



PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2010

I am very pleased to be writing to you as the new principal of ACS (International). Having only been here for a matter of a few weeks, I am nonetheless delighted to be here, continuing to be impressed by the ethos of the school and attitudes of the students with whom I have met. In this regard I would wish to pay a particular tribute to the fine work done by the Orientation Group Leaders in organising and managing the orientation process for our new students.

Although many senior students were involved, I would wish to pay particular tribute to Ang Jun Hong, Ian Lee, Bryan Quek, Desiree Yen, Annabelle Lim, Ananya Lalwani, Vidette Wong, Chloe Yeo, Emily Yu, Daphne Yen and Desmond Kandiawan and they were mostly supported in their work by several members of the staff lead by Ms Cheryl Seah who provided the necessary unobtrusive leadership which gave her young leaders full scope to exercise their tasks. There really was a very energetic and constructive atmosphere throughout the three days of orientation with the most enjoyable campfire and supper to finish the whole process. I know very well indeed how appreciative our new students were with work done by the OGLs and I know how the whole process helped our new students to integrate into this community.

THE YEAR AHEAD

Our chapel and assemblies over the last week have focused on the opportunities presented by the year ahead and our chapel prayer which is reproduced here highlighted some of the traits to which we might aspire:

My dear lord, please give me a few friends who understand me and remain my friends, work to do which has real value without which the world would be poorer, a mind unafraid to travel even though the trail be not blazed, an understanding heart, a sense to feel, a time for quiet silent meditation, a feeling of the presence of God, the patience to wait the coming of these things with the wisdom to recognise them when they come.

Certainly the year ahead has been given inspiration by the excellent IB diploma results and I hope that this will be mirrored in the results achieved by our candidates at IGCSE. Full details of these will appear on the website.

WELCOME!

In addition to the many new students we were also able to welcome to the school faculty the following new members of staff, George Kadukkara Thomas & Reddy Adi Naryan of Science , He Xia - Mathematics, Stuart Payne - English & TOK, Mrs Thamaraiselvi – Tamil Part-Time, & Mrs Rajkumari Seeni Chelliah – history –Part-Time

EXPEDITIONS

I was impressed to learn that the school had organized two service-oriented trips over the recent holidays. Ms Haseenah Allapitchay and Ms Divya Jesudoss lead a trip to Chiangmai in Thailand. A team of 17 students with their teachers stayed at a chalet in hills of Chiangmai for four days cleaning their own washrooms, caring for the community, sharing the living quarters with the local wildlife and cooking their bread over open fires.

Each morning they would walk into to the “Ban Pha Mon” school where they will divide themselves into three teams to work on various activities to help the school; finger painting, bracelet making and sport all figured on the agenda but so too the construction of a classroom block where new skills were learnt in terms of clearing ground, selecting bricks, making mortar and laying foundations. The group also able to make donations of school supplies to assist the education of those less fortunate than themselves. The group came away with fond memories of some tough work but some remarkably fulfilling experiences with wonderful people, in a character-building experience.

Not to be outdone Ms Susan George & Ms Loke Woan Jin departed to Cambodia for service trip with a community of “Soksan Primary School” which is near medieval capital of the Khmer empire. The group helped with English, Maths and Art lessons and also taught sports and games, and setup the PE room with basic facilities. They improved the rainwater harvesting facility to organize the local water supply and provided various items of games equipment, stationery and clothing. It was clear that one the most rewarding outcomes of the trip was the bonding which took place between the students of the two schools and there is hope that the friendships formed as a consequence of this visit will continue into the future, in particular for our IB students to gain proper and meaningful experience for their Creativity and Service programme. Beyond this, the trip allowed the students to explore the lifestyle of Cambodia and a little bit about its history, including visit to Angkor Wat the scene of great medieval capital.

Both trips clearly showed the breath of education we provide in helping young people to chart a course towards a fulfilled life.

