

# Northlakes High School Newsletter

*"Opportunities for future success"*



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Issue 4 Term 2 Week 10

Wednesday, December 12, 2012

## From our Principal Ms Merrilyn Rowley

2012 has finished very successfully....students supported The McGrath Foundation by holding a 'Pink Day', incorporating a cake stall, a concert and activities organised by our Student Representative Council. Students have recently participated in Schools' Spectacular, a University visit, excursions and special events, such as Mock Interviews and Ancient History Day. Boys interested in learning bricklaying have constructed a great barbecue near our Hospitality Centre as part of a workplace training initiative. We thank them for their support. Ms Bromley has had a group of students continue the painting scenes in D Block; and Ms Lubinski has organised a group to work on a community mural. Students have also assisted in the Transition of Year 6 students. Our music students have held joint concerts with Year 6 at Northlakes Public School. It has been a hectic time of year.

Some of our Year 12 leaders for 2013 were lucky enough to have two days of ocean and harbour sailing with Ms Simmons as a leadership program with the Freedman Foundation Youth Sail at the Cruising Yacht Club in Sydney. All seven that are a part of this leadership group have been helping to run the morning assembly and in various leadership roles within the school. We are appreciating the leadership roles these Year 12 students are taking.

We have celebrated academic excellence and commitment from our students in our recent formal assemblies. Our school has fantastic facilities and experienced and dedicated staff.

Our Trade Training Centre's Hospitality Program has produced excellent results for all students who accessed it including students from Northlakes High, Gorokan High and Lakes Grammar Anglican School. Alternative educational programs have been developed, which include flexible timetables, work or work experience, and TAFE to assist a number of students to reach a suitable educational outcome.

We are creating diverse educational pathways to try to help all students achieve.

This year we continued to improve our attendance rates by using technology in the school to do in-class electronic roll marking, and also SMS messages to parents if a student is marked absent. Within the school, emphasis on 'being in the right place at the right time', having all equipment and not using mobile phones in class has helped teachers ensure that class time is productive and not interrupted.

Our focus is always on improvement, and by ensuring our staff has access to a wide range of training, and that the school offers a diverse curriculum; our students can all do very well if they aim to achieve their personal best.

**Ms Merrilyn Rowley**  
Principal

## English Report

2012 has been a busy year in the English Faculty with the welcoming of our new Head Teacher Mr Boake, the

farewell to Mr Megale and the welcoming to Mrs Martin's new baby girl, Isla. We are also happy to announce Mrs Martin's return after 3 terms of maternity leave and we look forward to working with her again in 2013. We would also like to welcome the Year 7 students of 2013 to Northlakes High School



and hope they enjoyed their Orientation Day activities last week.

Students have been keeping busy in these last few weeks with a variety of different studies being completed from Year 7- 12. Year 7 has been busy doing a study on appropriation and recontextualisation with a study on the film adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *Gnomeo and Juliet*. Year 8 has been completing a media unit on television in which they are currently composing their own "Soapy" scripts. Year 9 are studying a Shakespeare unit with a variety of different plays being studied from *The Taming of the Shrew* to *Macbeth*. Year 10 have begun an Area of Study to prepare them for their Preliminary studies, as this is the first Module they complete in both Year 11 and Year 12. This involves studying the concept of *Change* and representations in a variety of different texts. Year 11 have been extremely busy and have almost completed their Area of Study Module on *Belonging* which is the first term of their HSC work. They have handed in their first major assessment task for their HSC which was a piece of creative writing linking to their Area of Study. Ms Norris and myself were both extremely impressed with the standard of a lot of the stories submitted by these students and the quality of work produced by all. An example has been attached to the end of this newsletter edition for your reading enjoyment.

A big congratulations goes out to Jesse Wilson of Year 11 for winning first place in the Wyong Shire Council's Short Story Competition with his story *Ignorance is Bliss*. The judging panel offered Jesse this feedback

"The style here was sophisticated, particularly the writer's agility with the multiple perspectives, the deftness with which he switches the perspectives and the effective choice of third person narration to handle it; the cold, objective narrative voice worked well; clean, clear twist at the end."

Jesse received a \$100 cash prize for his outstanding effort. Well done!



