Time and Space Program – ‘Stepping Up’

The following is an extract written by Bill Jennings – Time and Space Director – on his insights to the inaugural Marcellin College Father Son Evening.

By Bill Jennings – Director of ‘Time & Space’

The inaugural and recent ‘Stepping Up’ night was supported brilliantly by 80 Year 8 Marcellin boys and their dads and mentors. It was important to congratulate those dads, mentors and boys who turned up and said YES to being involved in this night. It is a big ‘YES’ for the dads/mentors as stepping into the unknown is not the most comfortable thing. It’s a big ‘YES’ for the boys because at Year 8, sometimes the safest action is to do nothing, and doing an activity at school with your dad could be judged as a pretty high ‘social’ risk by your peers.

By coming along together you made a statement about how you are important to each other and doing this you practically provided one of the important keys about ‘Stepping Up’ through the next few years… you were together. A feature of the small groups was the Year 8’s giving some advice to the dads and the dads/mentors giving advice to the boys. Here are some of the comments that were valued…

Advice the Boys Heard from the Dads

Give more than a one-word answer.

Your father was a teenager once too. He knows the sort of things you are going through.

Find the right balance between all parts of your life.

Make time with your family and not always friends.

Support your dad even though his interests are different… and talk to him every day.

Advice the Dads/Mentors Heard from the Boys

Listen to your son, (they are) no longer little boys, they have valid opinions.

Don’t force the issue at the wrong time.

Be patient with your boys and persist with setting boundaries & expectations.

Be more aware of friendship issues.

Boys are under a lot of pressure, we need to lighten up sometimes. Do things with our sons.

I never cease to be astounded at the wisdom of boys when given the ‘Time & Space’ to share their insights.

Following the small groups, the pairs came back to St Marcellin’s Hall for a one to one father-son talk that Father John Carnie, your school chaplain witnessed. He remarked how he was ‘more than impressed’ at how each pair discussed, listened and shared their memories with each other. He saw some dads and boys, using the question sheet provided, take all of the possible time provided to hear what was good about their relationship, speak frankly about the difficulties, and share their treasures and earliest memories of each other. This is ‘Stepping Up’ and these participants now have a very practical way to stay in touch through the next few years.

Congratulations to Mark Ashmore, the Marcellin College staff, panellists, parent helpers and Year 12 leaders.

We look forward now to the Year 9 ‘Time & Space – a program for boys and their dads or mentors’ – in Term 4. Go to http://www.time-space.com.au for further information and look out a for special parent information evening (and a session in the day for the Year 9 boys) on Tuesday 3rd August with Stan Alves who will offer some insights from his own life in support of this great opportunity for Marcellin families.

Pictures from the night: