



# flowerdale

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

EDITION 3 | TERM 3 2020



*Digital Photography Artwork by Christian Lontos, Year 7 Socrates*

AT HOME STEM EXPERIMENTS AND  
STUNNING ISOLATION ART.  
HOW OUR STUDENTS ARE  
CONQUERING REMOTE LEARNING.



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Magazine written, edited and designed by Claire Evans. Contributions from Dr. Vivianne Nikou, Mr. Rowan Evans, Mr. Louis Diamandikos, Mr. Manuel Pappos, Mrs. Alex Kimonides, Mr. Harrison Bergamin and Mr. Michael Grigoriadis. Images to the left are taken from the Virtual Soloists Series held recently on the Alphington Grammar School YouTube page.



**ALPHINGTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL**  
**18 OLD HEIDELBERG ROAD**  
**ALPHINGTON**  
**VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA, 3078**

# From The Principal's Desk

As we enjoy our well-earned Term 3 holiday break, I look forward to the opportunity to speak with our community on the term that was, and, indeed, the extraordinary year we have had to date.

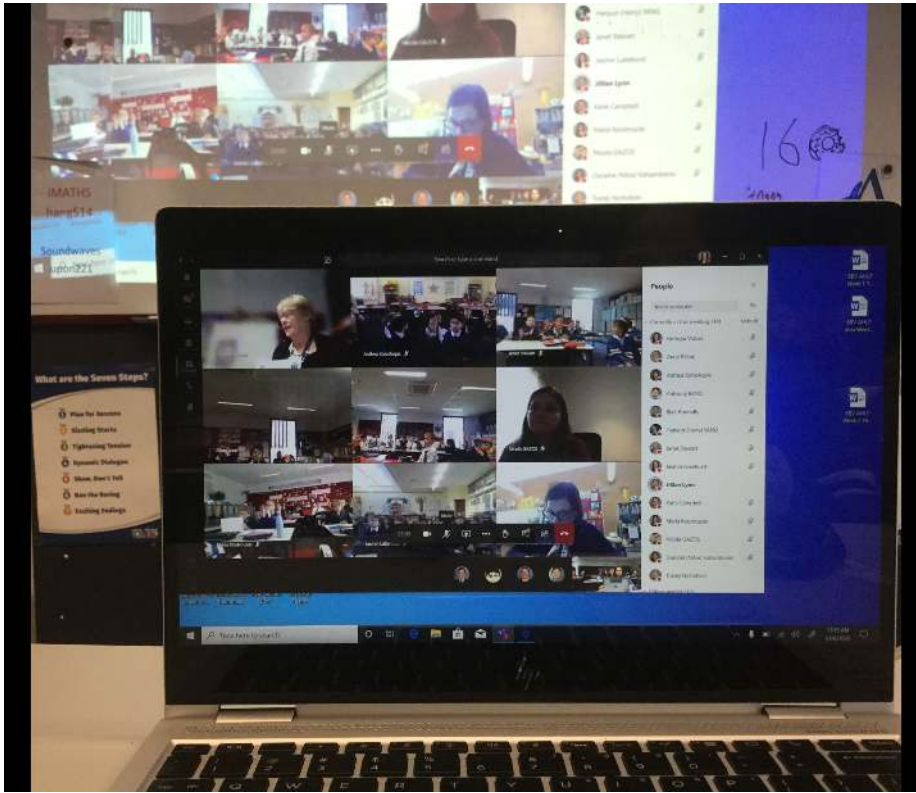
2020 Is a year that has been described many times as “unprecedented” but having come this far into 2020 it’s probably more accurately going to be remembered as a year of our community 'working together as one' to get through these immense challenges. As educators we all understand the need for strong positive teacher - student bonds, meaningful peer to peer relationships and parent involvement in the education process especially during times of uncertainty where routines are disrupted and the roadmap ahead is not clear. While remote learning has made it harder for teachers to have the usual one on one conversations with students there is a shared sense that “we’re going through this together”.

Parents have during this pandemic been more closely aware of what is happening in the classroom and friendship groups have moved to a new platform which in many ways has helped to forge stronger connections between students without the usual judgements which might take place at school. We are acutely aware that we all need human connections, and that when the human connections are loose then the form of engagement also weakens. The staff and pastoral teachers across the school have worked on a range of activities and touch points to keep the bonds between us all closer, not only to ensure academic outcomes but also to look at what learning is important and to look at how motivation, student engagement and achievement can dovetail together. Building relationships between home and schools has underpinned the success and positive feedback we have received during this phase of remote learning.

I thank the Staff, Student Leaders and families for working with us to keep our students connected to the learning process and engaged with a variety of activities both in and out of the classroom. Focusing on cultivating adaptability and positive aspirations will certainly help our students return to school with new levels of resilience, self reliance and independence in cognitive, attitudinal, behavioural and emotional adaptability. We all look forward to having the students back with us shortly.

**Dr Vivianne Nikou**  
**Principal**





# Pastoral Care in a Global Pandemic

BY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL - HEAD OF SECONDARY  
ROWAN EVANS

**Alphington Grammar School has always placed the care and well being of our students at the centre of all that we do.**

This is underpinned by the philosophy that happy students who feel that they are valued and have a sense of belonging to our school community will be well placed to learn effectively and meet the challenges that school provides.

One of the significant challenges for Remote Learning has been to set up a structure within which the pastoral team

can continue to care for the wellbeing of our students, supporting them as they negotiate the routine challenges of school as well as the unique challenges presented by learning in isolation.

Throughout the 2020 school year, our young people have been forced to face the daily doom and gloom delivered by the mainstream media and the increased reliance on technology. This reliance is a lifeline of sorts to all learning and social opportunities. This reliance in itself is challenging

for many adults, but on top of this, they have been facing a destabilising uncertainty surrounding when they might once again be permitted to enjoy the physical company of their school friends and community.