**Year 10 students working on their Area of Study**

The English Faculty would also like to congratulate the Year 12 students on completing their HSC and entering the "real world" this is a huge step for every student and it was fantastic to see them all so grown up at their Year 12 Formal which was held at The Glasshouse at The Entrance. The night was filled with dancing, speeches and some very funny memories of their years spent together at Northlakes High School. Well done and best of luck to all.



**Miss Smith and Year 12 students at the formal**



**Mr Hoffman decorating the tables**

Last Friday both Mr Stewart and Mrs Reay took the English Studies class to Sydney on an excursion for their *We Are Australians* unit. The task for the students was to take photographs around the city of certain things they believe to be iconic to Australia and to represent our culture. Both teachers and students had a fantastic day and the students have taken some very creative photographs to accompany the unit of work.

Lastly, we would like to thank all of the staff, students, parents and casual teachers that have helped our faculty run so smoothly this year. A special thanks goes out to some of our casual teachers and student teachers that have contributed to many things in our subject. This includes Mrs Martin, Miss Butler and Mr Nichol. We would also like to give a special thanks to Mrs Knowlinski and Ms Bromley for taking some English classes this year. A very merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all and we hope everyone enjoys their holidays.

**Miss Miranda Smith- English Faculty**

### **H.S.I.E Report**

Well the 2012 school year is really starting to wind down. By the time you are reading these words there will be only days to go. This month I will mainly address the school murals and associated art works in "D" block.

Firstly, however, we are actively continuing with school excursions. These are always of immense benefit to students. This final term we have seen the following;

-Year 7 having an 'Ancient Egypt" day at school. They played Ancient Egyptian Games and had a Pharaoh Gold Treasure Hunt.

- Year 8 visiting Taronga Park Zoo. Oh, how that place has changed for the better since I went there as a child. Much more environmentally friendly and of far, far greater comfort to the animal life. "Greener" and less reliant on walls of bricks and mortar.

-Year 9 off to Maitland gaol. This is an excursion that really exposes young people to the dramas of prison life.

- In 2013 students from Years 8 and 9 will be going on a four day excursion to Canberra. It will cost \$350 but includes all tours, food etc. Now that is something to both plan and look forward to.

Students and parents need to be aware of the historical background of our painted walls and classrooms in "D" block. Begun in 1997 by a former Northlakes History teacher and now eminently respected Wyong Shire Council librarian Mrs Lynda Smith. From 1998 onwards Mrs Bromley has supervised Year after Year of student artistic work by each Year 10. The murals are simply fantastic and just in themselves are worthy of a planned trip to this school.



**Year 10 students and their "beach" inspired painting upstairs in D Block**





**Year 10 students and their Aboriginal artworks in D Block.**

Mrs Bromley (even in her role now as head of H.S.I.E.) has given up so much of her personal time in realising the completion of these artworks, often coming in on weekends with family members to both finish off and tidy up. She is a true credit to the department.

The artistic young people are certainly amongst Northlakes finest and instead need to be commended and applauded. Vigilance and support against these thoughtless and indeed spiteful acts, needs to be both ongoing and consistent. Let us all work together for the betterment of **OUR SCHOOL.**

Christmas greetings to all!

**Mr. Gumley- H.S.I.E Faculty**

### **Languages Report**

Year 7 language classes have now completed their 100 hour mandatory Language course. For students that enjoyed Japanese or Indonesian there is an opportunity to choose these subjects again as an elective in Year 9. For those interested in continuing with Japanese, the school's Moodle site has a number of activities and links to websites to keep you occupied.



Year 11 students are now Year 12 students and have already completed their first HSC assessment task – filming themselves speaking Japanese using their laptops. This group have recently had a hands-on cooking experience in class, making Sushi. All students were able to create authentic looking sushi rolls using bamboo mats and a variety of ingredients.



The senior class were invited to attend the Secondary Japanese Workshop at the Australian National University on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of December in Canberra. More news on this in the first newsletter next year.

In November Mrs Davis and Mr MacKinnon took 12 students to the Japanese Film Festival in Sydney. Students were entertained by a Kendo display just before the screening of a new Japanese film for teenagers called *Bushido 16*. After the movie, students ate at nearby Japanese fast food restaurants. For some it was a new experience and we congratulate them on trying something new. We were very proud of the behaviour and maturity of this group. Mrs Davis looks forward to teaching them next year in Years 9, 11 and 12.

