

IT'S TIME



2018 | SEMESTER TWO | SJAG

CONTENTS

'Do They Know It's Christmas?'

Do They Know it's Christmas?.....	Pg 1
Justice at SPC.....	Pg 2-3
Christmas Hampers.....	Pg 4
Sustainability.....	Pg 5
Recycling.....	Pg 6
Would you eat a plastic bag?.....	Pg 7
White Ribbon Day.....	Pg 8
Fiat to SJAG.....	Pg 9
Justice & Spirituality Day.....	Pg 10
Year 10 Social Justice Forum.....	Pg 11
Invictus Games.....	Pg 12
What Christmas Means to Me.....	Pg 13-14

DO THEY KNOW IT'S CHRISTMAS?

In 1984 a group of around 40 artists, among them the likes of Bono and George Michael, came together to perform a Christmas charity single. The song they recorded, 'Do They Know It's Christmas', was written as a reaction to the two year long famine occurring in Ethiopia, and it became an instant hit. 'Band Aid', as the group was called, was predicted to make only £70,000 pounds for the song. A lot of money, but nothing to end a famine. What the song achieved instead was a grand total of £8 million, and the title of biggest-selling single in the UK of all time, a title it held for over a decade.

There isn't a better time of year than Christmas. Opinion or fact, you decide, but it is true that for many, Christmas is a time for letting go of all of the negative things we have experienced over the year, and sharing in the hope from the birth of Christ. It's a time for people to celebrate those close to them in gift sharing and celebration. What Band Aid achieved in their iconic song, and the renditions that followed including the most recent in 2014, was something quite remarkable. The song combined Christmas, a time of utmost faith and celebration, with an urgency for justice, and brought this pairing to the conscience of popular culture - in a way that had rarely been seen before, with such a large impact.

In our lives today, Christmas is closely linked with a duty for justice. It is a time for reflection on our place in the world. The celebration of Jesus' birth is a reminder of the importance of Christ in our lives, and the way we should strive to be like Christ, as in following in the footsteps of Christ we are able to empower the marginalised in our world and community.

Luke 2:10 depicts angels announcing the birth of Christ to the shepherds. This Lord and Saviour is not powerful or rich, but an outsider, and an infant at that. This story ultimately reveals to us the Kingdom of God and how God chose those who were marginalised and forgotten.

This year like any other has been a very busy one for SJAG. At the heart of what SJAG strives to do, is making the world a better place by assisting the marginalised in our society and across the world. From the Winter Sleep-out to Fair Trade Fortnight, and most recently, the Christmas Hamper appeal, SJAG has been a leading force in the community in striving for justice, and acting in small ways that have great impacts, always bound by the teaching and messages of Jesus Christ.

This year there are going to be people in our society who won't experience Christmas in the joyous way that so many will. In an unintentionally poetic way, Christmas Tree farmers across NSW are battling the drought conditions to provide a crop, and many trees, trees that will be brought into our homes, have been lost or are noticeably drought affected. While Christmas is a time for joy, let us not forget that it is also a time for faith, meaning justice. There are so many ways to help people in our world, and hopefully you will gain a sense of this in the articles of this It's Time edition.

We wish all in the community a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Harrison Vellar
Social Justice Prefect
and Joseph Mannah
Spirituality & Faith Formation Prefect



Justice at SPC

College Captains

Martin Luther King Jr once said, 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.' In today's world, individuals are equipped with all of the tools that are needed in order to become a voice for the voiceless and to advocate for the goodness of others and the world around them. Here at SPC we are pushed to become the best version of ourselves each and every day and, in turn, are encouraged to better those members of society who are sometimes forced into circumstances which they become trapped within. Whether it be through the Year 11 Social Justice Service Program, the Immersion Programs to Alice Springs and PNG, the Year 10 weekly visits to Chalmers Road school or the works of the SJAG team - it is obvious that through each other, we are able to help the other.

Throughout my time here at SPC, I have been lucky enough to be a part of the Social Justice Action Group and to partake in many different programs which have allowed me to recognise the way in which we, as the future leaders of society, are able to advocate, encourage and catalyse change within the world. Each and every opportunity which I have been given has moulded me into the young man I am today and will remain with me in each and every chapter of my life. Through these different opportunities, I have come to know that integrity, honesty and fidelity are at the centre of each and every individual, and collective, justice cause. It is through these small things that we are able to become a voice for the voiceless and to ensure that every human being is given the opportunity to be human. I am ever grateful to be a part of a school that nurtures the passion which all boys have within them for the world in which they live and the people around them.