Students also have an important role to play in caring for their peers and passing on concerns that may come to light in routine contact during lessons or more likely in incidental contact over social media. Their willingness to do this when necessary has been very reassuring and encouraging.



Our student leaders have accepted the challenge of providing a forum for student engagement in House and co-curricular activities as a means of interaction outside the mainstream academic program. This has been a hugely successful strategy in ensuring the continued health and wellbeing of all students.

In times like this, it is not just the duty of a few to care for others, but it is the responsibility of us all to be vigilant and supportive of others in need.

It has been great to see many of

our students have involved in Secondary Assemblies, whether it be contributing messages of encouragement, delivering a leadership speech or performing a piece of music, as life continues through the pandemic.

House competitions for students of all ages in Physical Fitness, STEM Trivia, a Language Perfect Competition, Music, Drama and Dance, a Still Life Drawing Competition and a Comedy Sketch Competition have been extremely well received by the students. These initiatives have helped keep

students engaged, stimulated and facilitating social contact with their peers.

On a day-to-day basis, class teachers are the front line of pastoral care and they develop a valuable wealth of knowledge of their students.

Teachers are conducting one-on-one meetings with students over Microsoft Teams as an extension of their classes to support their learning and provide the differentiation required for all students to remain engaged and challenged by the academic program.



Any wellbeing concerns that arise from these interactions are referred to the House Mentors, the Heads of House and then, if necessary, to the Exceptionality Team for appropriate follow up and intervention. Our Exceptionality Team is comprised of the Principal and the Assistant Principals, The Heads of House, the School Psychologist, the Transition Coordinator and the Head of Learning Support.

The School Nurse sits alongside this group and advises the Team on medical matters and issues of personal physical development.

The Exceptionality Team meet regularly to monitor the progress of our students and take action as and when required to support their learning and also the health and wellbeing of our students.

The International Student Coordinator and the Chinese

Student Coordinator also closely support our International Students with particular emphasis on regular communication with Parent Liaisons, Homestay Parents and of course the families, many of whom are in another country, currently cut off from Australia.

I am particularly mindful of our International students, many of whom are dealing with these incredibly uncertain and difficult times while on the other side of the globe from their immediate family. We are doing our very best to support and care for our International student community and checking in with them regularly.

We have seen a growing incidence of anxiety and depression in recent years but Remote Learning has brought an even greater focus on mental health and relationships.

We reinforce to the students the importance of caring for each other and checking in, as encapsulated in one of our Core Values at Alphington Grammar School: **Responsibility.**

We are responsible not just for ourselves and making sure we look after our own wellbeing, but also for looking out for the wellbeing of our peers.

We will return to School, and our School community will be stronger than ever. I send my best wishes and strong encouragement to all families within our AGS community right now as we traverse the road to recovery following the pandemic.

I look forward to seeing everyone back at school soon, even stronger and more resilient for the experiences which we have shared in isolation.

# S.T.E.M thrives with innovative solutions during remote learning!

BY LOUIS DIAMANDIKOS - HEAD OF STEM

**S.T.E.M. education is about bringing together** four major disciplines: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Apart from being taught separately as subjects, as required by the curriculum, the aim of STEM is to promote these disciplines when combined together as well. For example, implementing Technology/ Engineering and Mathematics into a Science project such as designing a mini-golf course.

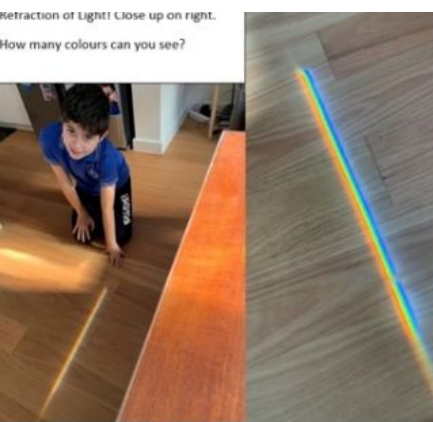
Over the last half-decade, STEM has been promoted and endorsed at Federal Government and Industry levels. At Education level, we have seen a transition from smaller separate departments such as Maths or Science teaching teams, into a larger entity which we now call the STEM Faculty.

Students now have more opportunities to flourish and learn in the context of STEM-based activities, as it allows for

participation in combined activities.

Among our favourite activities is a Forensics incursion which runs for our Year 10's. This includes all four Sciences (Physics-Chemistry-Biology-Psychology) plus some modern technology used in the cases of solving crimes.

This has allowed STEM to be promoted as a global concept, not just a collection of separate subjects.



### Atmospheric Pressure

Mariana Galanopoulos

**Materials:**  
 - Coloured Water (Blue Food Die)  
 - Candle  
 - Saucer  
 - Glass

**Explanation:**  
 The candle's flame uses up the oxygen that is inside the cup creating low pressure. The water at the bottom of the cup has created an air tight seal, the difference in pressure between the cup forces the water to rise until pressure from inside the cup is equal to the pressure outside.



We continue to use external educational providers that run competitions which further enhance learning opportunities in STEM. These include the University of Melbourne Statistics Department, the U.N.S.W. (ICAS) Algorithmic (I.T), Maths and Science Competitions.

We have seen an increase in the student participation rate for these valuable events. We have been extremely fortunate since Semester 2 last year, to be able to occupy our new state-of-the-art STEM wing with a number of innovative laboratories.

These include spacious labs, zones for students to work independently, ample

storage space, a central preparatory room, interactive whiteboards and the latest modern safety mechanisms (fire, water, gas and electricity). The ambiance and atmosphere of these classroom-laboratories is definitely conducive to higher order thinking and high level learning.

