



MERCY COLLEGE ALUMNI

Where are they now?

<p><i>Introducing :</i></p>	<p><i>Class of 1994</i> <i>Name: Fiona Lorenti (nee: Cuomo)</i></p>
<p><i>Questions :</i></p>	<p><i>Responses:</i></p>
<p><i>Hello Fiona!</i></p> <p><i>Thanks for sharing your story!</i></p>	 <p><i>Fiona pictured with two of her daughters who attend Mercy College</i></p>
<p><i>Do you remember what it was like at College and when you left?</i></p>	<p><i>Mercy College was a very happy place for me. I loved going to school. I enjoyed learning from my teachers, and I, like most teenagers, loved interacting with my friends. We had so many laughs! And it was all of the time. There was never a dull moment.</i></p> <p><i>Of course, as we approached the end of year 12, and our secondary school life was coming to an end, reality hit. Yes, we were now adults and WE were the ones who were meant to be in total control of where we were heading – the future looked scary!</i></p> <p><i>I guess this was a normal mindset. I remember taking into account some of the lessons that were taught by Sr. Marianna during our Religious Education Classes and how living the gospel values actually make you a more accountable human being.</i></p>



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	<p><i>Mercy taught me how to be tolerant, open and just, apart from also being highly skilled and informed of happenings in our surroundings.</i></p> <p><i>These are some values that were planted at Mercy, then they were further established as I grew. These are some of the things that helped mould me into the person I am today. Of course family values also play a significant part, and I came from a very loving and supporting family who encouraged my dreams and aspirations. Through them believing in me, I knew that the sky was my limit!</i></p> <p><i>When I was in year 12, and we needed to go through the process of university preferences, our careers advisor (and also my yr 12 biology teacher) Mr. Arnold, suggested that I should apply for a bachelor of teaching. I remember being with my friends, and they all had a good laugh! They even stirred me up, calling me 'Hey Miss' quite frequently. Of course, this was not something I decided to do initially, but it's funny how things turn out!</i></p>
<p><i>What drew you to science?</i></p>  <p>Maria Carinci (left) Math teacher of two generations at Yr9 level, Fiona and now daughter Enza</p>  <p>Fiona is pictured in the middle of two of her former teachers and colleagues now - Jenni Hickey (left) Julie Pirani (right)</p>	<p><i>I have always had an interest in science, and this became more evident during my VCE studies. I had a range of science teachers who were passionate about what they taught. I'm sure many of you would remember Mr. Joy. He was probably my favourite teacher, although my appreciation for his knowledge only came when I had him for year 11 Biology.</i></p> <p><i>Mr Joy drew the most fascinating and detailed images of organisms, whether they were from animals or plants, and you could see that he enjoyed being in his element. We still have some of his drawings on display in the laboratory.</i></p> <p><i>Mr McGlassion was another influential teacher. He was my Chemistry teacher who was also very passionate about what he taught. I guess if the teacher comes with a lot of enthusiasm, it's contagious! For me it certainly was, as these teachers, along with many others, drove me to appreciate science and all it has to offer.</i></p> <p><i>Many other influential teachers that helped shape me into what I am and how I teach today are now my colleagues, and I am very happy to call them my friends. I work among these wonderful people every day and they bring that extra bit of happiness to the workplace as well.</i></p>
<p><i>Did you set out with a career plan?</i></p>	<p><i>After year 12, I studied at Victoria University of Technology – Bachelor of Science: Chemistry and Biology. I majored in Ecological Toxicology. From here I went on to doing my Honours at East Carolina State University in the United States of America.</i></p>



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Upon my return, I had decided that I would prefer to have a normal lifestyle with a family – and the career choices I was moving towards wouldn't allow this of me – as there was a lot of travel and short term research based areas of work.

So I decided to apply to get into Veterinary Science or complete a Graduate Diploma in Education at the University of Melbourne. I was accepted into both courses and needed to make an important decision.

Of course, at this point I was 22, and didn't want to commit myself into another 5 years of study, so I opted for the Dip Ed course. Probably the best choice I ever made! I found that Teaching was what I was meant to do. It's my passion. I Love my work!

I have worked in many schools in the northern suburbs over the past 18 years. During this time, I also got married and had 4 beautiful daughters. (2 of them are current Mercy Students as well – next year there will be 3).

I am a staff member at Mercy College, and have been working here for 4 years now. I am a teacher of Maths, Science and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) – and current Head of Learning – Science.



Teaching Science in the Lab



Yr12 Chemistry Class

What were the significant milestones that have impacted your life journey so far?

