



Saints Times

YEAR 2022 - 2023

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRINCIPAL



To our dear Marian Family

Greetings from all of us at St. Mary's. Our school year is finally coming to an end as we close yet another year to allow our students to rest and spend some quality time with their families. We know that as parents you don't always get to spend as much time with them as you would like and we hope that you can all spend some meaningful family moments together this summer.

Looking back on this year, I am proud to see how far we have come as a school. Our students have engaged in a variety of activities throughout the year. They have taken part in competitions, challenged each other in meaningful Model United Nations debates, shown their innovative skills in science and enjoyed fun outings with their classmates.

I want to personally thank the students and their families who come to the end of their Marian journey this year for being a part of our Marian Family, and I wish you all the brightest of futures.

Thank you to all our staff for working tirelessly and caring for the children that have been entrusted to your care. Many thanks to all of our parents for your collaboration and understanding.

As we look to the next academic year, I offer a warm welcome to all the new students starting at St. Mary's and their families. We look forward to seeing you all in August.

We offer our Marian Family our sincere and heartfelt blessings for a safe and happy summer holiday.

Warm wishes,

Mr. Paul Asir Joseph
(Principal)

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Academic

PREFECT INVESTITURE CEREMONY

Shaping the future today through the leaders of tomorrow

- Fariha Mahmood, Senara Fernando & Ethann Danthi



Responsibility and leadership are integral disciplines in the St. Mary's curriculum, and in accord with this, our aspiring leaders stepped up and rose to the task on the 8th of November, 2022, as they pledged in on their designated roles, steering their student body to clearer waters; paving the way for generations to come.

The day in itself was no easy feat - days, weeks, months - our student council underwent innumerable hours of intensive and rigorous preparation within and after school timings. The prefect batch of this academic year was made aware of their significant roles a month or so prior to the event and so grew increasingly apprehensive by the minute. Our headboy and headgirl were well informed of the traditions surrounding this occasion and so began with their speech preparations the instant they were elected.

Our prefects spent countless hours perfecting their iconic entrance in the spirit of school pride; ensuring their march into the hall was military-grade synchronized, their respective flags were hoisted high with passion and their uniformity in alignment which would soon be allusive to the common desire to conform to our deeply valued Marian promise and the responsibility to be shining examples to the future generations of the Marian Family.



And thus the ever so anticipated day had finally arrived. One where the head boy, head girl, and their respective assistants, house captains and vice house captains, along with all the prefects, await to be entrusted with the incomparable responsibilities of carrying the school's shining legacy. With the students all reunited and gathered together in one hall, the environment of a leading prospect is set, alongside the theatrical entrance music setting the motion and the arrival of the undivided class of the propitious future.

For the academic year 2022-2023, our elected representatives and student body leaders, are Headboy Ethann Danthi and Headgirl Senara Fernando, bolstered by Assistant Head Girls – Rhea Araujo and Shaivi Cardozo – and Assistant Head Boys – Aaron George and Timothy Dias –

who had all sworn in to serve their fellow students and teachers in the spirit of commitment and fervidity. The Sports Captains intently partook in the badging and oath-taking ceremony, promising to utilize their leadership qualities and determination to bring out the best of abilities within their Houses. The Magical and Peaceful Unicorns declared Hayley Viegas and Adithyan Ramesh as their House Captains, along with Jac Hernandez and Vernon Figueredo serving as its Vice Captains. Josna Ouseppachan and Chengetai Mushayahembe were elected Captains of the Swift Pegasus, with trusted assistance from Vice Captains Althea Gamarose and Jonathan George. The Legendary Gryffons are championed by House Captains Mikylla Almirol and Nathan Thomas, with the assistance of Vice Captains Maryam Maher and Mohammed Ali Danish. Lastly, the Immortal Phoenix is guided by House Captains Saba Dargahi and Myron Colaco, with the help of their Vice Captains Tiara Schwallie and Jacob Manoj.

Promptly after, the students' input commenced, as the Headboy and Headgirl delivered their speeches. "As headboy, I believe it is my duty not only to represent and serve my fellow students but also to build bridges between all people in this school community, whether it be students or staff, so that we are a cohesive unit enriching each other's lives", remarked Ethann, looking forward to creating a sense of community within the diverse system of culture and beliefs represented by our Marian Family. "With great power comes great responsibility", quoted Senara, from the renowned Spiderman Franchise, in hopes to work "closely in collaboration with each and every Marian" and "in unison to keep the St. Mary's flag mounted high with love and hoisted with dignity and pride." The two have admitted to feeling quite anxious about the whole ordeal, keeping in mind the expectations from the school community, however they embraced their titles and vowed to use their platforms for the betterment of the St. Mary's community.



Devout to sculpting the school's potential, fellow prefects had a lot to say, "Being appointed house captain of Pegasus was both a privilege and honor. But more importantly, it was also an opportunity as I was able to step out of my comfort zone and undertake the responsibilities of a leader; motivating and bringing out the best in our young Pegasus athletes. Seeing their hard work come to fruition felt like a massive achievement and I'm grateful for that experience", says Josna. "So far my experience as a prefect has been both a big responsibility that I had to do, and there were a lot of expectations for me especially from the teachers to be a good role model to the young students but at the same time it has been really rewarding. Thus far, I am loving the experience. I find it really rewarding to be able to serve my school and to help the canteen lines, the clinic, and yea, it's been fun, chaotic and just rewarding", says Katie Velasquez of the Prefects.

As leaders of the student body, the main goal of the prefects was to set examples for those who looked up to us. Determined to inspire the young Marians into being responsible and respectful students - we had to lead by action. Following the Marian Promise, we promised to serve those around us, fostering a school community committed to the idea of togetherness and mutual respect. Being prefects also meant ensuring discipline amongst the students, in order to uphold the shining image of the school that the prefects before us had worked so diligently to sustain.



The future of the school is dependent upon the prefects that proceed us, that they may follow in the footsteps of the past student leaders and take up the mantle of taking care of our school. Together , our batch of prefects shall bear testament to our motto, "The End Crowns the Work."





GRADUATION 2022

One of the most unforgettable and solemn events of the school year.

- Mikylla Almirol & Kyle Tarrobal



“Every person you meet knows something you don’t; learn from them.”
— Jackson Brown Jr

The night of 17th November, 2022 was indeed a much anticipated time for the school community. The solemn, yet celebratory event saw the graduating class of 2021-22 don their gowns and caps and proudly accept their diplomas. The event took place in the main hall which was beautifully decorated in the Marian colors of blues, silvers and whites. In attendance to bear witness to this happy occasion were parents, SLT, teachers and other honored guests of the school. The ceremony opened with the grand entrance of the graduates from the O-Level batch of 2021-2022 led into the hall by the secondary teachers who had so passionately taught these students..

Our Primary School Section Head, Ms. Rose Libreja, who was our emcee on this merry night, guided everyone present in the hall throughout the ceremonious occasion enthusiastically.



Officially opening the proceedings for the night, our Principal, Mr. Paul Asir Joseph, addressed the gathering, congratulating the students for their hard work and dedication. Mr. Joe Flynn, MD, St. Mary's Group of Schools, spoke next, on the socio - economic aspects of the UAE and about what St. Mary's students may contribute to it. Dr. Al Kindi, the school's sponsor then addressed the assembly and spoke about the foundation of education in the UAE, encouraging every student to aspire and work towards their goals in academics and careers, even more diligently. Tokens of gratitude were then presented to these honored guests.



What followed these inspiring speeches was a pianist's treat, entertaining the hall with enjoyable melodies that echoed throughout the hall. Ruchith George from year 10 literally wove magic with his fingers on the piano.

And finally it was time for the main event! The roll call of graduates started. The efforts of the 2021-2022 O Level batch students throughout the 3-year course from Year 9 to Year 11, without compromising their ambitions had finally come to fruition.





As Ms. Kankanika Dutta called each name, the students went on stage and proudly accepted their hard earned diplomas as teachers, guests and parents applauded and congratulated these students' hard work and dedication to their studies. Mr. Joe Flynn and Sr. Jacintha Cutinha, our Directress, awarded the girls and Mr. Paul and Dr. Al Kindi awarded the boys, individually congratulating each on their achievement.

After this jubilant bestowing of diplomas, the school choir, led by Ms. Neesha D'Souza and Ms. Delushi Fernando proceeded to awe the gathering with two spectacular pieces specially prepared for the night; an instrumental showcase of the "Mission Impossible" theme song – executed by a talented and hardworking ensemble of violinists, pianists and flutists from Year 7 to 9!

While this performance was truly memorable for its sheer brilliance of execution and the sounds that echoed throughout the hall, what followed was even more impressive. The passionate vocalists from Year 7 to 11 stunned the crowd with their superb rendition of the famed melodies, "You Raise Me Up" and "Super Trooper".

With their high notes soaring as high as the graduates' grades, these lovely performances were perfect to balance the solemn atmosphere of the graduates starting new chapters in their academic paths after being united as Marians in our school for so many years.



After this musical extravaganza it was time for the outstanding achiever's awards. Our school customarily honors those students who exceed the boundaries of expectations and dazzle by rising up to the challenge. The top three students from both the boys and girls batches are selected for this award. Our top six attained the glory they so richly deserved with their dedication and hard work to excel in being the best of the best in their batch. This year the outstanding performers were: Senara Fernando and Aaron George in third place, Kiah Dsouza and Aryan Idnani in second place and Josna Ouseppachan and Ethann Danthi in the well deserved top spot.