FUTURE TRIPS

There are two more trips planned in the months ahead. Mr Chin Chee Kin is organising a trip to Kyoto in Japan from 13th to 20th March. An interesting itinerary has been arranged and students have been told of this in an assembly conducted by Mr Chin. A deposit of S\$500.00 payable in cash or cheque is due

by 29 January 2010 made payable to Jolly Holidays Pte Ltd writing the full name and class on the reverse of the cheque. Queries concerning the trip should direct to Mr Chin at chekin.chin@acsinternational.com.sg;

Mr Paul West is organising another adventure and service trip to Africa this semester departing on the 3^{1st} May and returning 17th June. The group will be visit South Africa, Botswana & Zimbabwe visiting such highlights like the Okavango Delta where a safari will be conducted; game drives at the "Chobe" river and numerous other trips including one to the famous Victoria Falls. The group will also help to build a Science lab at the Mosi-Oa-Tunya new high school" in Zimbabwe. There will be a briefing to inform the students of the trip on Friday, 29th January 2010. Please note that this trip is only available to students aged 16 above at the time of the trip. Further details can be obtained from Mr West at paul.west@acsinternational.com.sg;

ACADEMIC MATTERS

I have already drawn your attention to the excellent examination results but of course education extends beyond this dimension. Our Year 1 geographers will enrich their experience with a field trip to study natural vegetation at Bukit Timah reserve rain forest learning about forest conservation with a low-altitude walk along the forest trail conducted by the local botanist and conservationist Mr Joe Lai. The groups will go out on 1st, 2nd & 5th February during school time. Further details can be obtained from Ms Ho Chia Yue at: ChiaYue.Ho@acsinternational.com.sg;

Mrs. Simmonds of the Business Studies and Economics Department is interested in extending the opportunities for our Year 6 business management students to complete coursework. Each student has to find a business currently making changes in its strategy or structure and then to write a commentary as part of the course which accounts for 25% of the marks. It is vitally important that students can find firms who are willing to assist them and to provide data that can be used for research and presentation. Obviously information will be treated confidentially as it would be seen only by the student, teacher and examiner. If any parent is able to help in this matter, please contact Mrs. Simmonds at: patricia.simmonds@acsinternational.com.sg;

The school is also running a preparation course for SATs for those interested in applying to university in the USA. The course will take place every Wednesday, commencing 3rd Feb to 28th April 2010 encompassing 21 hours of regular classroom time three computer scored diagnostic tests and an official SAT study guide. The course fee is S\$850 which covered all course materials and GST. Further details can be obtained from Testtakers at 67287476 or email info@testtakers-sg.com. Forms for the course are available at the admin. office at the school.

The co-curricular programme has already begun. Rugby training for all boys at A (under 20 years) and B (under 17 years) and C levels (under 14 years) has commenced and will take place on Mondays from 4 -6pm, Wednesdays from 5-7pm and Fridays from 4-6pm. Training kit can be purchased from Mr Ronald

Smith but students should make sure they provide their own boots. The girls are also practicing for touch rugby. We intend to participate in the national championships in the 'B' division competition and if we have sufficient interest and strength we may organise a tour to Malaysia in March to coincide with the girls' competition. For those students taking part in the tennis CCA, they should note that the heads of tennis, Ms Pamela Ng, Ms Bonny Morris & Ms He Xia have decided to focus heavily on the commitment to the sport this year. Students who did tennis last year will only be permitted to sign up for the tennis CCA at either intermediate or beginner if they have demonstrated regular attendance over the last year. We really want to give those students who really love tennis to have the opportunities to improve by having quality coaching with the emphasis on individual practice for each student. Full details will be available at the CCA fair but as demand is likely to be high we will have to accept students on a first-come first-served basis. Competitive tennis will take place on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays whilst intermediate tennis will be on Tuesday with the beginners on Thursday.

The local community Barker Road Methodist Church Preaching Point at ACS (International) has seen a growing youth Sunday school since the church started in October 2008. Classes take place every Sunday except the Sunday of the 1st week of the month (Holy Communion) and every 5th Sunday which is an activity day. If any family is interested in considering this option, please come along to the weekly service on Sunday at 10.30am in the school multi-purpose hall. Children take part in the first part of the service, singspiration, before their classes begin around 10.50am in room OB1.3. Further information is available from the Church Office or email Evelyn at eveteoh007@gmail.com;

The School Creativity Action & Service programme for the IB diploma obviously plays an important part in the community projects. The CAS programme is co-ordinated this year by Mr Paul Hannon (Y6) and Ms Sabine Lingl (Y5). Both Mr Hannon and Ms Lingl have attended the appropriate IB training and are very enthusiastic about supporting your sons and daughters in this exciting component of the IB Programme. I would remind you that the CAS programme is a core requirement of the IB diploma providing that all-important balance to the academic studies and the opportunity to discover new interests whilst developing confidence and an ability to bring about change, and develop autonomy and self reliance. Should any parent wish to find out more they should contact Mr. Paul Hannon at email: Paul.hannon@acsinternational.com.sg; and Ms Sabine Lingl at email: Sabine.lingl@acsinternational.com.sg;

PARENTS' MEETINGS

We start our meetings with parents on the following dates and times.