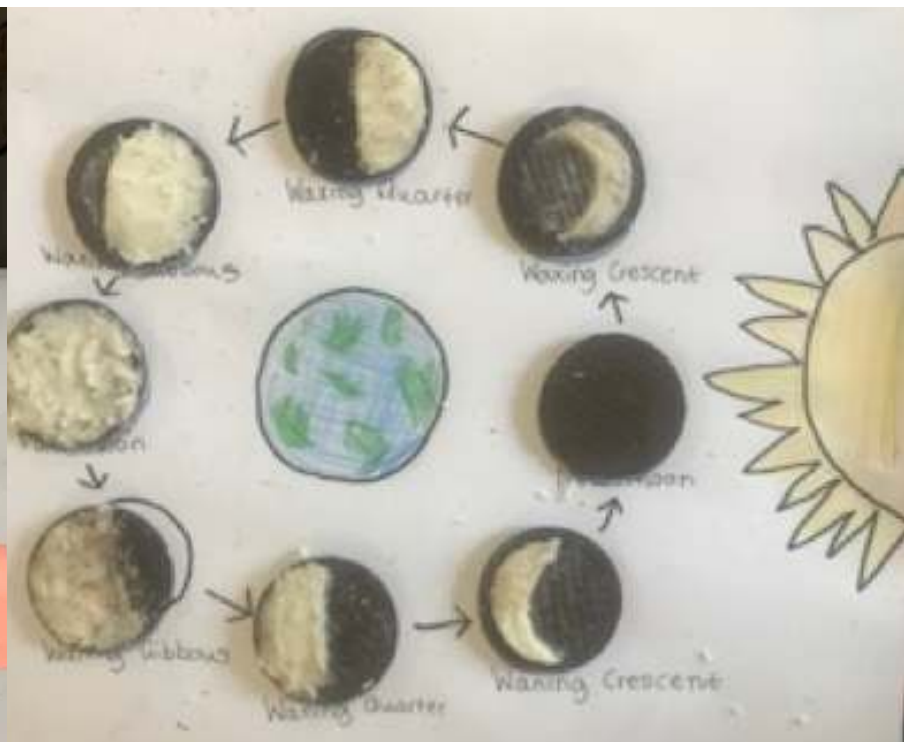
Although the pandemic has forced staff to teach remotely this year, all our STEM Teachers have adapted to the new norm. They have organised structured lessons and prepared all our students to successfully accommodate remote learning.

Apart from conducting regular timetabled lessons using the

Microsoft Teams platform, students are able to continue conducting some experiments from home. With safety guidelines being followed and parental supervision, students have used some common household items to complete experiments.

For example, the ‘Oreo Lunar Phases’ experiment, the ‘Mixing liquids in Density Tower’ experiment or the ‘Tissue-Box Guitar’ experiment.

In addition to remote learning, our Teachers have included some ‘extracurricular’ STEM related activities to keep the minds of all our students sharp and inquisitive. These activities included a different approach this year to the annual

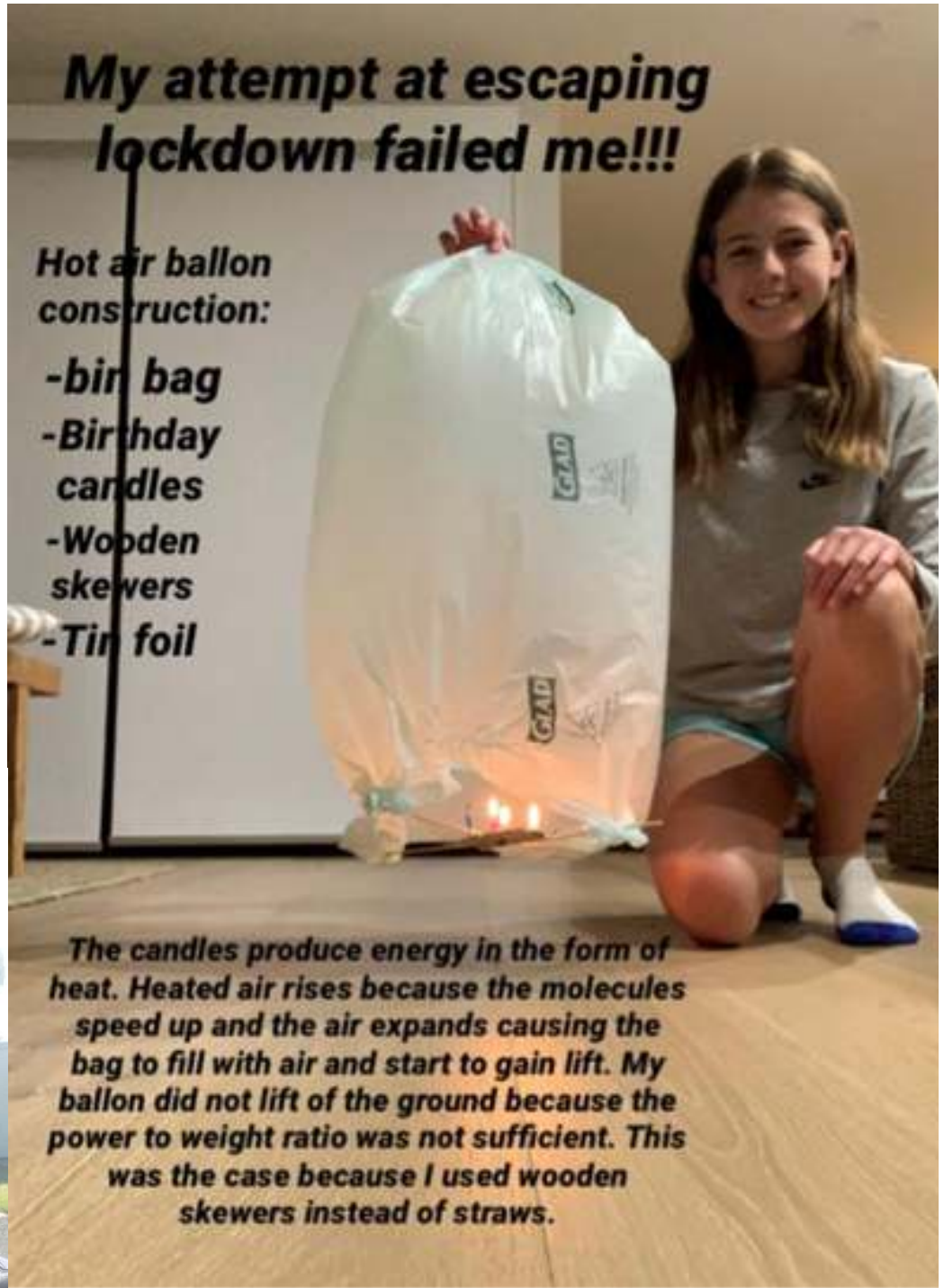




‘National Science Week’.

