Welcome from the Headmaster

Since the last Review, many refurbishments have been made to the College campus. Our architect is working on revising the Master Plan, and by far the biggest component of this is construction of the Secondary Arts Centre, planned for 2014/2015.

But the College community is not really about buildings. Rather, it is about the lives of our students and alumni, and the parents and staff who support or supported them.

This Review is about alumni stories, which we hope will develop a strong feeling of connectedness between our alumni and the College community.

We invite all College alumni to visit the College’s website (http://www.brisbane.coc.edu.au) and register on the Alumni Register page so you can continue to stay in touch with us. We are always interested to hear the story of your life after College.

Pastor Ron Woolley
Headmaster

Dressed for success and challenge

Old school friends of Jonathan Buttery (Class of 2004), may still remember his aversion to the College uniform.

For someone renowned for pushing the boundaries of school’s dress code, the Army may seem an unlikely career choice.

But, six years on, since joining the Australian Defence Force, Jonathan has no regrets. With a trade under his belt, and a long list of overseas and Australian destinations in his career highlights reel, Jonathan is well pleased with the gutsy move which took him from the concert hall to the barracks.

“I could not possibly picture myself in any other career choice,” said Jonathan. “The army has offered me so many unique experiences, and I am sure there are more to come.

“The Army’s core values of courage, initiative and teamwork were something that was also encouraged throughout my school life.

“I am proud to wear the uniform with people who I have shared this unusual journey with, no matter what task we are given.”

With keen musical ability clearly demonstrated throughout his College years, enrolling in a Bachelor of Music at the Southbank Conservatorium of Music seemed an obvious pathway. However, before the year ended, and after lots of thought, Jonathan said he decided to enlist in the Australian Army as an electrician and moved to Sydney.

“I encountered some ridicule when I made the decision to join the Army,” he recalls. “People thought the change from studying classical piano to wearing this uniform would be too much of an extreme change.”

After working for three years with a civilian company to earn his electrical licence, the special missions Jonathan has engaged with, both in Australia and abroad have struck the right chord.

For example, in 2009 he worked with around 300 other personnel on an Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program in Mapoon, Far North Queensland.

Over a six month period the soldiers constructed a number of houses for the community, graded and sealed roads and provided refurbishments to the existing buildings.

In 2011 Jonathon was selected to represent the Australian contingent abroad for the Pacific Partnership, a four-month mission to Tonga, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, East Timor and the Federated States of Micronesia.

He took part in a wide range of projects, with a mix of medical personnel including doctors, nurses, dentists and veterinarians from all three defence services.

As part of the 12 man Army engineer team Jonathan’s role in the mission was to undertake refurbishment and construction projects in schools, town halls, gymnasiums and auditoriums providing better education, recreational and community spaces for the local communities.

Jonathan said that looking back on his time at COCB, it was a time of preparation.

“I realise that it shaped me to be who I am today and given me a solid foundation of life values – many of which are mirrored in my current career,” he said.

“I thoroughly enjoyed my time and have fond memories from Year 1 to 12. I have made life-long friends who I look forward to seeing when the time permits, and have also kept in touch with some of my past teachers.”
It takes a special motivation to study for eight years out of nine since graduating from school. When the grind of lectures, reading and exams starts to wear him down, Jared Weston (Class of 2001) thinks back to the people of third world nations he treated in make-shift dental clinics. After completing five years of dentistry studies with first class honours at University of Queensland, Jared began working in private practices around Brisbane. He also volunteered his time on several mission trips to Uganda, Kenya and Bangladesh, working in schools and local halls. People came from kilometres to receive treatment.

“We saw many cancers and life threatening infections we could do nothing for, and deformities that left the patient alienated from their tribes,” recalls Jared. “Those experiences I hold dear. I always gain motivation from those memories of the poor people we couldn’t help. Fortunately in Australia I have the opportunity to get great training to go help those in need.”