Christian Bejjani
College Vice Captain

SPC has provided many opportunities for students to get involved in a variety of social justice through programs such as Immersion. Immersion was an experience which changed the lives of the group including me. A group of twenty-two boys were given the chance to attend Immersion Programs in Papua New Guinea and Alice Springs. Through immersion students were given the opportunity to experience what life is like without the opportunities and goods we take for granted. Students were provided with an experience which would be spiritually gaining as well as lessons which would remain with them forever. Many were asked to reflect on their true definition of poverty in relation to their lifestyle and were further challenged to simplify their lives back home as well as those around them. The strong connections the SPC community have made with the Vuvu Boys and the community in Alice Springs continue to be fostered through the Immersion and have helped shape the lives of many of the students who have been fortunate enough to attend, thus inspiring them to continue to live a life of justice

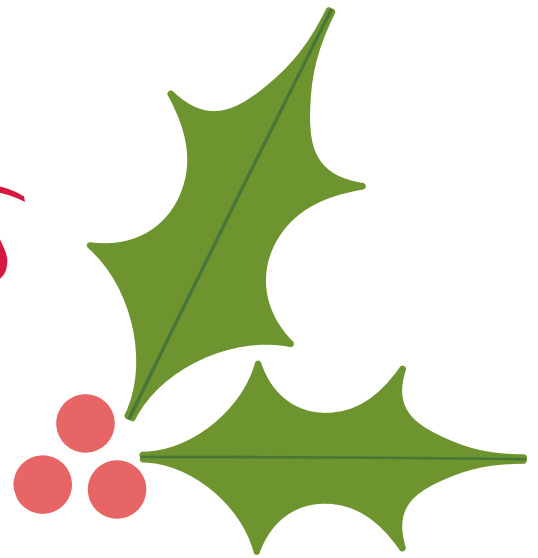
Daniel Francis
College Vice Captain



A significant way that every young man of the college participates in social justice is through the year 11 Social Justice Service Program. Students actively participate in various different types of social justice, each within a different context, and with its own unique lesson, for instance work at a community garden, homework help for refugee primary students, week long camps with disadvantaged children, and numerous others. I was lucky enough to participate in this program over the last year, and I must admit I was quite hesitant at first. This was the consensus among most of the cohort, many were either worried or unenthusiastic initially. This all seemed to change however, as many students, myself included, found that their service was not only valuable to others, but also for themselves. It taught each and every boy the value in helping those less fortunate, and modelled how to live in the way of Edmund. I speak with sincerity when I say that despite my first thoughts, this program was extremely valuable for my own understanding of justice, but more significantly, it was so abundantly valuable in its teaching of what it means to be a young man within the Edmund Rice Tradition.

Mark Herro
College Captain

Christmas Hampers



Christmas for many of us is a time of happiness and celebration as we gather with our family and friends sharing meals, laughing and chatting as we open presents. However, for some people, Christmas can be a challenging time. Over the Christmas period St Vincent de Paul Society provides support to over 14,500 individuals through financial assistance, clothing, utilities, food hampers and gifts for children. The Vinnies Christmas Appeal encourages the community to rethink their priorities at Christmas time by helping to give joy and hope to those who need it most. The contribution of our College will enable the Hamper Partners to provide the families and individuals who turn to them over this period with personalised gifts and quality hampers, so they too can share in the joy of Christmas.

As a College, we are a community that reaches out to those in need especially during the Advent season. Students bring in various items that are distributed to different organisations such as Catholic Care, the St Vincent de Paul Society, and a Women's Refuge. We hope to make their Christmas that much more special and helpful through our gifts of compassion.

Marco Grasso
SJAG Member



SUSTAINABILITY

AT SPC

All students and staff have been encouraged to do very simple things each day that can have a huge impact.

We can change the way we package our lunches, using containers instead of Ziplock bags or cling wrap. We can carry a metal fork and spoon from home in our lunchbox in case we purchase something from the canteen. We can bring our own bottle to school and fill it up at the hydration stations throughout the day. The uniform shop has the Colour House bottles on sale for \$15. You can also sign the petition to end the canteen's use of plastic cutlery, and replace it with some biodegradable birch or bamboo options.

(Sign it here, at <https://goo.gl/forms/mJHVxIYw6Jo2eUjZ2>)

There are also locations where students can dispose of their plastic bottles responsibly. You may have seen the three Colour House 'Return and Earn' bins around the school. If you're not already aware, you can recycle labelled and uncrushed bottles, cans and even 'Up & Go's, and they're taken to a specialised recycling depot. The added bonus of returning these items is that you can actually earn points for your House Colour. This initiative is a major game changer for the College Cup, and our plastic waste will be responsibly recycled.