Our valedictorian Josna Ouseppachen was next up on stage, speaking on behalf of her fellow students. In her valedictory address she spoke of her learning journey and experience with SMCHS, the struggles of the students during the unforeseen pandemic and the rewarding outcome of graduating successfully. She thanked the parents, teachers and fellow students who stood with them in these trying times as they worked towards achieving this milestone in their lives. Josna's inspiring speech, also had an important message. In a bid to encourage the juniors as well as remind the present graduates of the hard work ahead of them, she quoted Jackson Brown Jr. who said "Every person you meet knows something you don't; learn from"

This was followed by the Pearson Edexcel High Achievers' awards. Ms. Sreeparna Gupta, called forth the students who impressed the Board with their brilliant minds that brimmed with originality and excelled in their subjects to come forward and accept their awards. Mr. Warren D'souza came on stage next, for the Merit Lister's roll call, reiterating the fact that consistency is key when it comes to academics.

An unexpected announcement followed the valedictory address as the school surprised everyone with another set of awards. The "Outstanding Learners Pearson Awards" for the highest marks in the Country, Middle East and World in each subject. Ms. Vichitra Gabriella, our Pearson Edexcel Examination Officer announced the names of these students who have made St. Mary's proud by their academic brilliance. Mr. Paul and Mr. Joe Flynn handed out the awards to the following students:

The highest score in the world for GCSE Chemistry

- **Ethann Thomas Danthi**

The highest score in the world for IGCSE ICT

- **Jana Arkoush.** (Jana was unfortunately not present to receive her award in person)

The highest score in IGCSE Accounting in the country

- **Gajendera Lahiru Premasinghe.**

The highest score in IAL Accounting in the Middle East

- **Trevor Francis Fernandes**





The thunderous applause that rocked the halls was truly a testament to the perseverance and hard work of these students when it comes to their studies.

The night was still young and there was more in store. The students of the 2021-2022 graduating batch stormed the stage in a special performance to loud cheers as they danced with abandon, showcasing their talents with great joy for their fellow classmates, teachers, special guests and parents. The crowd went wild, the jollity of the dancers infectious, as they rocked the stage celebrating the victory they had worked so hard for.

Our headboy, Ethann Danthi ended the evening with a closing speech in which he expressed his gratitude and appreciation towards the school, teachers and parents for celebrating the accomplishments of the students and making the graduation event a grand success. The culture of learning we got from St. Mary's has great value in our lives and the Marian promise will forever stay with us.



BATTLE AGAINST THE REAL WORLD

A sneak peek into the real world
beyond school

Alyanna Masahud & Priyasha Chugh



After the devastating authentic high school years lost to Covid, we have been again blessed to first-hand learn in-depth about various national and international universities. Whether someone is preparing for studies abroad or still deciding on a field, the presence of university consultants has certainly reduced the stress that comes with university admissions.



NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES

The inaugural university fair, held on October 5, 2022, was a great opportunity for senior students of SMCHS to interact with several prestigious universities in the UAE, such as NYU AD, Zayed University, Emirates Aviation University, and more. At the fair, students received assistance from the representatives through various means, such as forums, emails, (and 1-on-1 phone calls in the near future). They offered Bachelor's and Master's degrees in various fields, preparing students for international job opportunities and contributing to the UAE's cosmopolitan growth, and emphasized how solid language fundamentals are favored in top-notch universities.

"Heriot-Watt's offerings caught my eye the most due to its known excellence in IT courses in the country. The staff at the stand were quick to clear any doubts I had and even gave brief explanations on scholarship discounts and fees through a comprehensive booklet."

— Jarred Balcita (Year 11)



INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES

As for the international aspect, our school arranged a Canadian university fair on the 20th of February 2023.

Many students were charmed by the propositions narrated by Durham College, University of Waterloo, and University of Alberta.

Senior students were made aware of when & where to apply including when to start preparations for university applications & documents; detailed discussions on courses, co-ops, accommodation, scholarships, requirements like IELTS, extracurricular activities and the standard grade qualifications in both O-level and A-level grades.



"When I learned about Brock University Canada, I became interested in its campus life, reasonable fees, various courses, and especially athlete scholarships. The assistants were also nice and interactive. This motivated me to take my studies more seriously as they require a specific grade average that I know I can exceed with more effort."

— **Angela Marquez (Year 11)**

"The University of Waterloo representatives were candid about the difficulties of studying abroad, which I appreciated. However, the fair mainly showcased expensive universities, limiting the range of options. Regardless, the high standards of the universities encouraged me to work harder in school."

— **Lisath Fernando (Year 12)**

It is safe to say everyone left the fair feeling more dedicated than ever to excel in any upcoming assessments, mocks and boards in the best interest of future studies.

The revival of university fairs organized by our school has proven to be a valuable resource for students preparing for higher education, providing a wide range of options from both national and international universities. Overall, the students of SMCHS highly recommend attending a university fair to gather information and make informed decisions about future education.



THE DAY SAINTZ MET THE QUEEN



- Kate Nicole Velasquez & Delisha Dias

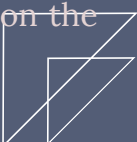
A deep dive into
MS. ONJALI Q RAUF'S
visit to Saint Mary's....
And why you should grab a
copy of one of her books as
soon as you finish this
article..!

A quiet, excited hush settled across our school's main hall as the one and only, Onjali Q, Rauf, strutted across the stage, adorably carrying her stuffed toys on her shoulders. This best-selling author has received many awards, ranging from the 2019 Waterstones Children's Book Prize to being appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the 2022 New Year Honors. But, perhaps, her biggest achievement is being the founder of the organisation "Making Herstory".

She graciously accepted the invitation to visit Saint Mary's Catholic High School on the 2nd of February 2023, in special appreciation of our primary students who won the Chevron Reader's Cup last year. And the school in collaboration with the English department and the librarians did their best to make her visit a truly memorable one.

Rauf has a stellar collection of children's books under her belt. From the iconic 'The Boy at the Back Of The Class' to 'The Star Outside My Window', 'The Lion Above The Door' and 'The Day We Met The Queen', this is the one common denominator amongst all the books this celebrated writer has written: she unapologetically writes books about issues that are 'not suitable for kids' - such as racism, domestic abuse, poverty and more - but are very real. She will enable the next generation, one book at a time, to tackle these very real-world issues by engaging and educating them in an impactful and sincere way.

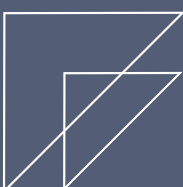
The days leading up to the visit saw the children all excited. The kids made a welcome sign for Onjali, a collage made with messages that finally looked like the cover of her all time bestseller, Boy at the Back of the Class. Our students were also very interested in owning Onjali's books, so much so that the school had trouble keeping up with the demand. Ms. Renthi, our librarian, recounts how she ordered some copies of Ms Rauf's books to sell to students who may be interested in them. Little did she know, these copies would be sold out by the end of the day! Ms. Renthi joked, "I finally had to go out and buy more copies of Onjali's books just to put on the library shelves!"



The long wait for the much anticipated Author's Visit was absolutely worth it! One could feel all the students' goosebumps collectively rise as they leaned in, listening attentively to the breathtaking and captivating stories from the refugee camps Ms Rauf volunteered in. Onjali showed the tragic picture of a young drowned Syrian boy laying face down on the lapping shores on Turkey beaches.

Ms Rauf had been volunteering tirelessly at refugee camps long before she first picked up a pen to start writing "The Boy At The Back Of The Class". She actually "walks the walk" and goes out to make an impact for these less fortunate members of society. The main focus of her best-seller is to zoom in on the refugee crisis and the individual sufferings migrants endure, all juxtaposed beautifully by being narrated from an innocent child's viewpoint. This is why her books stand out from others in the genre - there is a certain richness to them which alludes to the fact that all the experiences that have been written in these pages are echoes of stories that she herself witnessed and lived through. It was heavily influenced by the children she had interacted with in the refugee camps of Calais and Dunkirk in France. One child, in particular, is Baby Raehan (to whom the book is dedicated), whose mother Zainab she met in Calais when she was heavily pregnant with him.

Just by listening to her passionate and inspiring answers to the thoughtful and intelligent questions asked by our students, plus watching her patiently sit down and personally sign each copy of her books brought by our students, and seeing how well she captivated each student who entered the main hall with stories worth remembering, we can confidently say that every single student who entered the main hall that day walked out a different person. Every student knew who Baby Raehan was, just by listening to Miss Rauf's passionate talks. We are all empowered to be a catalyst for positive change in our lives by listening to someone as passionate as a force as Ms Rauf. She truly is one-of-a-kind, and we are honoured to have spent time with her that day. She also met with and congratulated the current year's second place winners of the Chevron Readers Cup.



A highlight from Onjali's visit is hearing her passionately speak about her debut non-fiction title, "Hope on The Horizon". If there's anything we, as the next generation of leaders and innovators, can gain from Rauf's books, it's this: where there is life, there is hope. There is hope if we manage to put aside our differences and work together to make this world better than how we entered it. If we finally open our eyes to the suffering of the less fortunate all around us, we can see that there is always something we can do to help, and when we stand up courageously against these issues and fight on behalf of the victims and refugees that do not have the opportunity to do so themselves, we can ensure that all people have enough to eat, have clothes to wear and have access to education (a gift so many of us have taken for granted), and ensure that they all feel welcome in a world that not just feels like a house, but rather a home.

"The entire world is full of hearts searching for a place to call home. But refugees are different because they don't just look for a home. They look for peace too. And because of that, they possess the most special hearts anyone could ever have."

-Onjali Rauf, *The Boy At The Back Of the Class*

REVIEWS FROM THE ATTENDEES:

"I was very excited because I had bought Onjali's book- "Boy At The Back Of The Class", and I was very happy at the session because she told us about her past experiences, about her brother and a story about a boy named Raehan, and I even got the book signed!"

- Abigail Draper, 5A

"The session was good! She explained the meaning of all her books, and she engaged with the children. She gave her signatures to all the children who had her book and picked certain students and answered all their questions. I had fun!"

