Dear Parents and Friends of St Paul's,

The Year in Review - As we close in on the end of the 2012 year, I would just like to say thank you to all the children, parents and staff for their support. This year has been quite momentous for St Paul's. Through the financial support of the Parish Community, the BER and Catholic Capital Grants funds, we completed just on $6million worth of capital improvements to the school over four years. These improvements have allowed us to provide facilities that enormously enhance each child’s learning - art lessons, assemblies, indoor sport when it is raining, confidential spaces for discussions with school personnel, a welcoming entrance, a car park that allows us safer access to and from school and many other additional activities/necessities can now take place. We have space to support the growth in numbers that is occurring at our school and our future is assured.

Our focus on Religious Education in 2012 has been to reintroduce the children to regular Class Masses, to improve the quality of our RE programs throughout the school and to show that formal prayer can be part of our lives as evidenced by the prayers we pray when we gather together each day at dismissal and our praying of The Angelus at 12 noon each day. This year we welcomed Judy Springfield who supported our Sacramental programs with entertaining and informative parent/children preparation evenings. Next year Paul Spence will be returning to support our Sacramental programs. During our 2013 classroom programs we will be placing a lot of emphasis on the place of informal prayer in our lives.

In 2012 we say goodbye to both Mrs Alfie Colosi and Mrs Marguerita Kavanagh. We welcome Ms Melanie Gleeson and Mr Edward Faraci to our team. We are very excited at the prospect of introducing the Music/Drama program with Edward, and Melanie will be taking over a Senior Grade as well as supporting our school community in her role as Religious Education Coordinator.

Our results across the board have been very pleasing in the area of NAPLAN and Early Years Literacy. These two elements are used to report the level of achievement of our school and inform our staff of the improvements we need to make, particularly in the areas of Mathematics and Literacy. By the end of 2012 over 90% of our Year 1 children are reading at level 26 and above. In comparison, like schools of similar Socio Economic Status on average achieved just over 52% and All Schools across the State achieved just on 53% reading at Level 26 and above. In regards to Naplan I would like to direct you to the following website - http://www.theaustralian.com.au/australia-affairs/in-depth/your-school/interactive#search. Through this site you can discover how much every school in Australia spends per child and where these funds come from and then compare the Naplan results for up to five schools at a time.

Our school compares most favourably with a number of private schools where the expenditure per child is far greater than ours. In the area of learning, we have targeted 2013 as a year when we will be working to improve the Maths and Literacy skills of each child, particularly in the middle years. We will take exciting new approaches to classroom organisation in the Year 1-2 area and, as always, we will strive to provide you with the best of evidence based reporting and assessment, allowing us to accurately track every child’s development and use that information to inform us of the teaching and learning approaches we must use to ensure continued improvement. Now that we have facilities that better support community gatherings, we started 2012 with a Bush Dance evening and through a lot of hard work by Jacquie Mancuso, Carmel Alberti and a strong support team, we ran a very successful Market Night in November. Our Fundraising Group continues to raise much needed finance that is used to pay off our Playground loan, support the Graduation with a school choir and supply other equipment used by the children. We have seen the Multipurpose Room used by the newly formed Craft Group and there promises to be much more exciting Community Involvement when we hold our Fete on Sunday March 24th 2013. A committed group of parents with the support of staff have been working hard to organise the Fete. From Day 1 in 2013 we need every family to support our Fete in some way. It promises to be a great day and the funds raised will go towards our Information Technology Improvement Plan. Already we have spent $11000 to provide Interactive Whiteboards for the Year 1-2 rooms and it is our hope that we can provide another four to the remaining classrooms and specialist areas as well as provide wireless access across the school and introduce tablet technology to the Senior Classes.

It is hoped that the funds raised by the Fete plus part of the school fee increases can be used to achieve this over the next couple of years.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to all the very talented and supportive staff at St Paul’s. Behind the scenes they do so much. Their work makes the school run the same way as a duck swims – a duck looks very peaceful and calm on the surface of the water but underneath it is paddling like mad, putting in an awful lot of work where it cannot be seen. Special thanks to Mrs Pat, Marilena, Fiona and, for a few terms, Pip Bourke in the office, assisting with all parts of Administration. We are very lucky to have such a dedicated and calm Vice Principal in Pat. On many occasions she will be the person who will listen to and support children, parents and staff when there are difficulties.

I trust that everyone will have a very holy and joyous Christmas with their families, that the children returning and beginning at St Paul’s will rest well for the adventures 2013 will bring and that our departing Year Sixes will have a very smooth transition into the next stage of their school life.

All the best, Paul
DATES TO REMEMBER

Tuesday 18th December—Graduation Mass 7.00 pm
Wednesday 19th December—Seniors Day out, Prep—4 Picnic
Thursday 20th December—End of Year Mass 11.30 am
Thursday 20th December—End of School 12.30 pm
Wednesday 30th January—First Day of School
Thursday 31st January—First Day of School for Preps

Farewell St. Paul’s

Just a short message in reflecting on the past 19 years, I firstly give thanks to God for all that I have achieved at St. Paul’s. I thank you Paul our leader who has journeyed with me, believing in me, allowing me to have the opportunities to experience success in all that I did here at St. Paul’s.

Along this journey I have found many great heartfelt members of the community of St. Paul’s who have taught me about Love, Faith and Hope. These include the wonderful staff, parents, parish members and foremost the students who I have had the pleasure to teach.

I am trying to stay focused on Leo Buscaglia’s words of wisdom “Change. It has the power to uplift, to heal, to stimulate, open new doors, bring fresh experience and create excitement in life. Certainly it is worth the risk.’ This is hard as St. Paul’s has been a home away from home for a very long time.

The last words of wisdom from me to you all is one of my favourite blessings.

May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind be ever at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face and the rain fall softly on your fields. And until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hands.

With much love and hugs

Mrs Alfie Colosi