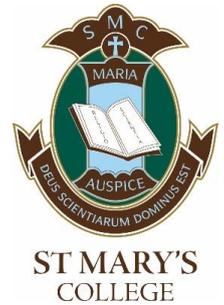


MEDIA RELEASE

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Championing the spirit of diversity.

There was a pop of orange at St Mary's College recently as students joined their hearts and hands together for the school's annual Harmony Day celebrations.

With more than 10 per cent of Tasmanian residents born outside Australia, event organiser Nicky Wakefield said it was important for students to recognise, and celebrate, the benefits of a multicultural society.

"At St Mary's College it's important that Harmony Day's message, 'everyone belongs', is voiced," Mrs Wakefield said.

"Our aim is to enable students to make connections between the Catholic social teachings of compassion, solidarity and dignity, and how we can take positive action to create an inclusive environment.

"For us, Harmony Day also focused on the Matthew's Gospel teachings of loving your neighbour as yourself and treating our worldly neighbours as equals.

"By celebrating this message at the College, it allows us a glimpse of what we are capable of as a community, and a society."

In celebration of Tasmania's multicultural society, which has come as a result of welcoming migrants into the Australian community, Year 6 students held a Migration Exhibition where students showcased migrants' diverse cultural traditions.

Year 6 student Lucy McKenna said that celebrating Harmony Day was all about recognising the influences of other countries that together make Australia multicultural and diverse.

"Our grade put on a display about different cultures and their influence in Australia, and we had a big assembly where we had two men do a Chinese dance for us, and we talked about the importance of different cultures," Lucy said.

"My favourite thing about Harmony Day was setting up the displays because it was a really good teamwork project and we kept on finding out new things about different countries.

"We're Australian - what makes us diverse is that we have a lot of migrants and refugees," Lucy said.

The College's Junior School students were treated to a special line-up of activities, which included a traditional Welcome to Country, given by two Aboriginal students, kite flying, Chinese dragon and lion dances, and the Year 6s' cultural migration exhibition.

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