- Khloe Velasquez 6A



EMIRATES AIRLINE FESTIVAL OF LITERATURE



- Kate Nicole Velasquez, Enoch Musyoki & Katie Velasquez

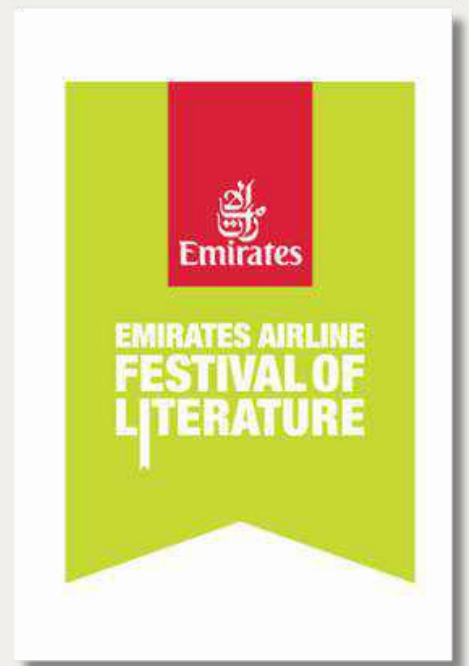
SAINTZ FEARLESSLY BATTLED IT OUT IN THE BIGGEST ANNUAL LITERATURE FESTIVAL COMPETITIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST!

What is Emirates Literature Festival?

The Emirates Airline Festival Of Literature was one of the biggest literary events in the Middle East this past year, for authors and book-lovers alike. It was jam packed with discussions, workshops , seminars and competitions diving deep into the literary world with local and international writers who have gathered for one thing: their love for the art of storytelling



This event had an amazing line up of authors and public personalities, ranging from Cecelia Ahern, the prominent author of PS I Love You, comedian David Walliams and David Koepp, the screenwriter of Jurassic Park - who to everyone's amazement actually came to the event virtually to expose the mastery behind how he writes the movies that are almost destined to become blockbuster cash-cows. Now we know they lied when they said magicians never reveal their secrets.



This event was an absolutely glorious celebration proclaiming the sheer power of literature, as H.H. Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, The Chairman of Emirates Literature Foundation couldn't have said it better: "These extraordinary writers bring new ideas and different perspectives, promoting dialogue, sharing their works, their thoughts, and their words, building bridges across cultures."

This year our school had collaborated extensively with the Emirates Literature Festival. Welcoming Onjali Q Rauf, the author of "The Boy At The Back Of The Class" for a book signing with the primary kids, after our students had won the Reader's Cup last year! Also, our school had participated in 3 competitions these past few months: the Chevron Readers Cup, Emirates NBD Poetry for All Competition, Oxford University Press Story Writing Competition and The RGS Guildford Dubai Children's Letter Writing Competition.

The love our students have for literature was evident from the record number of students who took part in the preliminary rounds for Readers Cup and Poetry. Once the participants were selected, what followed was months of preparations guided by our librarian and our English teachers along with two of our parent volunteer champions, Mrs. Charmaine Albuquerque and Mrs. Sona Rajesh.



CHEVRON READER'S CUP

The Chevron Reader's Cup is the LitFest's annual reading competition that's open to all the GCC bookworms, and this year more than 5000 of those bookworms had merrily taken part. For the first round, teams of 4 students from various schools competed in a test based on 3 books, testing their ability to recall and remember intricate details behind their chosen books. The 20 teams with the highest scores then compete in the cutthroat final round for the Cup. This year, the preliminary round to select the school teams itself saw a record number of students signing up. Finally 4 English and 3 Arabic teams were selected and started preparing under the guidance of Mr. Ahmed, Ms. Gehan, Ms. Shymaa and Ms. Renthi.



The teams that represented our school were:

A READER'S TALE -

Jhanina Romano, Joshua Chettiar, Ava David and Veronica Malubay

THE ROGUE READERS -

Jhadrian Romano, Danielle Correia, Mena Admassu and Shaun Sithu

JEWELS OF ST. MARY'S -

Jiovani Armia, Mohammed Ahmed, Nourseen Mohammed and Karas Sabri

CHAMPIONS OF ST. MARY'S -

Armia Rady, Raghad Mohammed, Karas Akram and Kathreen Ramon

WHERE THE WILD BOOKS ARE -

Jessica Sylvester, Ysabella, Qazi Umer and Isabella Lauren Mayogba

TEQUILA MOCKINGBIRD -

Qazi Ali, Aliza Asif, Jewindu Sechitha and Karis Kingston

SECONDARY ARABIC -

Cecelia Ayman. Lamar Mohammed, Meshkat Basheer and Karen Amgad



After a fierce semi-final round, all three of our senior teams, Arabic and English, got into their respective top 20s for finals. And “Where the Wild Books Are” eventually secured second place, winning awesome medals, certificates and a 500 AED book voucher (also awesome). “I would consider the baked goods Miss Renthí made throughout the year a prize too,” Isabella, member of “Where The Wild Books Are” confessed.

We sat down with Jessica and Isabella, two members from the winning team to congratulate them and ask her a few questions about her experience. They detailed their preparation process with Ms Renthí, our beloved librarian. They were tasked with reading their assigned book more than once and compiling a list of questions on a Google Doc. “Very tedious, ” said Isabella, “but it does work, you do end up remembering everything about the book if you make questions.”

“I think we made 100 questions per chapter,” Jessica joked. They then met every Tuesday to quiz each other, improving their ability to recall small, yet important facts from the books. Isabella urges future competitors to start preparations as early as possible “The one thing I did, that I would not recommend anyone to do is procrastinate on reading and making questions. We were told to individually make questions on each chapter. So as soon as you get the book, read it once and then immediately start from the beginning, putting in questions in the document you will inevitably receive from Miss Renthí in your Gmail.”

It was hard balancing their Reader’s Cup preparation with their school coursework, but Jessica leaves helpful pieces of advice for future competitors:

“There’s this quote, ‘When the going gets tough, the tough get going.’ The Reader’s Cup is kind of hard but it is fun and it represents our school. Do your best and have fun.”



POETRY, STORY WRITING AND LETTER WRITING COMPETITION

Another competition our students attended is the Emirates NBD Poetry for All Competition, calling all students ages 8-18 to memorize and recite their chosen poems with passion and feeling, honoring the Arab World's influential oral traditions.

We are truly proud of these venturous students who actively participated in this competition and showcased their love for drama and performing:

Linethma (Year 11) , Zenaida (Year 7),
Abner (Year 5) , Marilyn (Year 8),
Natalie (Grade 9) and Wenuri (Year 10)

We spoke to Wenuri (who did "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night" by Dylan Thomas) , Natalie (she recited "Power of the dog" by Rudyard Kipling) and Linethma (who recited "Lady Lazarus" by Sylvia Plath) about their experience in the Poetry Competition.

All three recounted the mixture of nervousness and excitement on competition day.



To encourage more students to join this amazing poetry competition next year, they gave awe-inspiring pieces of advice to the next year's competitors. Wenuri recounted how she "lost [herself] in the poem and got very much into character," and suggested for future competitors to do the same. Natalie said, "My recital really relies on how I present myself rather than how other people see me," and she advises that "Trying to do your best is way better than trying to be the best." Finally, Linethma urges future reciters, "Don't be embarrassed to be dramatic. The actual point of poetry is to be dramatic and to be your character. Don't be scared to show it off."

We could feel their passion for literature and poetry just from this short interview we conducted with them. Our students are not just talented at reciting literature, they are also adept and competent at producing and writing wonderful short pieces of it as well.

This was evident as our students from across grades also attended The Oxford University Press Story Writing Competition and The RGS Guildford Dubai Children's Letter Writing Competition. The theme for both was "Old Friends." We were well pleased by the number of eager students who made their presence felt in these competitions. Our students never fail to amaze and inspire us!

The continued enthusiasm for the Reader's Cup, Poetry Reciting, Story Writing and Letter Writing Competitions each year is impressive and greatly appreciated. What a fantastic effort shown by all our students!

Hurrah for the Saintz!



All the World's a Stage...

A week packed with endless fun-filled activities that unearthed a passion for reading many didn't know they even possessed.

- Althea Gamarose, Aryana Perera, Erin Fernandes,
Chengetai Mushayahembe, Saba Dargahi



The arrival of our first ever Book Week had sparked a certain excitement in the air. St Mary's was alit. Emblazoned with the passion for the arts; a passion honed as the days went by, from quizzes to bookswaps to plays and costume parties, we had it all. For at least one week amongst the mundane many, all the world felt as a stage at St Mary's!

DAY 1: QUIZ

The first day of Book Week was specially curated for years 7 & 8, who eagerly filled the main hall while buzzing with excitement. Their task was simple: to correctly answer questions based on a series of prompts- and they did not disappoint!

The questions were highly diverse, ranging from easy ones such as the names of fictional characters and settings in some books, to more challenging questions like the date at which some books were published. Some questions challenged even the most dedicated literature enthusiasts, questions like “What was the first novel ever written?” Everyone confidently thought it was “The Bible” , however we were embarrassed to find out that the answer was actually ‘The Tale Of Genji’ written in 1008 Japan, to this day it leaves us dumbfounded.

But other fan favorite highlight questions included:

Q: What is the best selling horror novel of all time?

A: Frankenstein

Q: What is the most expensive book in the world?

A: Joseph Smith’s ‘Book of Mormon’ sold for 35 million!

The atmosphere was electric as students shouted in desperation in order to get their answers across, but only the first person to get the attention of the mic holders and could correctly answer the questions asked would be awarded a delectable treat for their knowledge. And with that the first day of our SMCHS book week came to a satisfying end.



DAY 2: BOOK SWAP

Day two of Book Week kicked off, with Secret Santa's more dignified, solemn cousin: Book Swapping (yayyyy!). In which all class teachers, notified their students prior, to bring in the books they have long abandoned on their shelves, the books replaced by Wattpad and the ebooks.

