



Wesley School for Seniors

Newsbites

Term 3 – Issue 1
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Wesley School for Seniors update

By Jeannie Mathews
Program Coordinator

As we saw an unexpected turn of events this term resulting in face to face classes being stopped and the state going into another lockdown, we have resumed our seniors online classes which has seen an increase in type of classes being offered and student numbers.

Our website has been updated with some resources that our students might find useful along with a guide on how to zoom.

I hope that you all keep safe and where possible take up our online class offerings, keep active and manage your mental and physical wellbeing during this time.

Like many of us I have found myself praying for the strength of the Lord during these times and safety of our clients, family and friends. One of the verses that comes to my mind is Psalm 121:1-2

I lift my eyes to the mountains - where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Message

By Rev Stu Cameron

Superintendent and CEO

These are challenging days. We have been in some form of 'unprecedented times' for more than 18 months now, testing us at every turn, particularly our courage, commitment and resilience. Together we can pass the test.

While my all-time favourite confectionary would be Darrell Lea Bullets, a close second would be Violet Crumble – far better than the chocolate honeycomb alternative, Crunchie. It is beyond debate. I say this in sharing a beautiful proverb from the Bible:

*Gracious words are like honeycomb,
sweetness to the soul and health to the body.
(Proverbs 25:11)*

In these challenging times, one of the best ways we can support one another is with encouragement. When we encourage, we literally impart courage to another. It is an act of service that can have a profound impact, especially when hearts are anxious and minds tired. So, my gentle challenge to you is to actively look for opportunities to encourage a friend or someone else in your world. Imagine the impact if even a proportion of us stepped up our 'encouragement game' this coming week? Let's be honest, there's a lot that's discouraging in our world right now. Let's see if we can balance the ledger a little.

As we look to encourage one another let's, be specific with the words we offer. Don't be vague. Detail what you appreciate about someone. Be sincere; say what you mean

and mean what you say. Offer only honest affirmation. Be generous – encouragement should never be half-hearted, but full and rich. Be creative – encouragement need not be limited to words but can be offered in many ways through actions.

Finally, be empathetic. Right now, many, if not most of us, are carrying heavier emotional weight, whether related to work, home or both. Someone said that empathy is seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another and feeling with the heart of another. You may perceive there are people in your team or world who are doing it tougher than usual right now. Empathy moves us to action. One of my favourite writers, Brene Brown, says:

Empathy is simply listening, holding space, withholding judgment, emotionally connecting, and communicating that incredibly healing message of 'you're not alone'.

In challenging times being empathetic towards one another is encouragement in and of itself. Wisdom again from the Bible:

Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up. (Proverbs 12:25)

So, I encourage you to encourage one another this week! In doing so, be specific, sincere, generous, creative and empathetic. Even as you read these words, the name or face of a person you can encourage is coming to mind. Text them. Send an email. Walk across the room. Pick up the phone. Let's step into these coming days carried by a wave of encouragement. Encouragement shakes a defiant fist against all that is discouraging in our world, proclaiming there is hope that pulls us forward.

Before I finish, let me share one more very important piece of news. We have launched a very special appeal to support our Wesley Emergency Relief (ER) efforts in Western and South-West Sydney. In recent weeks our incredible ER team have been dealing with unprecedented demand for assistance from families struggling to feed their kids or pay essential bills. The money allocated to us by the government does not meet the demand.

I am inviting you, as you are able, to support this appeal. All money raised from the appeal will go directly towards supporting families and individuals doing it really, really tough.

Any gift you offer will be a very practical form of encouragement for those desperately needing some right now. Please feel no compulsion whatsoever, but if you would like to give please visit wesleymission.org.au

Or maybe you are in need of support? Please don't hesitate to reach out, it is while we are physically apart that we need connection more than ever.

Every blessing to you and your loved ones.

Stress audit – lockdown 2021

A stress audit helps us to set clear boundaries for the information we consume as well as take control of our exposure to stress and so contributes to better work-life balance.

Reflect on the parts of your day where you are exposed to stress, from the time you wake up to the time you go to bed. Where in your day are you experiencing stress, directly (towards you) indirectly (paperwork, hearing stories, news). Daily routine

In the morning:

- what social media do consume,
- are you messages stressful,
- what music do you listen to?
- what T.V. shows are you watching?

