



Chevalier College

FORTES IN FIDE | STRONG IN FAITH

Wednesday 6th December 2023

Address at Barb Santos Farewell

Good Morning to you all – it is indeed a great honour to be back at Chev in order to say a few words about this most amazing person – Barb Santos.

Before I do that, I would like to thank Mr Miller for his invitation to do so. I would also like congratulate him on the completion of his first year as Chevalier College Principal – and outstanding year from all reports, and similarly congratulate each of you – staff and students - for your terrific achievements. I am filled with great pride when I share with people that I used to be part of the Chev Family.

AND NOW TO THE REASON I AM HERE!

For all except those new to the college this year, you would be aware that Mrs Santos and I worked closely together up to the end 2022.

Mrs Santos has been at the school for some 30 years – but I will restrict my comments to the 15 years I know about. Do not panic – I am not going to speak about everyone of those 15 years – we would be here far too long.

When I first arrived at Chev in 2008, Mr Santos was a Maths teacher and a Year Coordinator. It did not take me long to see she was a HUGGER – something I was definitely not! However that hugging way extended into everything she did – she had so much energy in her maths classes, she never sat still, she was engaging with each student almost non stop. She would sing and dance and laugh with the kids and kids in her classes couldn't wait to get to maths. There was many a young person who would tell me as I walked the playground as asked them about their teachers – Mrs Santos – She's the best!!!!

The scenarios were similar for her work in Pastoral care – albeit there was a lot more hugging and support and just being there for the kids in her care. I recall on one very significant occasion a parent making an appointment to see me for one reason only – she wanted to tell me that “without Mrs Santos I would have lost my daughter – she saved her and she saved me – I can never thank her enough.”

Mrs Santos was also no pushover. When she needed to dispense some tough love she did it with dignity and understanding BUT if a line was drawn, you crossed it at your own peril.

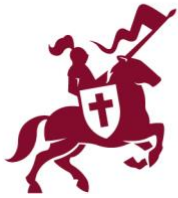
Around 2012, the College needed some very high level work done that was crucial for NESA at that time. I asked Mrs Santos to take on this job as a Special Projects Deputy for one year. I did this because another of Mrs Santos extraordinary abilities is her intellect and organisational skills. She completed this special project on time and perfectly and NESA was extremely happy.

When Mr Murchie retired as Deputy Principal (I realise that only some staff would know who I am referring to and all students in this hall have only ever known Mrs Santos as their Deputy Principal), unbeknown to me Mrs Santos was not going to apply for the role – she did not think she was good enough. All I can say is thank God other people got in her ear and she applied and was successful in what was a strong field of applicants.

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Mrs Santos took on this role in exactly the same way as she had done in all her other roles. She put people first, especially staff and students – if you needed to see her she was there to see you right there and then OR she would track you down as soon as she was free.

I sat outside her office for many years and was amazed at the foot traffic that passed my door to hers. Rarely did she ever sit in her office by herself. Students, staff, parents and community members were always her first priority – a priority of SERVICE to others. In any one day I would hear laughter, crying, hugs, deep and meaningful – and that was before break 1. So with her putting people first, you can imagine her days were very long because she never started her other work until HER people had finished for the day.

Then there was the oncall Mrs Santos for the overnight excursions and overseas trips – Mrs Santos was on the end of the phone and when stuff went wrong – wo ya gonna call? Mrs Santos even if that call was 2.30am in the morning. And sure enough Mrs Santos would not stop until she found a solution.

Throughout Covid, Storms, Bushfires, mouse plagues – Mrs Santos was in the thick if it trying to ensure all those in her care were looked after as best as possible.

Then there is her happiness to be amongst whatever is going on just to lend a hand or to watch and be there. You would see her at sport on Saturdays, sometimes coaching a team or travelling on a bus or just being there to enjoy the game. Music concerts, art shows, afternoon study, toilet duty – you name it she was never far away.

I have to tell you it was not always smooth sailing between Mrs Santos and myself. Boy, did I know when she was cranky with me – it was like I had been sent to the naughty corner – and, like many a young person, I knew what would send her into ballistic mode – it usually went like this with me saying “well no, we won’t do that just yet, let’s just see how things unfold a little more and then we will make a call!” Followed by Mrs Santos saying “we need to do it now!” and me saying “not yet” and walking into my office, praying I was right and that Mrs Santos would not follow me into my office. But these moments were few and far between – in reality Mrs Santos was the dream deputy to work with, or should I say for.

If I was completely honest, Mrs Santos was never my Deputy – we were co leaders – I just happened to be a bit paid more.

A big part of Mrs Santos role was all things staff and I have to say she did this role wonderfully. Indeed it was summed up by a staff member who said to me one day “Barb is my school Mum and I don’t know what I would do without her here!”

Now, I could go on for quite some time about the achievements and legacy of Mrs Santos, but time does not permit this, so I would like to finish with a few summing up statements about Barbara Santos as follows:

- She is a model for teachers to aspire to.
 - She is a model for how people might like to live their lives.
 - She is a model of empathy, compassion, forgiveness and care.
 - She is a Deputy Principal like no other I have worked with, and I have worked with 7 others in my time as a principal.
 - She is a hugger who wears her emotions on her sleeve.
 - She has been the Deputy Principal Chev needed for the past 10 years.
 - She is a CHEV person for always.
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- She is MSC Through and Through. And Chev is so very very lucky to have had here as part of its family for as long as it has, but now it is time to say goodbye – not easy – let me tell you from experience – and CHEV will be little bit different for a while but a piece of Barbara Santos spirit will continue to walk in these buildings and playgrounds and from time to time a comment around a dinner table or at a reunion will go like this – “Remember that crazy Mrs Santos who taught us maths and sang and jumped around the room and hugged us when we were sad – SHE LOVED US - SHE WAS THE BEST!”

Yes She was!

God Bless you Barbara Santos and THANK YOU. BEST WISHES FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF YOUR LIFE!

