



## Outstanding Contribution to NZ Boarding Award 2016 Recipient

## NZBSA Students Heads of Boarding Conference

## The Unseen Benefits of Boarding

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# CHAIRPERSON WELCOME/REPORT

As the newly elected chairperson of the Association welcome to this edition of Sign In. The NZBSA is proud to have membership of 92% of New Zealand Boarding Schools.

I firstly wish to express my thanks on behalf of all members of the association to our National Co-ordinator, Dee Guillemot-Rogerson, for the outstanding conference in Queenstown. Dee puts in a lot of work to ensure our flagship event for the year best serves the needs of our members.

I also wish to acknowledge the service of Chris Metcalfe who has stepped down from the Executive. Chris volunteered a great deal of time to ensuring our association is well regarded and connected across different sectors in New Zealand. We wish Chris well for the future.

Thank you to those who expressed an interest in standing for the vacancy on the Executive. After due discussion the board have decided to co-opt Sam Moore from New Plymouth Boys High School. We look forward to working with Sam over the coming year.

The recent surveys completed by members have provided us with valuable knowledge in terms of the direction and services our members need looking to the future. As a result the board revisited the strategic plan recently. The Association offers a great range of services in conjunction with our sponsors to members. We have included in this issue an overview of member services.

An exciting and new initiative is the coaching and mentoring of new Heads of Boarding for the first year of their tenure. Having been there and done that, we are all well aware of the challenges running a boarding

house in your first year. This free coaching and support services will help new heads to embed their vision whilst being supported by an experienced boarding sector professional. Please contact Dee if you are aware of anyone who would be interested in this service.

The coming year will see some changes to the website and other services to members. We are looking at developing a resource bank for members, as well as working with a New Zealand based tertiary provider to establish an accredited sector qualification that can meet the needs of those new to the industry as well as those who are experienced and looking higher qualifications. We will keep you informed of developments in these areas.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Sign In,

Regards

**Jon McDowall**  
Chairperson  
NZBSA



# OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO NZ BOARDING AWARD 2016 RECIPIENT

## FRANCES BARNETT (RANGI RURU GIRLS' SCHOOL)

Frances Barnett has worked in the Rangi Ruru Boarding House for 25 years, beginning her long and memorable career in 1991. Rumour has it that she lied about her age on her application form as she didn't think anyone would hire her at 50 years young! Initially, Frances was a Matron in the original Junior Boarding House, Te Koraha; Rangi Ruru's original historical homestead. However, Frances somewhat sadly transitioned over to the new modern boarding house in 2002. She has outlived 4 Directors of Boarding and is now onto her fifth.

Over the years, Frances has received literally hundreds of letters of appreciation as well as invitations to twenty firsts and weddings from boarders, Gap Tutors, Residential Assistants and Managers who appreciated the time, energy and love she showered upon them. You would be very hard pressed to find a boarder or a staff member, past or present, that didn't appreciate Frances for her integrity, commitment, loyalty and kindness towards them. She gives 100% of herself to everyone and never hesitates to stay late or arrive early if it benefits others. She can't stop worrying about the girls when she leaves either! She even took a few girls home with her when there wasn't any room at the inn.

Frances is also the School Nurse, so if a girl has a medical issue Frances is there to see to it that they get the best possible care, whether it be physical or mental health needs. She also organises all of the medication for the boarders, including their flu vaccinations. Frances arranges PD for the staff so that they are up to date with first aid and sports strapping. Boarding parents tend to call Frances before they call a doctor!

In addition, Frances is the International House Dean; a position she had the initiative to create, realising that these girls from a variety of countries often struggled with the cultural shock of living in New Zealand. She is exceptionally caring and considerate to these girls, meeting with them weekly to discuss any issues of cultural difference. Frances liaises with the school staff in order to ensure the International girls' daily wellbeing as well as taking them out regularly for dinners in her own time.