**Mrs Davis and Mr MacKinnon**

## Support Report

It has been a busy Term 4 in the Support Unit. Our IOJ, IOS and IM classes have just returned from a trip to Sydney. The IM class went on a Sydney Harbour Bridge walk and then visited the IMAX theatre. The IOS class was enthralled with Madame Tussaud's Wax Works and the IOJ class had a fantastic time at the Aquarium and the IMAX theatre. Special thanks to Mr Quodling for hiring and driving the coach and to the staff who through their fundraising efforts paid for the hiring of the Coach.



The BD class has been working hard learning bricklaying skills and building a barbecue outside the hospitality block. We would like to congratulate Marley Becker and Jyden Chancellor who were both nominated for awards by Sydney Distance Education for their outstanding work this Semester.

Finally, we would like to wish everyone season's greetings and a happy and safe new year.

**Support Faculty**

## PDHPE Report

The PDHPE Faculty would like to thank the majority of students for their efforts in PDHPE this year. We certainly enjoyed offering a small percentage of these students the opportunity to participate in the "PDHPE Goodkids Excursion" to Erina Ice in November/December. If the efforts and behaviour of these students is the norm rather than the exception our school is in good hands.

We would also like to take the opportunity to thank families for their support this year. In issues including uniform, notes concerning illness and injury, permission notes and money for excursions, etc your help with the day to day running of the PDHPE Faculty is much appreciated.

Looking to next year we will be observing with interest the progress of Mrs Jephson as she prepares to have her first child. Our best wishes are with her! Also to Mr Thomas who will be working on Mondays in a shared timetable with Mrs Kennedy. We are extremely fortunate to have Mr Feteneiai, Miss Sykes and Miss Thornton who will work permanently with us throughout 2013.

Lastly, a HUGE thank you to the entire PDHPE staff for their energetic and professional efforts throughout 2012. Thank you to our casual PDHPE staff members who so willingly and ably move into our school and classes and do an exceptional job. These include Miss Sykes, Mr Blomfield, Miss Thornton, Mr Feteneiai, Mr Grant, Mr Conquest, Miss Cogger and Mr Hawkins.

We as a faculty wish you and your families the best for the holidays ahead. Be safe!

**Mr Glachan**  
**Head Teacher PDHPE**

## Sport Report

Most recently in the world of sport Northlakes High School participated in a 'Leading with Action' day for the Premiers Sporting Challenge, and a different group of students competed in a Central Coast Mariners U/15 Football Gala Day. The Mariners' gala day was again a huge success, this year being hosted at the impressive Soccer5s complex at Tuggerah. Our students competed extremely well, and hopefully learnt from playing against some quality teams. All students also took home a ticket to the Mariners v Brisbane Roar match and those who took advantage of this were very thankful.



In terms of the Premiers Sporting Challenge, the students travelled to Lake Macquarie High School and participated in 2 x 2 hour coaching sessions from the sports of Cricket, Softball, Golf, Tennis and Rugby Union. Our students will now be student leaders in March 2013, and adopt the role of the coach for students in Years 5-8. This is a tremendous opportunity to develop leadership skills, as well as continue to develop their knowledge and skills in sports coaching.

Each and every school year there are countless competitions and opportunities for our students in a range of sporting contexts. A sincere thank you to all parents who have given up their time to come and watch their children compete, and for assisting with transport when required. We would not be able to enter some competitions without this assistance!

Term 1 next year features all three of our major carnivals, starting with the Swimming Carnival in Week 2, once again at Wyong Pool. Our Athletics Carnival is scheduled for Week 8, and the Cross Country in Week 10. More information about these carnivals will be sent home in the new year.

**M. Mansfield**  
**Sport Co-ordinator**

## **TAS Report**

The Year 9 Child Studies students recently held a Christmas party for themselves and their siblings. Everything went very well and it looks like this will become a regular event for our Child Studies classes. We offer a special thank you to the classroom teacher Mrs Garside and everyone who came and supported the event.

