

Spring 2009

RMC NOW



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//FORMING THE PERSON,
TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD

From the Master

Dear RMC Alumni and Friends

'You just cannot beat the life-changing experience of living away from home at a residence university'. Many readers of RMC Now will identify with this statement from Professor James Allan at the University of Queensland. We know about this from our own experience of College life, an experience described by Alan Gilbert, Vice-Chancellor of Manchester University, as living in 'multi-layered, close-knit, highly interactive learning communities'. And so it may not be a surprise that 'Engaging College Communities'*, a June 2009 report from ACER drawing on data from the Australasian survey of Student Engagement, found many positives arising from residential college life. Students living in residences are often more engaged in active learning and enriching experiences and report greater learning, development and satisfaction. The study found that the residential college cohort tends to be younger, in their first year of study, from a provincial area, studying fulltime or an international student than the general university population. All of these characteristics apply to the RMC cohort. And while our commitment to scholarship extends across both undergraduate and graduate fields we are not socially or educationally elitist. This issue of RMC Now focuses on the way RMC is supporting our members **'Engaging Students, Enriching Experience'**.

Welcome and please read on



Chris Bellenger
Master

* To read this report yourself, visit www.rmc.org.au and follow the link.

community life@RMC

Auld Lang Syne

Finishing the End of Semester Dinner according to tradition – hands linked singing Auld Lang Syne.



Courtyard run

Jesse Stevenson finished first in the Inaugural Courtyard Challenge and established the record for the 320m race with a time of 39s.



Engagement!

Former Residential Tutors Nick Stolk and Katrina Roberts recently announced their engagement – Congratulations!



Talent Quest

RMC Talent Quest judges: Rueben Williams, Gail Sequeira & Andy Seo.



Hadfield's visit

Former RMC Chaplain, Ian Hadfield and his wife Narelle visited RMC to discuss their work in Indonesia with RMC and Trinity Chapel members.



Basketball

RMC takes a penalty shot in the game against DLC.



Supporting: *Sporting Excellence*



SIMON MASSEY

Simon was just five years old when he picked up his first hockey stick – and he's barely put it down since! Thriving on the pace, energy and tactics of the game, Simon has gone from playing for his hometown of Tamworth, to playing fullback in the Sydney Premier League for the number three ranked Gordon North Sydney 1st grade team, and

now to his latest achievement – playing for the NSW Open Country Hockey Team. The National Country Championships were held in August on Simon's home turf – Tamworth. The NSW Country team won the competition, defeating Western Australia in the Final. On top of this sweet victory, Simon's performance earned him a place in the Australian Country Team. Apart from graduating from an Economics degree at the end of this year, Simon, who is a Residential Tutor at RMC, is getting married in January – congratulations and we wish you all the best Simon!



GON GUN KIM

The last RMC Now featured 26 year old Gon, a BBA student originally from Korea, and the NSW champion in the under-81kg division in Judo. We reported that Gon was on his way to the National Championships in Canberra, which he competed in during June. We are very proud to announce that Gon is now placed **FIRST** in Australia! Congratulations Gon – we are privileged to be mixing with Australia's best!

"Australia's best!"

RMC: Supporting *Service*

A day in Peru as a volunteer

Robert Menzies College was glad to sponsor Ruth Tan, one of our Residential Tutors, to participate in the Macquarie Volunteers Abroad Program in Peru this July. Read her diary entry for one day in Peru as a volunteer.

Another day waking up early just to realize that I will be having yet another cold shower in the Volunteer House. That did not dampen my spirit though. The past few weeks I have been embraced with so many different sights and wonders of Peruvian culture and scenery. Counting the blessings I was showered upon, I believe THIS is the very experience I have been looking forward to since I was told to prepare for the volunteering project in the rural community of Huatata in Cusco, Peru. Early breakfast in the House was a nice thing to start the day. My team mates eventually managed to get themselves out of the comfy bed and put on our team T-shirt 'Peru's Challenge', getting ready to another day of teaching lessons to the kids in the primary school in Huatata and more hours of construction work to renovate an abandoned building to a kitchen-come-workshop area.

We walked for approximately 15 minutes from the Volunteer house to Urubamba bus station and took a local bus to Huatata. The journey to the school on the bus was a nice one. Had closer contact with the Peruvians and saw a few Peruvian mothers who piggybacked their babies or goods with a piece of cloth tied to their back - it just amazed me. I wonder how they do it. I haven't learnt the secret. Scenery along the way to the school is again, amazing! Snow-peaked Andean mountains and different shades of colours of soil on the ploughed farms are sceneries I enjoy all the time during the 40 minute bus trip.

We resumed our daily routine of doing some construction work in the morning. So far we have finished the ceiling with bamboo sticks forming an insulation barrier for the building and the workers are putting on white plaster. Today we start to paint

the walls of the school and then the comidor (kitchen). We were often being visited on site by the kids from the school next door when they are having their 15 minute break between classes. It's always an enjoyable experience to mingle with the kids and share our laughter together. What more joy can you receive than to see laughter from the heart?

Around 12pm, the team will break into groups to give lessons to the kids: English, Arts, Music and Dance (and after an hour, all grades will combine to have hygiene and health lessons). Our volunteering work ended around 2pm and we head home on the bus. Lunch at 3pm is always being looked forward to as most of us will be very hungry by then. After having lunch cooked by a Peruvian chef, we proceed to our assigned Spanish lesson group to learn some Spanish for about an hour or two.

Ideally, volunteers have their free time at night and I planned to do some readings about Peru and revision for Spanish lessons. But things don't always work as planned and most of the time I end up in bed quite early to get some rest for another fresh start, thinking about the whole experience of being in Peru, experiencing Peruvian hospitality and culture, the contribution we are trying to give to the rural community of Huatata and the little things we could do to help build a better world for others.



Ruth Tan (far right) on location in Peru as a Macquarie University Volunteer.

Supporting: *Higher learning*



Carlo Bradac

from Italy is working with the Department of Physics and is studying the characterisation of Nitrogen-Vacancy centres in diamond nanocrystals. Among other applications to the life sciences, this research may prove significant in the development of quantum technologies.



Tiina Tosens

from Estonia is working with the Department of Biology; Comparative Ecology Group, and is researching the effect of leaf anatomy on the rate of photosynthesis.



Shaneel Chandra

from Fiji is working with the Department of Chemistry and Biomolecular Sciences and is developing microelectrodes for detecting dopamine in the brain.



Hannah Blackwell

from Australia has recently completed her Masters Thesis, *From Historical Event to Violence: the Cycle of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*.

Supporting *students*

“For the love of *learning*”

By Vicky Deane, Student Services
and Conference Manager, RMC

Supporting Students *Academically*



Name: Wen Xun Chan **Age:** 21
Hometown: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Course: Master of Commerce in Actuarial Studies
Position: Academic Coordinator

Description: At RMC, Wen Xun is in charge of the Academic Assistance Program and all the Academic Tutors. This involves coordinating a team of five to run tutorials for Business and Finance students six nights a week, as well as being on call for any urgent academic needs. Although the work can be time consuming and difficult when students ask for the impossible, Wen Xun enjoys the opportunity being an Academic Tutor provides for meeting and working with people from across the world – and it always helps him to revise old material too!

Supporting Students *Personally*



Name: Jo Dear Gan **Age:** 23
Hometown: Putrajaya, Malaysia
Course: Bachelor of Economics with Honours
Position: Residential Tutor

Description: Jo Dear Gan has been a Residential Tutor for almost two years, a position which is centered on supporting students personally. This role involves many things including pastoral care, academic assistance, helping students to be involved in community life, and arranging fun activities like block suppers. Some of the challenges of being an RT include enforcing discipline amongst friends, understanding cultural differences and coping in emergencies, but for Jo Dear the benefits far outweigh the negatives. She finds that one of the highlights of being an RT is the opportunity to meet and mingle with so many different people, and she says she studies more now that she is a tutor than she did before!

Supporting Students *Spiritually*



Name: Scott Blackwell **Age:** 48
Hometown: Brisbane, Australia –
but currently living in D Flat at RMC
Position: Pastor/Chaplain

Description: As Chaplain to RMC and Pastor to TCM, Scott's job is centered on supporting students spiritually. And how does he do this? Prayer! Prayer for exams, for study application, for diligence, for personal relationships, for family, for loneliness, for homesickness... the list goes on! Another large part of Scott's role is to teach the Word of God in Chapel and in Small Groups; to encourage people to read, think about and study the bible; and to be available to have pastoral conversations about anything that's on people's minds. On top of all this, he also supports students on campus as the Anglican Chaplain at Macquarie University. The opportunity to develop close relationships and to challenge people to think in new directions are just some of the things Scott loves about his role.

My favourite poet/writer is the Lebanese born Kahlil Gilbran. One of his comments goes like this: “The teacher, if he is indeed wise does not teach or bid you to enter the house of wisdom but leads you to the threshold of your own mind.” - Kahlil Gilbran.

Studying my bachelor's degree had been a life long (elusive) dream. That dream became a turnaround from wanting to acquire a degree - for the sake of a degree - to an experience I had no idea would be part of that dream: a passion for learning. The term 'learning' may seem like a simplistic and obvious commentary to make if one is studying a degree – it is after all why one embarks on tertiary education, but, does the passion elude some? Does obtaining that qualification become so all-consuming that the beauty and depth of what we learn becomes scratched and etched with the markings of stress and fear over failure or success?

My academic learning experience was like being plopped directly onto the pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. The colours of learning and enquiry burst down on me as I entered a world of a thousand corridors, with a thousand rooms filled with new discoveries: literature, history, writing, management practices, world religions, sociologies, folklore, and so much more. It was not only the new information, but how each part of it seemed to fit in some mysterious way - like a jigsaw puzzle of the globe. In our youth some achievements come as an expectation and right. Education is a right, but it is also a privilege, and a privilege to be shared around and used well. Will this piece of paper with 'Bachelor of Arts' beautifully inscribed on its face, change my day to day living? Maybe it won't change anything for me, or maybe it will; the future remains unknown – as it should. That which has changed is what learning has done for the inner spirit: fulfilment, exposure, achievement, and, experiences which have been influenced by the passion for acquiring knowledge.

I completed my degree in June 2009. That elusive dream turned around to become a reality. Academic learning is like the mortar in a brick wall – it cements together practical living experiences, the bricks of life. My passion for learning will never cease because the teacher has taken me to the threshold of my own mind.

Association dinner: *coming soon*

The RMC Alumni & Friends Association Dinner is only two months away. Please note Friday 30th October in your diaries and look forward to an encouraging evening of meeting with familiar faces, gaining a fresh insight into the present life of the College and its future direction, and a chance to hear our Special Guest Speaker Patrick Cole. A formal invitation is on its way.



RMC
ROBERT MENZIES COLLEGE

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