

# Take responsibility for healthier habits

## EDITORIAL

By JOSEPHINE CALLINAN

EATING habits are formed in a child's early learning stages; children's choices can be influenced by a variety of people and environments.

The humble school canteen is usually a child's first experience of choosing and buying their own snacks. Any influence by canteens should be positive.

St Paul's already has healthy alternatives on the menu. They sell oranges, apples, sultanas, cereals, salads and wraps, but our schools can be an even healthier school environment.

Schools, through all-natural and healthy canteens would provide an amazing opportunity to introduce children to healthier alternatives of all their favourite foods into their daily diet.

The school canteen can be tough sometimes for children and teachers who have allergies or intolerances to particular products. Schools are already nut-free environments, but for people with gluten or dairy intolerances, they often struggle to find a canteen product that is right for them. By introducing all natural chips and treats, low-fat food

products, gluten-free options and low GI (but high in fibre) breads and wheat products as well as preservative-free products, this would benefit a lot of people in the school community.

As well as benefitting the health of particular students, the introduction of these products would encourage students to turn away from constantly eating food products that are affecting our health and well-being. These foods can also lead to serious health problems in the future.

The message must be reinforced at every opportunity. Classroom teachers teach personal health (eating healthy and staying fit), but when that bell sounds the happy students run outside only to stare at the tempting foods that their school canteens and lunchboxes have available to them.

School canteens and parents need to be proactive in encouraging healthy choices for students; they cannot just stand there and watch children become obese from the bad influences that they are putting forward.

They are convincing children to think it is OK to eat unhealthy foods that may cause serious health problems in the future.

This could have so many repercussions for the individual and families – who is to blame?

It is time for all schools to turn to 100 per cent healthy canteens.



Cartoon: Samuel Shears



SONGBIRD: Student Azure Hudson has begun her vocal career in the Diocese's ASPIRE program. Picture: Emily Duff

# A goal worth the aspiration

By SAMANTHA CARTER

WHEN year 6 student Azure Hudson saw the opportunity to participate in a performing arts program, she jumped at the chance.

ASPIRE is an audition-based drama, dance, music and creative arts program within the Maitland-Newcastle diocese. It provides benchmark quality training for students in years 5-11. The program encourages students to chase their goals and dreams.

Azure had heard about ASPIRE through previous St Paul's students. She thought it would be a good opportunity to turn her dream into the beginning of a career and discussed auditioning for the program

with her teachers and parents.

Azure was selected to perform in the ASPIRE vocal group.

Azure and her peers participated in studio practice, workshops, advance skill development, networking and teamwork before they performed at the Civic Theatre in July.

Azure is enjoying the program and the opportunity to meet new people.

"You can make a lot of new friends from other schools and hang out with them while we practise."

Year 5 teacher Philip Burgess is a part of the ASPIRE team.

"ASPIRE provides students with an opportunity to showcase their talents beyond their school. It has been wonderful to see the confidence of the students grow."

# Living with an illness, hoping for a cure

By AZURE HUDSON

IN Australia, one baby is born with cystic fibrosis every four days.

St Paul's teacher-librarian Michelle Philpott has three children, two of whom have cystic fibrosis.

Everyone wants their child to be born healthy, but when a baby is born with an illness, it is a very different experience.

"When my children were born it was heart-breaking, sad and scary," Mrs Philpott said.

Her children need to have treatment every day; she gives them physiotherapy on their lungs twice a day.

The Philpott children take up to 40 tablets daily and they need to follow strict hygiene practices.

In May, Mrs Philpott took the 65 Roses Fundraising Challenge, raising a total of \$5025.

She hopes to continue to help others with cystic fibrosis by educating the public by raising awareness and generating funds to help find a cure.



65 ROSES: Teacher-librarian Michelle Philpott and her daughter Macyn. Picture: Olivia Knight

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