Jared is now in his third year of a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery with the view to becoming a head and neck (maxillofacial) surgeon, a specialised area of medicine which requires an individual to be qualified as both a dentist and a medical surgeon. Jared says the more he mixed with maxillofacial surgeons during his dentistry studies and career, the more he was drawn.

“Maxillofacial surgery involves, among other things the treatment of severe facial trauma, for example from motor vehicle accidents and assaults, and deconstructing and reconstructing the head and neck affected by cancer, and fixing congenital facial deformities. “For example, I have assisted in cancer surgery where the whole throat is removed and replaced with a small intestine. “I have also assisted in surgery where a patient with a growth hormone excess required his face and jaw to be broken and pulled forwards to allow for breathing. His tongue was growing too big for his mouth, and he was finding it difficult to breath.” Jared is currently studying at Sydney’s University of Notre Dame and Auburn Hospital, and working part-time as a dentist. Upon graduating Jared will still be required to undertake another nine years of general and specialist training to become a full qualified maxillofacial surgeon.

“Although I was not a huge fan of studying at school, I love studying now and could not imagine a life without learning new and wonderful things on a daily basis,” he said. “I love that I get to work with my hands, solving puzzles with my mind. Dentistry and medicine are very rewarding in their own right – you get to help people who may have no way of helping themselves, and that is a privilege.”

Jared’s recently wedded wife, Celine, is also in the medical field, working as a pharmacist in Australia’s biggest hospital, Westmead. She too has volunteered her talents in third-world countries.

“We both feel there is a calling on our lives to spend more time providing health care and training the development world…but not sure yet how that is to play out.”

Looking back, besides studying chemistry, biology and physics while at COCB, Jared credits another unlikely subject for developing his surgical skills more than others.

“COCB allowed me to spend time with great friends every day, and learn from committed teachers. I also developed dexterity with my hands as a dentist and budding surgeon in the woodwork sheds – albeit on a much larger scale.”

Inspiration from the third world
as well as working as a photographer at Tangalooma.

Before leaving for Africa Jody worked full-time for two years in graduate position at Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital, and began studying toward a Masters in International Public Health. After Africa she plans to work in the UK and travel for a year or two, and then return to her Masters.

“Occupational Therapy is a fun profession with plenty of room for creativity,” said Jody. “Most of all its fulfilling and the experience of working hands-on with patients and seeing their outcome is very rewarding. It gives you a fantastic perspective on health, people and the world.

“My memories of COB are some of the best of my life. I was very blessed with the classmates and teachers I had. Some of my closest relationships today are those I formed in school. My high school years were rich with opportunity. It was during this time I developed my love of sport, dancing and missions.”

Dream occupation

“I went for occupational therapy because it appealed to my practical and humanitarian nature,” said Jody Mills [Class of 2004]. “I saw it as a profession that would give me flexibility, employment opportunities and skills that could be used on the mission field.”

Check, check and double check – occupational therapy has delivered on Jody Mills’ dream. Working with a secure graduate position, with several mission adventures under her belt, and even a short time working on an island resort, occupational therapy is everything Jody wanted in a career.

At the time of writing, Jody was working as a hand therapist with Mercy Ships in Togo, West Africa. During her four month stay she is assigned with a plastic surgery team mainly treating burns victims. Also, in 2008, Jody spent a month in Uganda working at a special home for babies.

“I love being in Africa and knew that once I’d finished my studies and gained more professional experience I would return,” said Jody.

“My initial enthusiasm for missions was fuelled by a short-term mission trip we did to the Philippines at COCB. African is a continent I’m quite passionate about, having been born in South Africa, and I feel like I’m living my dream being here with people who are doing such amazing work.”

Jody’s resume is rich and diverse due to her decision to combine study, work and mission through taking a gap year. Before completing her Occupational Therapy degree at University of Queensland in 2009, she had also graduated from Discipleship Training School (YWAM) and worked on mission as a photographer in India and Hawaii, delivering the news in America

While many married couples wait until retirement to launch out in a motorhome, that’s how Simone Campbell (nee Gagliardi, Class of 1987) and husband Stephen started their married life.

