

Inspiring Excellence

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

For our Head Prefect Theo Walsh and Second Head Prefect Angus Malcolm, leadership is holistic. They believe that leadership is more than a title and should be all-encompassing of the world around you.

WITHIN A PEDAGOGICAL CONTEXT,

leadership is intrinsic. Within Cranbrook School, leadership is accessible, it is understood to be a means by which students can collaborate and excel in the realm of togetherness. At Cranbrook, leadership is inspirational, and it comes from within the student body. The inspiration to become a leader for Theo, came directly from within the Cranbrook community: "I am inspired by the people who have led the School in the past," he says.

We spoke to Angus and Theo about what inspires them most in their leadership roles, and their favourite moments of being a Cranbrook student leader.

What does leadership mean to you?

ANGUS: Leadership is not a position but instead it is about how you can make the world around you a better place. I believe that leaders are not necessarily people with positions or titles but those who can boost others around them and turn them into the best versions of themselves.

THEO: Leaders are the people who can bring together a group of people and make them stronger than the sum of their parts. Leaders not only act as figureheads but actively try to encourage the people around them to commit to a higher standard.

As a leader, what are your strengths?

ANGUS: I believe my strength as a leader is in my dedication and effort. Balancing schoolwork with leadership responsibilities has tested this in the past few months but I've strived to set high standards for myself and ensured that I give 100% effort in the work Theo, and I do.

THEO: My greatest strength is probably my communication skills. I encourage excellence in all aspects of school life, communicating my intention to diligently strive for excellence and my expectation that everyone else does the same. I have high standards for both myself and the people who have put their hand up to serve the School, and I need to effectively communicate those expectations to the people around me and encourage them to continually strive for improvement.

What inspires you?

ANGUS: I am inspired by the people around me who overcome challenges. In my friendship group, year level and in the wider School, I have encountered many people who have had family, social and academic challenges imposed on them but have persevered and emerged from these challenges as a better person. I am inspired by their resilience and determination.

THEO: I am inspired by the people who have led the School in the past. People like Asher Learmonth (OC 2021), John Coleman (OC 2022) and James Pelly (OC 2023) were all charismatic and engaging but most importantly they were devoted to Cranbrook and its students. These leaders took charge, displayed great commitment in uniting the School and embodying the great sense of pride that is essential to building a strong community. Their commitment is what inspired me to pursue a leadership role and contribute to this great school.

What are you hoping to do when you leave school?

ANGUS: After school, I'd like to study law. I'm very interested in justice and fairness. I hope that I can make a positive impact in my community one day as a lawyer.

THEO: I am particularly interested in the possibility of studying abroad. I want to open my eyes to opportunities that exist in the wider world and be exposed to a range of experiences.

Do you have any advice for younger students?

ANGUS: My advice would be to try everything. Cranbrook has so many opportunities in Music, Sport, Debating, Drama, and Art; to name just a few. When you're in your younger years, it's important to explore different things to find out what you like. One of the best decisions I ever made was to try out for the Debating team in Year 7. You'll make so many more friends from different areas of the School and might discover something you develop a passion for.

THEO: Just say yes! Every single week you will receive emails and information about possible opportunities for service and co-curricular activities. I understand that it is far too easy to disregard these events and just say, "That doesn't sound like something I would be interested in", but I encourage you to switch your mindset into saying yes, and actively putting your hand up to get involved in something that wouldn't ordinarily interest you. Through participation, you are more likely to get the most out of each day, and ultimately your time at school.

What is your favourite moment at Cranbrook?

ANGUS: My favourite memories of Cranbrook are around CITF. Being on a long hike in the rain with your mates is simultaneously the worst thing in the world while you're doing it, but such a wonderful memory to look back on. Being with your mates in the bush for a week is one of the best things that Cranbrook does, and it has given me some of my best memories of my time at Cranbrook.

THEO: The moments that made me fall in love with Cranbrook would have to be attending the major sporting events. I have been watching the 1st XV since I was in the Junior School and it was here that I witnessed the power of a strong community. The singing, the chanting, and the crowds supporting those who have put in remarkable amounts of work behind the scenes has always been my favourite Cranbrook experience. As I have progressed through the School, CITF has also become one of my favourite experiences. Whilst the treks and camping were often difficult and painful, the sense of accomplishment and fulfilment after completing such a task, particularly Year 10 CITF, is something that I had never felt before.

Who do you look up to?

ANGUS: Personally, whilst I look up to a lot of people, my Housemaster Mr Pappandreas has been a source of inspiration for me. He is always willing to give support to all those in his House and beyond. He's a great source of advice and acts as a model for how to lead, support and persevere.

THEO: Ms Sanders and Mr Faraway are two people I look up to immensely. Both teachers are sources of inspiration for me because of their genuine care for the people around them, and being active, selfless members of our community. They are always great soundingboards, willing to tell us both what we want to hear and what we need to hear. ■