**Principal’s Report**

Cannot quite believe that this is the last newsletter for 2011.

A very busy year has drawn to a close. Thank you again, to all the students, staff and parents and friends who worked together to make the school concert such a great success.

Next year we have a few staff changes across the school.

We say farewell to and extend our sincere thanks to Mrs Alex Anderson and Mrs Deb Hicks both for their outstanding contribution in support roles to Gray St over many years. We also farewell our two grade five teachers Elise Couchman and Sarah Maclean. We sincerely thank Elise for her contribution to Gray St as a Grade 5 teacher and across the school over the past two years. Also Sarah for her outstanding work as a grade 4 teacher in 2010 and then as a Grade 5 teacher in 2011 Sarah has been a passionate contributor across the school. To Steve Livingstone a huge thank you for coming in mid way through the year to replace Don Beaton when he was appointed to the acting principal position at Cavendish. Steve has also given a lot of extra time to activities across the school one as recent as the concert where he was managing backstage. Dean Kilpatrick has completed a great year as the P.E. specialist and we thank him for all his work in this area. Caterina Wilkinson has done an amazing job as the Visual Arts teacher. She has put in so many of her personal hours to ensure the high quality program that she delivered. The recent “Self Portrait” Art Show was Caterina’s suggestion. My initial comment to her was that “It is too bigger job” for a part time person to do” her reply was “No I can do it!” And of course we know she did do it. Thanks Caterina.

We extend a warm welcome to Ben Sexton, Damian Hayes and Louise Howman who will be joining our staff at Gray St in 2012.

I wish all families who are leaving Gray St moving to new locations, or who have had their last child finish Year 6, the very best for the new year. We thank you all for your valuable support to the school during your time at Hamilton (Gray St) Primary School.

The staff resume school on Wednesday 1st February without the children for planning and professional development.

Students resume school on Friday 3rd February.

On behalf of the staff, I would like to wish all members of the school community a safe, restful and enjoyable festive season.

Finally I would like to thank the staff for their dedication and work throughout the year. The school has completed another extremely successful year with excellent achievements across all areas. I personally would like to thank everyone for their support over the year and I am excited about next year working with you all again to further enhance the quality of education offered at Hamilton (Gray St) Primary School for all our students.

Helen

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2011 Daniel Hodgson Memorial Award – Madeleine Bradbeer with 2011 Dux winners Lukas Egger and Elly McLean.
School Council President Speech

Ladies and Gentlemen a very good evening. I’m Ted’s Dad.

On behalf of the Hamilton Gray St Primary School Council, my fellow parents and members of the School Community, it is with great pleasure and anticipation that I address you at the 2011 Christmas Concert as School Council President.

I would like to firstly acknowledge all staff who as leaders of the school are each responsible for taking on different lead functions throughout the year, whether it be House Athletics, Swimming, Active After School Care Programs, School Excursions or embedding Literacy and Numeracy Strategies across the school curriculum. It is always achieved with good humour and exemplary organisational skills. You help create an environment that is nurturing and provides an excellent learning experience for our children and the school community. To all our staff, well done this year and please accept our sincerest thanks for all your efforts.

Next year our school celebrates 160 years since it was formed, but arguably 2011 has followed 2010 as one of the busiest years in Gray Street’s history. Opening of the new $2.5 million dollar project in May has delivered two new classrooms, an enormous open learning space, learning pods used for literacy and numeracy support, new toilet facilities, a new canteen and most importantly for those of you who have been around the school for a little while we finally connected and weather proofed the quadrangle. We also completed one of the largest painting and maintenance programs ever undertaken by the school, the development of a vision statement and a new 4 year strategic plan, implementation of a new newsletter template and website, consolidation of the Outside School Hours Care Program, ramping up of our orientation and transitional programs, development of our Gray Street Community Learning Partnership with Southern Grampians Adult Education, hosting of numerous parent forums, refurbishment of the School Canteen, exceptional fund raising activities and numerous working bees. What a huge year it has been at Gray St!

One of the major pieces of work undertaken this year by school council was the development of a long term landscaping master plan for the school. This plan focuses on providing a structured direction for future grounds development and will assist in guiding our fund raising efforts over the next decade. You will note on the plan, a redevelopment of the Gray St entrance with one of the basketball courts making way for a terraced multi-purpose space, with an artificial grass surface to complement the school oval, undercover connections to the main buildings of the school and renewal of the playground area on French St, with play equipment built from natural timbers, orchards, kitchen gardens and landscaping. This is an exciting plan for the whole school community and we look forward to prioritising the projects and to get cracking in early 2012.

I am privileged to chair a terrific cross-section of the school community in your school council. They have worked very hard this year and have put a hand on the rudder and steered the school through the numerous issues and projects that are both planned and unplanned. I would like to acknowledge my fellow councillors, Deputy Chair and Education Sub Committee Chair, Susan Bradbeer, Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair, Jim Bailey, Facilities Committee Chair, Leigh Whyte and other parent councillors Jason Muldoon, Simon McKinley, Tom De Steiger and Martin Pitts. Council would not be complete without excellent input from our staff councillors in Kerrie McFadden, Emma Callaway and Raquel Potter. Sadly Martin resigned from Council in August due to work commitments and Tom will leave us shortly relocating due to a work promotion. Their input will be greatly missed and I thank them for their assistance throughout 2011.

