

I have had the privilege to work with Christine for over 10 years, during this time she has had a lasting impression on my personally as a role model, leader and friend.

Christine has always driven for excellence in education starting with her early education as Head Girl at St Dominic's in Dunedin, following her secondary education she attended both Victoria and Otago Universities obtaining a BA in classics, Latin and English upon graduating Christine gained her Diploma of Teaching. She has furthered her own education completing her MEdL in 2005.

As an educational leader Christine has taught, lead faculties and took the role of Dean at Villa Maria College before becoming a senior leader and finally a Principal and St Thomas of Canterbury College.

Christine is one of the few women who have become Principal of a boy's school and I believe the only women to become Principal of a Catholic Boys school. After having three daughters and spending 8 years at Villa Maria College, she must have felt it was time for a change!

Christine has had many personal awards during her career. In 2001 she was awarded an National Excellence in teaching award, her leadership has also led to some outstanding achievements including a Prime Ministers Excellence Award in 2014 and a 5 year ERO review in 2015.

Christine has been a huge advocate for Catholic Social Justice in the spirit if Edmund Rice. She has lead the introduction of Restorative practices at St Thomas and followed this up by working in consultation with Police, Nge Hue Wha Marae and Christchurch Community Law in implementing the Community Justice Panels which are now used nationally.

Christine has demonstrated leadership in improving educational outcomes for Maori and Pasifika during her time at St Thomas'. The huge increases in the diversity of the St Thomas' roll, is testament to her leadership in this area.

Christine's leadership during the immediate earthquake recovery, welcoming Catholic Cathedral College onto the St Thomas site, and working through large demolition and rebuild programmes, ensured St Thomas is well catered for in the future.

Christine has always been an advocate for those at the margins of society, in doing so changing lives of young people.

We wish you the best in your future endeavours, you will always be a part of the legacy at St Thomas'.

On behalf of our community I would like to present these flowers and ask you to join me in acknowledging our retiring Principal, Christine O'Neill

Fa'afetai lava. ia manuia le afiafi. Soifua. Kia Kaha kia maia kia manawanui

No reira tena koutau, tena koutou katoa