In terms of special projects, Frances initiated an ongoing relationship with Cholmondeley Children's Centre, a charity based in Christchurch that provides short-term emergency and planned respite care and education to children, aged 3-12 years, whose families are experiencing genuine stress or crisis. In order to provide for this deserving charity, Frances introduced the Annual Rangi Ruru Boarders' Concert where she will shoulder tap almost every boarder, whether they like it or not, to perform in order to raise money for this worthwhile organisation. It's impossible to say no to Frances, because you just feel like you're a bad person if you do!

Frances plans to retire at the end of this year. Her family of 5 children and 14 grandchildren have demanded that she have a rest, but it's possible they are just tired of sharing her with the hundreds of girls who she considers family. Rangi Ruru Boarding House won't be the same without her, but at least she has left Rangi Ruru with her legacy; her two daughters are now much-loved Managers, following in their mother's footsteps, which is not surprising considering they have spent the last 25 years listening to how much their mother loved her job.



Frances Barnett (middle) with daughter Nicky Barnett (left, Manager Rangi Ruru) and Treena Ruwhiu (right Director of Boarding, Rangi Ruru)



2015 NZBSA Award Winner Glen Petersen (Lindisfarne College) presents Frances with her award

# NZBSA STUDENTS HEADS OF BOARDING CONFERENCE

On the 26th of February I had the privilege to attend the New Zealand Boarding Schools' Association's Conference, which was hosted by St. Matthew's, with 40 other students from all over New Zealand. We focused on developing leadership skills and working as a part of a team, learning about monuments and movements as a way to define the purpose of traditions we have in boarding schools and the innovative ideas we can implement to fit the modern world.

After settling in we all went down to the gym to participate in a 'rock and water' activity; which was all about self-awareness, self-confidence and self-realization. It was really good in terms of providing techniques to overcome stressful situations.

We learnt about being good role models from Dr. Wood, who spent 10 years in a maximum-security prison. We discussed the values and emotions that drive us, how our brains are programmed to react in different situations and how this can determine the habits we develop and the way we are perceived.

We had a goal setting session where we looked at the big goals we have in life and the need to step outside your comfort zone. This was illustrated to us in an exercise where we all had to karate chop through a piece of wood. This was very daunting at first and I didn't think that I would ever be able to break the wood (especially after hearing that I could break my hand). But I, and the entire cohort, managed to by believing we could. The instructor told us, that this is what it was like reaching our goals, it's a bit scary at first but with enough determination and courage we can reach our goals.

We ended our weekend looking at other local boarding facilities discussing the different things that the schools' boarding houses did. I found the entire conference hugely beneficial and made so many new friends, it was a great opportunity and took a lot from it!

**Annabel McKenzie**  
*Head of Boarding – St Matthew's Collegiate*



# ARE YOU ON “ROCKS” TONIGHT? - WHANGAREI BOYS’ HIGH SCHOOL

Boarding schools enjoy a good dose of tradition and much of this stands us apart which gives us a distinctive identity. However, we have also moved with the times, some things have changed and boarding is a far cry from days of old. So let us have a look at tradition. Like the ‘Eton Wall Game’ at Eton College, ‘The Greaze’ at Westminster School or the ‘Illumina’ at Winchester College, Carruth House at Whangarei Boys’ High School (WBHS) has “Rocks”.

Not to be outdone by others, most boarding schools enjoy their own collection of vocabulary that only a boarder at or from that school establishment would understand fully. It can be difficult when showing perspective parents around your boarding house to make sure that you use a language that doesn’t need any translation.

So what is “rocks” I hear you say?

According to tradition sometime around 1940 wayward boys who were in trouble at Carruth House would be asked to walk the 450m muddy path down to the Waiarohia Stream (on the school’s western boundary) and lug back rocks from its banks. Good solid manual labour never hurt anybody, but what did this act prove? Over time a wall 1 ½m high by 1m wide by 25m long was cemented with the rocks and a barrier between the school and Carruth House was created. Despite the fact that no present boarders have ever experienced the collecting of rocks to build this wall or helping to construct it, it is their wall and it’s called the “Carruth Wall”. As the “Great Wall” is precious to China, the Carruth Wall is precious to all Carruthians past and present.

