



1 March, 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians of Year 12s

From 23 May to 25 May, Year 12s will be attending Retreat at the Maranatha Recreation Camp.

One of the experiences on retreat is to have parents and significant other people in your son or daughter's life (grandparents, siblings, neighbours) write a 'Letter of Affirmation'. Most importantly, **each** parent writes an **individual** letter telling your son/daughter why you love them and what they mean to you. The letters are handed out during the Retreat.

Could I ask you to select two or three sentences from your letter and attach them on a separate sheet of paper to the outside of your sealed envelope?

It is **essential** that you provide this **statement** because as part of the process of handing the letters to the Year 12s, these sentences will be read to the whole group.

I have attended many retreats and have seen many wonderful things happen with young people but the effect such a letter has on students is truly amazing. It is an extraordinarily powerful experience and a privilege to be a part of it. In asking this of you, we are conscious that many adults do not find such a letter easy to write – not because they don't have deep feelings for their child, but putting it in words and on paper is a very different matter. I have attached a few ideas and a structure that you may or may not find helpful.

Please ensure all envelopes are clearly labelled with your son or daughter's name. Attach to these letters the statements that will be read out and then place all letters in a sealed envelope addressed to me at the College. Could I ask that you get all letters back to me by **Wednesday 28 March**? Co-ordinating a few hundred letters is no mean feat, so I ask for your co-operation.

Hopefully, your child does not know these letters are coming so we ask you to keep this confidential. In anticipation, many, many thanks for your efforts but I am sure that you will find it a most rewarding exercise.

Yours sincerely

Julieanne Rasmussen
Assistant Principal Mission

Nicholas Lynch
Principal

Guidelines for letters.

Please return letters from parents/guardians by 28 March, 2018
You can send in letters from grandparents etc later.

These are only guidelines – write from YOUR heart what you want to and need to say.

Make sure the letter is from the heart / personal and not in any way like a 'reference'. Don't give 'corrective' advice, eg "You're a good bloke but you should have"!

Always be positive.

The letter should be at least a page in length.

Introduction.

How you come to be writing to this person.

What it feels like to be writing to this person.

What your connection is – how long it goes back – what it means to YOU.

Affirm the person you are writing to. Tell them what they mean to you as a friend / family member / mentor etc.

What are their particular gifts and talents.

What was your first memory of this person – first experience?

What are your memories of this person – your favourite memory. The thing you will always remember about them.

When you think of them what is the first thing that comes into your head?

What your hopes are for their future?

What do you want to thank them for and why?

What have they done for you?

Some positive advice for their future [but not too much of this].

Each time I see you I think

Remember some things from different times or aspects of their lives.

Recall how they have handled some difficult times.

What are some of their great accomplishments.

Include as many feelings as you can – as a memory or what you are experiencing: pride, joy, hope, determination, love, honour, kindness etc.

What quote do you want to include?

Most of all be honest – be you – and write from the heart. Ask yourself: If this was a perfect world – what is / are the positive things you would really want this person to know? What do you want them to cherish for the rest of their lives?

You are giving them a life-long gift!!!!

Some Affirmations from Past Parents

Mum wrote, "I have always loved and been so very very proud of you and even more with each passing day"

Dad writes, "I am very proud of you and proud of what you have achieved in your short life so far and I know that I will continue to be proud of you."

Dad writes, "Your life gives me life, your joy is my joy, your dreams are real for me and all that comes together in you."

Mum writes, "I am writing this letter to you to reassure you of my love and let you know how very special you are to me."

Mum writes, "John, I love you so much it hurts – I know this might sound like a cliché but it is a difficult thing to understand unless you are a parent."

Dad writes, "You mean the world to me even though I may not express these feelings as often as I should"

Mum writes, "From the first moment I held you in my arms you have always been one of my life's greatest joys."

Mum writes, "I know that you realise all the important things – that I love you – that I am proud of who you are not what you do – that I think you are a great person."

Dad writes, "I want you to know how much you mean to me. I was there at your birth, holding you in my arms saying to myself, life does not get any better than this."

Mum writes, "I am writing to you to let you know how special you are to me and that your presence in my life has been God's greatest gift to me."

Dad wrote, "As a Dad, it is difficult to accept that his little girl is growing into a beautiful young woman and a person that has her own identity, belief in life and her own feelings for what she believes."

"I really want to write this letter. It gives me a terrific chance to tell you how I really feel about you, my first born child." (Mum)