Holy Spirit Catholic School, Townsville - Early days and Captain Kid

**Strengthening our work**
When the Principal at Holy Spirit School in Townsville approved the implementation of KidsMatter Primary in Term 4 2012, he knew the processes would build on the work of the school in building a nurturing environment.

"... We strive to support students and parents. We decided a few years ago that a representative of the Administration Team would greet parents and students at the start of each day. We want to create a welcoming school for families. I saw that KidsMatter Primary would strengthen our work with students and parents."

Paul Lucas, Principal

**The creation of ‘Captain Kid’**
The school began to introduce KidsMatter late in 2012. A teacher on the Action Team created an approach including a character, ‘Captain Kid’, who featured in the context of health and wellbeing.

"... I thought that we could create interest about KidsMatter for students so we put up posters with the message, ‘CK is coming in 2013’. I thought a character could help with implementing the ideas of wellbeing in KidsMatter so I created ‘Captain Kid’ who is invisible but talks with students who might have difficulties. We created a rap and a series of stories that star ‘Captain Kid’."

Angela Lone, Action Team member

**A skit for Getting Started**
At the beginning of this school year, the staff participated in Getting Started, and a group of teachers acted out a story taking on roles of students and also Captain Kid. A boy was featured in the schoolyard without friends and Captain Kid talked to him and empowered him to become more confident and find ways to approach a group of peers. Staff agreed that the skit was an effective way to demonstrate how students feel and act.

**Action Team creativity**
The eight members of the Action Team include classroom and special needs teachers; a curriculum specialist; chaplain; a parent and teacher aide. When it formed in Term 4 2012, the focus was on students and how to prepare them for the introduction of KidsMatter. They decided to develop a survey for students which it conducted alongside the parent and staff surveys for Component 1.
... One of the teachers and I worked on questions and we ran it as a paper survey for students in Prep to Year 3. We adapted questions for students from Years 4 – 7 and used the Monkey Survey tool. Every student completed a survey and we were really surprised by the information that individuals gave us about their needs.

Natalie Ardel, Guidance Counsellor

Drawing parents into the school
Meet and Greet evenings have replaced more formal parent meetings. Earlier in Term 1, parents were invited to an evening that provided snapshots of what the school offers students and parents in relation to wellbeing.

Two Action Team members gave a presentation on KidsMatter, and other staff gave sessions about resilience, loss and grief, and there was a focus on Christian meditation. Parents selected sessions they wanted to attend.

Natalie said that the different format provided a way for parents to learn about the school and share with each other.

Snapshots of student leadership
The school provides a number of ways for students to take on leadership and care for the community. Students in Years 6 and 7 can opt into the Justice Crew which takes responsibility for observing interactions in play areas. They have been trained in mediation and conflict resolution. ‘Harmony helpers’ host lunchtime activities and games with younger students.

Many Year 6 and 7 students participate in a number of social justice and community outreach activities such as St. Vincent De Paul ‘Mini Vinnies’ program; fundraising for the St. Vincent De Paul ‘Assist a Student’ program; organising the Ronald McDonald ‘Fill a Pantry’ fundraiser; visitation once a month to Brooklea Retirement Village.

Year 7 students can apply for the positions of School Historian and School Photographer each year. They work together to write and record special events as well as day-to-day school life. They compile the stories and photos and present them to the Principal at the end of the year. Year 6/7 student leaders meet with the Principal regularly – and they produce real results. For example, a uniform change was initiated by the students. Year 7 students have a process for selecting a permanent legacy that marks their contribution to the school. In 2012, the Year 7s decided on a large mural on the side of a new building, and an artist developed the design and students worked on the mural.

... KidsMatter Primary makes us more aware of the need to encourage students to take on leadership as a way of spreading ideas about mental health and wellbeing.

Natalie Ardel, Guidance Counsellor

Holy Spirit School, Townsville
Queensland

- Is located 8 km South-West of the Townsville CBD
- Enrols 870 students
- Began implementing KidsMatter Primary in November 2012
- Has created a character, Captain Kid, to support KidsMatter Primary

www.hsstsv.catholic.edu.au