To the average passerby it’s just a wall, but to Carruth House it holds very special value. You see, ONLY Carruth House boys are allowed to sit on the wall. You will not be able to locate a sign indicating who can sit on it; it’s one of those unwritten rules that non-boarders just know. However, if an unsuspecting non-boarder trespasses on the Carruth Wall, they will be immediately asked to take their business elsewhere. From ex-Carruthians of old, the phrase of “sort them out and tell them afterwards” has been mentioned a few times. I shall leave the interpretation of this phrase to you.

At any one time I have always found Carruthians sitting on the Carruth Wall at interval and lunch times. I guess you could say that it is self-Policing and I have never experienced any problem with this. As I was never a boarder at Carruth House, I have said a few times that when the Head Boarder thinks that I have been the Director of Boarding for long enough, I may be allowed the privilege of being able to sit on the wall! I can’t wait!

So how do we use ‘rocks’ today in 2015? It is still exactly the same, and yet it isn’t. Any boy that deserves a punishment is put on ‘rocks’. The day has gone where they wandered down the 450m muddy path to collect rocks from the Waiarohia Stream and bring them back to Carruth House. Other jobs such as raking leaves, gardening, sweeping and mopping the dining hall floor for 1 hour are appropriate punishments that help keep the “wheels” of Carruth House “rolling”. To take the term “rocks” away and rename it would simply be inappropriate.

So, when you come and visit us you might just overhear us in conversation saying to the occasional boy, “you have to do your rocks tonight” and you will know exactly what we are talking about – or, if you see a boy hosing down the courtyard, you will be able to say to him, “make sure you are doing your rocks well”. When giving tours to older Carruthians, the Carruth Wall will always come up in conversation. I can always confirm with them, with justifiable pride, that the rules about the wall are still firmly in place.

I would love to show you the Carruth Wall, but please don’t ask me if you can sit on it unless you are a Carruthian because permission will be denied. The school bench about 10m away is where you can sit and admire all the hard work and sweat that went into the Carruth Wall.

**Ian Rowe**

**Director of Boarding, Whangarei Boys’ High School**



# LIFE IN THE BOARDING FAST LANE

12 years as a boarding house director in a house full of girls has given me a significant insight into the life of a teenager, and boy what a life it is.

No amount of advice and other life experiences can really fully prepare for what is ahead. All you thought you knew and all the tools you thought you had are nothing compared to being responsible for 56 girls 24/7. It is life in the boarding fast lane.

Tears, tantrums, Kardashians, non-stop giggles, snap chat, toast, squealing, break ups, morning wake ups..... sound familiar?

**Some key learnings as they say:**

**Boundaries – what are they and why have them**

Perhaps its old fashion but our young people seem to enjoy knowing there are boundaries there to protect and guide them. They enable a house and home to work so that everyone can find their place within. They surround the girls with a purpose and meaning and if fair and thought through help the place run effectively.

**Old school manners – still important**

Please, Thank you and a warm and friendly greeting go a long way in a boarding environment. We should set high expectations around what we expect in terms of manners within our boarding houses. It’s amazing how far a “Thank You Miss” or a “Have a great day girls” goes to creating a respectful and caring environment.

**Listening – take this opportunity whenever it presents itself**

You can never underestimate how much girls need to be heard. It can just be how their day was or how they are dealing with a death in the family. Always, always, always take the time to engage and just listen.

**Noise –a constant a given – what does it tell us**

It still amazes me what I learn and gain from just listening to the general chatter and noise of the boarding house. You can hear the happy buzz at the end of the day of girls singing in the showers, the chatter while the toast is cooking can let you know who has had a rough day, and the tired silence tells you perhaps an early lights out is needed. Just being present and listening gives you the heartbeat of the place and allows adjustments to be made.



Wrigley House 2015 – St Peter’s Cambridge

**Teaching teenagers that it’s ok to hear and to say NO. Don’t be afraid to tell it how it is**

Sometimes we need to stick to our guns and say the word no. If possible a Yes is always preferred but if a lack of communication or organisation on the part of the student occurs, feel comfortable enough to say that simple word. It is a lesson in life and one that will be so valuable for them in their future decision making.

