"We're not a community,

we're like a family …

this is our home away from home."

- 14-year-old MCP student

MCP … a school of HOPE …

- Notre Dame College -

McAuley Champagnat Programme

McAuley Champagnat Programme
Notre Dame College
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All about MCP…

WHO ARE WE AND WHAT WE DO

McAuley Champagnat Programme (MCP) is one of the three Notre Dame College campuses in Shepparton. The programme was developed in 2006 to meet the educational needs of "at risk" students in the Greater Shepparton region that were not being met by current education providers.

Our key supporters, Salvation Army's Brayton Youth and Family Services and Catholic Education Office of the Sandhurst Diocese, are joined by numerous community and corporate organisations that work together with MCP to fulfill its vision for our students and their families.

MCP was founded in the tradition of Catherine McAuley and Marcellin Champagnat.

Catherine McAuley founded the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland during the 19th Century. She "saw herself as direct and practical in her response, she went out into the gutter and garret to teach, to soothe and to shelter."

Marcellin Champagnat founded the Marist Brothers in France during the 19th Century. "The Marist Brothers commit ourselves to be more present among children and young people on the margins of our societies. We respond to the urgent calls that come to us from young people who really are at risk, for example, street children, those who are illiterate, victims of drugs and violence." (XIX General Chapter, Mission , 33)

Trauma, grief, violence, depression, drug and alcohol abuse, crime and neglect are just some of the challenges students at the McAuley Champagnat Programme (MCP) carry to school every day.

Burdened and damaged they come to this "*School of Hope*" to escape life's horrors and engage in education that will equip them with skills and qualifications to make successful transitions to higher certificate and diploma courses at Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE or the Shepparton Technical Centre, apprenticeships or traineeships.

The youth have learning difficulties and/or multiple behavioral problems which prevent them from attending mainstream schools. They arrive at MCP with little self-esteem, low expectations and limited numeracy and literacy skills and walk away with pride, motivation, achievement and most importantly an education that equips them with industry specific skills.

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Highly skilled staff including the MCP director, welfare, curriculum and pathways co-ordinators, a psychologist, welfare officers, 8 Qualified VET teachers/trainers and 6 Industry trainers work with students and their families in a unique learning environment that focuses on "hands-on learning" to give students specific industry skills and prepare them for the world of work and work tirelessly to ensure whole-of-student development.

MCP partners with numerous Indigenous, community and mental health organisations to further student connections and interaction to promote communication and work readiness.

HOW MCP WORKS

- Small teams of students and staff work together to achieve individual education goals within a structured learning environment. Flexible learning with boundaries!
- Early intervention - a student is monitored and a close relationship established with families so that we can ascertain if an issue is arising at home that may impact school.
- All learning has a real life focus - the CGEA units (literacy and numeracy) focus on real life situations e.g. renting a property, mobile phone contracts, applying for jobs, budgets. Students who are work ready work on VET units in Engineering, Hospitality, Sport and Recreation and Agriculture.
- Supportive transitions: In 2009 several students have successfully gained jobs in hospitality and agriculture and others are studying at TAFE level courses.

Time	Activity
8.45am - 9.30am	MCP bus collects students from their homes (Shepparton), train station and bus interchange for out-of-town students.
9.30am - 10.00am	Breakfast program – students provided with healthy breakfast
10.00am - 12.00pm	Morning Session - Literacy and Numeracy
12.00pm - 12.30pm	Lunch program – student provided with a healthy cooked lunch
12.30pm - 2.45pm	Afternoon Session - Elective Programme
2.45pm - 3.15pm	Bus returns students home (Shepparton), train station or bus interchange for out-of-town students.

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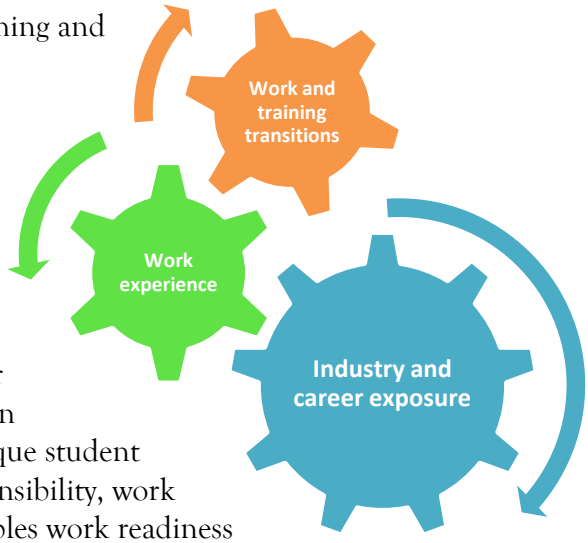
EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION

WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT MCP?

