




MERCY COLLEGE ALUMNI

Where are they now?

Introducing :	Annie Driver : <i>Graduating class of 2015</i>
Questions :	Responses:
<p>Hello Annie!</p> <p>Thanks for sharing your story!</p>	<p>Hi Diane!</p> <p>Thanks for this opportunity!</p> <p>Here is a photo of me (left) and my sister Emily.</p> <p>(Emily also attended Mercy College)</p> 
Do you remember what it was like at College and when you left?	<p>(Fears, aspirations, friends, what you took away from the Catholic ethos of our College)</p> <p>When I left Mercy, it felt almost like I was moving out of home. I had spent so much time there, whether that be in the mornings finishing up work or at night for extra subjects, rehearsals or helping teachers out, I felt like I was always there.</p> <p>So, to not having to go there every day was a real shock for me and in some ways, a fear because it was the only thing I knew. I had connected so well with staff and class mates and I knew I would never get that same homely connection at a university.</p> <p>However, I did feel reassured that like a home, Mercy would always welcome me back and help me out when I needed it. If I ever wanted to pop in and say hello to teachers, I could do that, if I needed help with uni work, teachers would help me – I always had a place at Mercy and knowing that made me feel relieved and ready to start a new chapter in my life.</p> <p>Throughout my VCE years, there were a lot of family struggles and loss of loved ones which took a toll on me and my family with work and study and co-curricular activities (performances and school musicals) and I will never forget the overwhelming support I received from the school.</p>



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	<p><i>Whether that was helping me organise SAC catch up dates, being able to talk to staff members throughout the day and just allowing me to pause, take a break and a deep breath and understand my emotions.</i></p> <p><i>In that period of time, I had never received support like it. Everyone was understanding and genuinely wanted to make sure I was okay.</i></p> <p><i>Although things outside of school weren't going my way, I knew when I walked into Mercy every morning, I would be supported and encouraged to keep going and keep smiling – because I was reminded how strong and brave I was and everything would begin to look up.</i></p>
<i>Did you set out with a career plan?</i>	<p><i>(Further study: What did you do / where did you go?)</i></p> <p><i>After many changes in what I wanted to do, I finally decided mid-year 12 on a course at ACU. It was a Bachelor of Arts/Teaching (Humanities).</i></p> <p><i>In this course, I would have the opportunity to Major in Psychology, Minor in Healthy Development and complete a degree of Secondary Education Teaching. I then applied for this course; applied and received the Early Achiever's Scholarship for ACU and commenced my studies in 2016.</i></p> <p><i>In this degree, I was required to complete set times of professional placements where I would go to different schools and see what it's like.</i></p> <p><i>One semester, I was lucky to go back to Mercy and work alongside Vicki Harvey as well as Julie Pirani and various other teachers and taught some Mercy girls. The following year in February, I received a phone call from Mercy asking if I would like a position of School Choreographer where I would work alongside Caitlin Lamont in the Performing Arts faculty. As well as this, I was also offered a part time position as an Educational Support Officer. So now I work there part time doing what I love – helping young women be the best they can!</i></p>
<i>What were the significant milestones that have impacted your life journey so far?</i>	<p><i>(Key pivotal points marking your inspirations, success) (family support, business success)</i></p> <p><i>First of all, getting my license helped a lot as I could travel to schools to complete my placements! But also, my sister graduated from her Nursing degree in 2017 and she now works full time as a nurse and seeing how much she has grown as an adult and has become so independent motivates me and encourages me to graduate and start another new chapter in my life.</i></p>



