Message from Fr Steve Curtin SJ, Jesuit Provincial, Australian Province

“After the highs and lows of the College’s inaugural year, it was most gratifying to hear from my Education Delegate, Father Chris Gleeson, that the new school year has begun very well.

At the first Jarjum College Council meeting on February 20th, Councillors were delighted to have Principal Fran McCarthy introduce to them the new staff beginning in 2014 and experience first hand their passion and competence for their work. Each of the new staff spoke warmly to Council for some 5-10 minutes about their hopes for their ministry in the school. I understand that the work of the College Council often goes unheralded, but I am very aware also that Redfern Jarjum College is much blessed to have the leadership of School Council Chair, Eric Goodwin AM, and Council members working alongside him – Graeme Mundine, Elizabeth O’Carrigan, Ailsa Gillett OAM, David Green, Fathers Pat Mullins SJ, Peter Hosking SJ, Chris Gleeson SJ, Father Melvin Llabanes PP, and Aunty Beryl Van-Oploo.

Already there are some good news stories of Redfern Jarjum College providing a safe and happy place for students and successfully transitioning several of them to mainstream schooling. It is my fervent hope and prayer that these good news stories will multiply as the College becomes stronger by the day.”

Fr Steve Curtin SJ Provincial
We knew that there was something bigger than ourselves and our law and custom revolved around the Creator. Jesus Christ reminds us of the importance of these practices which are already in our cultures. To be Christian is to be stronger in our belief in the Creator, as it reminds us of the right way to live.

Deacon Boniface Perdjert describes it as follows:

"God has asked us to love Him with our whole mind, heart and soul. So I must give myself to God as an Aboriginal. That is what God wants or else he would not have made me what I am. Really it is the only way I can go about it.

When I read the gospels, I read them as an Aboriginal. There are many things in the gospel that make me happy to be an Aboriginal because I think we have a good start. So many of the things that Christ said and did, and the way he lived, make me think of the good things in our way of life…"

"We find it easy to see in Christ the great dreamtime figure who, more than all the others, gave us law and ceremony and life centres, and marked out the way we must follow to reach our true country… So it is not difficult to realise that Christ is with us always…the same yesterday, today and forever."

These words embody the spirit of our work at Jarjum College, as we seek to blend Christianity and Aboriginal spirituality together, to give our children confidence in themselves and a strong moral and educational foundation for the future. I hope that you will join us on this journey and help to make it a positive and productive one for our community.

Graeme Mundine
Executive Officer, Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
Member of Redfern Jarjum College Council
Chair of RJC Aboriginal Advisory Group

From Eric Goodwin AM, Chair of College Council

Dear Friends of Jarjum,

We are well into our second year and our mission to help educate some of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children of Redfern is becoming a reality.

In a day to day sense Jarjum relies on many people; our teaching staff, our volunteers, and you, our sponsors and donors.

We have many volunteers who provide education support, counselling services and food preparation and catering to our children. We collect our children in a bus, provide breakfast, morning and afternoon tea and lunch in between.

All of this helps support our teaching program for the children, aimed at them reaching a level of competence in numerical, literacy and social skills to a level where they can transition to and take their place in a mainstream school.

Our mission is very worthy but is expensive relative to a normal school.

Our yearly budget is approximately $600,000 per year of which we receive approximately $300,000 from the Federal and State Governments. This still means that we need to raise $300,000 per year.

We thank you sincerely for your continued support.

As you are aware Fr Steve Curtin’s term as Provincial comes to an end at the end of July. I would like to record my and our thanks for the support Fr Steve has given Jarjum from the outset and wish him well in his next role.

Kind regards
Eric Goodwin AM

2014 at Redfern Jarjum College

Principal’s Report

We started Redfern Jarjum’s second year with 16 children, two new teachers and a new receptionist with Ray and Amanda. It is a strong new team to take on the challenges of 2014, carrying on the amazing work put in by everyone from last year. The first few days we did a lot of talking about what Jarjum represented and what were our goals and vision. We examined our mission statement and brained stormed how this could be put into practise on a daily basis. It was a lively debate on culture and spirituality, on reality and expectations. After much deliberation we refined our vision to two simple statements

‘Be Deadly. Be Present”

This statement is represented by a tree that we are building on in our gathering room wall. We talked to the children about the growing culture of Redfern Jarjum and what this meant to them. Uncle Ray led everyone through the process of choosing a tree to represent our school and he began the painting on the wall, guiding the children to contribute their thoughts and ideas. At the moment we have solid roots and the tree is slowly growing.

Each day brings a new range of achievements and challenges. These achievements are sometimes only small but significant. A regular attendance from the majority of children is encouraging. There are conversations about games and ideas for activities from the children. The girls organised a “girls night in” which gave them an opportunity to dress up and share a meal with the teachers and volunteers. One of our young Elders organised a colouring competition in which he donated one of his own books as a prize. Each child is working on their personal goals supported by some very dedicated volunteers. We have begun a garden. The children enjoy swimming each week and were all able to enjoy snorkelling at Clovelly on the last day of term. The Story Factory comes in each week to write imaginative stories with the children. There is also Capoeira and hip hop dancing. Each week some artists join us for the afternoon.

