

## Nurturing a unified vision and interconnectedness in the strategic directions of the Association's areas of ministry (MSA, MYM, M180, AMS)

Many years ago, when my eldest son was in about Grade 4, I knew I had to determine which high school he would attend. I remember at the time having the faith to just ask the question and await the answer. Over time a name started to appear and repeat in my mind: Marcellin. I knew nothing of the school, and don't believe I had ever heard of it before then. So when he reached Year 5 Marcellin College Bulleen was the school that we applied to, and were accepted by - but only after investigating it and applying our own family 'checklist' of values that were important to us. This is because unity - especially spiritual unity - was at the core of what we were seeking. My husband Len and I, weren't just picking an academic place to educate our son, we were discerning a school that would act out and hold true to the moral, ethical and spiritual values that we considered paramount to a good and true life, and would therefore be a good fit as our partner in the raising of our son. We were looking for unity, and what we heard and saw of the Marist characteristics at the school reassured us that this was the right place.

Currently our second son is in Year 11 at Marcellin. Len and I have been very pleased with the relationship we have had with the staff and believe wholeheartedly that the school puts in to practice the ethos of 'family spirit'. We have always felt that we have been in a relationship with the school and that we share the same vision - and that our sons have been the benefactors of this relationship.

Three years ago, when I was searching for a full-time position, I had a similar checklist in mind, but the most important thing for me was that I would be able to work in a strong spiritual Catholic community, and in a place where the work was carried out to serve others. Well, I couldn't believe it when I saw the ad on Seek for a position with the Marist Brothers in Brunswick - and then couldn't believe it when I was awarded the job! I just knew, again, that this was the right place and that this environment would mirror the values that were important to me - as a person, and as a Christian, and indeed (as I have come to understand) as a Marist.

I must admit that sometimes I have felt, as I came to comprehend the extent of the many areas of ministry in the Province and to feel more and more a part of this wider Marist family, that I don't have much to offer and don't contribute much. This is mainly because I don't have 'face-to-face' contact with young people (like teachers, principals, youth workers etc). However, one thing I have realised is that when we all share in the vision of what the organisation is hoping and striving to achieve, then that is the glue that binds us all together and directs our thoughts and actions, no matter what our role. The mission for us all is the common goal of serving young people, of loving them equally and inviting them to become transformed by knowing Jesus Christ in their own hearts.

I know that I do not teach a child in Cambodia, but I am heartened by hoping that the work I do do – which utilises my gifts and talents – is a small part of the bigger tapestry of the Marist mission. I have a wonderful role as administrative assistant for the Marist Association, but best of all I am able to utilise my skills as a graphic designer. It is actually very pleasing to be like a central 'cog' in the wheel by administering the Association database and the membership process. I can see the wide landscape of the organisation, including all the ministries, and come in to contact daily with people from all over the country – doing my best to assist them with whatever they need.

I really love designing the layouts and content of the prayer resources produced by the Association Pastoral Team, and creating the ChristLife newsletter, and love working on projects.

I think you can really enjoy your work if you are permitted to express your abilities – granted from God – and carry it out with a sense of service whilst feeling you are part of a much bigger picture that is seeking to be guided by God for the good of others. Then, of course, it becomes natural that others who need it, really benefit.

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