**SNAIL Mail Day 13th June**

**Technology is brilliant**. It’s worth repeating, so I’ll say it again. Technology is brilliant. I couldn’t do what I do so successfully without it. Now here comes the but……….not at the expense of everything else.

Research tells me that the modern teenager sends and receives over 2000 texts a month. They have developed new skills. They can now use two hands at the same time while texting from 2 phones. Sadly those skills seems lost when two hands are needed to make their bed, tidy their room or do dishes. Then if you add in Instagram, snapchat, facetime, facebook and twitter, no wonder they’re too busy to do those jobs mentioned. Pre teens criticise their older siblings about how much time they spend on screens, that is until they get their first phone or iPad, and it all changes, as they too become addicted.

Why did I instigate SNAIL Mail Day in 2014? One day as I sat watching my daughter and her friend sharing letters they’d written to one another in their early teens, laughing and enjoying the memories, it occurred to me their children would never have these moments. Someone needed to try and make others aware of what we risk losing. How much of what we know about the past has come from those handwritten letters. Yes, there will be google to find out about the past, but nothing is as personal as letters from within your family, as they tell the true story that is relevant to you. Emails and texts don’t last forever, but a letter will.

**WHY WRITE A LETTER?**

It’s Educational

Research is telling us more and more the connection between brain and pen when physically writing, far outweighs what happens when typing onto a screen. Pencils don’t come with predictive text, so kids have to think and write. They get faster with practice. When you write a letter, you have to think before putting pen to paper. Texting is instant, bad spelling and grammar, no punctuation. Kids needs to be able to communicate in a more constructive way at some stage.

Learn That Life Isn’t Always Instant

And that isn’t a bad thing at times. Our kids are growing up in an instant world. It has its good points, but also its negatives. We are losing our patience for anything not instant. If we don’t get a reply to a text in a minute we get frustrated. Our stress levels go through the roof, so what better way to get back to a slower pace, and enjoy the experience than by writing a SNAIL mail. A letter takes time, and conveys emotion in a deeper way.

It’s Fun

There is a fun element to writing a letter. Posting it off to another town, city or even country, then waiting for a reply. Have kids look forward to getting a letter. My granddaughter told me she even likes getting a letter from her dentist because it has her name on it. Surely we can do better than that.

Addicted to the internet? Aren’t most of us.

Turn your computer off for the day or night and sit and write a letter. You will be amazed at how therapeutic it is. It’s a blast from the past, and gives your eyes a rest too. The upside is when someone writes back to you. Make a coffee, and sit down and read their news, way better than an email.

**WHAT SORT OF LETTER TO WRITE.**

Say Thank You

Thank you notes aren’t overrated. Quite the opposite, they’re the perfect way to let someone know how much you appreciate their efforts.

Make A Change

A King Country school was having issues with drainage on their road frontage. Emails were sent, several in fact, with no response from the local council. The seniors then each wrote letters to the council, and guess what, within two weeks the problem was sorted. The power of the pen.

Make An Impression or Invite A Guest.

Sometimes you want to create a good impression. An email can get lost, but a snail mail lets someone know you bothered to take the time. If you’d like a local celebrity to come into your school, try watching them back out when they get thirty letters saying why they should visit.

Preserve Memories

One day your kids will want to know about what life was like, and what they got up to. One SNAIL mail day I wrote letters to each of my grandchildren, telling them what I loved most about each of them, and a short amusing story about their parent when they were their age.

Write A letter To yourself

What a great way to look at your life a few years down the track. Gather the kids, or your brothers and sisters together and put together a time capsule with your thoughts, about your life and maybe your family.

A Letter For The Future

One teacher had her students write a letter to someone in their own home. This was a brilliant idea as they got to see the whole process, from writing to, addressing an envelope, adding a stamp, then posting it. They were home when the letter arrived so saw the pleasure it gave. It can then be kept as a wonderful memory for years to come.

Make A Senior Citizen Happy

Our retirement homes are full of senior citizens, many of whom have few visitors and no longer feel they have value in society. They are full of history which should not be lost. Writing to an elderly friend or relation gives so much more than the pleasure of receiving.

Send A Photo As Well

How many of us keep our photos on a computer? How many of us have lost photos on a computer? How many of us say, I will print some off and never do? Let 2017 be the year of send a photo as well.

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