We had to find a way to keep our students interested in STEM activities in a remote setting away from the regular classroom. Students were asked to take a ‘STEM photo’ which encapsulated their own chosen activity with a ‘catchy’ meme or a smart title. We received quite a few great photos and prizes were awarded to the best entries.

Overall, although we live in challenging times, STEM learning continues to thrive in a remote setting!



# Farewell Manuel

WE SPEAK WITH OUR RETIRING BUSINESS MANAGER  
MR. MANUEL PAPPAS

In August 1994, Manuel Pappas arrived at Alphington Grammar School as our very first Business Manager, just five years after the School opened. This year, after 26 years of devoted service, Manuel will be retiring.

Excited by the school's prospects, Manuel felt that he would work well with new Principal, Jim Economo, whom the School had appointed in July of 1994. These thoughts, Manuel notes, 'were proven to be correct'.

Manuel, who dreamed of being an artist or an architect while he was growing up, keenly noted upon entering our School for the first time that 'the school buildings and grounds were not being maintained ...there were three old houses on the campus and one other privately owned in the middle of the school grounds where the Andrianakos Centre is now located!'

Manuel saw the opportunity in this. 'When I began, the school was in its very early days. Parents cleaned the school voluntarily, our library was an old stable, classrooms had broken desks and chairs, and the oval was a health hazard!'

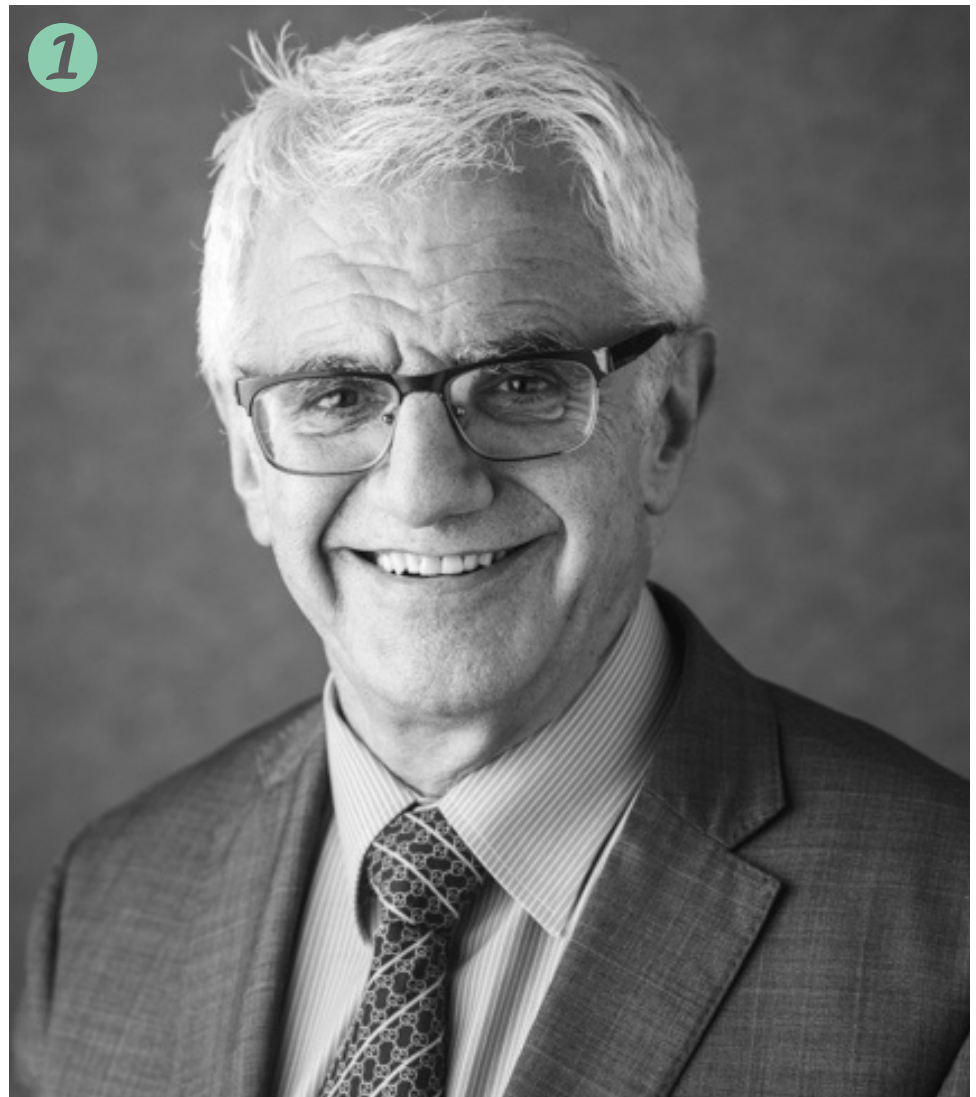
Determined to make a difference in his new role, Manuel set to work. 'It was a tough job in the beginning...'

he tells us, 'there was no finance software, no records, verbal indefinite fee discounts, no budgets, no payroll software, no staff awards and entitlements...it was the biggest challenge to bring the School to a position of financial viability'.

He took a hard line with finance and was focused on the task ahead; 'as Business Manager many may have

the perception that I was hard and a "Scrooge"...I think this is misrepresentative. The responsibility of controlling a school's finance in those very important early years was enormous - especially when you are a school still developing'.