We can reduce our plastic consumption TODAY and every day from here on.

We are also proud to announce that the College's Sustainability Gardens are flourishing and the fresh produce will now be available for a gold coin donation outside the Chapel after Friday morning masses.

Edward Carrall
Sustainability Prefect



Recycling

HOW YOU CAN HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

Our oceans now contain damaging amounts of plastic pollution, which will take hundreds of years to break down and have tragic consequences for marine life. However, Australians recycled 60% of their total waste produced in 2014/15. (According to the latest national waste report.)

Ways you can minimise the effects of waste;

Reduce:

- Reduce waste - choose products that can be used productively, recycled locally, and have minimal packaging.

Re-use:

- Reuse containers, packaging or waste products.

Recycle:

- Recycle waste material into reusable products by putting waste items into the correct bins.

The situation in Australia:

- Australians use more than 4,000,000,000 plastic checkout-style bags per year.
- Australians throw out more than 7,000 plastic bags per minute.
- Lightweight plastic bags are used for 12 minutes on average.
- They take up to 1,000 years to break down.
- In only 4 shopping trips, the average Australian family accumulates 60 plastic bags.

The global situation:

- It takes up to 500 years to decompose plastic items in landfills.
- According to the U.S. EPA, plastic recycling results in significant energy savings compared with production of new plastics using virgin material.
- Every year, roughly 102.1 billion plastic bags are used.
- Almost 8 million metric tons of plastic ends up in the world's oceans annually.

David De Cinque
SJAG Member

WOULD YOU EAT A PLASTIC BAG?

chances are, you probably
already have...

I would take a guess at your immediate answer being 'no'; but what if I told you that you've probably come closer to eating plastic than you might have ever realised?

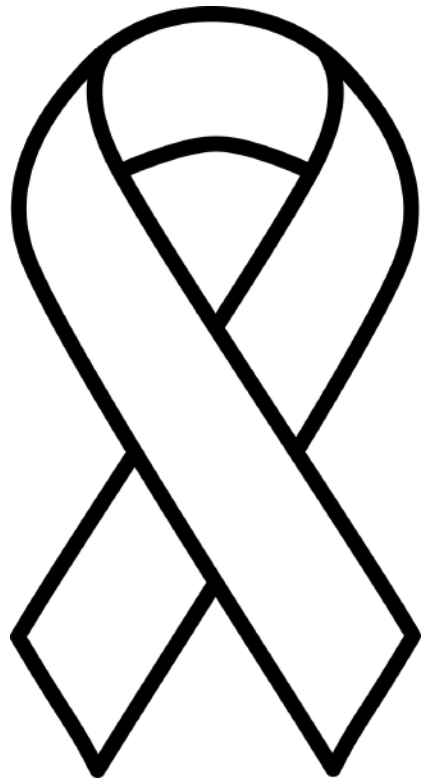
A study published by the University of Ghent in Belgium revealed that the average consumer of any seafood product will typically consume 11 000 pieces of micro-plastic each year, with these tiny pieces of plastic becoming embedded in our intestinal lining. I swear Mufasa warned us about this when he told us life was a circle; the population of New South Wales litters 168 million plastic bottles per annum, the fish eat the plastic, we eat the fish.

So next time you consider leaving your plastic bottle behind after sport on a Saturday (rather than saving it for the College 'Return and Earn' bins) and you find yourself saying "Not my problem," remember that you might be forced to eat your words (and the bottle) this upcoming Christmas when nonna whips out the prawns at the family lunch.

Thomas McMullan
SJAG Member



WHITE RIBBON DAY



White Ribbon Day was held on Sunday 25 November to raise awareness of men's domestic violence against women. On average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner. 85% of Australian women have been sexually harassed. 1 in 6 women experience abuse before the age of fifteen. 1 in 2 women will still experience abuse at some point in their lives. These staggering statistics are the harsh reality of domestic violence in our society, so we must work together to create change and achieve justice. At the Week 6 assembly, I set out three steps that all men need to take to end violence within our society: 1) examining our own attitudes and behaviours; 2) becoming an active bystander; and 3) challenging gender norms and inequality. By doing this, we become examples to other men on how to act towards women, creating an Australia where women feel safe and empowered to express themselves in their communities without fear.