Nevertheless, the kiddos brought in their dusty books, intended to be "swapped" with their friends. The day's festivities consisted of drawing lots that determined the order in which the children could exchange their own books for the better ones offered up by their classmates. It was a book barter like no other; as literary classics like the Harry Potter books were exchanged for other literary classics.

Meanwhile, in the primary section, the exchange was taken up a whole notch as it was conducted on the stage, in the Mini Hall! The kiddos went nuts! "It felt like Christmas in March, if only the gifts under the tree were old, borrowed books," I heard a kid say. All the children cherished the experience, their enthusiasm and genuine joy is what makes the tedious planning of events such as these truly worth it. Consequently, it makes it all the more important for us kids, to be grateful for our dedicated and considerate teachers, who had invested the immense amount of effort within this week to give us these core memories that we'll surely treasure well into our adulthood (I wasn't paid to say that- I promise).

To conclude, day two can only be summarised by saying that- the nerds had a blast, while all the cool kids got to take home a brand-new coaster or two, so really everybody was happy.



Everyone's a winner at the Book Swap!

DAY 3: ONE MINUTE ACTS

For day 3, year 9 and 10 students were challenged with the task of summarising complex plots through brief acts, the books ranging from Harry Potter to Great Expectations. Of course, they went above and beyond, producing riveting plays in groups of 2-7, with flair and enthusiasm.

The highlights composed of stellar enactments of abiding pieces of literature such as Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoyevsky in which Victor, Shanon, Cayden, Zalon, and Ronith of 9C surpassed crowd expectations through their commendable portrayal of the protagonist and antagonist alongside their masterful and inventive use of props in order to truly bring some of the pinnacle points of the book to life. Moreover, a rendition of Frankenstein by Mary Shelley was staged, wherein Delisha and Daniel from 10D and 10F exceeded the limits with their meritorious dedication to showcase the gothic and gloomy atmosphere of the novel through their stage presence.

The main hall was bursting with excitement and anticipation from everyone in the audience, as they rushed to raise their hands to guess the book being performed. Those who were quick were rewarded with tempting prizes of chocolates.



DAY 4: DRESS UP AS YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK CHARACTER

To end the eventful 'Book week', students were asked to dress up as their favourite book characters and they did not disappoint! From Harry Potter to Wednesday to Greg Heffley (and so many more), the costumes were spectacularly executed, with great effort taken to resemble their chosen book character. As 'Book Week' came to a close, the last day encompassed pictures being taken of the creativity displayed by our Marians particularly in embodying their favourite characters and overall the event encouraged a sense of cohesion amongst the students as well as the teachers as some even chose to group up and dress as a series of related characters, dabbling in the demeanour and appearance of the very characters that defined their childhood.

And some of our friends in honour of saying goodbye to their childhoods, had come up with some genuinely awesome costumes. Some honourable mentions include: Salma Naim whose awe inspiring Oscar worthy makeup skills had made her the ghoulish, most gruesome joker us kids had ever seen, she would have made Joaquin Phoenix himself jump. Other genius pieces like Carl Pacana's 2 in 1 Clark Kent- Superman costume was nothing short of brilliant, he literally wore a full suit over a Superman T-Shirt, so he could transform immediately at will by just pulling his shirt through. So adorable! We also saw Loki, numerous manga characters, some people from Riverdale, Tintin and Captain Haddock and many Matildas. All the year 12 Wimps (Althea, Josna, Senara, Fariha, Maryam, Caitlyn) basically just dressed like themselves: The Wimpy kids, by donning homemade masks and paper 2D hands which truly brought their character portrayals to life! Even Sir Warren and his family got in on the fun and dressed up like the Heffley family, it was sooo cute!



A few of our teachers also got into the spirit and dressed up for the occasion. We spied the March Sisters, Morticia Addams, Sherlock Holmes and Miss Honey, to name a few. There were hundreds of impressive showpieces, within all of the grades that deserve to be in the spotlight within this article, it just goes to show what amazing things our childish wonder and uncensored imaginations can hope to produce when we're handed the creative liberty in order to do so.



And frankly, what made this day even better was the awarding of 'Best Costumes' that presented students with a chance to be rewarded for their inventive portrayal of their chosen character. This task was handed over to Ms. Kankanika and Ms. Renthi, who judged extensively by surveying through the crowds of impressive costumes. They expertly quizzed students about their chosen characters and if the correct answer was received, the students were given spot prizes of large Cadbury chocolate bars which brought a gleeful smile to their faces!

Aside from the spot prizes, pictures were taken with the winners and certificates that affirmed their win were handed out by Ms. Renthi - which drew to a close the short yet undeniably exciting week of literature and learning, that surely inspired the next generation of Shakespeares and J.K.Rowlings!





Sports



THE JUNIOR SPORTS MEET

CELEBRATING THE YOUNG TALENTS OF SMCHS!

24 FEBRUARY 2023

- TANISHA RAGHAVAN, MALEESHA FERNANDO & HAYLEY VIEGAS



On the 24th of February 2023, the primary students of St. Mary's Dubai celebrated and thoroughly enjoyed their sports day. It was a day full of excitement, elation, and enthusiasm held in the school football field where children from years one to four wore their uniforms corresponding to the four schoolhouses:

PHOENIX (YELLOW).

PEGASUS (BLUE).

GRYFFON (GREEN) &

UNICORN (RED).

They participated in a range of events including novelty races, relay races, long jumps, and of course, cheering for their friends and houses from the sidelines.



The event began with all students participating in the traditional march-past led by the flag bearers, followed by the opening ceremony, which included the welcome speech and oath-taking, again followed by the declaration of opening the 2023 sports meet by the chief guest and our beloved directress, Sr. Jacintha Cutinha.

The event, supervised by teachers and volunteers led by Rosy Leo of Year 10D, allowed all the primary students to enjoy their day. Many parents were on site to support and cheer for the students participating in the events. They guided the students and helped them, allowing them to have a fun time while being safe.

The first event performed by students apart from the march past was the drill displays followed by the 50m races, and then the prize distribution for the long jump, 200m, and 50m. The drill displays were a key event during the sports meet, as students from years 1 - 4 showcased their talents and danced between various events, providing entertaining breaks for parents.

From dancing to the world cup song dreamers to dancing with coloured rings and balls, it was a colourful display that pleased many. It was evident to everyone present that day; the children were energetic and wanted to give their best, making this year's sports meet a memorable experience for all. Following the drill displays, students took part in running races of various distances ranging from 50m to 200m where these young athletes displayed their capabilities.



They also participated in novelty races which included: a game of balancing the ball and collecting the fruit for year 1, an obstacle race and a treasure hunt for year 2, another obstacle race and a jellyfish race for year 3, a hula hoop walk and a bob the builder competition for year 4, and lastly the great battle of the houses: tug of war!

The day finally ended with a closing ceremony which included: the closing march past with all students, again marching in their respective houses. From all these competitions and group events, a certain magical house, unicorn was awarded the overall champion, with 118 points, by our esteemed vice principal Ms. Lise-Ann.



The students of the red house cheered in celebration for each other with smiles plastered across their faces. Later, the sports day concluded with a vote of thanks to the students, teachers, parents and of course, the volunteers. Results from the competitions that took place prior to the event itself are displayed below and as for the races that took place during, they can be found at this link:
[PRIMARY SPORTS DAY RESULTS: 2022-2023](#)

RESULTS FOR LONG JUMP



LONG JUMP YEAR 3 - GIRLS

<u>s.no</u>	<u>NAMES</u>	<u>CLASS</u>	<u>HOUSE</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
1	Matthea	3B	GRYFFON	I
2	Katherine	3F	UNICORN	II
3	Russail Bahaa	3D	PEGASUS	III

LONG JUMP YEAR 3 - BOYS



<u>s.no</u>	<u>NAMES</u>	<u>CLASS</u>	<u>HOUSE</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
1	Sifen Dereje	3E	GRYFFON	I
2	Alfredo III	3A	PEGASUS	II
3	Ethan	3F	GRYFFON	III

RESULTS FOR 200m RACES



200m YEAR 3 - BOYS

<u>s.no</u>	<u>NAMES</u>	<u>CLASS</u>	<u>HOUSE</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
1	Jayson Jared	3A	GRYFFON	I
2	Sharon Joseph	3A	UNICORN	II
3	Chriswin Joseph	3C	PEGASUS	III



200m YEAR 3 - GIRLS

<u>s.no</u>	<u>NAMES</u>	<u>CLASS</u>	<u>HOUSE</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
1	Mackayla Lise	3A	UNICORN	I
2	Sydelle	3C	PEGASUS	II
3	Evana	3A	GRYFFON	III



RESULTS FOR 200m RACES



200m YEAR 4 - BOYS

<u>s.no</u>	<u>NAMES</u>	<u>CLASS</u>	<u>HOUSE</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
1	Zelen Fernandes	4B	GRYFFON	I
2	Bushra Asim	4D	UNICORN	II
3	Karous	4D	PEGASUS	III

200m YEAR 4 - GIRLS

<u>s.no</u>	<u>NAMES</u>	<u>CLASS</u>	<u>HOUSE</u>	<u>POSITION</u>
1	Rebecca Ezeh	4F	UNICORN	I
2	Shante Custodio	4E	PHOENIX	II
3	Anuprada Bulathsinalage	4F	GRYFFON	III

THE SAINTZ OLYMPICS: SECONDARY SPORTS DAY 2023

THE 2023 RENDITION OF THE ANNUAL SECONDARY SPORTS DAY:
AN EPIC COMEBACK!