Manuel found the most rewarding part of his role to be the relief on





parent’s faces when he was able to support them to relieve stresses at times if they were struggling, to ensure their children were able to continue receiving the quality education we provide.

Manuel notes that his favourite part of the Alphington experience is the family minded and caring environment that exists; ‘that’s one huge benefit of being a smaller school...it perpetuates a happy vibe throughout the environment and creates wonderful relationships between students and staff’.

Manuel believes this is one element of life at Alphington which despite 31 years of progress and changes, the school has fought hard to retain.

Manuel grew up with artistic and creative ambitions, but his parents were not keen on him pursuing Art, as they were concerned about the stability it would provide young Manuel, and he couldn’t complete the Physics prerequisite required for Architecture.

Somewhat lost, he began acting out in School. ‘I was a regular visitor to the Principal’s office, the Principal even advised my Father I would be better off if I was taken out of School and put to work in the fish and chip shop!’.

Thankfully, Manuel’s parents decided another school might be a better fit. At Kingswood College, he met the most influential figure of his story, his new Principal, Mr. Michael

Norman. Mr. Norman’s mentorship inspired Manuel to pursue a career in education, and fostered the work ethic, passion and commitment to community for which Manuel has become well known.

Manuel then completed a Bachelor of Commerce at Monash University, and began his career as a Secondary Economics and Politics teacher in government schools.

Driven and charismatic, he distinguished himself as a fine teacher and in 1979 was appointed to establish the first bi-lingual school in Victoria, St Johns Greek Orthodox College, where he was also the School’s first Principal.

Manuel relished this experience



and he notes he felt he was able to really relate to students who were struggling with their schooling journey, having struggled in school himself.

During Manuel's reign as Business Manager at Alphington, the School has welcomed a diverse community of International students. The International program began in the early 2000s under Manuel and then Principal Mike Smith's stewardship. It proved an excellent opportunity for the School to grow and expand.

Once the program was up and running, Manuel notes that the School was 'very proactive' and established a 'very strong relationship' with overseas agents. 'No other School embraces its International students like Alphington does...

it became known within the international student industry that we were offering an extraordinary care and support for our students which became our best form of marketing'.

His advice for students considering a career in Business? 'Well... it would be my advice for all students really, make sure you absolutely love whatever you are doing. In all the 26 years that I have been at AGS I never left home in the morning dreading that I was going to work!'

Manuel will miss Alphington dearly, and reflects fondly on the friends he has made and the bonds he has formed during his time at the School.

'I will definitely miss the people



most...' he says, 'including the students. How lucky we are to work in an environment which is imbued with the energetic sound of young people laughing, playing and running. Staff should never take this for granted. I think COVID-19 will make us appreciate this more...how precious this environment really is'.

Manuel is thrilled to have been part of the School's journey so far, and knows that the future will be just as exciting...'the school has improved its competitiveness with other schools and is really cementing its reputation as an excellent, diverse and supportive educational institution. The future is bright!'

As for Manuel's own future? He enjoys keeping fit and is a keen



runner, and is hoping to one day run another marathon. He loves spending time with his grandsons Billy and Zac, attending VAFA football, and supporting his beloved Richmond Tigers.

'I want to take this opportunity to thank the Alphington community' he notes, 'for their wonderful friendship and support...particularly in the last few years which have been extremely difficult for me and my family.'

Having the Alphington Grammar School community has definitely provided great support and much needed comfort...this School really is like one big family.'



**'I WOULD LIKE TO THANK  
THE ALPHINGTON  
COMMUNITY FOR THEIR  
WONDERFUL FRIENDSHIP AND  
SUPPORT''**

Photos:

- 1) Manuel Pappas, 2018
- 2) Ministerial sod turning of the new STEM Building - 2018
- 3) Manuel relaxing on the waves in Kythira, Greece
- 4) Honouring Manuel's son - Alexander Pappas
- 5) Manuel visiting International Schools in China
- 6) Family life in Kythira at Manuel's holiday home
- 7) Manuel with his beloved son, Alexander
- 8) Family life in Kythira - Manuel with his wife and grandsons
- 9) Family life in Kythira - Manuel and grandson

# The Vision of an Artist

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALEX KIMONIDES, SECONDARY VISUAL ARTS COORDINATOR

**Alex Kimonides began her career at Alphington in 1992. She refers to the way she found Alphington a case of 'serendipity'.**

An acquaintance of hers, a mother from the kindergarten her son was attending, was the After School Care Coordinator at Alphington. She was in dire need of an assistant.

Alex, a practicing artist and qualified teacher, was not working at the time as she had taken time off to be with her young son. She agreed to assist if she could bring him with her.

The next year, Alphington advertised for the role of Secondary Art Teacher and Arts Coordinator. The rest, as they say, is history! 28 years later, Alex is still in that same position.

I am very excited to write this piece about Alex, as she was my Art teacher from 2014 – 2016 when I attended the School. The instant immersion into creativity I felt when touring the school and walking into her art room made me decide that Alphington was the School for me – and I told my parents straight away I was happy with going here!

Once I began at the School and met Alex, I became aware that she was definitely the most talented,

patient and kind art teacher I had ever had. Her classroom was my happy place at Alphington Grammar and the teaching environment she created was supportive, calming and inspiring.

When I arrived at Alphington in 2014, her classrooms were adorned with intricate paintings all over the ceiling and walls, and bountiful supplies and facilities to create

anything one desired. I had the chance to experiment with every art form under the sun! The art rooms had very comfy chairs and I fondly remember feeling like I was coming to my 'home away from home' when I entered her class to work on my folio.

When Alex arrived at Alphington, the buildings were run down and the facilities were minimal...but the





‘grounds were beautiful...there was a lovely ‘vibe’ to the School and you felt a sense of belonging and a sense that the School needed you to make a difference for these kids’ she tells us. ‘In the early days, we were in such foundational stages that some of us even brought in our own desks from home!’

Alex put her touches around the art rooms, and over her 28 years, she has made the art room a museum of student art. It is highly unique and a great testament to the constant and continual support she shows to her students of any skill level.

