



# ELEVATE *in Melbourne's Metro East*

Seek the Shalom of the city.. & schools!

December 2009

Hello there,

I cannot believe the speed at which this second semester has flown! Yes, an overseas conference and home move tends to cause weeks to meld, but I'm still trying to date things 'November'! We are over halfway through Chloe's Advent calendar—activities each day to focus on the coming story—and it's only just sinking in to me; Christmas is very nearly here! How about you? ☺ It is such an important space for delight & rest.

Please pray for growth and depth in Elevate in the East; Thanks heaps!!!

**Mentors;** the faithful giving of time and expertise to students has had a really positive effect, but comes at cost. Bless them! We will need more for next year as well as for each new school.

### Teaching Staff and School Leaders:

These are the people we work with to explore options in schools. Ask for wisdom & timing of conversations.. & for favour.

**New openings:** As they hear about the work we're doing churches, chaplains and schools express interest. YAY! We need to move wisely.

**The Elevate team:** changes to staffing are going to require ruthless prioritising and much grace!

A gift of **godly leadership** for all in schools. Especially ask this for new PLC SUIs leader, Lauren and for Jon @ Melb Boys HS.

A strong **financial base and Interns** to enable us to develop and grow this exciting Kingdom work—  
AMEN!

Meanwhile good news abounds. We've seen our first Leading Edge at Fairhills HS through to completion.. & witnessed change in students and in the school just as we'd hoped. Softening of roughness. Hope growing. Warmth and effort replacing disconnection. Yesterday I was there to meet this year's yr8s.. & introduce what we'll be doing with them next year. Yr 9s looking shocked at the thought that this 'special Global classroom stuff' ~ mentoring, uncovering GOLD in students, letting them propose outrageous project ideas.. & helping them last the distance to success ~ was going to be offered the next year level! I'm so glad we've made them feel **that** special.

At a morning tea to thank volunteers in the school, our team far outnumbered any other areas. Staff drew me aside to thank & affirm us. I met an elderly lady who has prayed for us all year! Next year we'll run the program slightly scaled back; half the year level for each semester. I'm looking forward to writing it up, refining materials and getting it ready for more schools to explore. As a colleague in WA wrote recently:

*'Sometimes we leave sessions in really rough schools feeling so inspired. Other times we leave feeling like you have been wrestling the cycles of poverty and violence that rest upon kids as young as 10 who already look like they are headed for jail. Today was the latter, and trying to pray I just end up in tears.'* This aptly describes the emotions we've felt throughout 2009 & why we're trialling this more long-term and in-depth partnership with local churches, and a year level. Change comes in relationship. The right to speak into young peoples' lives takes time & trust. We have 'moved into the neighborhood' in the footsteps of Jesus & in response to his incarnation amongst us. He's still with us every day & students are seeing him. Some have enquired about church, many welcome prayer and ask great questions. It's all so good!

Much of the rest of my time and energy has gone to harnessing years of experience and SU-edness to help others, including new colleagues, student teachers and youth work placements 'get it'. The O/S Bible consultation was the best use of my capacity to model and share principles and skills SU has sown into me & thus very satisfying. All over the world people are using ideas & resources birthed in our little corner, here ☺. In a week I've attended weddings of two lovely young men who I've journeyed alongside & watched grow in insight and leadership & met with an SUFM team to think about how to making room for spiritual conversations. (Asking good questions,.. listening to God for prompts and insight. Being observant. Knowing the Bible well). I'm as keen as ever to help the work SU vols give themselves to be as effective as possible.

Lastly some exciting news: As a result of a timely conversation at the Consultation, we've been given a research questionnaire to assess the impact of Elevate programs on students' attitudes and behaviour. **I'm desperate for help from anyone with research/data analysis skills to help us tailor & use this remarkable gift.** It would encourage us and you, our supporters, but is also an invaluable assessment tool for schools we partner with.. & sponsors. Can you help or ask someone you know?

*In all of this I give thanks for the adventure of each day and for your support; truly a team effort. I'm also looking forward to a month spent on holiday before our little girl starts school!*

Shalom to you & yours,

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