WORAWA STUDENTS SHINE IN SCHOOL PRODUCTION OF THE SAPPHIRES

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PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM WITH SCOTCH COLLEGE

On Sept 12, twenty-five Worawa College students travelled to Scotch College to join the Scotch College Indigenous Partnership Program students for our last afternoon of shared activities for the year. Each Thursday afternoon throughout this year, Scotch College has generously hosted up to thirty-five Worawa College students for learning experiences in their extensive library, followed by shared activities with Scotch’s Indigenous Partnership Program boys. Our trips to Scotch College have been the highlight of the week for many Worawa students this year. The focus of our activities this term has been the preparation of the dances, sets and table decorations for ‘The Sapphires’ production.

We are especially grateful to Marnie, Yudha and Morgana who have organised our shared activities with the boys each week; to Amanda, for her enthusiastic assistance and teaching sessions in the library; and to the mothers of the boys from the Indigenous Partnership Program who have so kindly provided us with a delicious afternoon tea each week. We look forward to continuing our partnership activities in 2014.
WORAWA STUDENTS SHINE IN SCHOOL PRODUCTION OF THE SAPPHIRES

The Sapphires Project began as an idea in 2012 when Executive Director, Lois Peeler decided it would be the next major arts project for the College. The power of the story was that it was a modern Aboriginal story. After creating a College version of the story, the plans were made and the process began.

The Executive Director shared some of her personal experiences and insights with the girls.

Casting
A day was selected for the girls to audition for the roles, and an experienced Drama teacher assisted in the process. Entering a real experience of an audition was an important part of the learning process. Auditioning required preparation, dedication and confidence. After reading, acting and singing, four Sapphires were found and a wonderful cast of girls who could sing, act and dance.

Rehearsals
Rehearsals started off with great enthusiasm. Respect, Responsibility, Relationship and Rigour are the core values of the Worawa Program and each of these were the basis of the Rehearsal Program. Working with a variety of students to make a show required mature assessment of relationship. Respect of the process and the need to learn lines and movement were imperative. Respect for the efforts of others was central. The girls learned quickly that if we didn’t support one another as we rehearsed there wouldn’t be a show. Responsibility for our own learning was quickly highlighted as girls had to come prepared to each rehearsal, knowing lines and choreography. As rehearsals went on, rigour was vital as the initial excitement wears off and the hard-work takes its place.

Team work was the emphasis
Every performer and assistant was important to the success of the show. There were over 20 girls directly involved in a stage role. From ‘Sapphires’ to chorus, from acknowledgement to a final speech, the whole event required that each person was giving their very best effort.

Partners
There were many fabulous partners involved in Worawa’s Sapphires. A wonderful staff band from Wesley College helped make the night a success. They learned all the required music and supported the students brilliantly. A wonderful performing arts student from Yarraville Grammar, Lachie Wall, played the male lead. Dani Sibosado, an RMIT student played a lead role with great professionalism. A wonderful group of students from MLC added colour and flair to the song ‘Soul Man’. Scotch boys sang and danced to ‘My Girl’ and added a highly entertaining male presence to our show.

Many others added their expertise: from direction and choreography, to set making and wardrobe.

The Big Night
Worawa’s first musical was an ambitious undertaking. As the girls gathered for their first role as the residents of Cummeragunja, through playing Vietnamese waitresses, soldiers, nurses, protesters, showgirls, their rehearsals paid off. They each did a fantastic job. The Sapphire leads also sang, acted and danced with great professionalism. The night of the performance was a colourful, ‘soul’ experience that exceeded our expectations. The production was brilliantly executed by the young, first-time performers. The production culminated in a moving rendition of Ngarra Burra Ferra by the original Sapphires. The audience applauded for some time! We were so proud of all the students achieved.

Outcomes
There is a lot required of performers. Some of it is described earlier in this article. Students in the Sapphires Project had to engage in reading, learning and interpreting a script, learn blocking for the stage, learn music and lyrics, learn choreography, participate with and encourage others, learn to project their voice and consider audience needs when performing, understand the order of a show. Students had to overcome natural fear of performance, accept the efforts of others and believe in their own ability and work ethic. They needed to be brave, strong and accepting. After the show many students expressed how proud they were of themselves and how pleased they were that they had not given up, even when it was getting tough to maintain the effort towards the end of the rehearsals. They were so pleased that they had really done it. The Sapphires’ was a success before it actually went on stage. The show was the reward for all that went on before. Well done, Worawa girls!
Zarkeema practices measured and graphed. She also studied the way blood pressure is looked at the maths involved in creating models. Taking a child to the clinic to be weighed and measured. They then made themselves. They needed to carefully measure the quantities, make sugar crystals. The girls will now know which foods they should be eating, and the nutrients we need to keep healthy and strong. We look forward to seeing the girls again next term when we will take a good look at the brain – the body’s computer.

Media Program

Term 3 has been jam packed with exciting opportunities for the students to partake in media making. Every afternoon a group of eight girls travelled to RMIT University in Melbourne’s CBD to do their own hour-long radio program. This initiative was run through the Student Youth Network’s “Schools On Air” program which is designed to enable school aged youth to gain a solid introduction to the media world by training them to create their own content, correctly use studio equipment such as microphones and the control panel, understand the Australian Media code of ethics and how to have fun and be interesting whilst on-air. The girls had a huge amount of fun with their trainers, Travis and Anita, who did an incredible job of making every Monday enjoyable. The importance of this initiative is to provide our students with opportunities to explore their creativity and develop professional skills as a pathway to future employment.

