



## PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER –4<sup>th</sup> April 2011

Dear Parents,

Well, here goes for the second time – my initial attempt 'disappeared' from my computer screen never to return, except in the form of a previous newsletter; I am sure that you would have noticed a repeat so a new version was called for, hence the delay. I would like to blame the computer but, as it is my beloved iMac, I cannot, and must be truthful, admitting to my own incompetence and folly.

I do hope that you and your families had the chance to enjoy time together over the recent vacation and that the couple of extra days made it all seem a little less rushed and frenetic. The extra time did allow scope for a couple of trips to take place, which is a positive aspect.

### OVERSEAS TRIPS

Such trips do provide wonderful opportunities for our students to learn more about the world and its people, and undoubtedly do add an extra dimension to their education.

I was heartened that, again, the Christian Fellowship group took off to Malaysia with Mr. Chang Weng Moon, Mrs Cynthia Ang and Ms Jelin Tan. This year the Camp theme was 'The Morphing Time' and our theme verse: 2 Corinthians 3:18 ('And we... are being transformed into his likeness'). The idea of "Morphing Time" is based on an analogy between a caterpillar morphing into a beautiful butterfly and Spiritual Morphing, that is, God working in us – changing us from inside out – to be more like Jesus. Several theme talks were lined up to help the students through the process of morphing. The training also included worship, reflection and self-discovery through jungle trekking. It was heart-warming to know that at the end of the camp, the students did show signs of transformation, evident in their behaviour and reflection.

In addition, the students visited several exciting places for personal enrichment: the largest flower in the world (Rafflesia), swam at the waterfall, experienced blow-pipe shooting at an Orang Asli village, Boh Tea plantation, and the butterfly farm where they personally came in contact with exotic insects and scorpions. Above all there was the refreshing strawberries and strawberry ice-cream/shake at Raju's strawberry farm!

Not to be outdone Mr. Chin Chee Kin, Mr. Chia Choong Kiat and Ms. Audrey Moh took a party to the Maldives where environmental projects and work with a partner school blended happily with night fishing, swimming and snorkelling. Friendships were forged, new ones made and promises for return visits pledged.

## THE CURRICULUM

The idea of international-mindedness, enshrined in the I.B. Learner Profile, has also been well to the fore at the School in the last week or so. Our Languages Festival saw a wide variety of activities designed to get students thinking about how language affects culture, and *vice versa*, and the chance to practice and learn new vocabularies. Students enjoyed competition in the form of 'Boggle' and 'Scrabble' with results as follows.

SCRABBLE		BOGGLE	
1 <sup>st</sup>	Nikhil of TKK	1 <sup>st</sup>	James of GHK
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Jaswinder of TCT	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Elizabeth of GHK
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Simon of Oldham	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Sherlyn of LSG
4 <sup>th</sup>	Shasta of GHK	4 <sup>th</sup>	Sarah of TCT

The 'Amazing Race', and concluding skits and plays added a further enjoyable dimension too, and creative writing in different languages completed the rounded experience. There were also song dedications in the canteen which raised over S\$450 for the Red Cross Japan appeal. My thanks are due to Ms. Koh Leng Kim, Ms. Eniko Kiss and Ms. Audrey Moh for devising and running such an inventive programme. Although an adjunct to the Festival it is encouraging to know that our Year 3 Chinese students will be visiting the Botanical Gardens to help with their creative writing.

Our business studies students have been participating in the *Junior Achievement Titan Competition* and in the final stages (hosted by us) we were unfortunate not to be able to gain a place on the leader board: sadly the experience and power of the Singaporean American School kept us at bay. This said I am glad that we competed with commitment and vigour.

Commitment and achievement is usually recognised at this time of the year in awards at Founder's Day but the combined ACS event precluded this. We now intend to award the following students their prizes at the Student leaders' Investiture on 4<sup>th</sup> May.

<b>Year 4</b>	
OBA Gold	Maxine Tan Yibing
Han Pok Fong	Alfred the Qingyin
<b>Year 6</b>	
OBA Gold	Sarah Chan Ying Shuen
OBA Silver	Nicholas Ang Zhen Yao
Han Pok Fong	Tran Ngo Khanh Thy

We have just completed our Higher Education Fair which saw a wide range of universities and colleges represented at the School; a variety of talks was also provided. The whole day should have inspired our students to think seriously about the next stage of their education and my thanks are due to Mrs Rita Kaur for organising the day so well.

## PASTORAL MATTERS

The House system has been running now for one term and, overall, I have been very pleased with the way that all members of the community have adapted to the change. It has been rather frenetic getting used to new routines and systems but it was important to focus strongly on all these aspects, and on competition to engender the right spirit and give the new idea a fair chance of life in its infancy. I did promise to



the School that we would keep the whole concept under review and so we conducted an on-line satisfaction survey (including questions about the canteen) at the start of this term, and will do so regularly during the year. The results are summarised below and I am sure that you will agree with me that they make encouraging reading, especially as we are only just in to Term 2. This said we are not complacent and will need to keep a careful eye on how we ensure that this fine start is reinforced over the coming months.

