

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Year 10 Breakfast | Friday 6 March

The theme of this year's International Women's Day is **Generation Equality**. It's a call to action for every girl and woman across the generations to join forces to create a world in which females have equal opportunity to fulfill our potential. One of the greatest ways to bring about this is access to education. With higher levels of education, comes the potential to earn a higher income, giving greater choices to women. We sit in a wonderful facility that has been educating young women for over 130 years. You girls are the fortunate ones. Did you know that over half a million women cannot read and write? Unfortunately, this trend hasn't changed in 20 years. So, I urge you to contribute to projects like *Project Compassion* to help empower your sisters who don't find themselves in the same situation as you.

Things have changed in Developed Countries for many women. I want to reflect on my own family experiences to illustrate this. My mother was born in 1930 in Scotland. Her mother knew the importance of education to make a difference in her daughter's life. So, despite their limited finances, Mum was sent to a private girl's school but at 14 her formal secondary schooling finished. This was not unlike my father's experience, except that he was able to gain an apprenticeship and earn far more than my mother's secretarial work. Fast forward to my secondary schooling in the late 70s and early 80s, when friends of mine left at the age of 15. I remember feeling the injustice of one girl's experience as she was forced to leave school at 15, the same age as many of you, to care for her younger siblings. And me? Well I'm the baby of 5 and the first in the family to go to university. What a difference being the baby made, as my siblings finished school in the late 60s and early 70s when tertiary study wasn't always the norm. Education has given me the opportunities to earn an income that has made me self-sufficient, an opportunity that my mother's low paying jobs didn't give her. I know that as I journey into older age, I will be able to financially support myself, something my mum wasn't able to do because her income potential was limited.

You girls have the opportunity to embrace your educational opportunities to pursue further study. Make the most of this over the next few years. Look for ways that you can use your talents and gifts to empower other women. We have come such a long way from the days when families spent money on educating their sons and not their daughters. Therefore, I leave you with the question:

What will you do to make a difference
for women in this world?

Ms Aurora Reid
6 March 2020



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