The aim of this rich programme is to promote a love of learning in and out of the classroom. To show everyone the range of possibilities life has to offer.
OUR STAFF

Principal - Fran McCarthy
Fran is the Principal of Redfern Jarjum College where her vision is to create an open learning environment for the Aboriginal community of Redfern where everyone feels welcome and safe, and where the children are nurtured and challenged academically.
Fran brings a diverse range of working experiences in education in New Zealand, Uganda, Nepal and India and most recently at Currambena School a Lane Cove in Sydney. Fran has expertise in communication, conflict resolution and literacy skills, and will soon complete her Masters’ Degree in Education Psychology.

Aboriginal Liaison Officer and Teachers’ Assistant - Raymond Smith
Uncle Ray is our school Elder and has been involved in Jarjum since its opening. He has been an educator since 1980, and began his career in Woodenbong in Northern NSW. Ray has taught three generations of children and in returning to Redfern, where he spent his childhood, looks forward to a long future with Jarjum. He wants each child to develop independence and skills through education, enabling them to enter the workforce and thrive. He also wants them to be able to make positive choices for themselves and their people.
Ray is a renowned artist and has pleasure in passing on his artistic talents to the Jarjum children.

Teacher for upper primary children - Lijana Poga
Lijana moved to Redfern at the commencement of 2014 and was very happy when the Jarjum children took her on a tour of their favourite spots in the area.
She grew up in Dubbo where she developed a love for the country. She studied at the Charles Sturt University and has taught in Cebu, in the Philippines, returning to Australia to teach in an Aboriginal community in Wilcannia and then to Denistone in Sydney teaching the gifted and talented.
Lijana believes that each child is a gift and that it is her privilege as a teacher to develop a child’s strengths and offer support on their learning journey.

Teacher for lower primary children - Kali Samuels
Kali has been teaching for twenty years in many areas of education. Since 2005, Kali has been in remote Aboriginal communities in the Kimberleys, Wave Hill/Darguragu (desert) to north-east Arnhem Land. She can speak and understand a few Indigenous languages.
Kali’s strengths as a teacher are music, art and English as an additional language, play and experimental based learning, along with experience working with Aboriginal children and their families.
Kali will be working towards helping the children to gain knowledge and skills that build their abilities as students for mainstream schooling. She believes an ‘holistic’ approach can foster a ‘love for learning’ that can be placed in the heart of a child to remain as a flame throughout adult life.

Teachers’ Assistant - Amanda Morgan
A fourth generation Redfern/Waterloo resident, Amanda has been with Jarjum since its opening and brings with her a vast knowledge of the area’s history and the challenges of the local community. She has provided a range of administrative and office support to Jarjum staff, and now assists with the younger group of children.
Amanda wants children to leave Jarjum with a purpose and to be able to look forward to something and not become a statistic.

Teachers’ Assistant - Nichola Heffernan
Nicci became a qualified adult student with a Bachelor of Teaching in New Zealand in 2012.
During her time in Australia, she has worked in children’s services for the City of Sydney Council with a primary focus on areas with high numbers of Aboriginal students, including Redfern/Waterloo and Surry Hills.
Nicci joined the team at Jarjum in early March 2014. Prior to the above working experiences, Nicci was a professional musician.

Administrator - Kim Hill
Kim is a Dhanghutti woman who joined Jarjum as the Administrator in January 2014. Kim, a trained primary school teacher, has had wide and varied experience across education sectors from primary to tertiary teaching, as well as in administration. She has worked in the Catholic sector for many years and has gained, through experience, a
sound understanding of Catholic Education from her time with the Catholic Education Commission, as well as through the Catholic Education Office for the Archdiocese of Sydney. Kim has several degrees and has recently gained a Masters of Art from the University of New South Wales, CoFA campus Paddington and believes that education is the key to a life fulfilled. Kim believes that Redfern Jarjum College can make a tangible difference for the students by providing rich and varied opportunities to grow, master skills, gain confidence and to know that they can be whatever they want to be, with choices that are their own.

Sr Mary McDonnell RSJ
Mary is a Sister of St Joseph who has returned to Sydney (the place of her birth) after living and ministering for the past eight years in Warmun, a remote Aboriginal community in the Kimberley. Her involvement was in teaching and pastoral care in Ngalangangpum (a Catholic school) but was regularly called upon in the community in her role as a Justice of the Peace. Before she left for the Kimberley, Sr Mary taught in schools around Sydney and South Australia.
Mary has brought her many talents and abilities to Jarjum in pastoral care, teaching, administration and even as bus driver!

Ian Pavey, volunteer, together with the Jarjum children, has planted a garden, made wooden cubby houses and prepared a special BBQ lunch.

Gayl Hardaker, Volunteer ‘Our volunteers’ generosity is at the heart of Jarjum activities’.

We need your ongoing support to enable RJC to shine

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Graphic Banner designed by Cecile Jestin