

LUNCH FOR LANGUAGE TALK – MILES O’LEARY

Good afternoon everyone –

Thank you to Vicki & Bruce for inviting me to speak today and a special thank you to my mum – after all, it is every teenager’s dream to have your mum tell lots of embarrassing stories about you to a big crowd of people so thanks a lot mum ??– NOT!! Love you mum!!

It is my pleasure to talk to you all today - and not **just** because I get a day off school, a sleep in and a yummy lunch, which is very cool. I feel very honoured to say I went to Glenleighden so it is so cool that I can come here today & share my story.

Some people ask me if I get very nervous when I have to speak in public but actually I get pretty excited. You see, for me, all talking used to be very terrifying so now it is really cool that I can get up & talk to people & share my ideas.

My mum & dad’s memories of Glenleighden are a bit different to mine. My memories are that Glenleighden was just lots of fun.

I had so many really good friends like Matthew, Connor, Nicholas, Caitlin, Tim and many more. We had so much fun every lunchtime especially playing our games in the fort, playing tiggy and hide’n’sseek. I remember the best hiding place was always inside the big, huge tyre.

Sports Days were my favourite days of the year. I just loved being able to go in all the running events and it was a real thrill to stand up & be presented with your ribbons. The marching and ball games were always fun on the oval and who could forget all the amazing cakes & stuff the mums brought to share for morning tea.

The work was OK because the teachers used to turn it into games. I remember we used to do the number scramble with Gail & we used to dive to try and get the right stick when she said our number.

Fun Food Fridays were always the best way to end the week. We would eat all these boring lunches on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday then on Fridays we got to eat really cool stuff like pizzas.

The car pooling was also fun. For example, I remember when I use to go in the car with Anna and Will we used to count how many Mini Coopers we would see on our trip.

The school concerts were always a really big deal & all our families would come & sit on picnic blankets & stuff. One year our class did the Lion King and the Senior kids did “Thank Goodness You Are Here” which was really funny.

I remember one year we did a concert about going around the world. When we were learning about different places we got to taste different foods and lots of them were really disgusting especially the tea.

My mum & Granny remember when it was my very first Christmas concert at Glenleighden when I vomited in the car on the way there because I was so nervous & vomited afterwards because I was so happy it was all over so I scoffed too much party food – but I honestly I don’t remember that one **at** all.

I also remember the big soccer matches when we got to play against John Paul College. The team all got to the college grounds after school on the bus. It was huge & one year we won the big trophy for the school.

When I was at Glenleighden I went to so many birthday parties with my friends. There was one just about every weekend. There were bowling parties, pool parties, McDonalds parties. We had so much fun.

I was really very sad when I left Glenleighden & I missed my teachers and friends for a long, long time. I was lucky that for a long time after I left I used to still get invited to their parties & friends places to play. This really helped me.

I think if your child has problems with talking Glenleighden is the best school to choose. Your child might be just like me and have lots of ideas hidden in a secret place in their brain and Glenleighden can help them find a way to solve that problem and get those ideas out.

If your child has problems with language my advice to you is to always talk to them like they understand because they probably do. I can remember stuff from when I was two years old and mum said I had no talking then. I may have had no speech but I was really quite smart. When I used to cry and get upset it wasn't because I was naughty it was because I was frustrated.

Also, always read your children lots of books and take them to interesting places and do lots of fun stuff. They might not be able to tell you but they probably understand.

Grandparents are also good helpers & I would like to thank my Granny and Nanny, who are here today, for all their help and love they have given to me and my family. My Nanny has come on all our family holidays to help us & also is the person that taught me to hug with two big arms. My Granny used to always come to Glenleighden and help me and other children with our concepts and would spend lots of time with me at home.

Glenleighden helped me go from being an anxious person to a confident one. It is just so cool to be able to communicate.

I believe that even though we are only children we can still really make a difference in the world and being able to communicate has helped me to talk to people about my ideas.

For example, I feel very strongly about getting rid of cigarettes in the world because my grandfather died from smoking before I was born and I didn't get to meet him. Last year I wrote a letter to the government and they sent me a long letter in reply. I also did a speech about the dangers of smoking to my class and to Year 12 students at Kedron High School. My next step is to write a letter to the government about my idea for a campaign. I think if we teach all primary school students to never start smoking then all the tobacco companies will eventually go bankrupt. My campaign motto is "Don't Start and you will never have to quit". I think it will work.

I also like being school vice captain and being on the student council because it helps me be involved in making decisions about things that happen at my school.

I know that life can sometimes be difficult but if you stay focused, work hard, set goals, never give up and try to keep a smile on your face, you can achieve great

things and feel good about yourself. I think knowing this has helped me be a good leader.

I know life can be a bit tricky for me and I have a few strategies to help me, for example if I don't understand what someone has explained to me I always say "sorry, I was listening carefully but still didn't understand – please can you explain that to me in a different way." Usually people are very helpful.

Another strategy which has helped me is always having the subtitles on when I watch tv or a movie. It really helps me with my reading and spelling of words that I don't know.

My life is pretty busy. I have lots of different activities and hobbies. Beside being a school leader, I learn three musical instruments, perform in three school bands, plus there's lego club, running club, drama lessons and tag league. I make sure I have lots of time to relax though and I love hanging out with my mates. We love all things to do with Star Wars and lego, and play lots of tiggly & handball and, yes, the Xbox and computer.

My newest hobby is Games Workshop models. I spent many hours last holidays painting and building my little models and the next step is for Dad and I to build a the big battle board.

I am also very interested in animation and have made a few little movies at home with my lego & Transformers. I really love the work of animator, Nick Park, who made the clay animation movies of Wallace and Gromit. I have studied his techniques of animation including his storyboards and such. He has inspired me to want to go to university and study to become an animator.

I also love comedy. I love reading funny books and Rowan Atkinson is my favourite comedian. When I was young I had a lot of trouble understanding what made things funny so it has been a plan for me to work at understanding what makes people laugh. Last year I was runner up at the camp talent quest when I performed a funny poem from "The Bad Book" by my favourite author, Andy Griffiths.

Next year I start high school and I know there will be lots of challenges but I reckon I am tough enough to handle them all.

So thank you to everyone for coming today and supporting the Glenleighden School and thank you for listening to my story.

Remember – your children may not be able to talk to you but always give them lots of love – because love is something everyone understands.

Thank you.