

## Principal's Column

Brent Gray



**B**ravery. One dictionary definition states: 'The condition or quality of being brave; courage.' Bravery has been the theme for our senior speech writing this term, to tie in with inquiry work classes are undertaking. Speech making requires, for a lot of people, an act of bravery itself, as it can be quite a daunting task. Chris Murphy wrote of this in his column three weeks ago. So what amazed me about our group of speakers was not only the great speeches that were prepared and how well they were delivered, but the content that filled many of them. There were the speeches about brave people who went off to war and brave sporting heroes, but it was the high number of speeches about people (aunts, uncles, cousins, parents) who are brave every day as they fight their own war against cancer that blew me away. It was an all-too-common theme to many of the children's speeches. It is incredible to think, in a rural community such as ours, that so many people know people who are affected by this disease in its many shapes and forms. The disease impacts many of our families in a number of ways that determine things that our families have to deal with – running the household, working, travel to appointments and treatments – stresses that can affect a family as much as the disease itself. For some people, there will be positive outcomes, for others not so.



A number of our staff took part in a fun social event last week that had some more serious undertones. It was in the form of a quiz night, organised by the Ashburton ANZ Bank branch in support of Daffodil Day and the Cancer Society. 370 people took part in that quiz night, and I'm sure one of the reasons it was so easy to get so many people there was that if you asked each person, they would know someone affected by cancer. The sponsors list was long, the prizes donated amazing, and a great atmosphere was obvious during the night. (Even the winners donated their prize money back to the cause!)

The Cancer Society is just one of the charities that does invaluable work within our community for people in need. From a visit to someone, a bit of home baking, and support and guidance when there are so many questions, the support is endless and tireless.

To the people in our community who show bravery each day when dealing with cancer and the associated issues, keep up the fight, and be open to support shown by the people willing to do so.

To the brave people who support those in need, thanks for the willingness shown to support them.

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."

- Nelson Mandela