

Dear Fellow Parent

Our son Reuben joined Mandelbaum House in February 2021.

Our family had been on a global adventure living, working and going to school in four countries and ten cities over the last twenty years, from Tobago and Papua New Guinea to The Netherlands and Washington DC. No matter the obstacles, we were tight: a family of four with colourful personalities and strong opinions. So when it was time for our eldest, Reuben, to move away to university, it was a big deal for the family!

When Reuben chose Mandelbaum House it felt right! We were at ease. He had found a home away from home: a vibrant community, not too small, not too big but just right with warm, diverse and focused students. From the first time we met Shana Kerlander, CEO of Mandelbaum House, and other Mandelbaum residents we felt like we had met old friends. On move-in day, a Resident Assistant met Reuben in front of Mandelbaum House and was so friendly and thoughtful, showing us around. His room was ready and spotless; students from the floor came in to introduce themselves and kibbitz. The room was bright and fully furnished; so once unpacked he was in!

The atmosphere at Mandelbaum House is warm and inclusive. It feels like a big, extended family on a sojourn in Sydney, a stone's throw from campus. Residents greet each other by name, chat easily and look relaxed and comfortable. The number of residents is just right, around 38, plenty new people to get to know, but small enough for the House to feel personal.

Wherever we were whether exploring the wild valleys of Tobago or the jungles of PNG we lit candles on Friday nights and welcomed the Sabbath. So too at Mandelbaum House the candles are lit on Friday night and Jewish festivals are celebrated in a warm-hearted and inclusive way. Important festivals and remembrance days from other cultures are also acknowledged and celebrated like Diwali.

While most residents are not Jewish, Mandelbaum House is inspired by Jewish values and traditions: compassion for each other, curiosity about the world, striving to make it a better place,chutzpah about making things happen and understanding the power of just one person, humour about the human condition and the implacable and joyous role of the kitchen and good food.

Wham, when COVID19 Delta Variant arrived during the university winter break, Shana and her team were immediately responsive, introducing free boxed lunches and dinners as breakfast is only usually provided during this vacation period. So student's interactions in the community are reduced and Mandelbaum residents, staff and the local community are more protected.

Not only does Shana and her team constantly review all aspects of the residence and recalibrate them to suit the moment but she is responsive and open to ideas. Most heart-warming of all is how the residents have stepped up to the moment and continue to create a warm and supportive community.

Thank you Shana and the Mandelbaum House team!

Rosenberg Family