During the day:

- what do you listen to on the radio,
- podcasts,
- audio books,
- make phone calls?

At work/ during class:

Where are you impacted by stress, that is not part of your primary role?

- what classes are you attending,
- what reports are you reading,
- what forms are you filling out,
- what conversations are you having?

Evening routine

- what are you listening to on the radio, music,
- what are you reading,
- what shows are you watching?

Now you have a list of where there is stress in your day, start by auditing the stress you face.

1. Underline the stressors you need to monitor.
2. Circle the stressors you can lessen.
3. Put a line through the stressors you can eliminate.
4. Asterix the stressors you want support with managing.

Wesley School for Seniors Online Zoom training for students and tutors

Zoom for Tutors

Thurs 23rd 3.30 to 4.45 pm for tutors

Increase your zoom knowledge. Suitable for those interested in becoming a tutor, new tutors plus our current tutors. Latest tips and tricks. Q and A. All welcome.

Zoom for Students

Monday 27th 10.30 to 11.45am for students

Learn about Zoom, a program that will keep you connected with training, friends and family. Zoom gives you the opportunity to participate in our wonderful online classes. Learn the basics of zoom plus latest tips and tricks. Suitable for beginner to intermediate Zoomers. Contact us on **02 92635416** or schoolforseniors@wesleymission.org.au to register.

Wesley School for Seniors Online Upcoming Term 4 courses:

Guitar (Beginner)
Spanish (Beginner/ Advanced Beginner)
Chinese Proverbs and Poetry
Mandarin (Beginner)
Shakespeare
Money Matters
History comes alive
ESL English Conversation (from Intermediate to Advanced)
Ukulele (Beginner)
Tablets and Smartphones
Art and Photography basics
Guitar (Intermediate)
Introduction to meditation
Faith Chat
Piano (Intermediate)
Latin (Beginner 4)
Mysteries of the universe
Yoga (Beginner)
Italian (Beginner)

French (Beginner)
Strength, Mobility and Balance online
Book Club
Cinema discussion group
Current affairs forum

Wesley School for Seniors Online student testimonials

"The online course is great, convenient, saves time and as good as face-to-face class[es]," says student, aged 69.

"Always interesting and well presented," says student, aged 72.

Wesley School for Seniors Online tutor testimonials

"It's great to teach/learn from home. There is better control over student participation. It's easy to distribute course materials via the internet (no photocopying). It's easy to record each week's class via Zoom and the online process itself."

"It's most appropriate during the current [COVID-19] crisis."

"It's convenient for students and tutors. It's the new normal."

Student column - Learning via zoom

Here are some images of our Mandarin and Chinese proverbs students with their tutor Annie Chiu learning and socialising online during class. Chinese proverbs runs every Tuesday from 9.30 to 10.45 am and Mandarin class runs every Tuesday from 10.45 am to 12 pm.

Mandarin zoom class in session



Chinese proverbs and poetry class in session



Tutor column

By Liz Morgan

Tutor, Online chair yoga

I am a registered yoga therapist and I teach online chair yoga classes for older adults. My gentle, mindful yoga classes are specially designed for older people and people with limited mobility. The focus is on correct breathing, stretching, balance and relaxation with gentle exercises designed to help keep you mobile, prevent falls and improve sleep.

All movements can be practiced seated in a chair, rather than on the floor and you definitely do not need previous experience with yoga!

I encourage you to take things at your own pace, with opportunities to challenge yourself only if you want to, and you are invited to rest when you need to. Each class ends with a guided meditation, which is an opportunity to practice relaxing your body and quietening your mind. This is also done seated in a chair.

Did you know that more than one-third of people aged 65 and older fall one or more times per year? Falls occur due to multiple risk factors, including decreased muscle strength and postural awareness. There is a legitimate growing body of evidence suggesting that yoga can help older adults achieve increased strength, stability, coordination, and well-being.

Multiple studies have also demonstrated the positive effects of yoga on the mental health of seniors. It has been shown to be particularly effective in improving symptoms associated with depression and anxiety.