- Althea Gamarose, Chengetai Mushayahembe, Josna Ouseppachan & Aaron George



After 2 years of having no major events, the much anticipated Secondary Sports Day made its return on February 16th, 2023. Hosted at the Dubai Police Stadium in Jaddaf, this year's sports day was made exceptional with the incredible support from parents, teachers and our zealous Marian students.

OPENING CEREMONY

The programme began with a heart warming speech, followed by the UAE national anthem. As per tradition and to showcase the unity and strength of each house, the very first event was the March Past.

The Head Boy, Head Girl and their assistants carrying the flags led the march, followed by the house captains leading their houses. The students marched gloriously around the stadium before assembling in front of our chief guests and the SLT for the oath taking, delivered by our Head Boy, Ethann Thomas Danthi.

After the oath, the Saint Mary's Catholic High School olympic torch was lit and ceremoniously paraded around the stadium as it was passed between the captains of our school football, volleyball and basketball teams, after which the 2023 secondary sports day was officially declared open!

EVENTS

Racing after almost 2 years would have been daunting for most, but not for our Marians! All the competitors performed well and did not disappoint in making this Sports Day unlike any other.

The races kicked off with the 400m finals for the boys, followed by the 200m finals for the boys and the girls, 100m finals the boys followed by the 100m finals for the girls and finally the 4x100m relay races for boys and girls. The excitement was palpable as the runners took off, each determined to showcase their speed, strength, and agility in this thrilling event.

Some of the most impressive performers were, Jonathan George (Yr.12, Pegasus), winning medals for all his individual races and the 4x100m relay, Shania D'Costa (Yr. 13, Phoenix), dominating all of her races, Nirmal Davis (Yr. 6, Gryffon) and Pearl Dacruz (Yr. 6, Pegasus), both securing first in all their individual races and in the relay. Unsurprisingly, these four shooting stars also bagged the individual champion trophies this year.

For our Yr.13 seniors this would be, sadly, their last Saintz Sports Day. But just as all good things must come to an end, the future still seems bright as we saw a number of rising athletes at the starting line, many of whom competed in their first sports day this year!

And here's a shoutout to all of the competitors who were nothing short of spectacular and showed their earnest efforts at each race, garnering loud cheers and points for their respective houses. Bravo!



OTHER EVENTS

Due to time and venue constraints, some of the events were hosted in the days leading upto Sports Day on the school grounds. Nonetheless their athletic resilience and skills were awarded at the Sports Day venue.



TUG OF WAR

Another much anticipated event was a spectacular show of strength in the Tug of War by years 5 & 6 and 7 & 8.



BOYS

The battles began, as was tradition, with the boys 5 & 6 tug of war. The air was charged with excited murmuring as team captains and masters, discussed tactics and assembled their players strategically on either sides of the rope. On the starting whistle, all teams heaved the rope with a zesty determination that allowed them to surpass their physical limits. This year Pegasus and came out as champions across both categories. From year 5&6 Pegasus won first. From years 7 & 8, we had Gryffon in first.

GIRLS

The girls tug of war was a novelty as it had (disappointingly) never been conducted in previous years and hence, the event's inclusion was much anticipated. A key highlight was the truly unexpected semi final match between Phoenix & Gryffon years 7 & 8: Phoenix was a powerhouse; their unmatched players pulled the rope fervently with Gryffon struggling to cope with their increasing momentum. With Gryffon's marker nearly over the boundary, Phoenix roared for their quick victory except for one thing: the whistle was not blown yet. Gryffon, seeing their chance, seized it & declared their savage victory, sailing to the finals. The crowd went wild, albeit some with fury but many with sheer astonishment.

The years 7 & 8 girls finals featured Gryffon and Unicorn, out of which Unicorn came out triumphantly in first place. For years 5 & 6 girls, first place went to the Swift Pegasus!





DANCE DISPLAYS

The dance displays this year featured girls of years 5, 6, 7 and 8 in an enthusiastic group performance where all houses assembled to dance together as a symbol of unity. The choreography was led by our very own students from year 8, the younger students following them, dancing to the rhythm in perfect synchronization.

However, this year the dance display was not limited to one group: A- level students along with a few juniors took the crowd by surprise as they made their grand entrance in flashy black clothing to the stadium. With less than two weeks to learn and practice choreography, these seniors set the ground on fire as they grooved to ' Pepas x Danza kuduro'

CLOSING CEREMONY

After all of the events for the day were done, it was time for the most exciting part: prizes and awards.

INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONS

The best athletes that consistently displayed their fighting spirits till the very end, by winning the most points for their respective houses, were awarded individual championships trophies.

WINNERS

MARCH PAST WINNERS

Next came perhaps the most nerve racking moment especially for the house captains as all of their efforts and more importantly the hard work of the juniors who marched through the heat, were going to be rewarded with the prestigious 'March Past Winners' trophy.

And so it was announced...

THE 2023 SECONDARY SPORTS DAY MARCH PAST WINNERS:
GIRLS: PEGASUS & UNICORN (TIED FOR 1ST PLACE)
BOYS: UNICORN

OVERALL CHAMPIONS

Last but certainly not least, was the coveted "Overall Champions" trophies. All of the points accumulated thus far by our indomitable Marians were tallied up. In that moment, hopes were high and the rush of anticipation was building up as the crowd waited with bated breath.

THE 2023 SECONDARY SPORTS DAY OVERALL CHAMPIONS:
GIRLS: PHOENIX
BOYS: PEGASUS

The house captains along with their house masters and mistresses received the trophies as the stands roared with the sounds of deafening cheers. And with that Saintz Secondary Sports Day 2023, came to an end.

Once again, hearty congratulations to all of the participants and the overall, individual and March past winners, as well as a big thank you to everyone who showed up to watch the 2023 Secondary Sports Day, for making this event a grand success!



Jan 5, 2023

SAINTZ

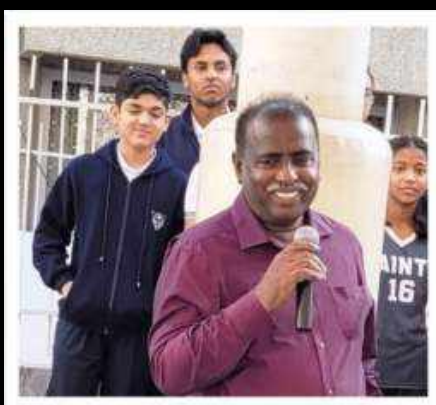
SPORTS FESTIVAL 2023

Althea Gamarose, Jac Hernandez, Hayley Viegas, Chengetai Mushayahembe, Y12

The Saintz Sports Festival 2023 made a victorious return to home grounds.



After some delays, the 8th edition of the SAINTZ Sports Festival was officially declared open on January 5th, 2023. The event welcomed 16 participating schools all across the U.A.E. and was graced with the support of guests of honor Mr. Alastair Dale Correya (an alumnus) and our Principal, Mr. Paul Asir Joseph.





Volleyball

Volleyball is a sport that requires a tremendous amount of skills and teamwork, and we are very proud to say that both of our female teams, junior and senior, possess those abilities.

VOLLEYBALL GIRLS:

Both junior and senior teams have played numerous matches against a wide range of schools, including DPS Dubai, Our Own Indian School Dubai, Winchester Jebel Ali, DPS Sharjah and NIMS Dubai. Our teams have not lost a single match during Saintz sports festival which showcases how team-oriented and incredibly well-trained they are by their coach, Ms. Liza.

Of course, victory does not come without hurdles. As a team, they had difficulties with communication, but with their coach's encouragement and unwavering faith in them, it is no surprise that they are what they are today. They truly embody the quote "No pain, no gain" by Jane Fonda.

Maria Elma Angela Marquez ultimately led the team to victory coming in at first place. In addition to serving as team captain, Angela Marquez also holds the title "Most Valued Player!"

VOLLEYBALL BOYS

Coming into the tournament with a whole host of difficulties such as player injuries and absentees, our volleyball team persevered until the end with unwavering hearts and managed to secure third place overall.

Although they were able to win against Winchester Jebel Ali and Indian Academy School, victory could not be obtained against both Delhi Private School and New Indian Model School Dubai, who were the eventual victors and runner-ups of the tournament respectively.

"We could've done better, but we pushed through with all we had. All that's left to do is get back to practice and win the next tournament!"

—Shane Dwayne (Captain & second top scorer of the tournament)

Morale among the team members remained high all throughout the tournament and there is no doubt that they will carry it into the next season and take back their title as the SAINTZ volleyball champions.

Volleyball





Basketball

Michael Jordan once said, "Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships." A team sport that calls for cooperation and skills, both our basketball teams did just that, bringing the trophies back home once again!

BASKETBALL GIRLS:

Unable to play at school since the pandemic, our girls were finally back to playing on their home ground. Although nervous, the team was excited to play the tournament and win, especially the captain and vice-captain, Hayley Viegas and Ananya Casinillo. Blazing through their matches—proving victorious against NIMS Dubai, Winchester Jebel Ali and DPS Sharjah, they were playing against TMS Dubai for the finals. The team managed to pull themselves together after the MVP, Rosy Leo scored a three pointer that brought the team morale back up. An intense final that ultimately culminated in a victory for our girls, finally ending their losing streak against TMS with screams of joy and happiness as they celebrated with their coach, Ms. Aevelyn.

BASKETBALL BOYS

Our SAINTZ boys' basketball team's performance in the tournament was nothing short of outstanding, as they blazed through the competition in high team spirits, defeating old rivals and securing victory in every one of their matches. From the moment they stepped on the court, cheers could be heard all around as spectators expected their victory—especially against Winchester Dubai in the finals where they played against the toughest team of the tournament and won in a spectacular fashion.

Despite having had little to no practice as a team for 2 years, our players' skills were sharp from having prioritized personal training out of sheer enthusiasm and passion for the game.