Rather than “spending their children’s inheritance” or “adventure before dementia” the newly married couple were criss-crossing America promoting an obscure Australian band called The Newsboys.

From oblivion to stardom, Stephen worked as the band’s tour manager, production manager and lighting director, and continues working with the band today, now one Australia’s most successful music exports. For Simone it started with a welcome interruption to her studies in Education at Christian Heritage College.

“Before I finished my first year I ended up marrying Stephen and we hopped on a plane to America to see if we could launch the Newsboys and get a record deal,” Simone recalled.

“We travelled around 38 States the first year, and I think our old jalopy of a motorhome broke down at least once in each state.

“We had the most amazing journey with the Newsboys – from playing shows for no money to becoming one of the most successful Christian recording artists.

“We have travelled the world with the Newsboys and have had the opportunity to minister to hundreds and thousands of young people. A highlight was being invited to play at a Franklin Graham crusade. His father Billy Graham spoke and it was the last time he ever spoke on a stage.”

Simone admits that the Christian rock star life came with its challenges, particularly as a stay-at-home Mum raising three children (Gabrielle 21, Josephine 15 and Oliver 9) while Stephen travelled with the band.

Now working for a marketing company, Simone is also currently condensing her 21 years of experience into a book called “How to Survive and Thrive”, with the secondary title “when your husband is away ministering and you are the one home raising the family.”

(continued page 6)
As a member of the Australian Federal Police (AFP), Tim Hall once formed part of Australia’s thin blue line. Today, as a financial planner, he’s more concerned about the bottom line of his clients and return on investment.

Tim (Class of 1991) fondly remembers the thrill of the chase as a Fraud Detective with the AFP, and at one time, heading the major fraud unit in Canberra. While bringing financial criminals to justice gave him a certain level of satisfaction, Tim recalls lamenting that in most cases victims never received full justice.

“There was a degree of closure for the victims, but they never got their money back,” said Tim.

“Like policing, financial planning still allows me to help people, only now the experience is much more positive.”

Today heading up his own financial planning company trading as Planit based in Newstead, Tim can trace specific steps that led to his taking the quantum leap from law enforcement, to his current career as an entrepreneur in financial services.

While working for a few years as a uniformed policeman in Tuggeranong (south of Canberra), Tim said he was keen to move into a more investigative role as a plain-clothed detective. He was thrilled when an opportunity arose in the major fraud investigation area.

“While I was in the fraud team in Canberra I got to meet a lot of people in the financial services industry and in particular, a couple of financial planners, and decided it was the career path I wanted to pursue longer term,” he said.

While still working as a policeman with the AFP Tim completed a Masters in Commerce (Financial Planning), and a Graduate Certificate in Finance. He is also one of very few financial planners who has ‘locked up’ another financial planner.

After the fraud team, Tim joined the professional standards area of the AFP where he was promoted to the rank of Detective Sergeant. In this area he spent several months in the Solomon Islands advising the local government’s anti-corruption police – a career highlight.

Then after 11 years in the police force, Tim knew it was time to make a change, and in 2005 he left the force, moved back to Brisbane and started a new career as a financial planner. In 2010 he teamed up with two other like minded professionals at Planit.

Another career highlight for Tim, while working for the AFP as a uniformed officer, was beating the odds (historically a 90% failure rate) and earning a place in the elite part-time dive squad, where he worked for nine years.

“As a member of the dive squad I was able to get out of the office and into the outdoors with a great bunch of guys.”

“Diving was hardly a glamorous role though, most of our duties involved searching rivers, lakes and dams for evidence in zero visibility. We recovered a lot of stolen motor vehicles but I suppose the worst part was body recoveries.”

While not part of his work now, diving is still one of Tim’s favourite pastimes. Having grown up in Carina, Tim says he has “come back to where I started”, now living in Carindale with wife of eight years, and two children Aidan (5) and Addison (3).