A small group of girls were selected to partake in the project with the aim of training them to use professional video recording and editing equipment to record Aboriginal oral histories. Under the tutelage of professional photographer and documentary maker Dave Callow, the girls have learnt how to use and manipulate a professional standard video camera, boom microphone, and the Adobe Premiere video editing program. Next term will provide an exciting culmination to the project with the students being given the opportunity to interview and record the oral histories of some Aboriginal Elders to create a movie. We hope that the girls will take their new skills with them when they return to their communities and engage in the important work of preserving culture and challenging. It was a real pleasure to see our students find their own voice and mature into confident, insightful presenters. Well done radio girls!

The Lab

The focus in Term 3 has been “Chemistry of Food.” During the term we have examined what is in food that helps to keep us healthy and which foods are best to eat. We have had a good look at different types of bush foods, from bush bananas to witchetty grubs, kangaroo to turtle eggs. We have had the opportunity to conduct a number of experiments too. Some students got to use a Bunsen burner for the first time! We tested soft drinks to find out how much sugar they contain and made sugar crystals. The girls will now know which foods they should be eating, and the nutrients we need to keep healthy and strong. We look forward to seeing the girls again next term when we will take a good look at the brain – the body’s computer.

Maths

This term the maths class set up a clinic and a chemist shop. This allowed the students to practice measuring using decimals. The girls stocked the shelves with lotions and potions that they made themselves. They needed to carefully measure the quantities, make an attractive label, price and mark the millilitres.

They investigated the profits being made through marketing Aboriginal beauty and health products in Australia. The clinic was set up beside the chemist and the students role modelled taking a child to the clinic to be weighed and measured. They then looked at the maths involved in creating and interpreting growth charts. They also studied the way blood pressure is measured and graphed.

We Believe in Education, Culture + Wellbeing
**DENTAL VAN VISITS WORAWA**

This term it has been great to have the dental van arrive and commence providing care to the students here at Worawa. EACH (Eastern Access Community Health) have set up the van, which has been situated near the dining room. Dental care is very important, both for good health now, and in the future. Education about dental hygiene and the importance of regular brushing and dental visits have been provided for the students. All students will be given the opportunity to visit the dentist in the van. As can be seen from this picture, it is a very well appointed, state of the art dental facility. This has enabled students to have access to not only dental assessments, but dental care and procedures as needed. The van will stay on site until all students have completed their course of care.

**WORAWA'S CRICKET SUCCESS**

This term, a group of Worawa students have been taking part in a weekly cricket program run by SEDA and Cricket Victoria. The participating students have learnt the basic skills of cricket, batting, bowling and fielding. This was the first time playing cricket for many of the students, however, the skills they displayed did not reflect this. Many of the students picked up on the game straight away and showed a true raw talent for the game. After the five week program concluded, eight students were selected to play in a Yarra Valley cricket competition against schools in the local area. Worawa students Jamie Lee, Griselda, Alliyanna, Nicka, Bernice, Shanelle, Regina and Naomi made up the winning team. Over the course of the day the team played three games, winning all of them by over 120 runs. This then took the girls through to the play off for the winning flag. The team took it all in their stride, comfortably hitting the ball in all directions and fielding together like a true team. Worawa won the final by over 100 runs, taking them to the next level of competition which will be the Zone finals in November. Well done girls on such an impressive debut to a new sport!

**THE DEADLY DASHERS**

On a freezing Sunday morning, early in the term, 10 Worawa students were selected to participate in ‘The Age, Run Melbourne’ 5 km fun run in the city. We joined the ‘Deadly Dashers’, a running team from the ‘Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention & Legal Service Victoria’. Although Aunty Pam wasn’t running in this race [she had run a half marathon the week before], she did lead us proudly to the starting line. We looked very professional in our ‘Deadly Dashers’ training tops and hand painted caps. $7000 was raised for the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention emergency relief fund and our girls felt very proud to be a part of their team. Next term, the whole school will participate in the Monbulk Fun run and the funds raised from this community event will go to constructing a running and fitness track on the College grounds. The track will enable the girl’s access to a pathway that will help them to improve and develop their fitness all year round. So save the date, Sunday November 10th, 2013. It will be a great day and hopefully, will raise a lot of money for a great cause.

**WORAWA STUDENTS ATTEND HEALESVILLE SANCTUARY UNVEILING OF WILLIAM BARAK SCULPTURE**

On August 15, a select number of students and staff joined Wurundjeri Elders, the Zoos Victoria Board and CEO, Healesville Sanctuary’s Director Glen Holland and staff at Healesville Sanctuary to celebrate the Sanctuary’s connection to Coranderrk with the unveiling of ‘Between Two Worlds’, a sculptural dedication to Wurundjeri Leader William Barak. The event was also attended by local politicians and special visitors from Melbourne schools and communities. Worawa students enjoyed participating in the proceedings and sharing lunch with the official guests.

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