbourne Teacher's College in 1943.

Dot was quickly sent off to Gold Street Primary School in Clifton Hill as 'excess staff', a common practice of teacher training in those days. But, it was wartime, there was a shortage of teachers, and rather than simply being an extra pair of hands, she was immediately assigned a class of her own. She would arrive early to light the fire in the classroom so students, especially those without warm clothing, could get some relief from the cold. Breakfast was also provided for those who arrived at school hungry. Dot had a number of such placements throughout 1943 and 1944.

In 1945, back on campus at Melbourne Teachers College, the usual two-week teaching rounds were abandoned and student teachers were sent to country schools for term-long placements. Dot ended up at Shelbourne, in a wooden

school house with 'outhouse' toilets and seven students who ranged from prep to the merit certificate. Dot graduated from Teachers College at the end of that year. She had also attained her Royal Lifesaving Bronze Medallion.

In 1946 Dot accepted a posting to Maldon, boarding with a local family and looking forward to weekend visits from her new fiancé, Louis, whenever he could get up from Melbourne.

Dot and Louis were married in 1947 and began their family, having 5 children over the next 13 years.

In 1964 the local parish priest approached Dot, asking if she would teach a class temporarily until he found a replacement. That 'temporary' position lasted until Dot's retirement in 1989. In that time she taught at St Stephen's Reservoir before moving to Santa Maria in 1971, initially as a year 7 classroom teacher, and then as middle school Science Coordinator, and eventually year 9 Level Coordinator.

During Dot's 19 years at Santa Maria she upgraded her qualifications, enrolling at La



Trobe and graduating with a Bachelor of Education. Her rapport with students was warm and lasting. Dot was a 'selfie magnet' for ex students who crowded around her at Santa reunions, reminding her what an outstanding teacher she was. Her reflection on her teaching career, uttered with characteristic understatement after she attended her final Santa reunion, sums up her humility and grace; 'It is satisfying to think I had a job that was worthwhile'.

The college gives thanks for Dorothy's outstanding contribution to generations of Santa students and staff. We have all been blessed.



Dot is top left with school friends 1941.



Recent photos of Pat at a football event



1955 Pat with friend M Kelly

## 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; [jessica.chahoud@santamaria.vic.edu.au](mailto:jessica.chahoud@santamaria.vic.edu.au)

## Vale

Dorothy Butler (Lambert)	Class of 1941	6 September 2021
Pauline Mary Hewatt (Hargreaves)	Class of 1957	23 June 2021
Diane Hubbard (Lyons)	Class of 1965	31 March 2021
Sr Glenda Bourke SGS	Class of 1957	4 December 2021

# College News

## Welcome Jo Rock, our new College Principal

In July we welcomed our new College Principal, Ms Joanne Rock. Jo comes to us from FCJ Benalla, where she was Principal for 5 years. It must be said that going into lockdown 4 days after beginning a new principalship is not ideal, but as you will see in the fun Q & A below, Jo takes such things in her stride! We wish her every blessing as she begins her journey with us. Our 2021 College Captains, Mia and Rosie, did an online interview with Jo just a week after she took up leadership of the College. We share the transcript of that interview with you.

**What has drawn you to an all girls school like Santa?**

I love teaching and learning, but I'm really super passionate about girls' education, which enables girls to grow and shine and to build confidence and self-belief.

**What was your first job?**

Well, I was a checkout chick at Cole's New World. Shout out to all those checkout chicks. You do a great job.

**What's the best career advice you've heard?**

I've heard lots of career advice, but certainly the things that have stuck with me are: be prepared, work hard and ask for help when you need it.

**What is your go-to karaoke song?**

Without a doubt, it has to be Katie Perry's "Roar", but strictly in the privacy of my own home!

**How would your friends describe you?**

I think they would say that I am very caring as a friend, that I'm very confident and funny, and like a laugh.

**Best travel experience?**

I am a travel junkie. I love to explore the world so choosing just one experience is tough. I've been to Africa, to Tanzania, and spent some time at a school where I sponsor a student going through her secondary education. We also explored the Ngorongoro Crater on an amazing safari. So Africa just pips Iceland, but I've seen lots of incredible places. I've been very lucky.

**One piece of advice for your teenage self?**

I would tell her, hang in there, you are stronger than you think, and you will overcome difficulties as they turn up.

**Did you do anything interesting during lockdown?**

I've worked most days, but I've also acquired some new skills. I learnt to bake bread and to spin wool, and I've taken up knitting again. I've become a bit of a beanie making factory. I spin wool and knit beanies and I give them to family and friends.

**Any fun facts to share with us?**

I take life as it comes. I am a very optimistic person. Glass half full. Silver lining. All that kind of thing. I try to lift the spirits of people around me if their energy is low. I certainly live my life enjoying as much as I can and being grateful for things that come my way.

**Any messages for the Santa community?**

I'm looking forward to meeting as many people as possible. Be patient with me, I'm on a steep learning curve. I'm sort of like a year seven on the first day of school. I've got a lot of things that I have to get my head around, but I'm really so thrilled to be here with everyone and I can't wait to get to know all of you a lot better.

## Congratulations to our 2022 College Leaders

Introducing our College Captains—Julia Capozzo and Livia Lingenti. Please enjoy learning a little more about these two fantastic young women.



**Julia Capozzo**

**Something important everyone should know about you?**

I am terrified of all creepy crawlies and even the smallest spiders scare me! I really value my family and friends and the connection and joy they bring me.