“There’s a part of me that misses the AFP – working reasonably standard hours and recreational leave – but I guess the trade-off is that you are building a business of your own.”

“I’ve got fond memories of COCB. A lot of my close friends are people I went to school with, and I still keep in regular touch with them. It’s quite remarkable how we’ve stuck together through the years.”

“We just had our 20 year reunion and it was like we were all back at school, and nothing had changed.”
If you watch Channel Seven early evenings, you may be up-to-speed with the work of Josh Fajzullin (Class of 2001).

As a TV journalist on current affairs show Today Tonight since early 2010, Josh is a regular face on national television, interviewing the rich and famous or reporting on an amazing array of issues.

In front of the camera Josh is the calm presence, bringing sense to complex or confronting issues, but there’s a lot happening behind the scenes. It’s a wild ride that Josh says he loves.

“Working as a television journalist provides me with more variety than I could ever have imagined – every day is different,” said Josh.

“Yes it can be a stressful job, the deadlines are tight, and you have to be relentless in your pursuit to get a story or beat A Current Affair to it. But at day’s end, it’s thoroughly rewarding.”

Covering the Queensland floods earlier this year presented Josh with his most memorable and heart wrenching assignment in his 10 year media career. As he rubbed shoulders with those affected with one of the State’s most devastating natural disasters, emotions ran high.

“I was the first TV crew to get access by boat, which my crew and I hitched a ride on into the Rocklea markets.

“The pumpkins scattered in the water looked like jellyfish bobbing up and down. Sometimes the boat would scrape over or hit something... usually the tops of trucks or bobcats. It was a surreal experience boating metres above roads which I grew up walking on.”

The quest to make news continually engaging means Josh is seldom bored. Whether uncovering the escapades of scam artists or confronting them, flying in helicopters following the east coast whale migration or interviewing stars like Keith Urban, the Irwins or Lleyton Hewitt...variety is the unwritten condition in his Channel 7 contract.

“I love knowing that I can influence and evoke emotions in people,” said Josh. “I can make viewers laugh, cry, feel happy, sad or angry.

“I endeavour to make news and current affairs entertaining so people want to watch it and will remember it. Not many people do what I do, and I’m grateful God put me in this role.”

Josh was also a ‘front man’ in his final year of schooling at COCB as school captain. A gifted actor, he went on to study acting, film and television and journalism at QUT before starting his media career writing scripts at local radio station 4BH.

He worked for several television news shows in Queensland, including Brisbane Extra and National Nine News.

“I have some wonderful memories at COCB. I was truly blessed to have such a cool cohort and bunch of teachers.

“Most memorable moment was giving Kevin Rudd a tour of the school. Playing the lead role in Richard III was pretty cool too, but extremely daunting. I had to learn, off by heart, more than 100 pages of script – or at least it felt that way! And I’ll never forget the thrill of theatre sports.

“I couldn’t wait to tackle university after leaving school...I still had no clue what I wanted to do as a career...but I knew it had to do something creative that used my God-given gifts.”

When not working, Josh enjoys playing touch football, and is currently studying Germany at University of Queensland “for something different”.

Delivering the news in America (continued from page 4)

In 1990 Simone and Stephen returned to Australia temporarily and Simone resumed her studies at Christian Heritage College in 1992, receiving two scholarships. Today her eldest daughter Gabrielle is studying at the same college. Stephen and Simone live in Nashville, Tennessee and Simone remembers the COCB years fondly.

“I was only at COCB for a year, but after 11 years in non-Christian schools it was an amazing freedom for me,” said Simone.

“I was a fairly new Christian at the time and I really appreciated an environment where it was OK to talk about Jesus and actually go to chapel and raise my hands in worship.

“I loved having teachers that I knew really cared about me as an individual and would always be there to talk about more than just school work.”
Let’s clear a few things up

Before we start telling the Damian Gagliardi story [Class of 1988], he wants to clear up a few things with readers.

Firstly, he and wife of 15 years, Ruth-Eva, did not name their first son Axl after Axl Rose (from Guns ‘N Roses).