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	<p>Another milestone was being offered the job for Education Support at Mercy. Having this job made my degree feel a lot more purposeful as I could see everything I was learning was being put into practice by teachers. Being able to work in the classroom kept me motivated to continue and work well throughout my degree.</p>
<p>Where has your career path taken you in terms of connecting with wider organisations, meeting people of varying cultures; locally and internationally?</p>	<p>(Did your career path include travel? What have other cultures taught you? Personal growth etc)</p> <p>As I am still studying at university, I have not had the opportunity to travel as much as I would love however, throughout my education units, I have been given a network of teachers and lecturers in the community that have offered a lot of help in helping me teach overseas. I am looking into travelling overseas in a few years once I have graduated from university to teach in schools across the world.</p> <p>As far as personal growth, it is safe to say I am a completely different person than what I was in the beginning. Not only through making new friendships at uni and creating such a healthy and safe support group, my experiences in schools, placement or as work has challenged me in being able to adapt to new environments and be resilient in very stressful times.</p> <p>I have taught myself how to cope healthily in stressful situations and have learnt a lot about respecting others and myself no matter where you are. I am very proud of the person I have become and am becoming but I know that my personal growth is always evolving and has just started!</p>
<p>Have you maintained any school friendships?</p> 	<p>(College friends – maintaining friendships – what has this meant for you? Support?)</p> <p>I always only had a small group of good friends throughout my school but as people change and start new chapters – we all lose touch. That isn't a bad thing, if I see girls on the street or bump into them I am always happy to see them and we all have a laugh about the memories we share from Mercy.</p> <p>There is one girl who has remained my best friend to this day – Tania Ragusa. Tania and I knew each other since year 7 and also knew each other outside of school as we were both dancers who you could consider of 'rival schools'. However, throughout the years, we have connected and bonded that she is the one girl from Mercy I am still so close with. Tania is completing her Bachelor of Arts at Melbourne then completing her Master of Education, so we will both be teachers of the future! Throughout our time at Mercy, Tania and I also worked alongside one another in the school musicals, both playing lead roles in Hairspray and All Shook Up as well as working in the student executive team of 2015 as College Co-Captain and Tania as Performing Arts Captain.</p>



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	<p><i>If that isn't enough – Tania and I also work at the same place for our part time job! Both starting as Christmas casuals, Tania transferred to my store a year later and the rest is history (been there for approximately 5 years). In the soon future, Tania and I are planning an overseas holiday to New York where we can drink coffee, eat bagels and see Broadway shows together and I can't wait to share those memories with such an amazing best friend.</i></p>
<p><i>What's next for you?</i></p>	<p><i>(What would you like to see / experience in the future?)</i></p> <p><i>I am still not sure what lies ahead but there is definitely a lot of travelling involved! I am graduating next year and am planning a trip to Bali and South Africa with my sister as a celebration of finishing university. I would then like to spend some more time in Education Support as I hope to one day go back to university and study this further. Moving out has become a topic of discussion at my house so that is on the list of things I need to organise in the future but there is no rush!</i></p> <p><i>I guess I haven't really got my future planned out – but that's okay. If something comes along that I would like to try, I'm going to do it and if it doesn't go the way I planned, that's okay too. I will just learn and grow from it. That's the beauty about life and the future – you will never fully know what is going to happen and you can make it whatever you want it to be! It's scary but also very exciting!</i></p>
<p><i>Mercy College are working on building the Alumni foundation network: past students and teachers.</i></p> <p><i>Would it interest you to give a short talk to current students at an assembly?</i></p> <p><i>The objective being a form of encouragement and interest for students and teachers alike.</i></p>	<p><i>(Connecting past students with present students)</i></p> <p><i>I would love to talk to girls at assemblies. Having worked there, I do know the students and they are aware that I am a past student however I would love to show them all the opportunities they have and how the Mercy community is always welcoming with arms wide open. They will always care for any student, past or present and will help in any way they can to see their girls succeed and become such strong independent women in what lies ahead for them.</i></p> <p><i>It would also be good to let the girls know it's okay to not always know exactly what is going to happen in the future and remind them that life is what they make of it. Work hard and strive for excellence but if there are hiccups and hurdles along the way – don't stress.</i></p> <p><i>The Mercy community is there to help, and it's these situations that make you resilient in your study and life in general.</i></p>