

## COMMENTARY

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### **BUILDING A LEADERSHIP CULTURE BASED ON SERVICE TO OTHERS**

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We believe that every MAC student should have the opportunity to lead, whatever that looks like for them.

To ensure every student feels worthy of holding leadership aspirations, it's important that we challenge perceptions of what a leader is and the way leadership stereotypes are, at times, perpetuated by the media.

So often, the notion of leadership is reduced to a hierarchical structure when in fact, true leadership is about values and service.

Sometimes people believe they cannot be a leader because they don't have a certain personality type.

Yet leadership is not about a personality type; it's about the strength of your values, having the courage to show your passion, and supporting and creating opportunities for others to share in those passions.

One concept of leadership that I find very compelling is 'servant leadership', an idea discussed by Simon Sinek in his book, 'Leaders Eat Last'.

His idea of 'servant leadership' is that leadership is not about a title, control, prestige or advancement.

Instead, it's about service, calling or just helping others.

Servant leaders prioritise the needs of their team over their own interests and give their all for the success of their team.

Servant leaders are skilled at creating an environment where people feel valued and inspired and are able to foster a sense of belonging that can empower people to do amazing things.

As Sinek says, 'Leadership is not about being in charge. It's about taking care of those in your charge.'

At MAC, we encourage our students to develop their leadership skills through engagement in all aspects of life at our school.

Through a range of academic, artistic, sporting, cultural and service-oriented activities, our students have a chance to discover more about themselves and their capacity to lead.

Each year at MAC, students nominate for a range of leadership positions across the junior and senior schools, including our head students, the student representative on the School Board, house leaders, and leaders of our student-led committees. Students who nominate for leadership roles deliver presentations to their peers and our staff, are interviewed by our senior leadership team, and students and staff have an opportunity to vote.

We also deliver a number of programmes designed to build the leadership skills of our students, including programmes that help our Years 7 and 8 students to develop their leadership skills.

The MAC Mentors programme, for example, encourages Years 7 and 8 students to understand what it means to be a positive leader and how to work as a team, be an active listener, compromise, disagree respectfully, negotiate, and show empathy.

This year, our head students Thomas Benson, Jackson Duguid, Jessie Winter and India Yule created and led a new leadership programme for students in Years 9 and 10, to help prepare our younger students for future leadership roles in the senior school.

Through completing the course, our junior students have gained many valuable insights into what it means to be a service-oriented leader. When asked what their perceptions of leadership were after completing the course, students said:

- 'Leadership is about listening and hearing what others have to say.'
- 'Leadership is a lot more than just telling people what to do.'
- 'Leadership is about having the ability to work with everyone even if you don't necessarily get along.'

I could not have said it better myself.

You can learn more about leadership at MAC on the college website here:

<https://mtaspiring.school.nz/leadership/>

### **More information**

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