Hi Everyone

If I was to encapsulate “community” I would look no further than our Class Carers. Here’s a group of parents to whom I feel a deep sense of gratitude. Some have been beavering away for months, creating treasures and crafting beautiful things, enabling other to revel in the soulwork of making things by hand. Some have devoted hours and weeks to planning and preparing beautiful spaces and experiences for our visitors and our children to delight in. Some, so stretched for time, snatched brief conversations before soirees and texts after drop offs, to run through checklists and affirm we were on track to pull off some key element of the Fair. They’re not in it for the acknowledgement, but if you get the chance to thank a Class Carer, please do so—we would be lost without them.

Supporting their work, they recruited enthusiastic and selfless helpers along the way, sometimes a whole class asked to devote a few hours to a task, sometimes individuals taking pieces of the puzzle home to complete - maybe only a couple of hours work, but every single detail vital—you can’t run a Mouse Hunt without a mouse! Of course, it wasn’t just Class Carers who took on responsibility for coordinating stalls and activities—my heartfelt thanks to those who put up their hand to share the load, you are wonderful!

The week before the Fair sees structures begin to take form and excitement building amongst the children as they chatter about what they remember from past fairs and what to expect from this one. The day before, the school is a happy buzz of preparation—parents alongside students alongside teachers and staff all working together towards a common goal. And what a beautiful picture we created. Chris lovingly displaying our children’s craftwork; Brenna & Penny creating a magical Craft Stall; Toni & Class 6 presenting THE most impressive secondhand clothes stall you’ve ever seen (and I’ve seen a few); Renee & Brenna mastering the Plant Stall; Dee & Julie hosting a gorgeously welcoming Tea & Cake Shop; Sally nailing the Boat Building; Kindy presenting a delightful Children’s Garden; Lara & Brad whipping up a classic Tractor Rides….the list goes on. Thank you to each individual parent who took time out to cheerfully help build our Fair. Our students, too, were utterly invaluable - younger classes tidying, decorating and picking posies, Class 5 building the gold panning pond and the older students enthusiastically completing every request with confidence and initiative. What a pleasure and a privilege to experience first hand our student community in action.

If you’re interested in the beans—I can report our gross takings were close to $20,000 and it cost just under $14,000 to stage the event—this is comparable to last year. But the money is a bonus, it’s really about proudly showcasing our school to the world and bringing our whole school community together as one. Thank you, everyone, for your individual contribution. It was such a pleasure working alongside you and I look forward to doing it all again. With best wishes, Ange
Another Wonderful Silent Auction : Thankyou !

Our Silent Auction was again a huge success! We made nearly $2750, down on last year, but still successful in being an excellent forum to promote our local businesses as well as rehousing a large volume of goods that otherwise just sit in sheds or go to the tip while their new owners buy new stuff. Thank you to all the local businesses who have given so generously, many of them year after year - please return the favour, do the environment a favour, do yourself a favour and shop with them!

Thank you Neil Tait for another beautiful rose arbour - always hot property, so if you missed out just pop across the road from school about 1km towards Castlemaine and check out his magnificent display. Thank you also to Pyrenees Quarries for donating the stone chopping boards—check out their great range of local and imported stone. Our Silent Auction wouldn’t be the same without one of Charles Caddy’s reupholstered stools! An expert in working with secondhand materials and vintage fabrics, we are very lucky to have an upholsterer of Charles’ calibre in our small town. Located near the skate park, his workshop looks a bit messy but his work is very neat!! Ph: 5472 3232

Thank you to The Bike Vault who donated yet another bike. They have recently moved to new premises around the corner in Templeton St, just down from Tonks - check these guys out for all your biking needs including servicing at very competitive prices! Thank you to Rob Kirby who again donated a very generous Harvest voucher. You’ll find him, specialising in seasonal local organic produce, at Wesley Hill Market on Saturdays and at corner Barker & Hunter streets on Fridays. While you’re there, check out the Castlemaine Sustainability Shop specialising in everything from beautiful eco friendly paints to new improved battery technology for solar panels. If you’re going off the grid, talk to these guys first!