Alex came to Australia from Cyprus at the age of 10 with her mother and younger sister. Her father had made the journey to Australia five years earlier. Growing up as a first-generation Australian, she dreamed of being a doctor, but her Year 12 art teacher

urged her to consider pursuing art, due to her natural talent and high level of skill.

She loved art when she was at School, and she remembers her classmates asking her to assist with their drawings. She completed her VCE at University High School, and did her tertiary studies at RMIT.

Her time at university was instrumental to shaping her as an artist, and she was taught and mentored by some world-famous artists during her time there, including Australian Surrealist painter Peter Booth. Famous performance artist ‘Stelarc’ was also a classmate!

Alex has found teaching art to be a highly fulfilling career, and, alongside her own career as a professional artist, something which has brought her great joy. ‘The most rewarding aspect of my



role is imparting knowledge...’ she notes, ‘and that’s something that I got better at with time, and learning so much from my students!’. Along with being a dynamic classroom teacher for 28 years, Alex has also exposed students to overseas art and culture by organising and facilitating several International art trips.

‘I was really glad the School gave me the opportunity to introduce these art tours’ she says, noting that the trips gave students an opportunity to experience culture and art scenes of some of the most inspiring and artistic places in the world, such as France, Italy and England. Another one of the most fulfilling elements to her role, she notes, is the opportunity it is has given her to ‘curate large exhibitions... not just for school students, but also artists from the wider community’.

Alex knows the future is bright for

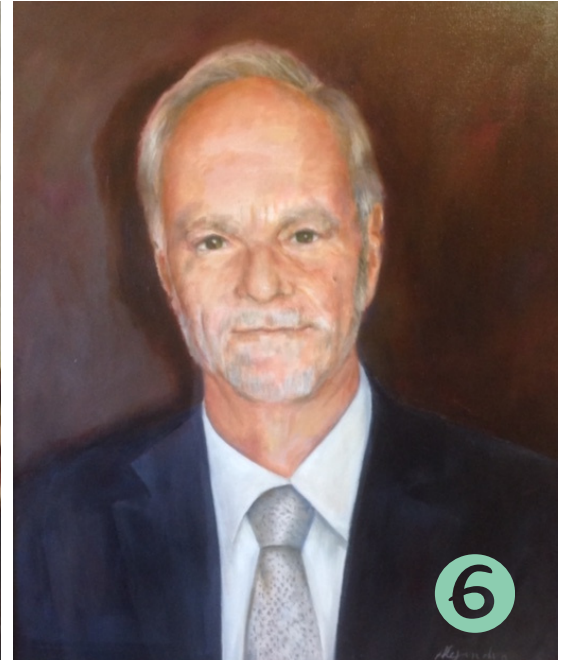


the Arts at Alphington Grammar... 'I see Visual Arts at AGS being considered as valuable in the future as it always has been to our School and its culture. The art-forms have been added to over the years with the advancements in technology, but creativity will always underpin all mediums of art and design. Alphington has no shortage of creative students, and I don't think we ever will!'

When she's not working, she loves travelling, painting (mostly portraits) and spending time with baby Archer (her grandson) who is three years old, and her family and friends.

Her advice to students wanting to pursue a career in the arts?

'If you are good at it and get pleasure out of doing it... just do it!'



**'THE WAY I FOUND MY ALPHINGTON GRAMMAR WAS A WONDERFUL CASE OF SERENDIPITY''**

Photos:

- 1) Alex Kimonides, 2017
- 2) Alex in Cyprus with her parents and sister
- 3) Alex's signature style - large scale portrait work
- 4) Students showcase multicultural portraits
- 5) Accomplished artist in her home studio
- 6) Alex's Principal's Portrait Series - Mike Smith



# The exciting world of STEM: The Story of Harrison Bergamin (Class of 10')

BY CLAIRE EVANS

**A member of the Class of 2010, Harrison Bergamin pursued a Bachelor of Civil and Infrastructure Engineering with Honors at RMIT after he left the school gates for the last time.**

Now, ten years later, Harrison works in technology consulting, as Manager of a boutique firm which specialises in Robotic Automation, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) software.

Harrison's story is testament to the fact that it is never too late to change career direction, and to find or pursue something you

really love. Even following his tertiary education, Harrison has gone on to complete a 'long list of certificates and certifications – it never ends!' but notes that if you have found something that truly makes you happy, it is more than worth it. Changing plans are part of life – and it's healthy to reevaluate your goals to ensure they make you happy.

Beginning at Alphington in 1997 in ELC, Harrison shares his memories of Alphington in the early days. 'There was really only a few buildings, the School has really undergone significant

**'LEARNING IS FOREVER AND CHANGE CAN HAPPEN VERY QUICKLY!'**

development since I began, and even more so since I left.' As he was so young when he began at the School, he notes he doesn't really remember much of his first year at the School, but that the 'little beds for naps were great!'

Throughout Primary School, and for the early years of Secondary, Harrison thought he would be 'a pastry chef...or something involving food' as he was so



Harrison in New York

passionate about the culinary arts. He notes that Work Experience in Year 9 was instrumental to his decision that this was not the career for him. 'Actually working in the culinary industry made me realise I preferred the actual food more than the idea of being a chef forever!'

Harrison flourished at Alphington, where he remained for the entirety of his schooling. 'My favourite subjects were Maths and I.T' he has fond memories of the Maths department, 'incredibly patient with getting students to understand different concepts and topics'.

He makes special mention of John Savopoulos (who is still a valued member of our staff) being one of his favourite teachers, 'he was just really patient and just a very talented teacher, I think he was a lot of people's favourite!'. John taught Harrison I.T.

