November 2017

LEA SERVICE AWARD

Jack Merx

For services to Lutheran schooling
1987 – 2017

The Lutheran Church of Australia thankfully acknowledges the faithful and committed service of Jack Merx to Lutheran schools for 31 years.

Jack Merx came to Luther College in 1987, commencing as Coordinator of Physical Education and Sport (Years 7-12). He instantly commandeered a healthy respect with students, who were aware of Jack's background as a physical instructor in the army, and set in motion a program that would support, encourage and inspire students in a variety of physical pursuits.

A keen outdoors enthusiast, Jack instigated the Luther Outdoor Education Group (LOAG) in the late 1980s and this provided students with the opportunity to experience a variety of outdoor activities, including bush walking, rock climbing, snow skiing, sailing or yachting on the Gippsland lakes. Jack organised the activities to enable anyone to participate, not just elite athletes, actively encouraging students and teachers to experience the outdoors. Jack's work often provided a boost in confidence for many students who discovered that they could walk 30km during an overnight hike with a full pack, learn to ski or sail. Jack also led a biennial trekking expedition in the Himalayas for past and present Luther students, teachers and parents.

Jack was recognised by his peers when he was nominated for the 1996 Teacher of the Year award. His seemingly boundless commitment to the total welfare of students, his desire to meet the wider needs of the middle years of secondary students, his ability to work in partnership with students as both a guide and leader, and his contribution beyond the call of duty were reasons cited for this nomination.

Jack constantly investigated new learning opportunities for students, and was instrumental in the development of camps for Year 9 (cycling) and Year 10 (outdoor education) in the mid 1990s. He also introduced VCE Outdoor Education, providing a pathway for students interested in the outdoors.   Jack was always keen to see Luther College teams perform well at Eastern Independent Schools Melbourne (EISM) carnivals. To this end, he invested considerable time in training students for the athletics, cross country running and swimming carnivals expecting commitment and dedication. The college and Jack were always rewarded, regardless of result, knowing that the students had given everything they had at the carnival.

As Head of Sport, Jack's role was largely administrative, but his interaction with students was not limited by this. He was a constant presence at home group, getting to know and supporting the Wicklow students. Jack's positive attitude and friendly manner enabled him to relate well with students across all levels and a variety of subject areas. As a teacher of the Year 9 Rite Journey program, Jack challenged students emotionally and mentally, constantly seeking new ways to encourage them in their reflections and learnings.

Jack models servant leadership. Apart from his daily activities at Luther, every week he can be found serving meals at The Dining Room, a local meal program for those in need, humbly serving those who are seeking a friend and a hearty meal. Central to Jack's character is his strong belief in God. His faith has shaped his personality and his outlook complements Luther College's ethos and values.   Jack is an engaged, caring, dedicated and professional, with a strong ability to befriend young people. They are drawn to his easy going, interested and tolerant manner towards them. Jack is genuinely innovative, committed and adaptable and will be missed by all at Luther who have been privileged to know him.

Jack's faithful and conscientious service to the Lutheran Church of Australia, through his service in at Luther College, has been outstanding and is humbly recognised through this Award.

Stephen Rudolph
Executive Director
Lutheran Education Australia

Serving Australian communities through Christ centred quality education.