

SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

Breakfast Club is here to stay at St Albans Secondary College



St. Albans Secondary College recently joined the School Breakfast Clubs Program in Term 1 this year. They serve more than 150 breakfasts each morning! Their Breakfast Club wouldn't be the success that it is without the help of their committed student volunteers.

Administrative and First Aid Officer, and Breakfast Club Coordinator, Carmel Castorina, has been at the school for 10 years and their Breakfast Club has been running for almost 12 years. Carmel, who says Breakfast Club is her favourite part of the job, was happy to share how their Breakfast Club has improved since joining Foodbank's School Breakfast Clubs Program. She also shared their ingenious idea of featuring Breakfast Club testimonies in their Yearbook to help spread the word!

Carmel says, "Breakfast Club started one day per week and then I brought it to two days, and now with Foodbank's help, we are capable of running it every morning. Foodbank coming along was amazing as I had more breakfast to offer the kids".

Carmel worries that without Breakfast Club many of their students wouldn't have time for breakfast at home, or they wouldn't have access to a variety of foods. She knows how important it is to the students and says, "when they come to school and they see Breakfast Club, they have a better day."

Carmel believes their Breakfast Club's strong sense of community contributes to the success of their program. Students volunteer each morning and staff are known to pop their heads in and offer help.

It is with this openness, that their Breakfast Club is ingrained in the daily life of a student at their school.

Carmel also acknowledges the important opportunity Breakfast Club creates for students and staff to build relationships. She says, "Breakfast Club is a community, we all come together, students and staff talk and chat. Staff have an opportunity to see kids in and out of the class environment".

Carmel also engages the students to help run Breakfast Club, she says of her student helpers "they are my main support backbone." The school makes sure that those students are recognised for their contribution by giving them certificates at the end of the year, "the kids know that the school is very **very** appreciative of their help."

One other reason why their Breakfast Club is successful is the dedicated page in the Yearbook that is distributed amongst students each year. This helps to promote Breakfast Club to other students.

The Yearbook features a variety of the school's programs, and Breakfast Club features in it because it's such a significant program within in the school. She says, "this year it will be even more joyous because we are now running five days a week".

Carmel gets photos and testimonies from the regular Breakfast Club attendees, through this she says "past students bring on other students, or even siblings. It just follows every year...."

It's also obvious that a large part of their Breakfast Club's success comes down to Carmel's passion. She says, "the program is probably my favourite role of all that I do in the school. It gives me so much satisfaction and it's just so important to educate the kids about eating well".

And it's clear that their Breakfast Club isn't going anywhere, Carmel says, "if Breakfast Club doesn't run, the kids really miss it. It has impacted the school significantly, it's part of the school now. It's here, and it's here to stay."