As we age our strength and mobility decreases but the natural effects of aging can be countered with yoga. In this gentle yoga class, you are gradually introduced to a range of easy movements and postures which increase your range of motion in the joints, improve bone density and muscle strength and improve your sense of balance.

We practice together in a supportive, friendly atmosphere, so why not come and try a class?

I very much look forward to seeing you on Thursday mornings from 10 to 11 am.

By Ken Ranby

Tutor, Cryptic crosswords

Greetings from Lockdown N.S.W.

Those of us who are not busy with Zoom classes and becoming bored with commercial-filled television programs will be thankful if they can improve their skills at crosswords of the Cryptic variety with all the time on their hands. A common device of setters is the Anagram where the letters of a word or phrase are re-arranged to form another word or phrase; a simple example being 'heart' to 'earth' or 'thing' to 'night'.

Some anagrams are surprising e.g. 'Santa' to 'Satan' but some can be quite appropriate; here are some of my favorites (from the internet): astronomer - moonstarer; punishment - nine thumps; dormitory - dirty room; debit card - bad credit; Clint Eastwood - Old West Action.

But my personal favourite was a mathematical anagram; eleven plus two - twelve plus one (not only do the letters match exactly but both equate mathematically to thirteen AND each anagram consists of thirteen letters!

Finally, we could play around with our own names (this could be useful in formulating codewords which we seem to need frequently these days): I was able to get a Welsh moniker by switching from Ken Ranby to Bryn Kane.

Go Cold U.K. (Good Luck)

By Paul Hurst

Tutor, Guitar Intermediate

Musical Jokes

What song do tornados like?
"The Twist."

What's green and sings?
Elvis Parsley.

Why do fluorescent lights hum?
Because they forgot the words.

How can you tell if a singer's at your door?
They can't find the key and don't know when to come in.

By Bill Koh

Tutor, Ukulele Beginners

My experience as a rookie tutor at Wesley School for Seniors. Dedicated to all the senior school students at Wesley Mission

The Wesley Seniors 'beginners ukulele' class started in July of 2018 with seven students. and gained in numbers to 24 in 2019. The enthusiasm was electric and with it the energy and camaraderie of the class. The first concert was held in December 2018 barely 5 months from inception with all seven students participating. The class grew from there and by mid-2019 the class had swelled to 24 students.

In order to hone the playing skills and confidence, students were encouraged to participate at concerts during the year.

The first concert was Wesley Senior School's 50th anniversary in June of 2019. Followed closely by the multicultural concert in September. We held a picnic/ jam session at Balls Head Park, Waverton in October. Shortly after we participated in the fund-raising concert at Uniting Church, Rockdale organised by Hazel Lynton. In early December we gave a performance at Bondi Junction RSL Christmas show. The year culminated with two more performances at the Wesley Senior School's annual concert and the Christmas Church service.

I must say that as a first year tutor I was truly blessed with such an enthusiastic group of students whom gave me so much challenge and encouragement making teaching an absolute pleasure as it's rewarding. Online zoom classes started from the beginning of 2020. Many of my students would just love to jam and continue to improve their skills as well as be introduced to new songs with more challenging chords. To date probably about 800 songs have been distributed and collated.

During this trying times, music and camaraderie helps the mental state of individuals. I am looking forward to the day when we can come together and enjoy playing the ukulele and singing together in class. In conclusion I would quote Shakespeare's sentiments on music:

*If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! it had a dying fall:
O! it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour.
(Twelfth Night, 1.1.1-7)*



We remember fondly

We take this opportunity to remember our Wesley School for Seniors tutors who served the community for many years and sadly passed away over the last year.

*Barbara Tonitto – Square dancing tutor
(Intermediate and Advanced)*

*Margaret McAlpine – Square dancing tutor
(Beginners)*

Barbara Tonitto and Margaret McAlpine managed to engage a lot of seniors meaningfully to teach them the skill of dancing. Square dancing requires learning of steps and figures used in traditional folk dances and social dances. Barbara and Margaret painstakingly worked with seniors to teach them through the year and eventually prepared them for the end of year concert.

Despite health issues, Barbara continued to work with Wesley School for Seniors and rarely ever missed a class. She has also trained Margaret and other tutors to take over the class in her absence. We will miss them dearly.