Basketball



S





Football

After 2 years of arid St. Mary's football grounds, the 2023 Saintz Sports Festival undoubtedly reignited the SAINTZ flame of victory and passion.

FOOTBALL GIRLS:

B"The more difficult the victory, the greater the happiness in winning." – Pelé

Though the Football Girls team felt overwhelmed at the start, with some sharing that this was their first time playing the whole 30 minutes in a tournament especially after a long break with limited training periods, they proceeded to demonstrate a strong and serious commitment to overcome the odds. Concerns were raised initially about the losing streak against GMA, a tough competitor that seemed to imprint a spot of doubt on the girls' mindsets. But the girls fought hard and refused to give in to the taunts of their past letdowns. They slowly but surely climbed up the ranks taking each competitor out briskly until finally it was time to confront a familiar face on January 12th, 2023.

"The more matches we won, the more our confidence went up and our team was determined to win!" – Nathanya (Goalkeeper & MVP)

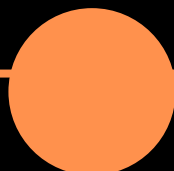
On the day of the final tournament, the competitive atmosphere was set and only continued to grow as crowds of spectators cheered on the teams encouragingly. The girls noted that they felt the pressure, more than before, which overwhelmed them at first, they held their heads up high and huddled together to pray that their efforts would be rewarded. That's precisely what happened, as our Football girls team brought home first place!

FOOTBALL BOYS

Representing St. Mary's were the reigning champions, gracing the football grounds after 2 years of not being able to compete on home turf. Although they weren't able to secure 1st place, they put on a spectacular display of athletic prowess throughout their games against schools such as NIMS Sharjah, Woodlam Dubai and DPS Sharjah.

They held strong in their semi finals game against Winchester Jebel Ali, with team captain Andrew Thomas scoring twice in a row. But alas, victory couldn't be salvaged as Winchester Jebel Ali won 3-2 against SAINTZ. Although the morale was low, the boys accepted their loss in good spirits and still managed to secure 3rd place against DPS Sharjah with vice-captain Joshua Thapar scoring a last minute equalizer putting the game at a standstill 5-5. Being sent to penalties, the boys took up the opportunity to overturn their prior loss and won 3-2 after captain Andrew Thomas scored the winning penalty!

Senior members of the team shared: "Even after the loss, the team didn't lose motivation. Instead they persevered and fought even harder, "It was a really intense match that challenged the boys."



Football



Bidding farewell to our triumphant Saintz Sports Festival was difficult yet fulfilling knowing that all of our teams stood on the podium, with trophies embellished with the blood, sweat and tears of our hardworking and dedicated Marian's.





Extra Curricular



ADPIQ QUIZ

AT AL DIYAFAH

A battle of general knowledge and wit.

Tanuja Kumarasiri



The ADPIQ is an annual quiz hosted by Al Diyafah School; it tests the contestants' general knowledge on fields ranging from science to sports.

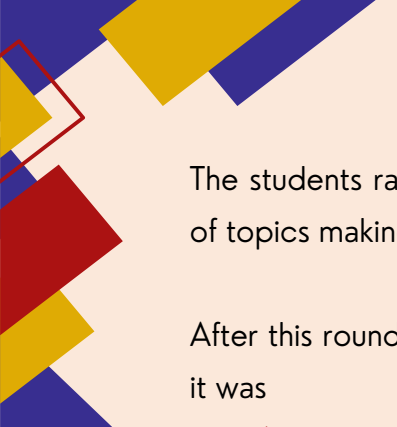
The juniors had their competition on the 2nd of March, featuring two teams from our school: The girls team - Thanuli and Joanna and the boys team - Aric and Sasindu.

The seniors' challenge took place on March 3rd, introducing two teams from our school: Qazi Umer and Yafet (Grade 9) as well as Jose and Tanuja (Grade 10)

The opening ceremony introduced the quizmaster and outlined the procedure, followed by the students of Al Diyafah showcasing their talents in instrumental music and singing.



Then the teams sat for an elimination round to determine who would go forward to the finals. The Juniors attempted a quiz featuring random questions from topics one would not expect; general knowledge questions based on the periodic table or even the names of stadiums in Qatar. The seniors attempted questions based on various trivia; including questions like "State the full names of Rihanna and Drake," and "Name the famous food with the same name as a capital city in Europe."



The students racked their brains trying to answer these tough questions, the broad scope of topics making it almost impossible for any team to answer most questions.

After this round only the top four teams would go forward from each category: for juniors it was

- Arab Unity,
- Apple Int.,
- Al Diyafah and
- SMCHS

(with Aric and Sasindu representing our school) in the final round. For seniors it was bittersweet. Even though both our teams qualified, only one team per school was picked, allowing Qazi Umer and Yafet (who got the higher score) to compete in the finals. It was finally between Apple Int., Sheffield, Al Diyafah and finally our own SMCHS.

The finals consisted of many rounds, each based on a different theme. The featured questions were from several subjects ranging from facts about the UAE to guessing the logos of airlines. In one instance, they showed the contestants a photo of a plane used to carry out cloud seeding, asking for the purpose as well as the government body responsible for the task. The different formats of questions created a sense of tension and made it a tough competition up to the end.

For the juniors Aric and Sasindu breezed through the rounds finishing at the top with a score of 100. They left their competitions in the dust, with the second place winners a whole 15 points behind at 85. In the senior category Qazi and Yafet gave it their all and were in the lead for most of the competition. Yet, at the end of the challenge Al Diyafah managed to surpass them by 0.5 points! Even the quizmaster had never seen something like that before!.

Finally, once the rollercoaster of a competition ended, SMCHS students brought home their first and second place trophies in the junior and secondary category respectively.

Our winners were willing to share their experiences with us:



• Yafet & Qazi Umer Farooq - Year 9

“

“The competition was an amazing experience but rather tough. It inspired collaboration and cooperation through competing to gain more knowledge. It was a fun experience to take part in a general knowledge competition and I think it was good mainly because it developed self-confidence and a sense of friendly rivalry.”

- Qazi Umer Farooq

“

“It was a very riveting experience. It was also a little bit intimidating to compete against the other schools, as all their students seemed extremely skilled. However it was very enjoyable and satisfying to match wits against them and come out on top. Especially since we were a little far behind in the beginning. We scored a solid 100 by the end of the competition.”

- Aric Gabriel Marcos



• Sasindu & Aric - Year 6

Ultimately, it was both an educational and entertaining experience for the students. It is practically guaranteed to learn something new in a Trivia competition; it was certainly the case for the students that attended. The experience showed that one does not know everything and that whether in a textbook or a competition, there is always an opportunity to learn something new in life.

A SWEEP THROUGH SWEET PITCHES!

Conquering the future of business markets, one proposal at a time!

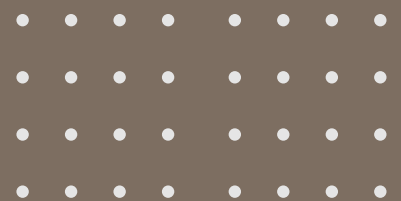
• • • •
- Mikylla Almirol and Senara Fernando



On the 11th and 12th of October, 2022, four senior teams varying from three Year 12 groups and one Year 13 group, presented entrepreneurial proposals divided by three categories such as Branding and Ad design, Convergence and Technologies of the Future, and Sustainable Business Practices for Young Vision Magazine's annual Business Pitch Competition, held to evoke the creativity of aspiring entrepreneurs by presenting unique business ideas with methods to advertise it.

The preliminary and final rounds took place in Amity University and provided an insightful experience to the students, proving to be a fruitful opportunity grabbed. Shortly after the preliminary round with up to 38 teams competing, the awaited final round took place a day after, with one team from Year 12, under Branding and Ad design, with another team from Year 13, under Convergence and Technologies of the Future, qualifying successfully.

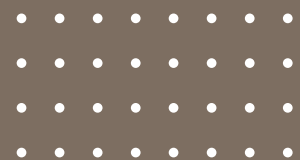
The basis of the competition was to appeal to a more sustainable, ethical and potentially more healthy lifestyle, that is currently taking over the food and media industries— plant based diets. The initial round presented our competitors with the prompt 'lactose-free dairy products.' The teams were required to create a pitch around 5 minutes long, with the option of including a prototype. The final round urged teams to come up with a completely different, out-of-the-box idea for another business pitch, this time for 7-8 minutes, on vegan comfort food.





For the first round, our winning team brainstormed the perfect, indulgent, decadent dessert, almost too good to be true — lactose-free ice cream mochi, creatively made from rice milk. The team had brought along a prototype to really seal the deal. For the second round, they took a popular comfort food item and ‘vegan-ified’ it — proposing the perfect ‘Vegan Birria Tacos,’ catering to a wide variety of tastes and cultures, presenting innovative fusion dishes that absolutely wowed the judges.

After earnest hours of preparing contents such as product prototypes and authentic proposals, the first place winners under the Branding and Ad design category — the members being Saba Dargahi, Mikylla Almirol, Althea Gamarose and Aryana Perera, victoriously brought honor to the St. Mary’s name with the team’s innovative ideas, bringing great pride and glory with the first win of the academic year, starting off the 2022-2023 year right. Their glorious victory inspired our student body to participate in a plethora of upcoming thrilling competitions to enhance their experience in the corporate world.



Against all odds, inspite of the doubt from others and themselves, teammate Aryana Perera going on to say,
 “We basically never expected to win,”
 team leader, Saba Dargahi persevered with a positive, reinforcing spirit;
 “Confidence carried us through the competition,” as she reassured herself and her team that the sweet smell of success would soon come their way.

SO CLOSE, AND YET... SO FAR

An inside look into the BCC sustainability competition; a project that excited, challenged and inspired our desire to change this world, one tedious case study at a time.