The VET Information Technology class is having a great time learning about computer hardware repairs and replacements. As part of the course requirements, they need to be able to diagnose and repair computer problems. To ensure they get a solid understanding, their teacher Mr O'Mahoney has been removing or disabling required hardware components leaving the students to establish what the problems are and fixing them. It has been a very enjoyable exercise with students not enrolled in the subject asking if they can join in! ☺

The Year 9 Textiles classes is designing and making their own bags. So far this year, they have already designed and made quilts and pyjama pants with most of the designs and finished products being of an excellent standard. Well done year 9! A small selection of the designs are shown in the photo here.



Our Hospitality and Food Technology classes have had a very busy time of late as they have been preparing foods for some catering commitments we have throughout December. Amongst those commitments have been functions for the Northlakes High School Year 6 to Year 7 Orientation and the Northlakes Primary School farewell for Year 6 parents. Each of these events has provided our students with great experiences that help them towards their goal of receiving their VET certificates of Achievement.

We recently held a special thank you afternoon tea for the volunteers who have supported Northlakes High School throughout the last year. A very big thank you for all the help you so willingly provide to our community. The thank you afternoon tea is a token of our gratitude and we hope to see you all back here next year.

HSC results are out this week and we are all waiting excitedly to find out how well our 2012 HSC students have done. They have been a very hard working and focused group of students so we have high hopes that they will receive the marks they want.

Sadly, we bid farewell to two of our great teachers, Ms Cheryl McArthur and Mr Robert Milne. Both are moving on to another school. We will miss them being in our faculty and we wish them all the best in their new endeavours.

Finally, we in the TAS faculty wish all of our students and parents a very happy and safe Christmas. We look forward to catching up with you in the New Year.

**Mr G O'Mahoney**

## Drama Report

2012 has been a great year for Drama at Northlakes. We've had a small but talented group of Senior Students who have been dedicated, creative, adaptable and above all heaps of fun to work with!

We have toured theatres, seen exciting and innovative new productions, workshopped a number of plays, devised performances and even written a few essays.



**Mr Stewart and Miss Smith on various excursions throughout 2012**

Thanks for an amazing year, Bek, Jedd, Kate, Maddie, Nathan, Reece, Ren and Sophie, you're all awesome and you're all going to do great next year. Best of luck,

**Mr Joshua Stewart**

## The Student Representative Council Report

The SRC has had an amazing year this year, being heavily involved in acting upon student concerns and fundraising for worthy organisations.

In coordination with various staff groups students helped organise and run 'Green Day' in April. This involved assisting and running a whole school "emu parade", running a cake stall and coordinating with performing arts concerts to support the music department. The money raised from green day went toward the agriculture farm to build much needed new composting bins.

SRC leaders also attended the World Vision Global Leaders Convention (GLC). The students learned about the state of the global food index and the impact of this on the international community. Consequently, students decided to run the 40hr Famine. This became a whole school event. The Lake Munmorah SRC 'threw down the glove' challenging us to see who could raise the most funds. We answered the call, raising nearly \$1800 for World Vision, and defeating them in the process. Funds went to World Vision's program in Ethiopia which is seeing yet another drought, much like the one seen in the 1980's.

'Pink Day' was a massive success. The students once again coordinated with staff to raise awareness of cancer and support for the McGrath foundation. A cake stall was set up, students coordinated with various staff to support a concert put on by CAPA, and a sponge throwing competition run with the school captain, the Principal Ms Rowley and Deputy Principals Mr Welham and Mr Boake finding their heads wet through their support. Total fundraising made over \$1200 for the McGrath foundation this year; a huge and generous effort made by the school community.

Other foundations supported this year were 'Jeans for Genes' and 'Canteen' (Bandanna day). Another notable achievement was the establishment of the Student Environment Committee set up independently by SRC students as with the aim to improve the school grounds and student environmental awareness.

The SRC would like to thank the whole school community for their support this year and we hope next year will be bigger and better again.

**Mr M. Van Dremt**

## P&C

I would like to take this opportunity to say a special thank you to all of the parents, and staff who have supported the P&C this year, and we look forward to meeting new parents in the New Year. The first meeting, and AGM will be on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March at 3:30pm in the Language Centre. Thank you to our hospitality students, and staff for preparing a wonderful afternoon tea for our volunteer lunch.

Canteen

Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers that have helped out this year in the canteen. We say goodbye to Colleen Carr, who has been volunteering, and working in the canteen since the school opened. Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication.

Also a big thank you to Leanne, the canteen Manager for caring for the students, and staff all year.

## **Library**

### **Attention all Year 12 Students:**

**There are still a large number of books that have not been returned. Please return these to Mr Zappia in the library as soon as possible!!**

## **Uniform Shop**

### **Attention: All year 10 Parents**

We now stock senior skirts, and shirts available from our uniform shop, which is open every Friday from 9:30 till 11:00am. We will also open after the Presentation assembly. We will be open on the last day of the Term 21/12/12, and also Staff Development Day 29/1/12. You can now pay by direct debit to BSB No. 032 570, account No. 288460. Just send in the receipt number with your order to the canteen, and we can make it up and send it home with your child.

A special thank you to Julie Hutchins for her constant dedication in keeping the uniform shop well stocked and taking care of all the parents. It was a massive day on Orientation, and thank you to the volunteers that helped make the day run smoothly.

**Mrs Angela Bambey**

## **Year 7 Report**

Year 7 have finished their first year of high school – what a huge learning curve for all!! It has been a wonderful 2012 – I believe that students have successfully settled into high school and most are working well in all areas of school.

Year 7 Presentation Day was on Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> December. This was a chance to celebrate the achievements of our students, both academically and in creative areas of the school.

Reports were issued to students in Week 10. These are Semester Two reports. Parents are advised to look at both the comments and grades section of the reports in order to gain an understanding of the students' overall achievements for 2012.

HSIE hosted the Year 7 Egypt Day in Week 9. What a great occasion! Students were given the chance to

re-enact daily life in Egypt, play games and eat an Egyptian feast!! The day was our first one ever held – and was a great success! Ms Bromley and the HSIE faculty must be congratulated for their effort in organising this interactive incursion for Year 7.

Finally, it has been a personal highlight of my career to undertake the role of Year 7 Advisor. At times it has been challenging – I have certainly grown both personally and professionally. Each day I am rewarded by seeing Year 7 students happy and enjoying their learning process and their school environment. It truly has been a gift to be in this position. I cannot wait for our students to venture into Year 8 and continue their wonderful Northlakes High School experience!

Parents, caregivers and students – I wish you all the happiest of holidays and a fantastic New Year. See you in 2013....in Year 8!

**Ms Erin Campbell  
Year 7 Adviser**

## **Year 8 Report**

Wow, what a busy time of year! There has been a lot happening in the school this term. Students have been on excursions, sporting activities, good kids rewards, and many more opportunities have been made available.

Students are looking fabulous in uniform. Please keep in mind that the transition into Year 9 next year may mean new uniforms will be needed. The uniform shop is open on Fridays.

So many students dressed up for Pink Day which raised funds for Breast Cancer Research. The best dressed in Pink were Jaycen Kimmorley and Kiara Mooney. I loved that students got into the spirit of things and supported this valuable cause. There will be no more out of uniform days this year.

The camp to Illawarra is beginning to fill. Please pay the initial deposit of \$50 if your child would like to go. A further permission note will be made available next year.

Elective choices have now been displayed and students are aware of their classes. There will be minimal changes next year so please arrange for elective changes before the end of this school year. Some electives did not run and second choices were put in place. Most students seem excited by the coming year and having the chance to specialise in educational areas that they are passionate about.



In general, I feel that the year group is working well and strive to get along with others. If your child needs to speak to me about any issue at school please remind them that I am available in the CAPA staff room during break time. If you need to discuss your child's progress please email me via: [megan.lubinski@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:megan.lubinski@det.nsw.edu.au) or on 4390 0555.

**Mrs Megan Lubinski**  
**Year 8 Adviser**

### **Year 9 Report**

With Year 9 drawing to a close there are several issues that that should be reinforced for Year 10 in 2013.

Firstly, there is no longer a School Certificate and it's accompanying external exam. The School Certificate has been replaced by the Record Of Student Achievement, a certificate which will awarded to students when they decide to leave school. Added to this is the fact that Year 10 students must remain at school until the academic year ends and Year 10 students no longer commence holidays early.

