

Mrs Vera Toohey, Parent and former Staff member: (written in 2021)

Reading the Mission Statement for Trinity College, Beenleigh, Dave and I could only feel that this was the place for our children to attend, as the values were everything we believed in. Also, Brother John Mullins encouraged us to send our remaining children to the new college; at that time we had two older children who missed out on enrolling, then we had eight children to look forward to being educated here, and that then became 10 beyond 1983 with two more additions to the clan.

When we all gather at a family event, the chat inevitably will run to Trinity days, and although our two eldest children did not attend there they seem to know much about the college as we would have Trinity students regularly in our home. Listening to the family chats they often recall Trinity Day when the students had "free range" and the theme often was "taunt the teachers" and this was taken with great banter from those who were copping the students' flack.

There was also the Trinity Fun Run around the streets of Beenleigh and also Windaroo. Sponsors donated to this for fundraising, so students really gave it their all. Trinity Beachathon was another memorable event. Who would want to attend class rather than run or walk on our Gold Coast beaches? The college really encouraged all to join in these activities, and AFL, athletics, swimming and sports in general were certainly a big part of maintaining healthy bodies in our young. Trinity competed across many sporting events, from local and progressing to state levels - a super effort in the early days.

Then of course there were the musicals, Oliver, Oklahoma and Bye Bye Birdie which did draw decent audiences, and were often the chat of families in the district.

The highlight for those students completing their 12 years of schooling was the Graduation Mass and dinner where the parents, students and teachers came together for one of the nicest evenings - never forgotten.

In 1994, the then principal of the college, Mr. Bob Peacock, took the risk of taking yours truly into the college team as the Home/School Liaison Officer. This was the most wonderful time for me after years of home duties with a large family and it was so good to "go to work". It was a true eye opener behind the front doors of the college, to see the enormity of the workload. The teachers, and staff in general, gave of their all for the benefits of their students and also the families. Teachers were exchanging and encouraging one another even when it was time for a break, and made a great effort to help their charges. Actually, on the first morning of my employment some staff were around the table in the staff lunch room welcoming me, when through the door comes one of the teachers assigned to student duties in the grounds, only to announce "Guess what? I just caught one of the Toohey boys having a cigarette by the burning bush!!!!" Well, silence. Followed with laughter and my total embarrassment. What a great initiation to staff. The teacher involved was possibly more embarrassed than me, but I was ever so glad the lad had been "caught". Still today he does not smoke. Another son who loved to spend lunch break catching eels in the swampy area on the Boundary Rd. side of the oval, still goes fishing with delight. To me it speaks volumes too, when those students who attended Trinity with our children across the years, 1983 to 2000, remain treasured friends. At a son's wedding last March I had my eyes covered by a young man who came up behind me. When he uncovered my sight there stood four Trinity fellows all giving me greetings which I think says it all. We have our daughters (three of whom are high school teachers) still meeting on a regular basis with their Trinity peers, and of course these days technology keeps many corresponding and giving one another updates on their lives/activities. Most of these ladies are now mothers themselves.

To conclude my small contribution I recall with humour an occasion early in 2000. I had dressed in the early autumn morning in the dark. Power was out. I slipped into my shoes at the end of the bed and headed off to the airport to collect a relative on an early morning flight into Brisbane. It was only at morning tea break that I realised, as I kicked a football to a student, that I was wearing two different coloured shoes!!! I was so embarrassed again, but as I went to walk to the staff room, I almost knocked over Julius Caesar!!!! There beside me was Julius- aka Mr. Ray Mitchell, who was dressed for the Easter season with Good Friday approaching. We stood, looked each other up and down, then burst out laughing, which was difficult to stop. Ray's laurels nearly fell down to choke him, and the Trinity motto came to the fore, " IN GOD WE TRUST." Our day continued, as it began, outfitted with aplomb. It was that year that both Ray and I retired; it was time we felt.

I, along with my husband and "children", thank Trinity and all those who worked there, from the principals, to the teachers, to the canteen, to the gardener. You all influenced those young people in your care, I think, for the better.

Vera Toohey