Throughout the week leading up to the day, students wore white ribbons on their ties to stand in solidarity with women affected by domestic violence, with all the money raised from this going towards the great work that the White Ribbon Foundation is doing to further awareness of the issue. A short video of several Year 11 students and male teachers was also organised and presented at the Week 6 assembly (you can watch it using the link below). Special thanks to Ms Lamir for her work on organising all of this within the school. On the afternoon of Friday 23 November, the Strathfield Youth Committee and the local Council held an event in Strathfield Square, which attracted hundreds of people to hear from various organisations, as well as from special guests Jodi McKay MP and Mayor Gulian Vaccari.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/17CQuddK6u6MJrPFRWShDTbQ0X276ayiC/view?usp=sharing>.)

Lawrence DePellegrin
Year 12 Student

the change from FIAT to SJAG

MATTHEW MACHADO

During the middle of Term 4, Luka O'Connell and I transitioned from the Faith in Action Team to the Social Justice Action Group. In Faith in Action, we focused on putting our faith into action. We did this by visiting nursing homes, visiting Treacy Villa and learning about our faith in various ways. One way we did this was through learning about parts of liturgy and how to develop one. We were also given opportunities to participate in liturgies such as Founder's Day. These events allowed us to learn about our faith, have fun and take the time to put it into action into meaningful and powerful ways.

Social Justice enables us to work on initiatives that allow us to act more justly for people in our society. I have so far been in the group during the time when we organised Christmas Hampers and White Ribbon Day. Both are great examples of how we can act justly for people in society, by helping those who are poor and those who are victims of domestic assaults. Whilst both teams have been very different, they are both very insightful and allow us to develop our understanding of faith and later progressing to social justice.

I hope to continue this work by helping to develop more initiatives whilst also continuing the same ones. I hope new people join in future years, and I encourage anyone looking at joining to come along to develop their understanding of their faith and social justice.

LUKA O'CONNELL

My transition from FIAT to SJAG happened in Week 4, November 2018. The things I did in FIAT was watching a documentary called *Chosen* (*Chosen* is about a liturgy that contains stuff about the church and Jesus, like priesthood.), talking about our faith, being taught how to make a liturgy, visiting the nursing home and visiting the brothers at Treacey Villa on the last week of Term 3.

In SJAG, run by Ms Rodricks, we do initiatives such as the Detention for Detention and the Christmas Hampers. We also do other initiatives on other action days such as White Ribbon Day and we might do something next year for Harmony Day. The SJAG students look after the St Francis of Assisi Garden during our sessions. My transition to SJAG was a great success because the boys here are very nice. I think other people should join.

Year Seven Justice and Spirituality day

On Thursday 1 November, the Year Seven cohort partook in the annual Justice and Spirituality Day. On the day, the grade was split into different groups according to their colour house and spent their time participating in many different activities as well as listening to guest speakers from the House of Welcome. Throughout the day, students fasted from eating and were given a cup of rice at lunch time. This little sacrifice allowed us to realise that sometimes people don't have as much as we do and to be able to empathise with them provides us with the key to creating a just world.

On the day I participated in two specific activities which included art and team building. First I took part in the art program where we were given the task to make a flower out of paper, glue, scissors and chopsticks. When we finished making this, we were asked to write a famous quote about refugees. This task showed us that sometimes through endurance we can get through any struggles which are in front of us. The second activity I took part in was centred around team building. We learnt more about each other through this activity, as we took part in name games and games which taught us the importance of visual communication as well as verbal. This showed to us that with the people around us we can achieve great things even without talking; we just need to put our mind to it.

After this we were talked to by the guest from the House of Welcome. This experience allowed us to understand the importance of assisting people who may be in need. Overall, the day saw us expand our knowledge about the struggles which refugees may go through and the importance of our role in alleviating any issues that may occur.

Dominic Smith
Year 7 Student

Year Ten Social Justice Forum

On September 27, all of Year 10 participated in the Social Justice Forum. This was a day in which a variety of organisations long associated with the College, such as, the House Of Welcome and Edmund Rice Camps, worked with students in a variety of enriching and enjoyable activities.

This not only engaged the students, but allowed them to gain an understanding and insight into various justice issues present in today's society and get a first-hand look into what people and groups are doing to make a difference in our world. After being able to look at two specific activities, all students gathered again in the Hall where all of the justice partners formed a panel through which students could ask any burning questions they had.

Overall, the Social Justice Forum was an extremely rewarding day that gave us an awareness about not only the various social justice issues present in our society, but those who are doing something about it.

Jeremy Short
and George Pachos
SJAG Members

INVICTUS GAMES

How did you get involved?

