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MLC STUDENT SHARES THE STAGE WITH EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN

Year 4 Methodist Ladies' College student Rachel Gower is in many ways like any other nine year-old girl; she keeps busy playing hockey, swimming and diving, and she enjoys acting. Rachel has overcome displacia of her hips and she lives with dyslexia and juvenile diabetes. But don't feel sorry for her - Rachel is very quick to point out that she is 'normal'.

Women Who Lead director Holly Ransom begs to differ. She considers Rachel's confident and pragmatic approach to life as extraordinary and invited Rachel to share her inspiring story at the recent Women Who Lead event, *Ordinary is Extraordinary*.

"Every woman is extraordinary, and every one of us can make a positive difference in our community," Ms Ransom said. "*Ordinary is Extraordinary* aimed to break down perceptions that leaders are 'born' extraordinary, and this concept was reinforced by speakers including internationally renowned trauma plastic surgeon Dr Fiona Wood, former professional tennis player Alicia Molik, clinical nurse specialist (youth health) Jo Rees, and educator and entertainer Clare Stace," she said.

"As a guest speaker, Rachel demonstrated the enormous impact 'ordinary' individuals can make on their community by outlining her work to increase awareness of juvenile diabetes and raise funds to support research into the condition," Holly said.

"Since being diagnosed with diabetes last year, Rachel now sees a life focussed on helping people and in addition to her life-long dream of being an actor, she is contemplating careers in law and medicine."

The message of *Ordinary is Extraordinary* really hit home for participant Rikki Sward (14). "The talks were passionate and inspiring and made me realise you should live life to the fullest every day. It has made me want to try that little bit harder and make the most of every opportunity," Rikki said.

Ms Ransom said while many young women have ambitious plans to make a positive impact throughout their careers, they often lack the practical know-how of women who have successfully travelled that path," Ms Ransom said.

"By inviting leaders to speak about their experiences and impart valuable knowledge they have gained, young women will be better equipped to make their dreams a reality."

Women Who Lead has provided two opportunities for students and women throughout the Perth metropolitan area to hear the stories of female leaders from a wide range of careers.

The next event scheduled for Wednesday 29 July, titled *Financial Know How*, would provide information on issues such as limiting debt, saving money for special events, living within your means, successfully gaining appropriate employment and issues to consider when launching and running a business.



The final Women Who Lead event for 2009, *Fit Mind and Body*, would focus on the importance of maintaining health and wellbeing in performing to potential. This would include practical advice on achieving a balance between work or studies, family and recreation, as well as eating well and accepting your body.

Ms Ransom said Women Who Lead was an important initiative of the MLC Foundation to inspire and equip women and students who aim to be future leaders in our society.

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