Priyasha Chugh, Senara Fernando & Aryana Perera



*In the midst of October 2022, an unspoken tradition by our school rose once again upon the announcement of **Curtin University's Business Cup Competition (BCC)**. The mix of excitement of seniors to fill up their CVs and get a taste of the real dynamic business world inspired a series of students to sign up and brave the challenge. Four teams of 7 (Goal Diggers, KAISHO, Green Mile, The Variation) were formed, armoured with the deep rooted determination to succeed. The challenge lasted a whole month and would task its participants with enhancing and implementing sustainability in existing businesses and their methods of production.*



On October 15, 2022, the BCC program commenced with an interactive workshop that was introduced to 28 of us kids, to the pressing environmental issues faced by our planet and we were tasked with the challenge of possibly preventing an impending future of an irredeemable Mother Earth, through moulding creative and robust solutions to be implied in the production processes within our stubborn corporate world. We were encouraged to not just propose but to embody the solutions themselves, and with this in mind, our mission began on October 20th with our first case study.

Although the question appeared simple at first, we quickly realised the scope of the challenge and had to think outside the box to address the SDGs due to the high expectations that the judges of BCC had demanded from us. Over the following weeks, we were presented with three more case studies, addressing crucial problems like poverty, clean water and education each with a seven-day delay and although the task was incredibly difficult to research and analyse, we undoubtedly gained an invaluable experience in problem-solving and collaboration.

And as a result, two of our four teams made it to the top 20 on the leaderboard out of 300 participating teams in weeks two and three, boosting our confidence in ourselves and our potential to really make a difference in this world, no matter how small. Four weeks after the program's start, we found ourselves standing in the halls of the Emirates Institution, preparing for our elevator pitch. The pitch was an opportunity to showcase our public speaking skills and introduce our innovative ideas for a breakthrough technological device that could transform the modern classroom. With determination and confidence, four speakers representing our school strutted out onto the stage, embracing the auditorium with confidence while presenting our ideas to the judges.



But the judges broke our hearts. They did not select us for the final round. And, as a result our BCC dreams were over. It was go big or go home. Our ideas weren't big enough, so we went home. Happily, to be honest, after a painstaking day of exhibition and high nerves, all of us just wanted to rip those stuffy formal clothes off our backs and enjoy the rest of our Saturday. Although, the girls had to console all the boys who weeped silently on the bus ride home, reminding them of why we participated in the first place. The snack boxes! It was for the free snack boxes. Those were good. The cupcakes were moist. Artificial vanilla, but good.

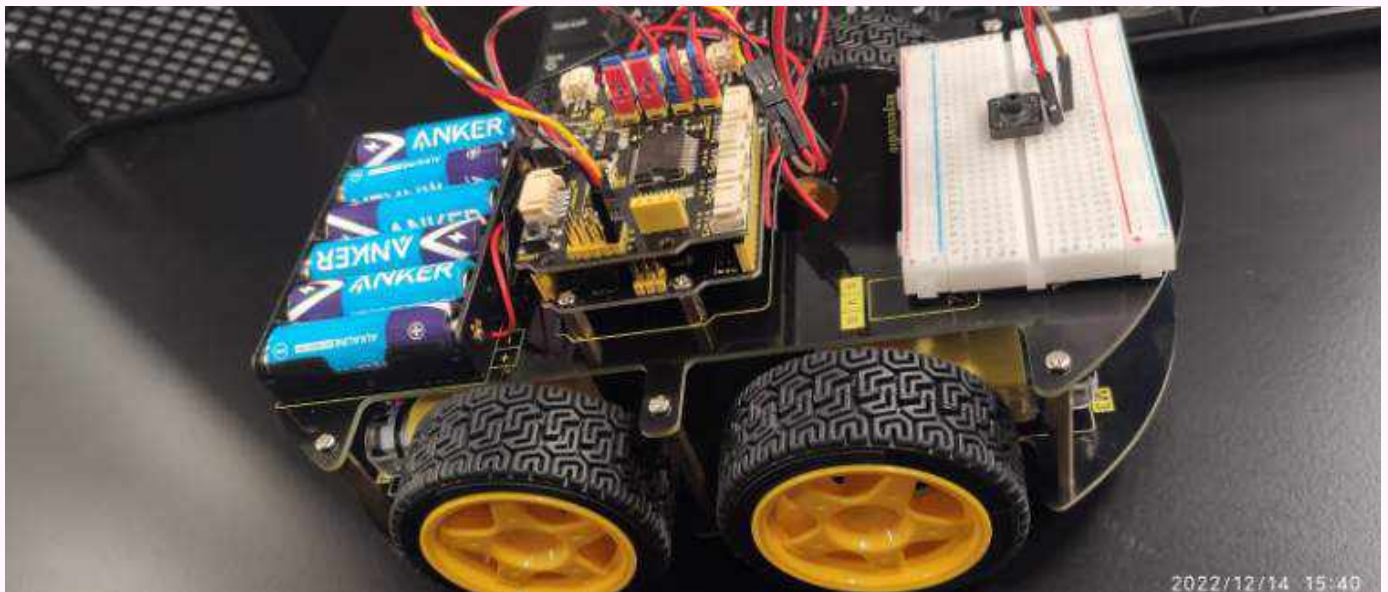
All in all, it was a tough few weeks full of rigorous research, tedious planning and multiple zoom call sessions but we genuinely grew in our affection for each other, recognizing the unique individual potential that each of us had in ourselves to transform the world in one small way or another. We learned an immense amount of mind-blowing scientific things like plastic ingesting bacteria, marine organisms that can eradicate malaria and cholera in Africa, among much more. And for us commerce students, it gave us a profound appreciation of the power of science, and how nerdy our A-level Science friends truly are! BCC opened our eyes on the difficulty every organisation faces in the implementation of sustainability with the account of finances, innovation, and social factors in consideration. Despite the devastating results, the real victory was the privilege of getting an early ride home and those sweet participation certificates to prove to universities that we at least tried!

Adventures at AUS



SAINTZ CLAIMS PODIUM POSITIONS FROM EVERY COMPETITION.

Tanuja Kumarasiri & Althea Fernandes



ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING BOOT CAMP

How often do you get to see what engineers actually do? In December of 2022, many events were offered to the school— one such event was a two-day boot camp from the American University of Sharjah, for a taste of the fascinating world of an electrical engineer. The faculty included Dr. Usman Tariq, Dr. Shayok Mukhopadhyay, Dr. Lutfi Albasha, Dr. Ming Foey Ting, and Dr. Narayanan Raghavan. A campus tour navigated a vast world of its own outside of classes— sports facilities, cafes and food-courts, libraries, even a driving center!

The event allowed students the opportunity to build and program their own robot, create a radio circuit by soldering, check out their own electrocardiogram using bioengineered equipment, observe the first Emirati nanosatellite and a Class 10,000 clean room.



Overall it was a great experience and really gave us an amazing insight as to our interests in each field of electrical engineering!

...- Shaivi Cardozo



AUS competitions

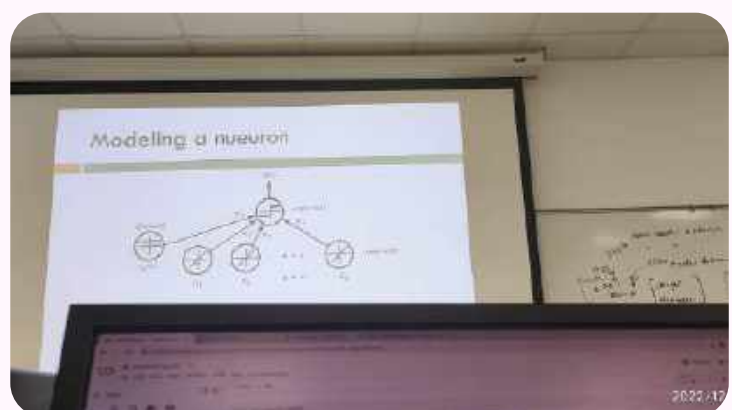
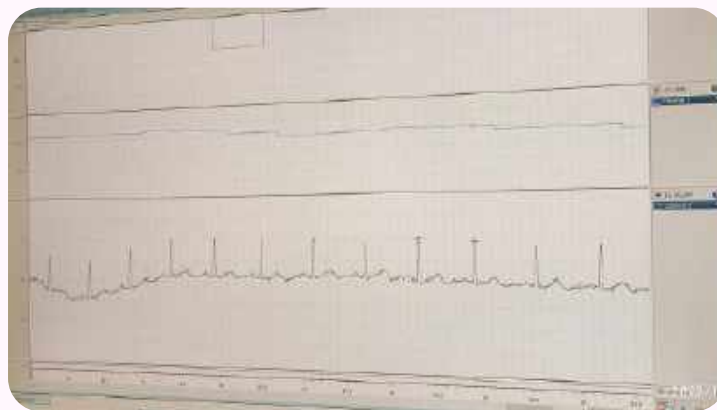
The day began with our school arriving on the campus, where they eagerly awaited for the competition to begin. First came the Quiz, in which two teams from our school participated. The first team being Karthik, Damian, Sathishka, and Sadiq and the second team being Malaika, Rachel, Tausif, Ashlyn, and Jeffery. Both teams made it through the competition, however due to a miscalculation, three teams were left for the semi-finals. After some careful deliberation, AUS decided on a three-way final to decide the winner of the competition. The first team from our school came out on top winning first place, followed by the second school team!

The Water filtration competition had one team: Vanuja, Yousef Naim, Adrian, and Rico. The competition required the teams to make a water filter out of basic materials and the teams were judged based on purity of the water and speed of filtration. Each team was given 1 litre of dirty water and only 5 minutes to filter it but alas, our school team managed to purify 890ml. Finally, it was announced that the school team won 3rd place.