**How not being a parent gives you an opportunity – be sure in your own moral compass.**

When the opportunity presents itself take the time to really engage in conversation relevant and current for your students. We get to often hear so much more than parents and that gives us a moral obligation to help our young people make good decisions and to question what is going on in their lives. Be present in their world allowing good morals and values to guide you and them.

**Know your girls**

An essential element in establishing connected relationships is getting to know your girls. Find out about who they are, where they are from and what makes them tick. Are they a sport billy or a closet songstress, are they off a farm or an urban dweller, are they self-contained or are they the loud and proud, are they allergic to something strange or are they an environmental warrior? Knowing the small details can turn a simple conversation into a true connection.

**Connect, be a rock**

This is probably my biggest lesson. The life of a teenager is fast paced, demanding and sometimes damn hard. We should be the rock in their lives. The constant. Being consistent and showing we really care is so vital. I really don’t think you can give enough in this job.

**Boarding life and friendships – your true squad**

For the girls this is what they take most with them from being a boarder. They develop lifelong friendships and the experiences they get within our walls are vital to them developing a sense of who they are and helping to form the directions they will go. What a privilege to be a part of this squad.

I think boarding life will continue to evolve with our ever changing clientele and world. Balancing old school values and an understanding of a teenager’s fast paced world isn’t easy. Enjoy living life in the boarding fast lane, just don’t forget to pull over into the slow lane every now and again.

**Jenny O’Leary**

**Wrigley House Director  
St Peter’s School  
Cambridge**

Jenny has been House Director of Wrigley House from 2002 to the present. Wrigley House has housed up to 54 year 10 12 girls. Jenny is widely involved in the life of the school. Previously she has been a Year 9 Dean, as well a day House Director. Currently she is HOD Social Sciences and Geography teacher. In addition, she is the manager of the Open A Girls Netball team. Jenny is a highly effective Boarding House Director and School staff member. She wrote the article on her sabbatical term in term 3 this year.

# THE UNSEEN BENEFITS OF BOARDING

There appears to be a trend in boarding at the moment where the number of local students going into boarding is either static or falling and is often being propped up by international students from either ex-pat communities overseas or students from countries where wealthy families see great benefits in giving their children education in the English language surrounded by the opportunities afforded by the home country. Nowhere is this more true than here in New Zealand.

Allied to this is the general lack of information about the benefits of boarding being proactively directed towards the parents of day students from a young age. I give myself as an example. I started school at my senior school at the age of eight (it was an 8-18 school in the UK) and there was never any doubt that I would go to that school. It was where my father had gone, his brother and my cousin and I would definitely be following in the family footsteps. At no stage was any other option considered, except the local state school if I did not pass my entrance exams!

This is often the case now, parents will have an idea about one school, maybe a couple more but there is rarely any discussion in the families about whether the child should board or not. If the parents were boarders, and they can afford the fees, then the child will in all likelihood board. If the only way the student can go to the preferred school is to board, than that is what he or she will do. If the parents were day students, then the chances are the child will also be a day student. Why is this the case? Why do parents of probable day students rarely consider boarding as an option? As a current boarding Housemaster, these questions interest me greatly and I have tried to put forward my thoughts below.

The obvious answer may be that the parents have considered it but the fees are preventative, however in my, albeit brief, questioning, more often the thought of boarding has not even crossed the minds of the parents. I would suggest that if we as the boarding community are to grow the numbers of our boarders, as well as looking overseas and to other distant markets, we should actively market boarding to our prospective day parents.

What to market then becomes the next question, and I think that here we often focus on the wrong things. In a similar style to the Simon Sinek TED talk (the theme of the 2015 NZBSA Conference in Wellington), we can split up the boarding experience of a school or college into 'WHAT', 'HOW' and 'WHY'.

The 'WHAT' are the positives that a student can gain from boarding at the most basic level. Things such as extra tutor assistance for homework, use of the school's facilities once the school day is over, the ease of getting to and from after-school practices and rehearsals and the ability to socialise with others of the students' age and social group over a game of pool or a cup of coffee once the school day is over to name but a few. However if the schools and colleges focus on the 'WHAT' that their boarding houses do and offer, then my supposition is that there will not be a great extra up-take of boarding places. Yes, we all need to let prospective parents know what activities the boarders can do once the school day is over. Yes, parents will want to be reassured that their sons and daughters can make use of the school's facilities, be it sporting, musical, dramatic, technological or academic in their downtime but actually, this information will not encourage new families to come into boarding.