As a council it is imperative that we strive to have an honest, transparent and open working relationship with our Principal. Principal Helen Freeman has now been at Gray Street Primary School for two years. This year we have continued to enjoy Helen’s great passion and clear vision for the school. She continues to strive to make Gray Street Primary School a place that values the individual learning needs of all students through a varied curriculum, high quality teaching, positive partnerships and innovative programs and practices. On behalf of school council can I publicly express my appreciation for your dedication, insight, incredible hard work and leadership in assisting council to realise Gray St’s true potential.

Another vitally important function of council is in approving its fund raising activities for the year. Without this additional fund raising support to the school’s finances we would be in a far poorer position. Many people within the school community contribute to this important activity however it is the tireless group of fund raising committee volunteers that I wish to make a special mention to again this year as we are on target to break more than $18,000 for the calendar year. A huge thank you and we look forward to prioritising those funds towards the landscaping master plan next year.

Personally I have had another year of great discovery and enjoyment by being involved at Gray St. Sitting with parents reliving my own memories of primary school during the development of our vision statement as we were challenged by facilitator Des Gorman, the privilege of working with leading staff to workshop the new four year strategic plan, raking, weeding and sweeping with more than 40 parents from Prep to Grade Two at our big working bee for the year, travelling to Port Fairy as a parent volunteer to Grade Two school camp and proudly watching our students, out of their comfort zone, Excel - some of them away from home for the first time, debating policy positions with fellow councillors during school council meetings and only last week sharing the emotions of a grade six graduation with staff - past and present, departing families and proud grand parents as we reflected on the memories and experiences of our graduating cohort. Gray St is so much more than just dropping off and pick up your kids from school. Every parent has a skill to offer and we will look forward to seeing as many parents as possible give up a few hours for the school in 2012. You don’t need to give an enormous amount of time just one or two times a year, but we will really need you next year. Our enrolments are projected to be the lightest we have seen for the last few years. This will have some budgetary implications that volunteering your time would really help us overcome. It is an exciting time 2012, as I have highlighted, and we want your support.

On behalf of Gray Street Primary School can I thank最主要的 of all, our students, and please accept our sincerest thanks for all your efforts.
URGENT NOTICE

Thursday 22nd December 2011
Last Day 1.00pm finish
(not 1.30pm as previously noted on the newsletter)

Junior Netball 2012

Students wishing to play netball in 2012 MUST return the Confirmation Notice sent out last week to Ms Ferrier by tomorrow. This will assist us in gauging numbers before the start of the 2012 season.

The summer competition will commence Saturday 11th February 2012 and conclude 24th March (6 weeks).

Gray Street will be assisting with taking registrations during the first three weeks of netball and we are asking for parent volunteers to assist with this task. It should be no more than 2 hours receipting payments whilst the netball is being played in the first three weeks.

We hope to enter U10 and U12 teams subject to sufficient coaches and umpires.

Registration costs for the summer season are:

U10 - $54 (VNA $30 + HNA $24) (VNA is payable only once per year)
U12 - $64 (VNA $40 + HNA $24)

Carolynn Murray & Lisa Ferrier

To those families that will be leaving us at the conclusion of term, thank you for choosing Gray St Primary School and allowing us to contribute to the development and education of your special son or daughter. Please don’t forget us. Your time here no matter how brief is part of Gray St’s rich heritage and you are always welcome to return at anytime, even if it is just to keep an eye on how things are going!

In concluding tonight I wish to thank all those who have added something special to school life throughout 2011. We have continued to be fortunate with some very kind acts of volunteering from the school community - whether it is helping students to read in the classroom, perform maintenance and administration duties or cutting up the fruit for Fresh Fruit Friday – your contribution is invaluable. Our strategic and infrastructure planning throughout this year will place the school in the best possible position for the future. We have seen our staff go above and beyond their usual duties to inspire our kids to be confident, independent and enthusiastic learners. We have seen our facilities evolve to create a healthy and happy educational environment that assists our children reach their full potential.

The children of Gray Street Primary are our future leaders and as School Council President it is a privilege to be able to contribute to their lives. I look forward to welcoming you in making an additional contribution to our school in 2012. Please have a safe and happy Christmas and enjoy the rest of tonight’s terrific entertainment.

BOOK BOXES/PARENT PAYMENTS

On Wednesday 1st February 2012 (the Wednesday before the students return to school) payment is to be made at the school office with the “book box” available for collection on this date. Payment can be made by and can be made using EFTPOS – including Credit Card, cash or cheque (made payable to Hamilton (Gray St) Primary School) at the office.

Please note your child’s “book box” can only be collected once payment has been received.

Book Boxes will be available for collection on Wednesday 1st February at the following times:
- 9 am to 12 noon
- 1 pm to 4 pm
- 5 pm to 7 pm

Items in the “book box” will need to be named and returned to school on Friday 3rd February for your child to use in the class.

New Uniform Shop

New uniform will be available for collection/purchase on the following days before school returns in 2012:

Monday 30th January 9.30 to 11.30
2.00 to 4.00
Tuesday 31st January 9.30 to 11.30