**You win \$10 million dollars. What would you do?**

Definitely donate it to charities that stand up for girls' rights and access to education. The Good Samaritan Inn would also be on the list. And I might just keep some money aside to pay for my future HECS debt!

**What legacy do you hope to leave at Santa?**

I hope I will be remembered for being caring and compassionate, and for giving everything a go. I also hope to encourage others to step out of their comfort zone and be passionate about what the future holds for them.

**Your advice to Year 7s beginning at Santa?**

Never be afraid to ask questions or for support. Whilst it may seem intimidating, there is nothing worse than feeling lost or stuck on a topic. Your teachers are extremely willing to help and support you in any way they can. Try new things, get involved, make new friends, discover a talent or hobby you never knew you had!

**Three words to describe you?**

Organised, genuine and understanding.



**Livia Lingenti**

**Something important everyone should know about you?**

I love and value any opportunity to learn, especially when given a chance to meet new people and listen to their knowledge and experiences. I love to create art, watch AFL (Go Blues!), listen to and play music and I absolutely adore animals!

**You win \$10 million dollars. What would you do?**

I would love to travel and donate money to those in need across the world. I would love to visit the Good Samaritan Kinder School in Bacolod City especially after missing an opportunity to visit this year due to the COVID pandemic.

**What legacy do you hope to leave at Santa?**

I hope Julia and I can continue to foster a compassionate and inclusive school environment. I hope students across the college remember feeling valued, welcomed and given the opportunity to freely voice their opinions and beliefs.

**Advice to Year 7s beginning at Santa?**

Take risks, meet and befriend students from across the college and immerse yourself in the school community. Participating in all the activities on offer provides an avenue to make friends and try new things. Don't be afraid or nervous about making mistakes. Most importantly have fun and remember the whole Santa community is there for you.

**Three words to describe you?**

Friendly, creative and passionate.



## Front Seat at the Barty Party

The College congratulates Melanie Omizzolo on her part in Ash Barty's historic victory at the Wimbledon Women's Singles Championship. Mel, a former Santa student and College Captain, has been Ash Barty's physiotherapist for a number of years and is a central member of her team. We congratulate both Melanie and Ash on this great achievement.

# A Year To Celebrate!

**Margaret Lea (Bird)**

**(Class of 1968)**

It's been 55 years since my last year at Santa. I left after completing my Intermediate Certificate in 1966. I joined the Commonwealth Public Service and began my career as a Typist and Stenographer at the Bureau of Meteorology Melbourne, in the Drafting Section, where I also met my future husband. It was an office almost entirely made up of men. I settled in well, but after almost three years, I transferred to Telecom in the Computer Section, typing computer programmes. I then worked in a huge typing pool of 40 or so women at the Bureau of Census and Statistics, typing huge columns of figures – so tedious!

I was so privileged to then be chosen as one of four typists to work at the International Telecommunications Conference in 1970, which was held at the Southern Cross Hotel. We typed in English and French for the delegates who came from all over the world. Then along came a Typist in Charge position in the Research Dept of Telecom,

followed by a Clerical Assistant position at Australia Post in the Forms Design Section.

In 1971, I got married and our first child came along in 1973. I left work to focus on my family. I only worked 6 years in the Public Service, but I enjoyed my time there and the many opportunities which came my way.

In March of this year, my husband, Jeff and I celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary with our three children. I also turned 70, a great milestone! Because of Covid-19, we had a small family celebration at our home.

This year is also 50 years since my favourite teacher, Sister Thaddeus passed away. She was my fourth form teacher (Yr 10), who also taught our class Religious Knowledge, Geography, English Expression and Literature. Sister taught me to be true to myself, to aspire to be my best and to always pick up the pen. "The pen is mightier than the sword" was her motto.



I have been chronically ill for the past 30 years. As a result, I am often homebound and bedbound a great deal. When I get too downhearted, Sister Thaddeus whispers in my ear, "Go to the Psalms, Margaret!" And I do just that.

It certainly was a magical time at Santa in the 1960's. My memories are so special. It's as if I was there only yesterday.

# Putting Lockdown to Good Use

Pat Walsh, human rights activist, writer, Northcote local, and long-time member of the Santa community, put last year's long lockdown to good use by 'digging up the story of his street and his suburb'. The resulting book, 'A Window on our Street: Sondering through COVID-19 in Northcote', was published last year, and is a great read.

Go to Pat's website [www.patwalsh.net](http://www.patwalsh.net) for more information. Pat and his partner Annie Keogh had three daughters at Santa in the 1990s and early 2000s, and gifted the College the white, and much utilised, baby grand piano that resides in the music rooms.



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# Santa Maria Fundraising Wrap

A good news story! Through the generosity of staff and the involvement of families doing the 'Walk with Love' activity on Santa Maria Day, the school community raised just over \$10,000! All money raised goes directly to our wider Good Samaritan family in Bacolod City, Philippines. With the extended closure of the Kindergarten due to COVID-19, Sr Anne Dixon and the team have been heavily involved in a food relief program. Well done one and all!



# Santa Maria College

## 2022 ANNUAL REUNION

SUNDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2022

2.00PM – 4.00PM

*A celebration for past students from all Year groups.*

THESE PLANS ARE PENDING COVID RESTRICTIONS, MORE INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE IN 2022.



# Girls. Future Ready!

## WE EDUCATE GIRLS

A caring and inclusive school encouraging girls to be fearless in their learning and engage confidently with the world.

Dare to Imagine

50 Separation St, Northcote VIC 3070

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