The 'HOW' is again important, but not the deciding factor in parents committing to becoming part of the boarding community. The knowledge that schools actively seek out the best practitioners, send their staff on great professional development and are always looking to improve their boarding facilities is neither surprising nor game-changing. Parents expect this level of service and the continued improvement in the boarding experiences offered is a necessary part of running a boarding school in the current economic environment.

It is far more important to educate those who do not know about the unseen benefits of boarding that are, by their nature, hard to quantify and difficult to define. To quote from Sinek again, this would be the 'WHY'.

Schools either consciously, or sub-consciously, are aware of the unseen benefits of boarding. They will in all likelihood have their houses or hostels, programmes and procedures set up to assist the ideas set out below and the staff should be actively working towards providing the right atmosphere for these benefits to flourish. It may be that because a good model of boarding has been set up, that these occur without direct, specific and conscious actions and in these cases it becomes even harder to quantify what is going on and the benefits that are accruing to the individuals involved.

I wonder how many prospective parents who did not board get to have a real insight into the strength of friendship those who do board are fortunate to gain. A prime example of this is to ask those who went through senior school as day students but then went through university in halls of residence and then into a flatting situation, who their strongest friendships are with. I would wager that most would say theirs come from their university days – mine certainly do! Those with differing views are often those who spent five, sometimes more, years boarding with the same crowd of boys or girls; who spent evenings working, playing, talking and learning together. The usual case then would be that the friendships made in school may be the strongest.

Another often overlooked benefit of a boarding life at school is the ability to adapt to change, to get on with all types of people from a variety of walks of life and the resilience to changes in circumstance. Ray McGovern, the chairman of the British Boarding School's Association, suggested in 2014 that boarding helps to nurture children who are more independent and self-reliant. He went on to say that boarding education develops vital social skills and perseverance alongside academic ability. He also suggested a link between boarding and the sorts of characteristics desired by the top universities and employers: "They [employers and universities] are increasingly looking for more than top academic grades. They look for social skills and confidence, independence and resilience, character and perseverance. They look for true grit. In boarding schools we have the time and the expertise and the interest to encourage every child to develop and grow, to find themselves, to dare to try new experiences."

This is not to say that day students cannot also gain these characteristics. It is just that in most boarding environments these days, the students will find themselves in situations and activities that develop these skills more readily than their day-student peers. At both my present school and my past two places of work (each in a different country) the opportunities for boarders to go outside of their comfort zones,

to experience different activities and places and to challenge themselves in varying social environments were greater than those opportunities for their day counterparts. Each activity is in itself a great advert for boarding, but the consequences of the experience, the true benefit of such an activity are often overlooked.

Living day to day with a group of your peers, some of whom will be easier to live with than others, brings with it a whole realm of character-building issues that the non-boarders do not often have to deal with. The ability for students to learn from observing others, often in a subconscious manner, is very difficult to gauge. By doing homework with more able students, for example, a less able student can certainly gain a better insight into how to work and learn that they would otherwise and this is difficult to replicate in a home situation unless they had sibling assistance. Clearly the student is more likely to be able to gain assistance in all areas of academic study if there are a larger number of peers offering assistance.

Dealing with conflict and learning to stand up for other's points of view is another characteristic learned more rapidly in a boarding environment than in others. Hopefully this is actively addressed as part of a boarding programme as well as being part of growing up in close proximity to a large number of similarly aged young

people. Time management and self-organisation are also large parts of boarding life, especially when there are constraints upon some aspects of after-school life. For example, if there are specific days and times that boys can head out to the shops, then the management of their time and resources to ensure they can head out as and when they are allowed becomes very important!