QUESTION	% AGREE/ STRONGLY AGREE
My Housemaster/mistress (HsM) communicate house goals clearly	92.5
My HsM has organised the House activities well	89.5
My HsM has set a good example for us to follow	93.5
My HsM has encouraged us	93.4
My HsM has led the House Tutors and students well	91.7
I have more friends through the House system	64.6
I know people at the School better through the House system	54.4
I am satisfied with the leadership of my House Tutor	88.1
I enjoy working with my peers	90.8
I am happy with the leadership of the School	78.7
I am proud to be involved in House activities	85.5
I like the House I am in	83.9
I have contributed to and participated in House activities	92.2
My buddy is helpful	86.0
I feel that I belong to the House and School	82.6
I have more leadership opportunities through the House system	72.1
I have more opportunities to participate in School life through the House system	81.1
The PSHE lessons have taught me life skills that I need	67.5
The leadership training has taught me skills that I need as a leader	74.0
I understand the IB Learner profile	71.1
I am satisfied with the food provided in the canteen	62.0
I am satisfied that there is enough variety of food in the canteen	63.6
I am satisfied with the price of food in the canteen	41.7

The Food Committee comprising our caterer, staff, students and parents has met to discuss these results and a number of strategies and menu suggestions have been considered: hopefully this will help to raise the levels of gastronomic satisfaction.

### THE CO-CURRICULUM

One of the highlights of the end of last term was the House Singing Competition which proved – despite strong evidence to the contrary in Chapel services – that our students can sing, and sing well. It was wonderful to see all the students and staff participating together and enjoying (for the most part!) the whole process. Our adjudicator, noted tenor Mr. Melvin Tan (ably hindered by the Principal), had a hard task to separate the top three houses, although the winner on the day was surely singing in the context of a community.

POSITION	HOUSE	POSITION	HOUSE
1 <sup>ST</sup>	TCT	5 <sup>TH</sup>	CKS
2 <sup>ND</sup>	TKK	6 <sup>TH</sup>	GHK
3 <sup>RD</sup>	Oldham	7 <sup>TH</sup>	Thoburn
4 <sup>TH</sup>	SVM	8 <sup>TH</sup>	LSG



Sport has not figured so highly yet this term although I am delighted to report that our junior footballers beat Excelsior International School 7-3, and our netball team beat OFS convincingly 26-7.

I hope that our Interactors, participating in the annual gladiatorial debate in the arena of the Italian Model UN in Rome, have communicated their ideas well – they represented (topically enough) the Ivory Coast. I look forward to hearing how they fared.

Our awareness of global issues was also honed somewhat as we sweated and peered our way through Earth Hour (albeit a day early): lights were turned off and air conditioning was eschewed as our way of raising awareness of the important issue of climate change and responsible use of our planet's resources.

Speaking of responsibility reminds me that the School is hosting the *Total Teens Transformation Camp* on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> May. Full details appear at the end of this letter.

### **STAFFING**

I was not able to complete all aspects of staffing in time for the start of the year because three new colleagues were not able to complete their existing contracts in time to begin in January. Happily that situation has been rectified with the arrival of Ms. Victoria Sargent in English, Ms. Orla Kelly in French and German, and Mrs. Irina Fieraru in science. We also enjoyed the company of two colleagues from our sister school in Jakarta, ACS International (Jakarta), who spearheaded thereby what we hope will be a fruitful series of collaborations in the future.

### **PRIMARILY FOR PARENTS – TERM DATES**

I wish to intimate a change to term dates with an apology for having to change them: despite wide consultation nobody spotted that a later start to the year in 2012 would bring us very close to the Lunar New Year. This would have made it difficult for many of our students who would have had to make long journeys in quick succession and may have even be tempted not to bother arriving back until after LNY. We also wanted to avoid the disruptive start to Year 5 by waiting until the IGCSE results were released. I very much hope that the changes made will not be too disruptive for you.

<b>TERM 4 2011</b>	
Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> November	Term ends
	Graduation & Speech Night
Saturday 19 <sup>th</sup> November	Graduation Ball
<b>TERM 1 2012</b>	
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> January	Orientation for new students
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> January	Orientation for new students
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> January	School starts – ALL students except Year 5
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> January	School starts for Year 5

PSP would like to initiate fundraising for our new school library in the form of dessert sales. We are privileged to have a very generous and kind sponsor, who is the brother of one of our parents, and he has flown in frozen American cakes, the likes of which you find at American coffee outlets and hotels.



We have on hand an amazing range of desserts from which to choose. They only need to be thawed and are ready to be served. These very delicious desserts are available for you to order and can be kept frozen for months and enjoyed at leisure. Please browse the list on the order form at the end of this letter and place your orders by emailing or faxing it to us. You may also drop the form into the box at the School Reception. Also, please note the two collection dates and be sure to indicate your preference clearly on your form.

Thank you for making your contribution towards our new library and we know you, your family and friends will thoroughly enjoy these delectable desserts.

PSP would also like to encourage parents to volunteer to assist on International Day on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April: this is an enjoyable day of activities and, naturally enough, food. If you are at all interested please let PSP know on [acspsp.net@gmail.com](mailto:acspsp.net@gmail.com).

Finally can I make another plea about meetings with members of staff? We are always pleased to see parents on a face-to-face basis to discuss matters of concern but please do remember that all of us are involved in teaching and other aspects of running the School: there is no guarantee that staff will be available to see you without an appointment. We really do not want to cause offence by having parents wait for long periods, or to have to turn you away if an appointment has not been made and staff cannot see you at that time. We can usually manage to see parents within 24 hours so please do not hesitate to call to arrange a suitable time; of course a genuine emergency is a different matter but, mercifully, these are relatively rare occurrences. Thank you for your co-operation and understanding.

With my warmest wishes.

Yours sincerely



P Kerr Fulton-Peebles  
Principal