



# ELEVATE in Melbourne's Metro East

Seek the Shalom of the city.. & schools!

December 2011

Hellooooo!

Sitting in a prep class, overseeing year 9s running craft activities for a LEdge project, I was stunned when a child said confidently "I know what's tomorrow; it's Christmas!" THEN I realized she meant *December* and, honestly, I only *partly* relaxed,... there's so much going on before we get to Christmas, it seems! But first I need to look back,...

We were about to go on camp when I last wrote—MAD Camp was a blast! Chloe loved it (thanks for your prayers) and we saw loads of change in students, during camp & since! There was lots of silly, loud attention-seeking going on and that's normal,.. but I found a few quite challenging (some really horrid attitudes re conflict, revenge, sex and relationships). At one stage we had the possibility of a feud continuing after camp from foolish pranks. I asked a male leader to walk the boys through the ideas of heartfelt apology & reparation and forgiveness leading to reconciliation. These concepts are so deeply part of the Gospel we forget how radical they are to those outside loving community. I'm keeping a quiet eye on their facebook posts even still. We also saw at least one camper become Christian & loads make significant steps towards faith & living a Kingdom life-style. For many it was the 'serving others' opportunities that brought the most insight & delight. **Beautiful to witness.**

I was next at a national conference that certainly delivered great opportunities to train and network, but my highlight was a revelation over a coffee. Asked what I see myself *called to* in SU's ELEVATE work, these ideas just flowed from me: They say it takes a village to raise a child and I think that's true. The thing is, it seems in Australia we delegate that role in large measure to our schools. Communication & conflict, discipline, values & beliefs, sex ed, life goals & more are all mediated and addressed in school, alongside english, music and maths. It's a huge task. When as parents we try to remain in close contact, we are often told 'we'll handle this' (for many, and some valid, reasons). BUT schools are not set up to 'raise kids',.. & are certainly not resourced for all it entails. So I see our role as working to re-connect schools with local community (people of goodwill from diverse generations with rich insights) to make them healthier 'villages' for the coming generations. It feels urgent and important work to me. Kingdom work, in fact. What do you think?

I think this is why Leading Edge is raising all the interest it has lately. Because it brings to the surface some of the key things we want coming generations to have, that seem to be lost or being lost: service & empathy; teamwork & respect; esteem balanced against a 'sober estimate'... what Michael Carr-Gregg calls "a hole in their souls'. AND we want students to stay the course of their schooling. So the relevance of what they learn and the engagement of students in their learning (especially built through trust relationships) needs attention. We want to barrack for families in all this, too. It is a delicate balance and significant service to a school community that ELEVATE brings. **The difference is tangible.** I'm proud to be a part of it.

Again this summer I will be working to get things in order for a sharp start in 2012. A week with Chloe and Paul at Coolamatong Family Camp, and some time before at the beach, will be a welcome change of pace. So it *is* December,.. and we anticipate celebrating the coming of our wonderful Counsellor,.. Jesus,.. Emmanuel, without whom we'd all be lost! May I willingly serve the world he made & came into!

Much love to you & yours,

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Please pray for growth & depth in ELEVATE in the East; Thanks heaps!

**Fairhills Elevate Mentors;** pray for a sense of achievement & delight.. & for MORE mentors in 2012!

**Teaching Staff and School Leaders:** Pray for the big picture of *students thriving* to be foremost in all the juggling agendas.

**New openings:** 4 schools have asked about running Leading Edge in various formats in 2012 Woah!

**ELEVATE MAD camp 26th-30th Sept:** God answered our prayers in many ways! It was great... & may changes go deep.

The gift of **wise & loving leadership** for the 'villages' which are raising our kids!

**Family Camp**—for Paul & I ☺ working together on adult input.

**Praise God for 1 Intern** with me for 2012 already; more please! **A Leading Edge development team** is next as well as a strong **financial base** to multiply and deepen ELEVATE in the east. **This need is still urgent.** Please keep praying that God will raise up people and funds—**AMEN!**