

School Counsellor Newsletter



Imagine - Reflections on the Year 8 Production



Director of *Imagine*, Kerri Fitzgerald, often speaks of the importance of the Arts for our wellbeing.

Not only do the Arts provide a release and to educate and entertain, but also to support and challenge us. *Imagine* focused on our imagination and how we can use it to help us through our own personal challenges as well as addressing those challenges facing the globe, something we need to think about more than ever. As Kerri mentions in her Director's Notes, to imagine is to have "hope, wonder and opportunity".

I was lucky to be able to watch *Imagine*, a performance of four separate plays by Medbury's Year 8 students, in the last week of Term 2. I laughed a great deal, was engaged the whole way through and was left with a great deal to ponder after watching a wonderful show. I found myself leaving the auditorium imagining the different scenarios in the plays

and thinking about how they offered me a way to develop my empathy and understanding for others further. I hope that my thoughts about each play can sit alongside your own impressions, or for those of you who did not see it, I hope you can gain a snapshot of how powerful this show was. Indeed, it was a fantastic production despite the challenges of preparing and performing the plays after lockdown and its ongoing implications - *imagine* doing that?! All of those involved did a wonderful job in challenging circumstances.



This is a test: This entertaining play is about the main character, Alan, doing a test, in impossible conditions whilst constantly being reminded that it is vital to his future. For example one question asks Alan to 'explain the nature of the universe - true or false' and another asks him to answer in Chinese but Alan had a dentist appointment on Tuesday when they learnt Chinese! Clearly these questions are stretching the limits of possibility! This play not only made me laugh but it reminded me of how confusing life can seem sometimes, especially when we are feeling pressure to do well.

Even though everything was over-the-top and exaggerated in this play, sometimes life can feel that confusing and overwhelming. At those times it is important to acknowledge this to your son, explain that it does happen at times, talk about how he can cope, who he can talk to and check in with factors such as sleep, diet, social connections and exercise.



Boy Overboard: This thoughtful play is about young refugees and how they cope with the journey from Afghanistan to Australia. As the characters touched on themes such as never giving up and having a vision even if things feel hopeless, such as when they arrive in Australia and find out they may not be allowed to stay, I found myself feeling very hopeful despite the bleak situation in the play. As similar situations are often portrayed in the news, they can provide opportunities to talk to your son about what helps to give him, and yourself, hope when things feel hopeless. For me it is a sense of purpose. What is it for you and your son? Could it be useful to talk to him about this or similar feelings?



Ernie's Incredible Illucinations:

A play involving a visit to the doctor about hallucinations, or 'illucinations' as Ernie's parents call them, as they do not believe them to just be illusions. As I watched a variety of wonderful scenes come to life in the doctor's surgery, including a brass band scene featuring Medbury's own Headmaster, I was reminded of the importance of remembering that something does not have to be real to feel real. Often our worries and anxieties are not based on what is actually happening or could actually happen, but that does not mean these feelings are not real. It is extremely powerful for adults, whether they be a parent, teacher or counsellor for example, to listen to students and to hear what is important to them, whether we share the same view or not. When was the last time you were able to just listen to your son without adding your view but rather just acknowledging what is going on for him? It can be harder than we think!



Those were the days: Written by our very own Kerri Fitzgerald, this play focuses on the joys of remembering the good old days. As I watched this play I found myself realising that our memories of our childhood are often rose tinted even if we can look back on them differently as adults. I think it is important to remember that when our children are doing what they are doing, even if we cannot see the sense of it, we were children once as well. An attitude adjustment is mentioned in the play, and I found myself wondering who needs the attitude adjustment? Perhaps nobody, but empathy and understanding, and remembering that we were young once too, can go a long way.



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Jenelle is a Registered Provisional Member with NZAC (New Zealand Association of Counsellors).

If you wish to discuss the services the School Counsellor can provide please see your son's homeroom teacher or Amos Pilgrim amos.pilgrim@medbury.school.nz.

