

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

BETH MORGAN

CLASS OF 2008



When did you attend Lowanna College, and what year level did you complete?

I attended Lowanna College from 2003 until 2008 as a student and completed Year 12 (VCE).

What are your memories of Lowanna College?

Camps – I was fortunate enough to attend several special camps. In Year 7 I attended the Gifted Writer’s Camp, where I met Alison Leicester and learnt about writing techniques. In Year 8 I spent two days in Melbourne on the Drama Camp. We saw two plays and experienced the Melbourne lifestyle. In Year 12 we visited many institutions in Melbourne for the University

Camp which helped to inform our decisions of where we might like to study. We went to Dracula’s Cabaret for dinner and a show on our last night which was such a fun experience to have with our friends in our final year of school.

Lowanna College Musicals – Lowanna was always known for its musicals every year, run by the music team and Graeme Nicholls, our former Assistant Principal. I was a daughter in *The Pirates of Penzance* in 2005 and played in the band between 2006 and 2008. When I began my career at Lowanna, I was in a role helping our cast learn the show and put on some fabulous performances.

Kool Skools Recording Project – This project was the highlight of my schooling. We were incredibly lucky to participate in a statewide project, recording original songs that we wrote in the song writing unit. A friend and I wrote a song in 2006 called “My Brother”, which was a tribute to my brother who passed away before I was born. The Music Department received a phone call from Kool Skools and were told that the whole panel of judges were in tears listening to my song. I received many nominations for Best Ballad and Best Singer/Songwriter. On my final track in 2008, I wrote the music so that all my teachers could play instruments on my track. To play with such accomplished musicians at a young age was a valuable experience.

Mouse breeding program in Science – I had always wanted to own a mouse. In Junior School, we participated in a mouse breeding program, looking at the reproductive cycle of mammals. My mum wasn’t keen on having a rodent in the

house, but wrote a letter to Mrs Lowe and said, "I give permission for Beth to have a m...m... mouse".

After school music lessons, ensemble rehearsals and performances – I attended many music lessons and ensembles after school hours. I was involved in Soul Band, Swing Band, Choir, Clarinet, Flute, and Saxophone Ensemble, to name a few. Most terms we would have a soiree and in Term 3 we would showcase our class band and Kool Skools songs in a bigger concert format. The highlight performance was when choir teamed up with the rock band "Necromanic" and performed the whole of "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen.

How do you think your experiences at Lowanna College helped you become the person you are today?

Lowanna College gave me so many opportunities to grow and develop over the last 21 years. During school, I was able to study a range of different subjects that have been so helpful during my teaching career when having to take an extra class or work in faculties outside of music, such as Indonesian. Lowanna gave me so many musical opportunities to perform at the college and in other musical organisations such as the Latrobe City Youth Band and Warragul and Latrobe Theatre Companies. As a new educator beginning my career at Lowanna, the staff and students were so supportive, and already knowing the school community made it so welcoming.



Was there anyone at Lowanna College who had a positive impact and upon reflection, influenced you to follow the path you have chosen?

Countless amazing teachers at Lowanna have made me the person I am today. It began with Chris Paynter in Year 7 who made the transition from primary school to high school so easy. We had trips to Melbourne regularly and met some amazing mentors through a program with IBM; I still have contact with my mentor 21 years later. Steven Howe made Year 9 English very enjoyable by reading the grandma character in an Arnold Schwarzenegger voice. He taught me that education doesn't need to feel difficult for students. I was always amazed at how much I had learnt when we completed a test. Belinda Neal, my Indonesian teacher, was one of the biggest influences on my career path. I remember having a conversation with her at parent teacher interviews where she shared her advice about teaching. The biggest influence on my life has been the Lowanna College Music Department. David Williams, Cameron Nicholls, and Jill Lawrence gave me so much of their time and amazing opportunities to develop my skills in music and education. I am incredibly proud to have followed in their footsteps and given back to the next generation of musicians.

Tell us about your journey after leaving Lowanna College, and where are you now?

I left Lowanna to study a Bachelor of Music at the University of Melbourne in 2009. After completing this degree, I wanted to further my studies in Education, but a trip to Indonesia meant I missed the deadline to apply. I decided to continue studying a Certificate III in Education Assistance to gain insight into aide work. I completed placement at St Monica's Primary School in Footscray during this degree and realised that primary school education was rewarding but exhausting (hats off to anyone who works in the Primary sector). During this year I applied for a nanny position with a family in Glen Iris. I was able to work with a 13-month-old during this job, and I have had the privilege of watching her grow into a beautiful, confident young woman, and continuing a friendship with the family ever since. In 2013, I was fortunate to be in the last intake of the Diploma of Education at Monash University. I was able to continue my nanny position while I studied at the Clayton campus. The Music Education faculty there was incredibly supportive during that year and gave me so much guidance in my education journey. In 2014 I applied for a Music Teacher position at Lowanna College, returning to the Latrobe Valley after living out of a suitcase for 6 years. I have been so fortunate to work with my former teachers and learn from the best in the business. I am currently still working at Lowanna, branching out into teaching Indonesian at junior school level, as well as taking some leadership positions as an Instructional Coach.