My Family are my inspiration. I look at my daughters, and I'm watching how fast they are growing. Before long, they will be in my shoes with a family of their own. As a full time working mum, I want to show them that anything is possible if you put your mind to it.

You CAN have it all! Yes, it takes hard work and lots of effort, but who are we kidding! Life wasn't meant to be easy. You get out what you put in. If I give my 100%, then the output will measure that. I demonstrate this in my life and my work. I want this to be an example to my girls that as long as you do your best, try your hardest and enjoy what you do, great things will happen. They have for me so far, and I believe they will continue to do so.



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A question for your two girls who are students at the College:

'Enza and Sophie, what is it like as a student having your mum working as a teacher at Mercy College?'



-Sophie and Enza Lorenti

Both my sister Sophie and I love having mum around at the College.

We get to see mum in a different light; she is our mother at home and our teacher at school. While she is in her element at school she is not only our mum but like a second mum to the students at Mercy College. Everyone absolutely adores her! She is always helping students – not only her own from her class, but others from other classes as well. She embraces all of the students and treats everyone fairly.

Our mum is a huge role model to every student in the school and tries to make sure that everyone reaches their full potential. She is always responding to emails from students at all different hours of the evening.

She gets involved in anything we are interested in, for example, both Sophie and I are in the Mercy Swimming Squad, and she gets herself involved in helping with the coaching every Tuesday afternoons until 5:00. She runs afterschool programs for students who are interested in science, and she is always wanting to learn new things, like at the moment, she is trying to learn more about robotics.

It is truly inspiring to see my mum doing what she does best, and makes us both feel very proud to have her as our mother. Sophie and I, both want to become teachers when we are older and this is all because we are inspired by our mum.

She's a true Mercy Girl!

Fiona, where has your career path taken you in terms of connecting with wider organisations, meeting people of varying cultures; locally and internationally?

Initially, had I stuck with my original plan, then yes! Travel was a huge component. It was an area that required much experimental research and sampling...looking at biochemical hazards in our environment, their impact on human health and solutions in overcoming such problems. But in teaching, there isn't much movement internationally – well for me anyway!

Yes, there are connections we make with the wider community locally. I endeavour to make these connections so students are able to understand the relevance of their learning and how this will apply to them later on in life, once they leave the walls of Mercy behind.

Meeting people from many different walks of life – parents of the students I teach. Having a better understanding of where they have come from and the hardships they have had to sustain in order to give their children the best they can give. Especially the 'new Australians', those who have fled their countries to begin a new life here with their families. I have been very fortunate to work with many different people in partnership with their child. I have found that through this involvement, it becomes a 3 way learning experience for all. And through communication, understanding and involvement, we can grow together in a better achievement of student engagement in their academics and the learning they receive.



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<p><i>Have you maintained any school friendships?</i></p>	<p><i>I have always maintained great friendships throughout my Mercy years as a student, and these friendships continued and grew once we all left the College.</i></p> <p><i>Many of us reconnected later on in life, through Motherhood – as we were having children at the same time and ended up sending our kids to the same Primary School. And some of us reconnected again through our partnership with education at Mercy. I now teach many of my 'old high school peers' daughters.</i></p> <p><i>All of these friendships I have maintained through the years hold a dear place in my heart. We were once the Mercy Girls making our own memories in these classrooms, on these grounds. And we can get together and remember stories of our past – and when we do, it still brings out the teenager in all of us as we chuckle away with our versions of the stories we made.</i></p>
<p><i>What's next for you?</i></p>	<p><i>We, at the College are working towards implementing 21st Century learning through STEM based subjects, enabling our students for the necessary skills needed to be successful candidates for future jobs – including those that have not even been thought of as yet!</i></p> <p><i>I am currently working on a curriculum we can offer our students that will develop these important skills. Right now, my main focus is developing such a program and upskilling myself, so I am able to deliver the learning content to our students so that they are able to meet their full potential and give them opportunity to engage in such a subject thoroughly.</i></p> <p><i>I also look forward in continuing my role as Head of Science, and taking our science faculty to another level – developing STEM in the science curriculum as well and implementing the new technologies available today in the areas of science we teach.</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>As I am a current staff member of the College – I very frequently reminisce on the 'good old days' with my students. They are always engaged knowing about my learning, my experiences and what I aspired to when I was their age.</i></p> <p><i>Hopefully they see me as a 'role model' that they can aspire to. I am a local girl, just like them. A mother, with daughters that also attend Mercy College, and I feel that I'm very privileged to work among the great young leaders of tomorrow.</i></p>
<p><i>Future Alumni reunions – past students and teachers, will take place every year on the third Sunday in October.</i></p>	<p><i>Not a problem!</i></p>