My Sydney Archery Club was asked by Archery Australia if there were any members that would like to participate. I gladly volunteered as it was an opportunity for me to give my time in the aid of assisting others to help them achieve their personal goals.

Did you receive any information about the athletes that you were officiating for?

Prior to the games we were given training about how to be respectful around those with disabilities and how to assist them accordingly. We were asked not to take pictures of the athletes without their permission and to act in a professional manner at all times. I was blessed to be surrounded by an amazing team of athletes who asked me to take pictures with them – I was delighted!

How long did you officiate for?

The competition was held over two days. Day One was the qualifying round and Day Two was the medal day. Day One consisted of scoring and assisting the athletes in my lane, many of whom were dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. On Day Two I was officiating at the practice area and assisting those with a wide range of disabilities.

Did you enjoy your experience?

Absolutely! I was in awe of the amazing talents and sheer determination of these athletes. There were so many rewarding moments and lots of laughs shared with both officials and athletes. I would definitely assist again and I would encourage all ages to get involved as well.

Interview with Mrs Collett





CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME...

The Christmas season for me always begins with the annual Festival of Carols and Readings. It centres me with the real meaning of Christmas - the birth of the Christ Child, Jesus. My favourite carol is O Holy Night as it is such a moving piece of music and the lyrics really sum up the Spirit of Christmas. I'm usually staying with one of my siblings at Christmas so I attend Mass at parishes other than my own.

Christmas is always a special time for my family and me. It's about being together and sharing a laugh, good food and the odd drop of wine and beer. As my family has expanded from three siblings and me to a tribe of 30 it is very hard to be all together in the one location but we are all in contact with each other, especially on Christmas Day. Relationships are far more important than the gifts given and received but it is fun watching the younger members of our family opening Santa's stash!

My hope is that the Spirit of Christmas is felt on a daily basis throughout the year, not just one day of the year.

I wish everybody a happy and safe Christmas.

Ms Bellamy

Christmas, for as long as I can remember, has been my favourite time of the year. It has always been a time to be with family, friends and eat lots and lots of food. The highlight of Christmas is always Christmas Eve in my family where we all used to go to my Nonna's house for a meal with my entire family adding up to a little over 50 people. We would eat our traditional foods like bacala (baked cod in sauce), rispelle and potato braciola, share stories and gifts, laugh, go on our annual Christmas walk around the neighbourhood rating the lights and decorations and finishing off the night with midnight Mass. The season always allows me to remember the important things in life, to be grateful for all the blessings which I have and to make sure I share happiness and joy with those I interact with everyday.

Mr Sciortino

Continued...

Christmas has always been special for me. When I was young it was the excitement of finding presents under the tree and mum's and dad's smiling faces and their obvious happiness at our wonderment.

It was going with my mum to take homemade lasagna to the Exodus Foundation. I was always excited that others would enjoy my mum's yummy food!

I also loved going to midnight Mass and the sense of hope and peace as I thought about the baby Jesus being born in a manger. I loved the carols that I sang with sincerity and joy mixed with sadness as I thought about my dad (who passed away early) and with whom I would not be sharing the magic of Christmas anymore.

I loved the days of fuss and preparation for our Christmas lunch and sharing this with my extended family. We laughed, we played, we ate and were happy in each other's company.

As an adult nothing much has changed except that in addition to everything I have said, there is the gratitude and love of being so lucky as to be able to share this wondrous time with my own children and grandchildren and see the same emotions in their eyes as were in mine as a child. There is a sense of fulfilment seeing our Christmas traditions being handed down through the generations. For me Christmas is the definitive reminder of the circle of life.

Ms Valente

Christmas is always a special time for me and my family and a time that we all come together to celebrate the birth of Christ. When I was younger I specifically remember waking up at early hours in the morning to run down the stairs and open my presents and loving the joy of receiving gifts. Then getting dressed into my new clothes that I had received as presents and wearing them to our annual Christmas lunch. It was the best when my cousins came over and we exchanged presents and had fun together with my siblings and I creating memories for life, for us to always look back on.

Being in an Italian family the dishes that my Nonna & Nonno make alongside my aunts and mother is what is a core aspect of my family Christmas and what brings us together. The rush in the morning of making the big dishes to feed everyone is what brings us together on this special day and is something significant in my family.

Though growing older I feel more joy in giving rather than receiving. Experiencing opportunities such as the Christmas Hamper Appeal, and specifically dealing with it through SJAG I have learned the joy that comes from helping others and bringing joy to their life during the festive season.

I wish everyone a safe and merry Christmas! I hope you enjoy this time with family.

Joshua Veidreyaki