It’s hard to learn anything if you are absent from school - It’s not OK to be Away.

Pictured at the Lions Youth of the Year Regional Final in Willaura on Sunday are L-R Keenan, Maddie, Judges David Byrne, Louise Staley MLA and Libby McCormick, Mitch, Bianca and District Governor of Lions Phillip Johnson.

Congratulations to Year 11 student, Bianca Gerrard on winning the Regional Final of the Lions Youth of the Year Competition. Bianca travelled to Willaura on Sunday to take part in the event and won both the Award for Public Speaking and the overall Youth of the Year events. The day saw the four regional finalists take part in a thirty minute interview which took into account a number of criteria. Judges were looking for community involvement, leadership, sporting and cultural activities, citizenship, general knowledge in current affairs and academic achievements.

The students were then asked to present a 2 minute impromptu speech, with no preparation time on the topics of ‘Should we sell Australian Farms’ and ‘Should Australia interfere in the rules and laws of other countries?’ All students spoke extremely well on both topics. They then presented a diverse range of 5 minutes prepared speeches on subjects of their choice. Students spoke on ‘Capital Punishment’ ‘Poverty in India’ and ‘Goats.’ Bianca’s topic was ‘Building Strong Women.’

Bianca will now travel to Horsham on the 28th March to compete in the district level of the competition. We wish her all the best.
From the Principal’s Desk

Our School Council Election process has been completed for 2015-16. Congratulations to new and re-elected members – their contribution to the governance of our school is greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank retiring members for their input and support in fulfilling their role on School Council.

Parent members 2015-16

Tim Carland
Louise Crowley
Mark Morcombe
Colin Gerrard
Tracy Gibson
Kerri-Anne Neil
Sandra Holtkamp

Staff members

Belinda Evans
Adrian Page
Lynne Dickman
Heather Higgins

Co-opted members
(positions to be determined at our March 24th meeting)

PFA Representative
Community Representative
Student Representative

Next Tuesday March 24th is the School Council Annual General Meeting. This is a public meeting which members of the Beaufort community are welcome to attend at 6.30pm. The main agenda item will be the presentation of the 2014 Annual Report. This will be immediately followed by our first meeting for the Beaufort Secondary College 2015-16 School Council.

Karl Schier
Principal

Grade 6
Come and Try Day
Grade 6 students from across the region have been invited to the Beaufort Secondary College Come and Try Day on Friday 20th March. For more information contact Mrs Higgins.

Parent Information Night

All parents of students in Grade 6 are invited to attend an information session at the school on Monday 23rd March at 7.00pm. The session will be held in the school library. For more information contact Mrs Higgins.

Reports

Term 1 reports will be distributed to students on Thursday. Parent Teacher interview forms are asked to be returned before school to the general office on Monday. Parent Teacher times for Thursday can then be allocated. Any concerns contact Mrs Higgins.

Vouchers

A reminder to families who received vouchers to please return receipts to Mrs Higgins as soon as possible. A report needs to be written before the holidays on the impact of the vouchers on students and their schooling. Any concerns to Mrs Higgins.

Yr 9 Engineering Excursion

This Wednesday all Year 9 students will be travelling to Ballarat as part of their Science program to participate in an engineering program. We look forward to a full report next week.

Year 7 Humanities & PE Health excursion

All Year 7 students will be going to the Wildlife Park in Ballarat this Friday morning and then to the Major League Sport Expo in the afternoon. Please return all permission forms to the General Office. Concerns to Ms Higgins or Mrs Maxted.
It’s hard to learn anything if you are absent from school - It’s not OK to be Away.

Student Teacher

Beaufort Secondary College welcomes a student teacher from Monash University, Ms Erica McConachy. Ms McConachy will be working in English, Humanities and Business Management over the next two weeks. We hope Ms McConachy enjoys her time at Beaufort Secondary College.