For organic produce, bulk dry goods and now “Who Gives a Crap?” recycled toilet paper (50% of profits from the sale of which goes to Watershed – providing clean water and sanitation to children in need), head into Green Goes the Grocer, on Templeton St. Thank you also to Castlemaine Fresh who donated the delicious fresh fruit and veggie hamper.

Starting at the Bendigo end of Barker St, call into Top End Technology & Cartridge World for all your computer tech needs and printer cartridge refills at approx. ½ the price of new – also better for the environment! Down the road a bit pop into PJ Tyres for new and recycled tyres and repairs and check their new nitro treatment extending tyre life by keeping inflation at the ideal level. Cross the road to The Snip for Men, a great little barber shop, walk in any time with no appointment for a very swish cheap kids or men’s haircut. Back across Barker St is a beautiful little shop called Tribe, owned by our very own Ange – it’s full of all the really clever creative stuff she does, perfect for Christmas presents with an edge. Tribe showcases over 30 local makers and artists, including beautifully detailed work by Donna Fearn (Faircloth) another of our avid donors. Cross again and you’ll come to Maine Shoes & Accessories specialists in fitting kids’ shoes – ask for their frequent shopper card.

After all that shopping you may need to stop in at The Dot for a milkshake. Moving away from fruit & veg, Dot has expanded her cafe—a great place to grab a good value wholesome lunch made fresh onsite. Around the corner is Stocks, specialising in fair trade clothing and gifts, this is the shop with all the beautiful cotton dresses on the rack out the front. Jumping Jupiter’s Toy Store not only has an impressive range of LEGO but loads of high quality games and jigsaw puzzles. Don’t forget, for all your office supply and school stationary needs, use Castlemaine Office Supplies – not those other guys, COS are just as cheap!

Need a health boost—drop into Healing Well for high quality chiropractic, reflexology and Chinese medical treatments from our old faithfuls Marg Peck, Sonia Stocco and Rima Truchanas and naturopath Nicola Pilon who has recently joined the Well. For excellent swimming tuition you can’t go past the newly revamped indoor pool now known as Castlemaine Fitness Centre. For all your pet health needs head to Vet’s All Natural, also handy for dropping off escape dogs found running on the road on the way to school – love that wire nest sculpture! The alcohol department was a little light on this year but always feel free to call me (Lisa Thomas 0439 419 333) for award winning boutique Birthday Villa Cabernet or Gewurtz.

Other school family businesses who generously donated include ArteDeco in Daylesford for all your quality Art Deco jewellery, furniture and retro clothing needs. (perfect for Christmas gift vouchers for teachers). Visit Malmaison online for all you Francophile needs, and also Louise Jiricek’s PipPoppit for funky handmade clothes.

Ellie Marney’s immortalisation in fiction was won by Blossom D’Onofrio! Look out for that name in Ellie’s next YA novel. Ellie’s Every series is on sale where all good books are sold (she’s actually very famous and her books are great).

Thank you to Sovereign Hill for donating a family day pass. If you haven’t been, Sovereign Hill it is an absolute must for the holidays—make sure you catch the boiled lolly making demo and the molten gold pour! If you’re heading out of town via Melbourne, check you’re car into Ace Parking just near the airport and much cheaper than on site! These guys approached us to offer a donation without even being asked!

As you know I love the recycling potential of the Silent Auction. Thankyou particularly to de-clutterers: Anna & Steve, Fiona Hall, Dianne Pickett, Margaret Crowe, Brenna, Kathryn Hall, Andrea Coyle, Donna Faircloth, Maria Beddome and Lucy Mayes. And to the lovely person who donated the overlocker!

Looking forward to doing it all again next year. New blood very welcome! Kind regards, Lisa Thomas