

## The St Francis Xavier Worry Tree

Sometimes we come to school with a head full of worries, concerns and anxieties. Who will play with me today? Does my teacher like me? How will I tell my teacher I didn't do my homework? I upset mum this morning, I hope she is ok.

These worries can spin around in our head all day, preventing us from being happy, being able to concentrate and can also impact on our learning.

After some discussion with our leadership team, we decided we needed somewhere for our school community to put these worries. A place where they can park their worries for the day. A tree seemed like a lovely idea. Our St Francis Xavier Worry Tree is a friendly tree that takes your worries and hangs them on its branches and out of your head.

We are very fortunate that we have a parent in our school who is a very talented artist. We approached **Tea Ercoles** with our request, for her to paint us a worry tree at the entrance of our school.

Tea writes:

*An idea plagued me: how can kids leave their worries behind? One of the teachers suggested using hooks or a mail box. Children could write their worries on a bit of paper and attach them to the mural or put them into a box.*

*But those ideas didn't sit right with me. Some worries are private and come from deep inside. They're not for others to read. If a private fear or worry is revealed, and a child is teased over it, then the bond between tree and child will be broken.*

*The answer came one night. I dreamt the answer in a poem.*

**Touch our tree  
And you will find  
That all your worries  
Will be left behind.**

*So I grabbed my pencil and sketch pad that live on my bedside and scribbled it down in the dark.*

*The next day I started to draw....*

### **Something about the tree**

The trunk is twisted and stressed. It flows up through the branches, which curl and stretch out to the top of the composition, where the tree transforms into shades of red and pink around curls of abstract flowers.

These strong curls slowly float down becoming small in size and softer in their colour, becoming small blossoms and petals that flow and disappear into the wind.

The poem asks the viewer to touch it and engage with it. The poem is surrounded by floating petals in the wind which represent the letting go of worries. The grass is full of pretty little violet flowers. Purple is a spiritual healing colour, one that is appropriate for the earth in which the tree lives and grows in. I hope the mural will bring smiles to the people who touch it.