This brings me to my 2<sup>nd</sup> point, this being the leaving age for students. Students MUST remain in school until the age of 17.

As the Year 9 adviser I have been privy to both the good and the not so good of 2012. Our students never cease to amaze me with their mature approach towards their education. Their ability on the sporting fields and in the fields of the performing arts and visual arts are to be commended.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind parents that the school is offering two excursions for our Year 10 students for 2013. As year adviser I am organising an excursion to Tasmania to be conducted in December 2013 and the HSIE faculty are conducting an excursion to Canberra early in Term 2 2013. Both of these excursions offer the students an experience that will stay with them for a life time. Please encourage your student to visit the HSIE staffroom to find out more about these events for next year.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas and a look forward to seeing Year 10 in the new year.

**Mr Ed Seaby**  
**Year 9 Adviser**

### **Year 10 Report**

Year 10 have had an eventful and positive 2012! The Year 10 Presentation Day Assembly was held with Year 9. I would like to congratulate all year 10 students who received awards and performed on the day. As I said at the assembly I would love to give out 100 hundred Year Adviser's awards but am not able to. I have such a wonderful year group and I am proud of all of you that have achieved throughout the year.

Respect, responsibility and personal best are three areas we focus on at Northlakes High School. As Year 10 Adviser I would like Year 10 to focus on their uniform, being prepared for classes and their overall attitude to school for the next two years as seniors! A new uniform is needed for Year 11 and 12...

The next two years are very important for our students as it is the beginning of their future as young adults. It is a time when they will make decisions about further study and employment. A mature and positive approach is needed for their senior years. I will be working closely with all of the students especially with any welfare or study concerns.

Something else I would encourage parents/carers to discuss is their child is the use of mobile phones and iPods in classrooms. It is against school policy to use these electronic devices during class time. If they are caught using them they will be sent to a Deputy Principal, who will contact parents/carers to come to the school to collect these devices.

Please contact me if there are any concerns with Year 10 students by phone on 43 900555 or email [jodene.garside@det.nsw.edu](mailto:jodene.garside@det.nsw.edu)

I would like to wish all of the students and their families in my year group a safe and happy Christmas!

**Mrs Jodene Garside**  
**Year 9 Adviser**

### **Year 11 Report**

The end of the year is fast approaching and it is incredibly important that effort is maintained throughout the Christmas holidays. Everything that has been taught to the students this term is part of the HSC syllabus and will be tested in the HSC exams Term 3 next year.

During Term 3 our student leaders were selected and they have been doing a fantastic job so far in the school. The student leaders have been active in the morning assemblies and did a great job helping with the Pink day in Week 8. These students have also had the opportunity to learn how to sail through the Freedman foundation youth sail program down in Sydney harbour in the last few weeks. Ms Simmons from the PDHPE faculty was happy to accompany the students to the sailing evening and days, with all students saying that they had a fantastic time and learnt a great deal. Keep up the great effort Coby-Lea, Jacob, Brianna, Brayden, Sharnii, Nathan and Matthew.

The Step Up Mentoring program has started with a number of students, who were nominated by their teachers. This gives the students an opportunity to touch base with a staff member on a regular basis and research has shown that students who are assisted find it easier to overcome adversity and achieve at school. I strongly encourage you to support your child if they are a part of this program as it has the potential to be very beneficial.

The final report of the year also, sadly, signifies my last as year adviser. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to be year adviser over the last 4 years. I feel as though I have developed a special relationship with many of the students and parents alike and it makes me quite sad to think that I won't be here at school during the final year of their high school education. Although I won't be here at school on a daily basis, I will pop in every now and then, so I'll be around just to keep an eye on how things are going. I wish the students every success in their education and their future. Have a safe and happy Christmas.