- MCP offers a unique alternative education that includes competency-based curriculum focused on foundational literacy and numeracy and life/work skills.
- Safe, inclusive learning environment that promotes achievement through respect and trust.
- MCP provides healthy meals, transport and sometimes shelter to assist with poverty and safety issues.
- Progressive pathways planning that builds firm training and career foundations through - industry and career exposure, work experience, work and training placement. (See illustration).



- Literacy and numeracy levels have vastly improved. Most students arrive at MCP at least three years behind their expected numeracy and literacy levels but leave with competencies at Certificate I, II or III levels.
- Many students present with behavioral problems or learning disorders that hinder them from gaining an education and participating in society. MCP's unique student management model teaches students respect, responsibility, work ethic and appropriate workplace behavior that enables work readiness within local industry.
- The level of family interaction at MCP is exceptional and unseen in most other educational facilities. Parents and carers are consulted during the development of student Individual Learning Plans at the start and end of each school term, they participate in student discipline and welfare, and play a part in student achievements, presentations, school events and activities.
- MCP maintains weekly family support.
- Each student obtains a specific skill set in one of the listed VET areas and the literacy & numeracy outcomes of the CGEA. All students have specialist Information, Communication and Technology learning sessions as an integral part of literacy within CGEA.
- Student Welfare Model:

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STUDENT FOCUS

FLEXIBILITY AND INDIVIDUALITY

- Student programs are designed individually and goals are negotiated with students and their parent/carer to achieve maximum success in career pathways through participation in various VET certificates, complementary electives to build skills and foundational literacy and numeracy to support career opportunities.
- Student learning is tailored to physical and/or intellectual disability, learning disorder or mental health issues. (Approximately 84% of students have social/emotional/behavioral disorders).
- All students are managed individually by a team of staff (teacher, integration aide and welfare officer) under the umbrella of the leadership team.
- Four Indigenous staff to support Indigenous students (Approximately 45% of the student population)
- High staff student ratio – One staff to three students.
- Calm learning environment with open spaces, hobby farm, community arts etc.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

- MCP works in partnership with families, not a distant group of parents.
- Students & families are assessed at enrolment by the psychologist and counseling follows as required to address trauma and abuse and personal development to assist students .
- Staff identify student needs & strategies are implemented with student and parent/carer consultation to improve levels of success and achievement.
- Parents/carers participate in the regular ILP meetings to review progress, recognise achievement and set new goals.
- Parental contact - weekly telephone contact, home visits and family days.
- Community members play mentoring roles & volunteers assist with program learning.
- Partnership with family – not a distant group or parents.

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IMPACTS

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR LIFE

Students are continually challenged to improve in a safe, structured and calm environment. Students focus on academic skills, and behavioural/social/emotional coping strategies.

- Youth gaining specific VET skills creating stepping stones to careers and employment.
- Specialist learning environment to focus on the learner, not the class.
- Indigenous specific needs, not a blanket approach to meeting student needs.
- Students use VET and electives to produce goods and services to support the wider community. E.g. prepare and serve afternoon tea to community groups, emergency services and industry workplaces; host school community events for national days of significance, recognise and thank program supporters and participate in cross-campus events.
- Support to cope with behavioural /social and emotional challenges.
- Students learn effective communication skills.
- Students learn to manage anger and deal with confrontation/aggression.
- Students learn techniques for impulse control.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FROM COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY PEERS

- Industry peers (e.g. GMLLEN, RTOs, specialist education programs such as DOXA, Barinya, Ganbina) visit MCP to learn about its operations and structures.
- Numerous media reports express student acknowledgement of MCPs impact on their educational, training and personal achievements.
- MCP True Colours Achievement Awards receive overwhelmingly positive feedback from students, families, supporters, partners and the wider community.
- MCP attracts students from as far as Melbourne and New South Wales.