Harrison notes that it wasn't just the classroom learning that made his experience at Alphington so valuable – his most memorable Alphington moments were work experience, swim carnivals due to his fondness for swimming, and also the Metropolis Project. 'These were all just really fun experiences' he recalls, 'and they all had really valuable opportunities for independent learning in a novel, unique circumstance'. The thing that really made Alphington special was the 'small classes' he says, 'it gave a

unique chance to speak to teachers and develop relationship on equal footing... as regular people. I think it helps immeasurably when you need to ask questions, it also makes for great class discussions'.

Harrison now finds himself in the very lucky position of absolutely loving his job...'I pivoted and changed careers from what I studied at university when I was 25 and it's payed off so far' he notes, saying that his favourite part about his role is the variety in the work he does, and how it varies drastically depending on the project he is assigned to.

Harrison's firm works with large multinational and national organisations to help them understand and implement these new disruptive technologies. He leads teams of consultants to complete software projects for clients.

On a daily basis, managing a digital consultancy firm primarily involves coding, where Harrison develops his own automation or software projects for clients, and analysing different teams and jobs within workplaces to ascertain where Automation and AI can help make things more efficient. The most rewarding part of his role is mentoring and training new staff. He feels very lucky to work in a position where he is able to pass on his knowledge and give graduates new skills in an occupation which he knows will grow in demand over the next 5 to 10 years.

Harrison is now a keen advocate for STEM education, and is passionate about spreading the message of the incredible variety and fulfillment that can come from a career in the STEM industries.

Harrison notes that the fast-moving nature of development within STEM has led to technological changes and advances that have disrupted thousands of lives and changed some industries forever... 'There's a number of careers and jobs that existed when I was in school that no-longer exist or are on the way out. Something like ride-sharing (Uber) or automated checkouts! New careers and jobs come out of nowhere and grow in demand, typically in technology or STEM related fields.'

Harrison's advice for students who are interested in a career in STEM? 'Learning is forever and change can happen quickly. You should always be striving to learn new skills and how to perfect them: this attitude alone will take you far...you might not know STEM is for you unless you try!'

Harrison is now planning on pursuing a Masters degree in Business Administration (MBA) either locally or overseas. At Alphington, we are proud to help formulate resilient, adaptable and well-rounded students. Harrison is a credit to our school and we are very proud of him. We are excited to watch his career grow and celebrate his successes.