School Nurse

We welcome Ms Kate Higgins to the Beaufort Secondary College as the new school nurse. We have not had a school nurse at the school this year so we look forward to having Ms Higgin’s support.

Courage to Care

The Courage to Care Excursion is for all students in Year 9, 10 and 11 and will be held this Friday. Students are expected to wear full school uniform and bring their own lunch and snacks. Students leave at recess and there is no facility to buy lunch at the venue. Please return forms to the General Office as soon as possible. Any concerns contact Mrs Higgins or Mr de Zoete Spiero.

Immunisations

Pyrenees Shire came to the school last week for students in Year 7 and Year 10 to have their immunisations. Thank you to Mrs Sutherland for supporting the students on the day.

Permanent Textas

Students are reminded not to bring permanent marking texta colours to school. Please leave these at home.
### IMPORTANT DATES

Please check each Newsletter each week for additions/deletions or changes

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>March</th>
<th>June</th>
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<td>Fri 20 Year 7 to Wildlife Park</td>
<td>Fri 19 Year 11 Presentation Ball</td>
<td>Mon 13 First Day Term 3</td>
<td>7th Legacy Public Speaking</td>
<td>Fri 18 Last Day Term 3</td>
<td>Mon 5 First Day Term 4</td>
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<td>Fri 20 Years 9,10,11 to ‘Courage to Care’</td>
<td>Fri 26 Year 12 Presentation Ball Last Day Term 2</td>
<td>M 20 - F 24 Year 9 Ski / Outdoor Camp - Rubicon</td>
<td>M20-Fri 24 Year 10 Work Experience</td>
<td>Mon26 - 30 Year 10 Urban Camp - Melbourne</td>
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<td>Fri 20 Grade 6 ‘Come and Try Day’</td>
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<td>Mon 23 Year 9 to Sovereign Hill</td>
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<td>Mon 23 VCE Business to Sovereign Hill</td>
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<td>Mon 23 Grade 6 Information Night</td>
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<td>Wed 25 VCE HHD to That Sugar Film</td>
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<td>Wed 25 GWR Swimming Competition</td>
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<td>Fri 27 World Challenge WALK RUN Last Day Term 1</td>
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<td>Fri 17 Eureka Athletics</td>
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<td>Sat 25 ANZAC Day</td>
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<td>Sun 26 Presentation Ball First Training Night</td>
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<td>Tues 28 MWC Athletics Carnival</td>
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<td>Fri 8 House Cross Country</td>
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<td>Mon 18 Year 11 Chemistry to EcoLinc</td>
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<td>Wed 20 MWC Cross Country</td>
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<td>Mon 8 Queens Birthday Public Holiday</td>
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<td>Thurs 18 MWC Football Netball Competition</td>
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### Beaufort to Thailand

7,000km Walk / Run
27 March, 2015
Walkers needed
- Register your interest to -
evans.belinda.a@edumail.vic.gov.au
or Ring the school on 5349 2305

Beaufort Football and Netball Club
Gold Coin Family Day
Saturday 28th March 11am to 3pm
Beaufort Football Oval - All Welcome
Many amusements - Everything a gold coin

Page 4  School Phone 03 53 49 2305  18th March, 2015

It’s hard to learn anything if you are absent from school - It’s not OK to be Away.
Help your kids build their own firewall against online Nasties

The online world provides endless access to inappropriate content for our kids. Filters can play a part, but as Catherine Gerhardt describes, it’s much better to have a fully rounded approach to tackling the issue.

Fiction vs. reality. One of the biggest concerns I have as a parent at the moment is the relative ease with which children can have access to online pornography. Recent studies revealed that children as young as eight years old have seen it, and most kids have witnessed it before parents have even considered discussing it. For me, it’s about considering what the long-term effects are going to be on our children’s future relationships. With wide access to the internet, including mobile devices and gaming systems, it is too easy for even young children to reach inappropriate content.