Secondly, and along the same lines, 40-year-old Damian is officially announcing that he has abandoned his dream of being a rock star (but is still open to offers).

Thirdly, even though Damian did spend most of the time outside Mr Plumb’s physics class at COCB with friend David, they did manage to listen through the window.

While waiting to front a rock band, Damian has clocked up almost a decade working as an IT consultant with Brisbane-based company Eclipse Computing, and is already planning his long-service leave. Considering some of the adventures Damian has endured as an IT consultant, he deserves the rest.

“As a consultant I have travelled endlessly and been involved in many projects, but there are few more memorable ones,” said Damian.

In summary some of the escapades of an IT consultant include:

• Attending a mental health prison in Melbourne, and being asked to eat a lunch prepared by the inmates and to sleep on-site
• Visiting a cotton farm where the owner’s wife stored a shotgun behind her desk and threatened to shoot the IT consultants if the project didn’t go well
• Being trapped in a Lae hotel (Papua New Guinea) for a weekend listening to the constant gunshots of a riot, and feeling the odd earthquake
• Business class trips to London and luxury hotels [to end on a positive].

Damian admits there were some random twists and turns before he arrived at his current preferred career option. He studied accounting at QUT [with Red Frog founder Andy Gourley], worked a few years as an accountant, before interrupting his first well-paid job by taking a year to study at a Bible College.

“God in His wisdom wanted me to spend a year at Word of Life Bible School in Sweden between 1995 and 1996.”

“That was undoubtedly the most interesting, boring, exciting, challenging, horrible, wonderful year of my life to date. One highlight – I met my wife-to-be.”

Upon leaving Bible College, Damian started his career in IT while working in Singapore, and finally returned to Brisbane after a couple of years based in Sydney. He and wife Ruth-Eva now have two “amazingly cute kids”, Axl, seven, and Tom, three. Both boys attend Citipointe.

“The best thing about my work, apart from the fact they pay me, is the variety,” said Damian. “I rarely work in the same place for more than a few days, I meet new people all the time, new businesses and new industries.

“The travel can be a bit challenging for our young family, but I could not imagine going back to a 9-5 job in the same office every day. I think I’d go a little [more] insane.

“I am effectively my own boss so I can choose where I go, what I do, which is wonderful. As long as I get the job done, they are happy.”

Snowboarding is a passion that also keeps Damian sane, and by all indications, his head is currently crystal clear.

“I have managed to snowboard so far in Australia, New Zealand, Colorado, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, France and a few other countries my 40-year-old brain can’t recall instantly.

“Apart from that I still play piano for relaxation at home and just do the normal stuff normal people have time for in life – family and friends.

“If any of my classmates are reading this, add me on Facebook.”

Let’s clear a few things up
The people, the community and the creativity which exudes from the world of theatre is irresistible for Phil Slade (Class of 1993).

As a composer with over a decade of achievement across Australian theatrical productions, it’s not work for Phil. It’s more like a musical discovery tour which also pays the bills.

Phil’s talent for weaving melody and words around scripts and character development is now well recognised within Australia’s theatrical community. Closer to home, Phil enjoys a strong connection with Brisbane’s premiere theatres, the Queensland Theatre Company and La Boite.

To sample some of Phil’s craftsmanship this year, look out for QTC’s production of Romeo and Juliet.

“I love telling stories and that’s why I love the theatre so much,” said Phil. “There is also this immediate response from people. Every night is slightly different and I love the anticipation of that.

“I genuinely love the people in theatre. I think the community of people are fantastic. You have to be in theatre because you love it. There’s not enough money for anyone to be doing theatre unless they love it and I think that’s a real gift.”

Although a musical prodigy – very involved with all aspects of music while at school and being appointed as the college’s first Music Captain – Phil’s pathway into composing for theatre involved several twists in the plot.

He successfully applied to study music at university straight after school, but at the same time was preparing to tour Australia as part of Steve Grace’s band. Forced to make a choice, Phil chose the latter, and subsequently enrolled in a teaching degree at Christian Heritage College.