**Mrs Lara Jephson**  
**Year 11 Adviser**

## **Year 12 English Creative Writing Assessment**

**By Stacie Quinnell**

*Sometimes life becomes alien. You lose sight of who you believe you are, and who you believe everyone else to be. Everything that you thought you knew is thrown into oblivion. Gone. Yet these moments define who we are today, and create relationships stronger than we'd ever experienced before...*

*Sharp, cool wind. Rustling the hairs on my neck, causing them to quiver in unison with the lush*

*emerald leaves. They look almost black in the twilight. The darkness amplifying its hollow call... how I wish I could answer it. But it is not to be.*

*Funny, how comforting it used to be, and now all it triggers is a hollow emptiness that is destined to remain unfilled. I often wonder how they are & what they are doing. Have they forgotten who I am, cleared my leaf litter mattress and started anew. Or have they left it unchanged in an attempt to hold on to what will never be, the memories forever lost. You'd think they would miss such a young member of the pack, instead she was shunned... alone and longing for a forgiveness that will never be received, and so is the want of the world. But it doesn't do well to dwell on dwindling dreams, so I press forward, feeling the crunch of dried twigs and leaves beneath my paws. I can't help but wonder if the hunger I feel is directed towards the need for food or for companionship that I am no longer privy to. Shaking my head does nothing to free my mind... I cease my endless plunder through the dark tangle of vines and numerous other varieties of flora that are indiscernible, and curl into a tight ball, letting my dreams take me to a happier place.*

*Crack. Mother? No.*

*Adrenaline coursing through my veins, a guttural snarl escapes my maw, showing an impressive row of canines that are unique to my bloodline. A wisp of red fur. "Surprised to see me? I thought as much". The nerve, he knows the law! Why wander so far from the others, especially to associate with a banished member of the order. I continue to snarl in his general direction, arching my back. Lines were drawn that shouldn't be crossed, but no, he is still staring at me, mere fascination glinting in his crystal blue eyes. "Your family misses you sorely, don't you wish to return? I have an offer that you won't want to pass up, so listen carefully. Beyond this stretch of the woods is an object of very high value to our clan. If you can retrieve this package, and return it to the Elders in one piece, they may welcome you back."*

*This had to be a joke...*

*Everyone knows the horrors that lie at the rift between these woods and the next. Of course*

*only a desperate outcast would ever willingly risk their life by nearing the devils gates. "I'll do it. But keep in mind that if anything has happened to my family, you will suffer a fate worse than death". And with that, I sprinted off in the other direction, refusing to bestow the pleasure of a glance.*

*If I didn't miss my family so badly, I wouldn't be here. But here I am, attempting to buy my way back into the very group that spat me out. Dank. Dark. Nothing. In the bright mid-day sun, the earth beneath me appears black, bone dry, devoid of life. Just like everything in these parts.*

*Even the sole inhabitants of this long deceased land. They were here, lurking in the shadows, waiting for me to become complacent. I was not about to let that happen. The legends of our clan describe foul creatures that prey on the weak of mind. Who lack self belief. And I just happened to be the perfect candidate. I feel as if there are eyes boring into every facet of my being, scrutinizing my every move. If only I had more clues as to the object in question, this would be so much easier! What is that? I can smell something... a faint scent trail, similar to that of my pack. There is no doubt that it will lead me to the all important object. CRASH! My ribs crunch.*

*I am crushed between the solid wood of a petrified tree, and something scaly and sinister. Razor sharp, yellowing claws reach for soft meat on the underside of my body, but I manage to manipulate the limb with a snap of my incisors, inches from its decaying flesh.*

**Stacie Quinnell  
Year 12**

## **TAKE HOME A BIG BROTHER OR BIG SISTER !**

Give your children the wonderful opportunity to have an international big brother or big sister by hosting one of our exceptional international students arriving in Australia in February 2013 for their 5 or 10 month programs. Our international students from France, Germany, Italy, Austria Japan, the U.S.A and Canada will live as a local, attend a local secondary school, arrive with their own spending money and comprehensive insurance cover – all arranged by Southern Cross Cultural Exchange.

Call your local coordinator, Dianne Axam on: 0429 406 126 for more information.

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*Learn how to get started and how to keep going*

*Enjoy writing and reading brilliant stories*

Held at Hunter Writers Centre, 90  
Hunter St, Newcastle.

11 – 12 year olds  
Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2013

13 – 14 year olds  
Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2013

15 – 16 year olds  
Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2013

10am – 2pm  
\$30

**Bookings Essential:**

[hunterwriterscentre@gmail.com](mailto:hunterwriterscentre@gmail.com)