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BUILDING NEW AND STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS

MCP continues to expand its community, corporate and education/training relationships in an effort to capitalise on opportunities for program development, create new ventures to provide students with a wider variety of employment and training experiences and broaden its networks to strengthen program sustainability.

Partner	Outcomes
Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative Pty Ltd	Cultural celebration and leadership
Academy of Sport Health and Education	Joint delivery of VET training and joint staff professional development Bluearth activities Reconciliation Week celebrations
Apprenticeship Factory	VET training in hospitality.
Educational living	Cert II in Engineering for all MCP students and work preparation.
VOTES	Providing: CGEA, Cert I Voc Prep, CTE, Agriculture, Sport and Recreation
Brayton Youth and Family Services (Salvation Army)	Host site for MCP. Provides staff training and works with students who require emergency accommodation & emergency mental health care.
West Hume Mental Health Intervention Team	Provide health programs and activities for students. Co-facilitates "Girls Only" program. VET competencies completed in program.
Save the Children Foundation	Co-facilitates child care course at MCP to assist students with aspirations to complete Certificate III in Child Care Services. VET competencies completed in program.
Ganbina – Koori Economic Employment Training Agency	Intense support for Indigenous students focusing on education, training and employment.
My Moola – First Nations Foundation	Provide financial literacy program to Indigenous students. VET competencies completed in program.

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SUSTAINABILITY

SYSTEMS & PROCESSES - CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

STAFF PARTICIPATE IN VARIOUS EVALUATION AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES:

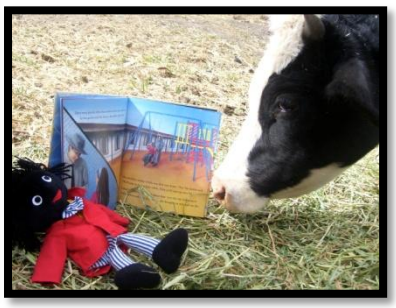
- Constant professional development for all staff including workshops, accredited training and university studies (masters, associate degree and certificate IV levels).
- Annual program review by programme leadership and & whole school management.
- Daily evaluation of student and program activities (daily debrief).
- Special event/program/training debriefing and evaluation.
- Regular staff meetings focus on development, feedback on trialing new strategies.
- Whole-campus staff training for state & federal policy relating to youth & education.
- Leadership team attend, present papers and run workshops at state and national education conferences.

TRAINING PARTNERS PARTICIPATE IN REGULAR FEEDBACK:

- Formal evaluations are conducted with training partners, students and staff to identify highlights, strengths, weakness and areas for improvement.
- VET trainers and providers meet regularly with staff to discuss progress, best method to deliver practical and theoretical training.

STUDENTS ARE INVOLVED THEIR DEVELOPMENT:

- Individual Learning Plans are a tool MCP uses to manage, review and evaluate student achievement and development and set learning and behavioral goals. ILP meetings are held every term and include the student's welfare worker, teacher and integration aide.
- Students participate in regular reviews of MCP electives and specialised programs.



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PLANS IN PLACE TO ESTABLISH LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

2010 MOVE TO $2 MILLION PURPOSE-BUILT LEARNING ENVIRONMENT INCLUDING:

- Small class sizes (max 12 students & 3 staff)
- Technical Centre
- Hospitality Centre - plans to have a training cafe at the new site which is able to supply staff, parents, students, in a fully working environment. Credentials could include: safe food handling, Barsitas license.

2011 CONSTRUCTION OF ADMINISTRATION WING (FUNDING PENDING) INCLUDES:

- Allied professionals co-located with MCP - mental health, GPs, dentist, counselors, audiologist, optometrist to be used by students and families, extended families in a proactive integrated approach.

FUTURE DREAMS:

- After-hours use of the training facility for groups of parents wishing to update their skills.
- Daycare & Childcare course established - training for students interested in Child Care Services & facilities in place for young mothers to bring children.

QUOTES FROM PARENTS AND STUDENTS:

"It's amazing … she gets up early in the morning and she's so excited about going to school."
Mother of 15-year-old student

"She's attending school five days a week - she didn't do this at her last two schools!"
Mother of 14-year-old student

"No-one can call me a loser, I've won an award…"
14-year-old male student

"Here (at MCP) you get attention and it's a lot easier to concentrate on your lessons…"
15-year-old female student

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