Though quick to acknowledge he has never fronted a classroom, it was through contacts made while at school and studying at CHC that he was introduced to theatre, starting with school drama teacher and CHC lecturer Rob Burgess and the Paradigm Shift Theatre Company. He earned his first credit, composing for a musical called “The Singer”.

Now with over 15 years’ composing experience, Phil’s music has featured in such productions as The Wishing Well, The Glass Menagerie, Rabbit Hole and The Last Man Standing.

When not working with scriptwriters and directors, Phil is also a full-time psychological science student and Campaign Director for local State LNP candidate John Grant.

“Believe it or not, the psychology I’m studying at University of Queensland, and what I learned at Christian Heritage College, both help me with script writing, and in terms of understanding people – and I find it fascinating.

“I had a great time at Christian Outreach College. The music program—particularly with Desley Herschell, Faye Crane and Kim Chandler – those three were a major influence on me musically in different ways.”

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For Andrew Purcell (Class of 1995), working for Google lived up to its reputation. The same company that is world-renowned for creating order from the chaos of the internet is also renowned for creating cheerfully disruptive workplaces.

“Google was an absolutely fun experience,” recalls Andrew who worked as Manager for the company’s data centres in Canada and the US from 2007 to 2009.

The array of staff facilities available to Googlers (Google employers) can shame the most expensive of holiday resort. In its quest to break the mold of many IT company cultures – empowering all employees to innovate and take calculated risks – Andrew says that Google is reshaping employee engagement and workplace culture.

Free ski holidays, free lunches supplied from so-called ‘micro-kitchens’ dotted throughout the facility, pools, gymnasiums and spacious meeting areas are part of the Google way.

“Managing about 23 people it was my role to look after productivity, and making sure that the guys and girls in the office had all the same benefits as our co-workers in California,” said Andrew.

For example, in one Google office, a meeting could sometimes be interrupted by someone applying the brakes or steering to avoid a collision with a pedestrian. When in Mountain View, watch out for “team bikes”!

“These are eight-seater bikes where everyone peddles and everyone is facing inwards – and you have a meeting while you are on these bikes while you ride around the streets,” said Andrew.

Or what organization encourages one of its team to develop a ‘potato gun’?

Andrew explains “I had one team member who was a bio-chemist – he wasn’t a typical IT geek. He was a scientist and a really interesting guy, and he had a plan for a potato gun.”

“We put it together as part of a team project and then took it out in a field after hours to shoot some potatoes… but I hear they are illegal in Australia now.”

Team bonding and shooting vegetables aside, Andrew found satisfaction in the work at Google, being associated with such iconic services as Gmail, the Google search engine and the Internet browser Chrome.

“I worked with the Chrome launch and that was an amazing experience, because it was something that made an impact across the globe,” said Andrew.

“It was a small contribution, but I helped to make the downloaders available in the data centres and developed some new technologies to do that.”

Married to wife Rahneida for 12 years and with a growing family (Kiersten, 10, and Kayla, 7), Andrew declined to relocate with Google to America back in 2010. Instead, he chose to work alongside Rahneida’s to establish a day care centre in Toronto, Little Feet Big Dreams Child Care.

The couple have since sold that business and moved back to Brisbane, where they have enrolled their daughters in Citipointe Christian College. It’s full circle for Andrew, who after graduating from Citipointe completed an IT degree with QUT and then travelled to Canada in pursuit of Canadian girlfriend Rahneida. He worked in the financial industry for about 10 years before joining Google.

Surveying the grounds of Citipointe College today, Andrew is grateful seeing some of the facilities that were once only a dream during his time as a student, such as the swimming pool, now reality.

“I have lots of great memories of the college, and that’s why we were so excited to enroll the kids when we got back to Australia,” said Andrew.
In a way, Lucas Adams (Class of 1997) is living his father’s dream. Well, it was just one dream – a very timely dream his father experienced one night that changed the course of Lucas’ life.