1. Yr 1 Parents Meeting on 30 Jan 2010 at 9.30 am
2. Yr 2, 3 and 4 Parents Information Evening at 7 pm, 1st February 2010
3. Yr 5 IB Information Evening at 7 pm, 4 February 2010

These meetings will take place in the school hall. We look forward to meet with you.

LUNAR NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS

The Lunar New Year Holidays will be from 13 Feb to 16 Feb. We have our Staff Development Day on 17 Feb. **As such, students will only need to report to school on 18 Feb 2010.** The school will celebrate the Lunar New Year in school on 12 Feb and students will be dismissed at 11.30 am. Please ensure that your child/ward is in school for this celebration. Students absent on this day without a valid medical certificate will be on **unauthorized absence from school.**

DISCIPLINE NOTE IN 2010

Attire - Please note that students should be attired appropriately for school. Students are allowed to wear the Polo T shirt on Mondays to Thursdays. On Fridays, students are expected to be in their collared shirt and tie. Only the school's hoodie cardigan will be allowed as an additional optional garment. Students are also expected to be in their PE attire when playing any sports or games. Please ensure that you child/ward has sufficient pieces of the attire.

Late coming – in addition to the number of days of absence from school, the school will also tabulate the number of days that a student has been late for school in the End of the Year Report. Early report still applies for students who have been late 4 times in a term. Demerits and a detention will be given as well. Please ensure that your child is punctual for school.

Letters from Parents - All absences from school needs to be accompanied by medical certificates. A maximum of 2 letters will be allowed per term by parents to explain their child's/ward's absence from school.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Please be considerate when dropping your child off in school. There is a three-vehicle-length yellow box junction outside the gate of Warner Court, along Taman Warna. Please follow the box junction rule and not block it. We are denying residents of both Warner Court, and those trying to turn right out from Jln Merah Saga the ability to move. We seek your co-operation in this matter.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

May I remind all parents except those on a giro to ensure they pay the school fees with immediate effect? I cannot stress enough the importance of paying fees on time not only to avoid unnecessary anguish caused by the school chasing-up on unpaid fees but also because the cash flow of the school is dependent on the fee income. As I am sure you are aware the school receives no money or whatsoever from the government resources; as we are self-financing we have to keep a very close check on all of our costs hence the need to charge fees and other extras such as lunches and other consumable materials.

I have very much enjoyed meeting many of you at the various events to mark the start of the term and school year and I hope very much to get to know more of you as the year unfolds.

With my very best wishes

P. Kerr-Fulton Peebles
Principal

STOP PRESS...I.G.C.S.E EXAMINATION RESULTS

As I am sure that you are aware I.G.C.S.E. results were released this morning: I thought, therefore, that you might appreciate some information about the success of our Year Four students in this year's diet of exams. I am delighted to report that our students have recorded some superb results with significant improvements compared to last year's results. The proportion of students gaining the top grades of A* and A has risen by 8% to 57%, with some thirteen students achieving five or more passes at A*; there have been, correspondingly, fewer students achieving the lower grades and the overall pass rate has also gone up to 94%. Unfortunately a number of students have not managed to reach the required standard for progression on the full I.B. Diploma Programme: senior staff and I will be seeing them and their parents to discuss their futures assessing not just their results but their attitude and approach to the education we provide, their disciplinary record and the viability of a course in Year 5.

As I am sure you can imagine I am thrilled that the I.G.C.S.E. cohort has achieved such palpable success. The results are a testament to the commitment of the students: they have worked assiduously and responded well to the careful direction and efforts of their teachers. They, in their turn, have worked with commendable zeal to guide the students in their studies and I pay them due tribute for their fine work.

I know that you will be very heartened by the results achieved by students of ACS (International) this year.