Most kids who have seen pornography know immediately that it feels wrong. They can feel ‘strange’ and their personal instincts kick in like an alarm system telling them something is not quite right. They may feel sick, embarrassed, confused. Some kids stumble across it (many porn sites know popular key strokes kids use), and others are exposed to it by friends or family.

Is pornography really that big of a deal for our kids? The simple answer is yes. Pornography damages their brains by tricking them into releasing the same pleasure chemicals that drugs do. “A child’s brain is more vulnerable as it is rapidly forming neural connections. Viewing pornography can reprogram a child’s brain and initiate an addiction that is often harder to overcome than drugs or alcohol,” says Kristen Jenson, author of Good Pictures, Bad Pictures.

Pornography harms relationships. Youth are being exposed to pornography even before they have had the opportunity to experience a relationship. Teens tell researchers that they don’t like pornography but they feel pressured to watch it, and they even acknowledge that it provides a model for them to follow. When we start to think about kids getting sex education from pornography, we can start to understand why we should be worried about their future relationships. Viewing pornography is setting up unrealistic expectations and desensitizing sexual expectations. Pornography can distort a person’s view of what a healthy relationship should be, and devalues the principles of mutual respect, trust and love we expect our children to experience in the future.

What can parents do to build their child’s firewall?

Be proactive, be preventative. Like most things it’s helpful for parents to begin the conversation before their child becomes interested in porn. Younger kids are more likely to see the parent as a dependable source of information; by the time they are teenagers peers become the reliable source and peer pressure and curiosity can lead them down a path of unrealistic expectations and perhaps, even addiction.

Be open. Most kids won’t tell their parents because they know they shouldn’t be looking at that stuff and, worst of all, you might take the technology away from them. Be honest, for many of us that might be our first reaction. But in hindsight it only prevents kids from telling us about their online experiences later on. It’s okay to say, “Thanks for telling me, I’ve had that happen too”, or “Let’s look into that together”.

more on page 2
It’s hard to learn anything if you are absent from school - It’s not OK to be Away.

Start by asking your child. Ask whether they have ever seen inappropriate photos online. Let them know that if it happens you expect they will come and tell you, assuring them they will not get into trouble and will not have the device taken away from them. You can suggest your child leaves a note for you if they see something online that makes them feel uncomfortable. This lets you know when they are ready to discuss it and gives you the chance to have a chat with them on the subject when you are ready.

Internet filters and porn blockers. These are important, but they are not a one-stop shop on protecting our kids. They can certainly help by minimising the risk of ‘random’ porn attacks, but they won’t safeguard them either. Even if we feel we have placed adequate measures within our own homes, children must, and do, go out into the wider world where they will have exposure that is beyond our control.

Developing internal filters is about getting kids to understand what pornography is, how it affects their brain, and coming up with strategies they can use when they are exposed to it. Children need to be able to make safer choices when they are in situations where content filters or adults are not monitoring their behaviour. It is normal for kids to be curious and as they head into the teenage years that curiosity peaks. As children grow they spend more time online and get exposed to more of the online world, with parents having less control over their viewing habits.

Parenting responsibility. Websites and governments are taking the minimum responsibility on these issues, so it has to become primarily a parenting responsibility. Children can be protected and harm can be minimised by taking some common sense approaches. Parents need to establish their expectations about children’s viewing: make sure communication devices are used in public places; install net nanny and firewalls where appropriate and don’t be afraid to keep a check on website histories. Investigate how you can protect your children and minimise their exposure by installing a porn site blocker onto your Internet connected devices. A quick Google search will provide some options which best suit your family.

Discussions about pornography need to be part of an ongoing conversation within the family. Talking won’t put your kids at increased risk; in fact, it increases their awareness and empowers them to make safer decisions when the time does come. Short, frequent discussions will help your child remember information – rather than one big long lecture. As bestselling author Steve Maraboli advised: “Take action! An inch of movement will bring you closer to your goals than a mile of intention.”

Catherine Gerhardt