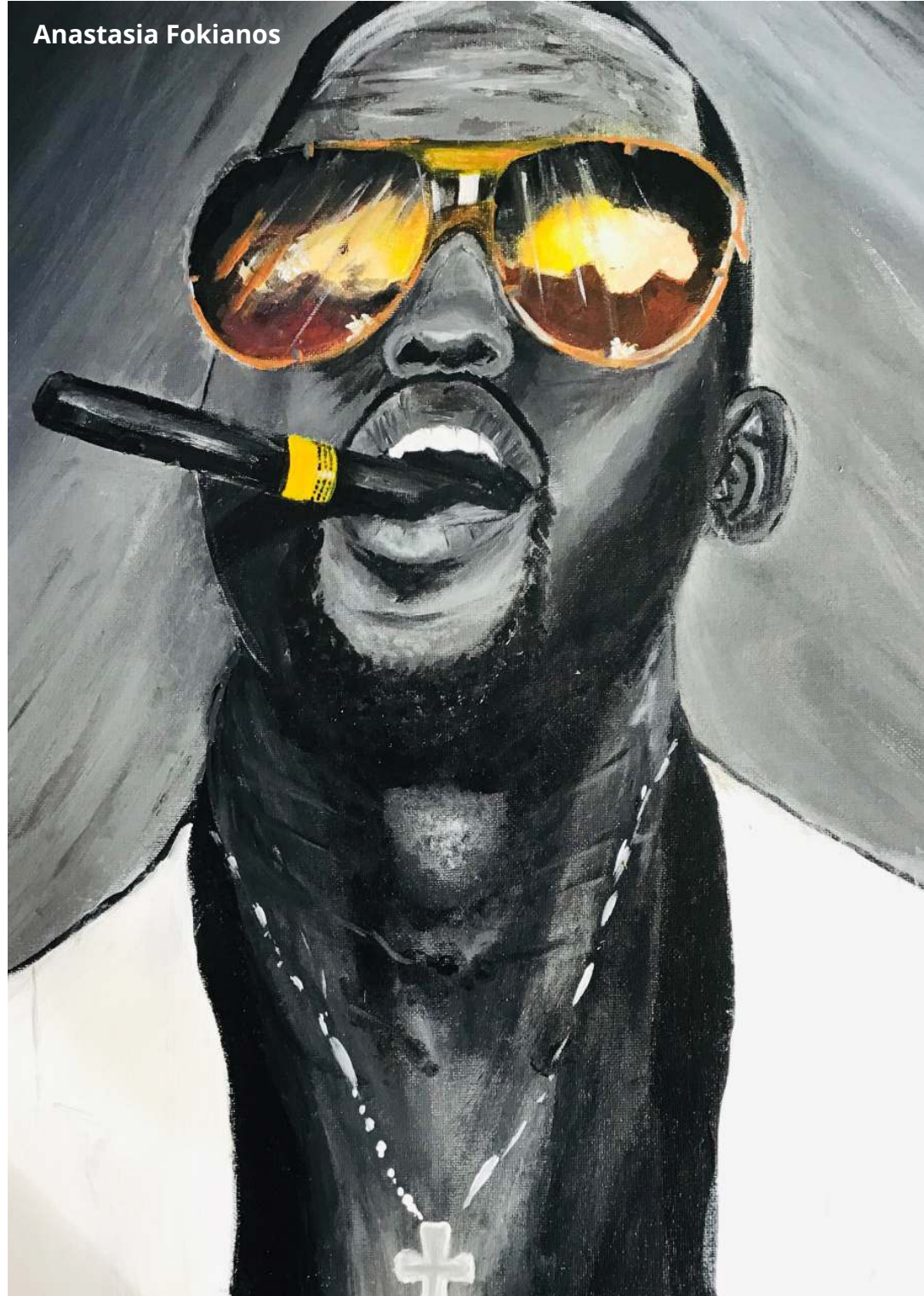
# Alphington Art - Term III



Junming (Jimmy) Wu



Ryan Paraskevas

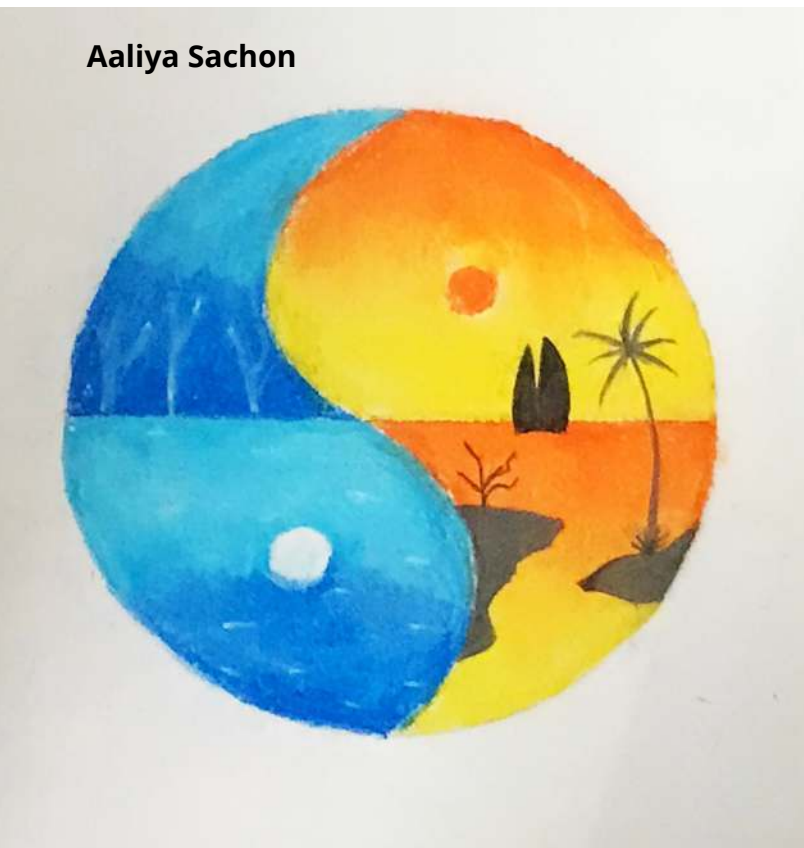


Anastasia Fokianos

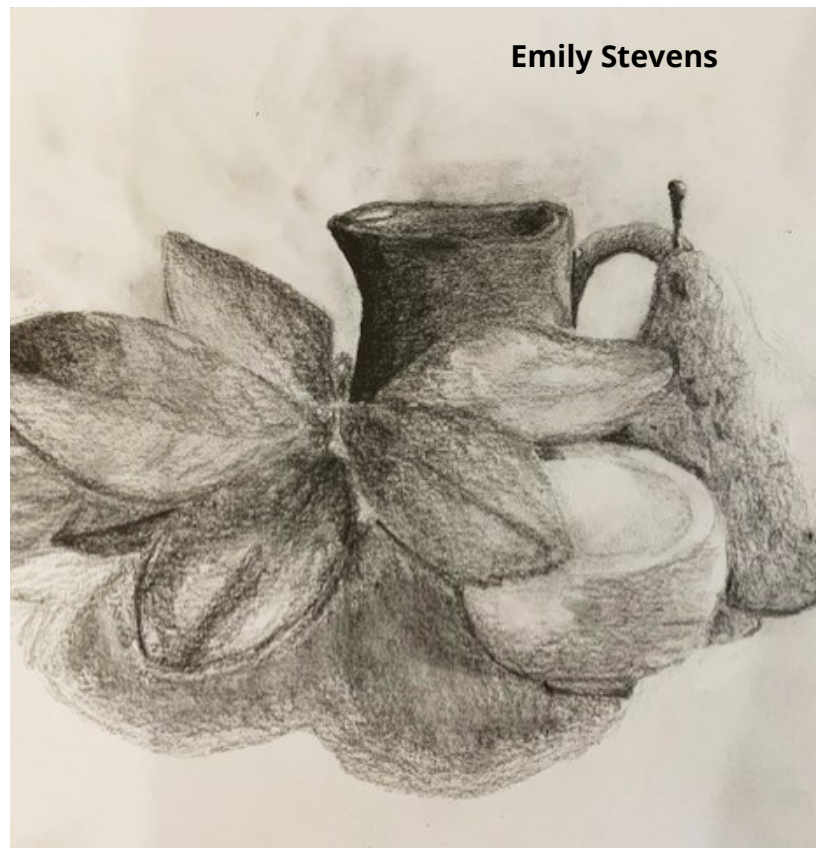
Pamela Thodis

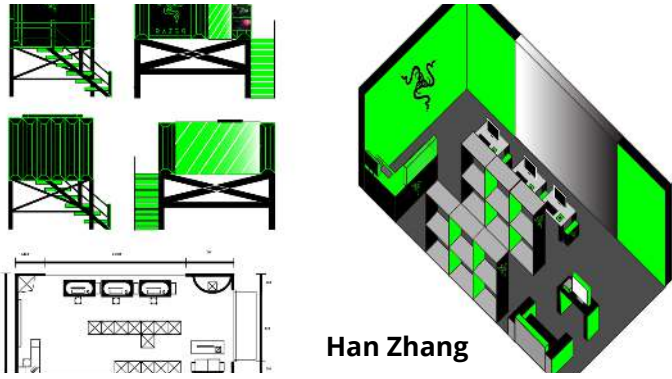


Aaliya Sachon



Emily Stevens





Han Zhang






Xiao Yi Ngoo



Dean Efthimiou

Joanne Chasomeris



alphington\_grammar\_school   
AlphingtonGS   
Alphington Grammar School 



**Alphington**  
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

18 Old Heidelberg Rd,  
Alphington VIC 3078