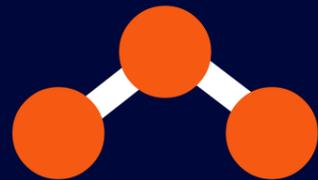
I do not know whether parents are more likely to send their sons and daughters into boarding once they are made aware of these strengths of boarding, but I am sure of the importance of these ideas in the discussions that go around the decision to send a child into a boarding environment. I believe that the boarding community needs to be more proactive in these areas if we are to fully market and advertise the full range of benefits of boarding to a wider range of families. If we are able to do this, then we may see the boarding numbers start to rise in a similar fashion to the way they have been in the UK over the past few years.

*Andrew Levenger*

**Boarding Housemaster  
Flower's House  
Christ's College**



# ARE YOU A **NEW** HEAD OF **BOARDING**



A key to success:

## **MAKING CONNECTIONS**



NZBSA is proud to offer you and your school a coach/mentor for a year free of charge to ensure your success in our industry.



Use the experience of a sector professional in your area to help guide you on your leadership journey.



For further information  
Dee Guillemot-Rodgerson  
National Co-ordinator  
gud@cghs.school.nz

## **MEMBER SERVICES**

**1**

### **NATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR**

The NZBSA employs a National Co-ordinator for 15 hours per week to liaise and engage with its members.

**2**

### **NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

Our annual conference supports members with resourcing, knowledge and working models to support cross sector growth.

**3**

### **MENTORING**

New to the job? - NZBSA offers new Heads of Boarding a one year mentoring and support programme free of charge.

**4**

### **SIGN IN MAGAZINE**

Keep abreast of current events, trends and news within the NZ boarding sector through the Sign In magazine.

**5**

### **CROSS SECTOR CONNECTIONS**

NZBSA works with the MoE, ERO and other relevant sector's and legislative bodies to ensure our industry has a voice in big picture decision making.

**6**

### **WEBSITE & RESOURCES**

Check out the website for the latest news, sponsors and events. A soon to be published resource section will host templates and exemplars.

**7**

### **GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS**

Innovation and best practice are fostered through grants and research scholarships to members whose work is of benefit to the boarding sector.

**8**

### **STUDENT CONFERENCE**

The student conference provides student leaders with an opportunity to meet like minds, enhance their leadership capacity whilst leading their school.

**9**

### **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

The NZBSA can provide PLD directly or indirectly through nominated providers. Contact the National Co-ordinator to see how we can help.

For further information contact:  
Dee Guillemot-Rodgerson  
gud@cghs.school.nz  
www.nzboarding.co.nz

# ONBOARD MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Are you ready for a change, a system, resourcing and professional support to take your boarding house to the next level?

The future focused boarding management system allows you to complete all your boarding house systems, checks and reporting from one place whether it be health, learning, behaviour, leave, positive psychology or pastoral care related. Engage your parent community through the unique parent portal, or use the inbuilt reporting system to see trends and patterns across the boarding house. Designed and based on best practice models let the system manage your boarding house whilst you focus on leadership.

“onBoard is the best thing we have implemented into our boarding house, we now have one system to record ALL our pastoral care needs and leave for our boarders. Through onBoard we implement and manage our positive education models, as well as monitoring and reporting on our boarders progress toward prep and the key competencies from the NZ Curriculum. Linking all of this to the parent portal is fantastic. It is easy to use and has incorporated parents into the boarding life of their daughter making the relationship between house and home more authentic. Our staff are now always up to date when coming on shift as a result of the system whether it be medical, behaviour, general wellbeing or leave. Our catering staff now have immediate access to

forecasted numbers for meals. As a Director of Boarding the remote access to current happenings at the hostel is invaluable as is the ability to analyse trends and patterns across the house. The onBoard team are readily available and their immediate response to questions is superb, always going above and beyond. Not only do we love the programme the resources, knowledge and support offered through the onBoard group regarding boarding in general is a added bonus. I highly recommend this to other schools.”

*Dee Guillemot-Rodgerson – Director of Boarding, Christchurch Girls’ High School*

Further to the onBoard management system the team at onBoard Education Group offer boarding specific confidential professional consultancy to support you and your team. Whether it be human resource management, leadership coaching, health and safety, strategic planning and self review, or targeted professional learning for your boarding house contact the team at the onBoard Education Group to see how they can be of support to you.