In was late in 2000, when Lucas was looking for direction in life, his father dreamed that Lucas would join renowned Christian mission organisation Youth with a Mission (YWAM). It was the night before Lucas was to be interviewed as part of the recruitment process for the Royal Australian Navy.

“I told Dad he was crazy, went to the interview, and came back with the intention of joining YWAM,” Lucas recalls.

In hindsight, Lucas’ father’s ‘crazy’ dream over 10 years ago proved to be a real game-changer. Rather than being enrolled in the Australia Navy, Lucas now lives with wife Hallie and their daughter two-year-old Evangeline in the U.S. city of Louisiana. This year Lucas will graduate with a Bachelor of Music Education and will begin teaching music to Grades Five to Eight.

Within months of his father’s dream Lucas moved to Melbourne, and began a three month stint travelling on missions throughout Australia. Events converged, leading to Lucas not only finding his future wife, but also the vocation he now loves.

While in Darwin on a YWAM mission trip, Lucas recalls meeting a “cute brunette”.

“We spent hours that night chatting, but lost contact after for about six months,” said Lucas. “In early 2002 I was back in Brisbane looking for work when one day I received a phone call from this girl – she was back in Louisiana working.

“We started an international relationship, both of us traveling back and forth between our respective homes a few times. Then in March of 2003 I asked Hallie to marry me, and we wed in October.”

Lucas said the next major turning point in his life was enrolling in university to study music education, majoring in saxophone. As part of the practical aspect of the degree Lucas took part in a 120-strong University marching band, including a stint of leading the saxophone section.

The band marched and played choreographed shows before college football games and at half time, an amazing experience of a young Australian. They also performed at two National Football League (NFL) games at the revered Superdome in New Orleans, restored after being left devastated in 2005 by Hurricane Katrina.

“I love music...music is the one medium that can take us from our mundane daily lives,” Lucas said.

“I also really enjoy imparting knowledge to young people and children. If they walk away from my class with the basic tools to play an instrument, these skills can improve their lives and bring them and their friends many happy times.”

Lucas remembers Christian Outreach College as a virtual oasis of his younger years.

“At my first three years of high school at another school I was teased on a regular basis. COCB was like dying and going to heaven. I was respected and liked. The teachers cared. This was the second best investment that my parents ever made in my future.”
Despite some unsavory memories from his school years, Aaron Thirkettle (Class of 2003) is planning to one day emerge from the business world with the experience and qualifications to become a teacher.

More on those memories later...

Currently, the work/life balance is going well for Aaron, a new Dad, and working as National Asset Coordinator for concrete product and engineering giant, Humes.

“I love how my role is varied – every day is different and I sometimes get to travel around Australia in the name of business,” said Aaron. “I love learning something new and working out more efficient ways to get things done.”

“I married my amazing wife Micah in 2009, and we welcomed William into the world in June this year.

“We’ve been blessed with a baby who sleeps well, eats well, smiles all the time and most importantly, is happy and healthy.”

With a Bachelor of Business (HR and Accounting) under his belt, Aaron’s goal is to earn a Masters, qualify as a CPA and cap studies off with a Post Graduate Degree in teaching.

“My ultimate desire is to teach, but I am soaking up as much industry experience and knowledge as I can first.”

Maybe it’s the memories of school which drift in and out of Aaron’s mind which draws him back to school? Maybe not, but most could relate to Aaron’s tongue-in-cheek recollections.

“The locker room from school is a lingering memory,” he said. “When the wind blows in the right direction I swear I can still smell the waft of teenage BO, sweat, Lynx deodorant, and the mouldy food stuffed behind the holes in the lockers.

“Seriously...Citipointe really set a good foundation for hard work, commitment, perseverance and results. Every experience has both good and bad memories, and I can honestly say the good far outweigh the bad.”

As a passionate musician and audio enthusiast, Aaron also serves as worship director at his local church.

Teaching is the goal... just don’t visit the locker room
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