I absolutely love my job here in a school I am so familiar with. My view of coming back to the Latrobe Valley was to inspire and help the next generation realise that there are so many opportunities out there and that they can achieve anything they desire if they work hard for it. I want to give back to a community that gave me so much growing up.

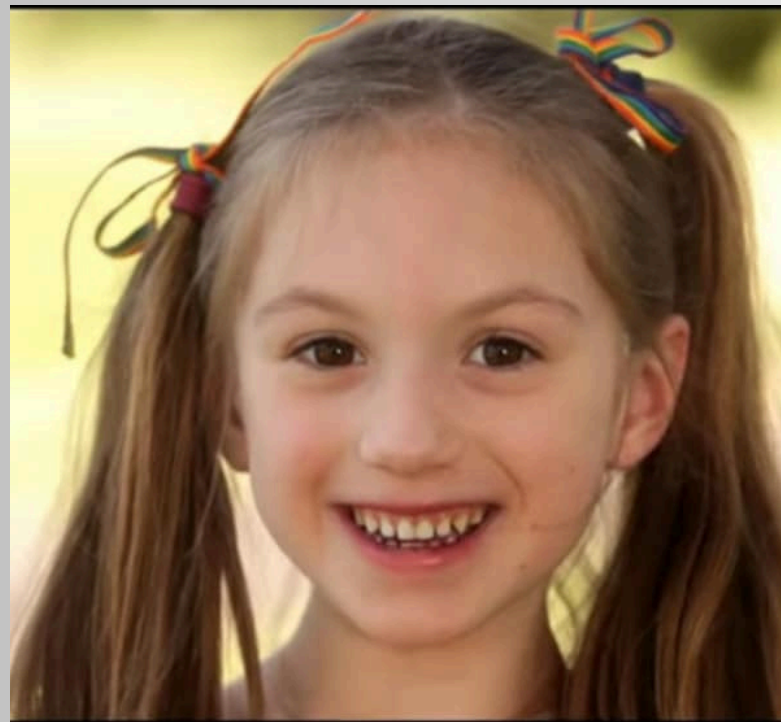
What are your greatest accomplishments (awards, achievements, defining moments, travel, family etc.)?

I feel so incredibly blessed to live the life I have. My biggest achievements in my education journey have been completing my Bachelor of Music and Diploma of

Education degrees, working at a school that I love and teaching subjects that I am truly passionate about with some very talented students, helping so many students achieve their goals and go to university to study Music, giving back to a community that gave me so much, and being a part of the Lowanna College community for over 20 years.

In 2012 I worked in Melbourne as a Nanny for a family of doctors with a 13-month-old daughter. That job changed my life for the better and I have gained a second family who have become some of my dearest friends over the past 12 years.

In 2013, my 7-year-old niece, Amelia, received a liver transplant after suffering from biliary atresia and porto-pulmonary hypertension. Unfortunately, she was too sick at the time of the transplant and passed away. This had a profound impact on my life, and I try to raise awareness about organ and tissue donation by talking about Amelia's story. She was an ambassador for Zaidee's Rainbow Foundation for organ and tissue donation awareness, and every time we see a rainbow it reminds us of her. Amelia taught me to live for every moment, to make the best of every situation and to spread positivity to everyone, even in the darkest times.



My niece, Amelia

In my musical career, my greatest achievements would be playing in the Latrobe City Youth Band and travelling to Japan and China in 2008 to play with our sister cities, playing in the bands for the local theatre companies, and playing flute for the Gippsland Symphony Orchestra from 2015. I also had the opportunity to play with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in the Symphony in a Day Program in 2019. To play at Hamer Hall with such high calibre players was such an enriching experience that I loved taking back to my students.

For my mum's 70th birthday in 2018, we travelled to the UK for three weeks in search of some family history. We saw many places related to both sides of our family, including mum's family church and a pub in Wales that the Morgan family built and ran back in the 1840's. It was such a wholesome experience for both of us and a memory we have to talk about forever.

We welcomed a puppy called Maggie into our lives in 2022. She has brought us so much happiness and laughter, and the students at school loved her when I used to bring her in as a little puppy.

2024 has been an exciting year for me; I got married in March and bought a house in April. My wonderful students gave me a beautiful gift pack and flowers before my wedding; it has been very special to share those life events with my students.

What advice would you like to give to current Lowanna College students?

Take every opportunity given. Love yourselves and always have your own back in life. Life is too short to be stuck in a job you hate, so make sure you work hard to give you the most options once you leave school. Education is the greatest gift you can be given. The years at high school are the best, but most challenging years you will have; use this time to learn new things. High school is also about experiences, so get involved in every aspect of school so that you have those memories to look back on. You may not remember that maths equation when you leave, but you will remember those special moments that make you smile.

