**Kia ora tātou. Warm greetings to you all from Nancy and Neil – Counsellors.**

Now that the year is well underway it seems a good time to begin the first of what will be regular fortnightly contributions to the school newsletter from the Counselling team. Our hope is that this space will provide helpful information to parents and whanau about some of the work we do at school, as well as providing a link to resources you might find interesting and topical as you parent your children and teens. Each fortnight we will present some aspect of our work as counsellors at JPC and we welcome your feedback. Firstly, some introductions.

**Nancy Macmillan** (Ph extn 8854). Some of you may know me from my previous role as an English teacher here at JPC. In 2011 I embarked on study through the University of Waikato towards a Master of Counselling, completing this at the end of 2013. Since June 2014 I have been Head of Counselling at John Paul College. I am loving my new role which sees me working closely with students to support them in working through challenges they face in their lives. I welcome your input as parents and whanau in caring for and supporting our students.

**Neil Carter** (Ph extn 8808). I have an 18 year history as a community and faith based youth worker, running youth groups and teaching life skills programmes in schools. I have spent many years working with young people and their families, helping them deal with the issues life throws at them. Last year I completed a Diploma in Counselling from Bethlehem Tertiary Institute. I pride myself on being non-judgmental and easy to talk to. My goal is not to tell students what to think or believe, but to assist them in understanding themselves and supporting them as they journey through life.

This week’s focus is the **Travellers** Programme.

Travellers is a school-based programme for young people in their first year of secondary school that helps them face life’s challenges with confidence and new skills. Its aim is to help students build resilience and develop self-confidence. From an on-line survey, a group of 8 students will be invited to participate in a 10 week course of learning led by the two school counsellors. The permission of parents/caregivers will be sought prior to the start of the course.

Findings from the Travellers pilot project:

*Young people report:*

* *that their experience in Travellers enhanced their connections with peers, family members, staff and facilitators*
* *reduced emotional distress*
* *improved school performance*

You can read more about this at [www.travellers.org.nz](http://www.travellers.org.nz)