

Mrs Melissa Arne-Umstad, Parent and current member of the Teaching Staff: (written in 2021)

My Time at Trinity College

My memories of Trinity College when I first started back in 1999 was of a cosy little town that I had never really heard of. I remember getting off at Beenleigh train station and not having a clue about the direction of the school and having a nice old man and his dog drive me up there for my interview.

After walking through the vacant block of land/car park, known for its smokers, I was greeted by Judy Bell at the PE/Sports room roller door before we met again in my interview where I automatically felt at home. I loved the kids; they had a certain spunk and personality about them. They were always happy to share themselves with you whether it was through their chats in class, at sporting events or in the playground.

Back then we enjoyed Tables Café, a café run by some of the students who worked with our learning support staff (Cathy Boyes, Lesley Baratta, Elke Williamson and Karin McCarthy to name but a few). The students would take your order, you would pay at the register, they would serve you your coffee and cake, set and clear the tables giving them some real life skills to use later in life.

I had an all boys single sex English class and a basic Maths class where we had budgets and used catalogues to spend that budget. We did hands on forensic science becoming detectives and solving clues before those type of shows became popular on tv. These memories come flooding back at many a school reunion.

I was blessed to work with some amazing people, some of whom have gone in to bigger and better leadership roles in and out of Catholic Education.

I had the opportunity to teach overseas for a few years, and I was blessed that before social media I was still able to keep in touch with the amazing staff at TC with regular postcards and updates on where I had been. The fact that so many staff stayed at TC for so long is a credit to the school and the staff and families.

Upon my return from overseas I thought that I needed a change and decided to work in the travel industry and put my travel experience to good use. Whilst working locally in Beenleigh a certain manual arts teacher kept popping his head in and saying hello and reminding me that I was never this stressed at Trinity College. Within 6 months I was working back at Trinity College teaching the brothers and sisters and kids of students I had taught when I was there the first time, always feeling welcomed and part of the ever famous Trinity family.

I had the opportunity of teaching, being head of Sport and seeing Trinity win a few SECA/ACC carnivals against many bigger schools, convene a National Marist Basketball competition, become a Pastoral Leader, and return to just teaching to focus my energy on my classes and Game Changers youth groups.

Trinity has been through its ups and downs in terms of tragedies, results, reputation and enrolments but it has always been a place I (and many people) could call my second home, always have a laugh and never go hungry. I have made lifelong friendships, seen families grow up and send their own kids back to the school. The Pastoral nature of the school is what stands out the most to me. Every staff member has the kids' best interest at heart and cares for them, worries about them, wants to see them grow in to the best person possible and does everything in their power to make that happen.

I look forward to my journey continuing as I continue to teach and watch my own boys and nephew come through the school as I work alongside my brother and step dad.

Melissa Arne-Umstad