

## *Tena Koutou Katoa* - Greetings to all parents and caregivers

Kia Ora Tatou,

In the office here at school there are some really wonderful old daily journals that were written by previous principals between 1897 and 2002. It's a real treasure-trove of interesting material, stories and history of how we got to be where we are now. As a bit of a history-nut I have trawled over them and enjoyed reading them.

There are many, many things that stand out, but one that is particularly pertinent right now are the stories of sickness and epidemics. Typhoid, Diphtheria, Polio, Influenza are the main ones. Although these diseases have been somewhat eliminated, they are still incredibly bad - we modern people have just forgotten how bad they could be for us and our children. Imagine how much of a nightmare they must have been back then, before modern medicines and treatments. School was closed for long periods of time, repeatedly. Tragically, whole families were hit, sometimes with children being permanently affected, or worse. Words like *isolation*, *sanitising*, *hospitalisation* and *testing* were new words then, and are very familiar to us now.

I found reading these diaries fascinating, and it was interesting to know how many times these terrible diseases came back through the community.

It is comforting to know that what we're dealing with at the moment is nothing new under the sun. People before us have had to handle big problems, and we will handle them too. People before had their lives turned upside down, put on hold repeatedly, and we may feel like this too. It is good to know that humans together can, and do, support each other, and know that as individuals, like our forebears, we can handle this current pandemic and its disruption too.

Have a great week,  
Alastair & the 'H' Team.

### **Casino Night Awesomeness:**

Many thanks to the wonderful team of PTA and helpers, who made Friday night's Casino Evening a great success. It was really wonderful for the community to be given this opportunity to get together and imagine what a billion dollars might look like! Congratulations to the high-rollers and spot-prize winners on the night.

### **PJ Day Funds for Ronald McDonald House:**

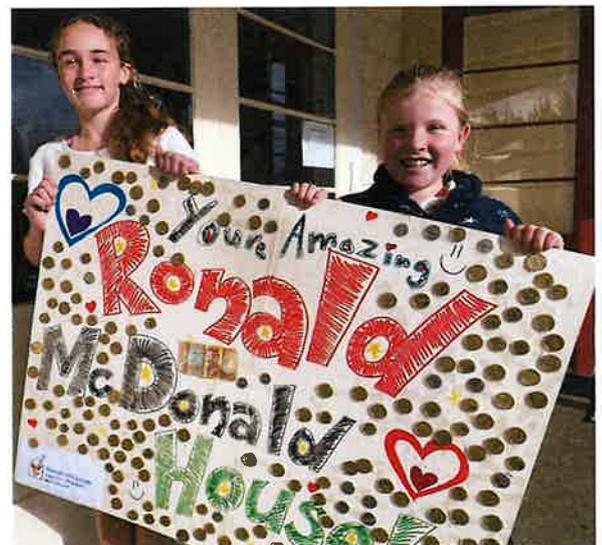
At last Thursday's PJ Day we raised the very impressive sum of \$306! Dressing up was fun and easy, but the amount raised will make a difference for the kids and parents when they need Ronald McDonald House. Chloe gave a beautiful description of its importance to everyone, so we are happy and proud to be supporting this charity. Well done Halcombe School!

### **Mid-Year Reports:**

Teachers are currently updating their assessment records and writing straight-forward reports that will go home at the end of Week 9. These will state, very simply, how your child is progressing. These reports will be accurate, and based on up-to-date information.

### **Student Council News:**

Some of you may not know about our Student Council. All our Year 8 students are part of this team, and plan events that are fun and inclusive. This year, the Year 8s have organised Wheels Day, Spider Day, PJ Day, and they are looking forward to organising the disco in a few weeks. They also take a lead role in inter-house events. Every year, the Council raises money, and are then able to decide what to spend the money on.



Recent purchases include the trampolines, school drone, library seating, trees, the wooden seat outside the library, sculptures for the garden, and our portable basketball hoops. They have just spent \$1,000 on something very exciting too - it's Top Secret at the moment. We'll let you know the details soon!

### **Matariki**

Although Matariki has been celebrated for centuries, this year marks our first modern celebration as a nation. It is exciting for everyone. As a staff we have learned some interesting things about Matariki from a Te Ao Māori perspective. This time is recognised by Māori as the beginning of Māori calendar, based on the stars, sun and moon (just like many civilisations around the world before us).

The nine stars of the Matariki cluster each represent an important aspect of life:

- Matariki is the star that signifies reflection, hope, our connection to the environment, and the gathering of people. Matariki is also connected to the health and wellbeing of people.
- Waitī is associated with all fresh water bodies and the food sources that are sustained by those waters.
- Waitā is associated with the ocean, and food sources within it.
- Waipuna-ā-rangi is associated with the rain.
- Tupuānuku is the star associated with everything that grows within the soil to be harvested or gathered for food. Tupuārangi is associated with everything that grows up in the trees: fruits, berries, and birds.
- Ururangi is the star associated with the winds.
- Pōhutukawa is the star associated with those that have passed on.
- Hiwa-i-te-rangi is the star associated with granting our wishes, and realising our aspirations for the coming year.

Seeing the whole cluster of Matariki and observing how clearly each star can be seen gives us some insight into what may come in the following year, but it is also a time as individuals and families, that we can farewell those who have passed on in the last year and release them, as well as look to the future, our hopes, goals and dreams.

We are planning an event to celebrate as a whole school on June 30th - look out for the note next week. Make sure you ask your children about what they are learning about Matariki too!