The Paper dome competition had two teams. The first team being: Rachel, Damian, Sathishka, and Ashlyn alongside the second team: Nicole, Leann, Raham, Glynis, and Kurt. The competition was based on whether a team could construct a paper dome (within specified dimensions) that could withstand 20 kgs. They were judged on both the lightness of the paper dome and its strength. Our school's first team secured the first place followed by the second team reaching 4th.

Lastly, the Water Rocket competition. It involved creating a rocket that would be powered by water/air pressure to see which would travel the furthest. This competition featured two teams from our school, the first one being: Vanuja, Yousef Naim, Adrian, and Rico alongside the second; once the launches concluded, the first team ended up leading to an astounding first place with their rocket roaring past all of the other teams.

It was an incredible day for our school as we managed to win a podium in every competition!



EVERY STEP COUNTS...

St. Mary's takes on the Diabetes Walk 2022 to help raise money for diabetes research.

- William Rodrigues & Aaron George

The Diabetes Walk is an annual event, held by Landmark Group, that raises awareness and funds for diabetes research. This event brings together thousands of people from all walks of life, each with a shared goal of finding a cure for this chronic disease.

The event coincides with the Dubai Fitness Challenge and encourages residents to increase their daily physical activity. It also brought to life many activities for the entire family, including Human Foosball, Bungee Run, Obstacle Course, Giant Jenga, Bollywood & Zumba Dancing and Live Music. Participants also were able to get free blood sugar testing and BMI testing conducted by Dubai Health Authority and had access to health and nutrition consultations. Participants this year were encouraged to dress up in blue to represent the cause.

The funds raised from the Diabetes Walk go towards supporting research into new treatments, technologies, and therapies for diabetes. They also support programs that help people living with diabetes manage their condition, such as education and caretaker services.

Our school volunteered yet again to take part this year to advocate the cause. For starters, the students began the day by playing a lively game of "Catch The Frisbee Ball" by the entrance - a truly exciting way to start off the event. Soon everyone gathered, with the school flag hoisted sky-high, to stride and encourage the cause. After numerous groans, dead-ends and 'slight' detours, the group feasted on delectable snacks to sustain themselves on their walk, at which point many seemed to be breaking a sweat. In the end, most felt that the walk was well-worth the experience and that it was a resounding success with no mishaps whatsoever.

In conclusion, the Diabetes Walk is an important event that brings together people from all backgrounds to raise awareness and funds for diabetes research. It is a reminder of the impact of diabetes on individuals and communities, and the necessity of supporting those living with the disease.



One Small Step for Man; One Giant Leap for St. Mary's

The Emirates Aviation Rocket competition had brought home a record win for St. Mary's amidst the anxiety, self doubt and cutthroat competition.



Aryana Perera & Ethann Danthi



The seventh edition of the Emirates Aviation University's 'Water Rocket Challenge' — was a competition of unparalleled prestige, that entailed that each team would design a homemade water rocket that would compete to travel the furthest distances in order to win. Our school had 2 entries— Team LANCE and Team Subsonic. With their eyes on the first-place prize — certificates and iPads for each member of the winning team, they would do absolutely whatever it would take to win. Both teams worked meticulously to construct the perfect rockets in the pursuit of bringing home the honour and glory of victory (but most importantly those shiny new iPads).





After practice launches exceeding 80 metres in distance, our teams were pretty confident of success. The sun rose on March 12th - judgement day.

They arrived at the University, possessed by the spirit of both nerves and excitement, anxious to honourably display the fruits of their labour. There were many other schools participating, notably Islamiya English School, Merryland International School, among others. They waited, waited, and waited some more as the organisers finished setting up.

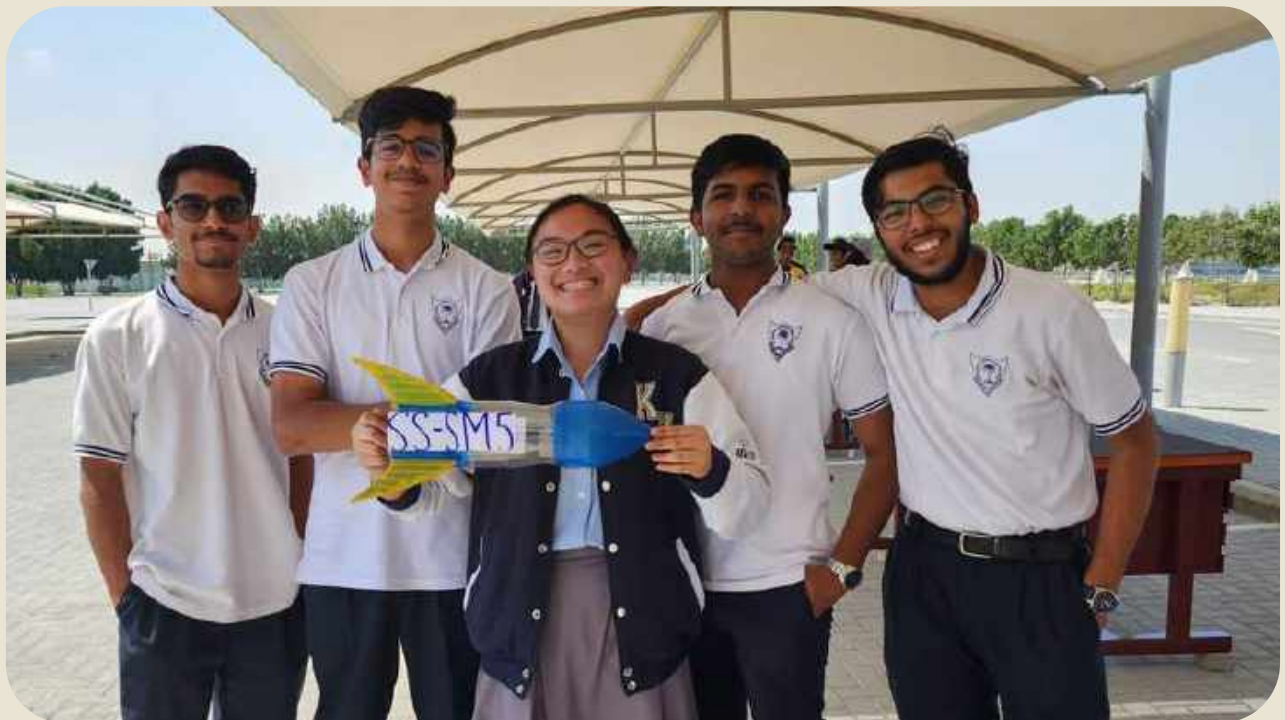
2 hours on the clock to build a rocket and make it look good. They had this in the bag. At their stations was an assortment of building materials. Both teams burst into action. In perfect harmony, each member executed their respective duties. A fire blazed in their hearts, kindled by their desire to win, to prove that all the time they spent preparing was going to get them the win they so desperately craved.

In spite of the murmurs, looks and comments from the other teams, as well as unsettling doubts about whether their rockets were becoming too heavy, or whether the fins were the right size, amidst a million other apprehensions-our teams had persevered. They stood strong. Their trust in their abilities- firm and impenetrable. They knew exactly what they were doing and they were going to prove those doubters wrong. Both teams finished on time, with Subsonic lagging behind slightly, held up a little over final calculations. Finally the rockets were handed over to the volunteers for their designs to be judged.

And then, it was time to launch the rockets. The most important part. This preliminary launch would ultimately decide their fate in this prestigious competition. Could their rockets truly shoot for the stars? Or would they crash and burn forever into oblivion. Our teams were among the last on the list for the first round of the launch, therefore they had the unnerving luxury of waiting in nervous anticipation for most of the other rockets to fire away. In biding their time, they witnessed the preceding teams make their shot, some reaching distances of 60m and 70m, while other more tenacious rockets confidently flew over the 80-meter mark, causing our rocket men and women to really break a sweat.

Finally “Subsonic” stepped up onto the launching pad, and with gritted teeth- executed their launch. Their rocket cleared a steady 58m. It wasn’t the distance that they were hoping for, but all was not lost yet.

Now, the time had come for LANCE. With bated breath, the team watched as Rocket LANCE executed a clean lift off. It blasted off into the horizon! Fueled by the passionate cheers and cries of its makers, the team witnessed their beloved spacecraft catapult itself to a mighty **distance of 97 metres!!**



Hurrah for St Mary's! They had won the battle, but the war was far from over. For the second launch was impending, the launch that could ultimately seal an uncertain victorious destiny.

Once again, the spotlight was on Team Subsonic, and they were destined to pull off a comeback like no other. They gave this final launch their everything, and their sheer determination and grit paid off! Their humble airborne vehicle sailed across a distance of 84 metres! Sweet redemption for team Subsonic.

At long last it was Team Lance's chance. That First place win was within their grasp, and they couldn't allow their grip to slip. The Countdown had begun... Lift off!.. and then history was made. The LANCE rocket trail blazed into the horizon. A hundred and three metres of absolute glory. It was a sight to behold. A new school record- broken comfortably by more than 10 metres. But all was not over. As results time had come around, our rocket-men prayed hard that their distance could pull through just enough to compensate not only for the 96 metres achieved by a previous team, but for the design of their rocket as well, which let's just say — had left a lot to be desired.



At last, their prayers were answered. As not only had our Team Subsonic secured 4th place, (missed at the podium by just a fraction of a point), but the LANCE crew had ultimately made their mark on the Moon, they secured first place, bringing our school everlasting glory, and an unshaken reputation of victory and perseverance. The boys were as high as their rockets themselves. They erupted into uncontrollable sobbing as they went up to receive their new iPads, marking a new frontier of achievement for our humble school. It was just as Neil Armstrong had proclaimed 50 years ago: **"One small step for man, one giant leap for St Marys."**

WALK FOR HOPE

THE 2ND RENDITION OF MERCITHON
A HUGE SUCCESS!



- Katie Velasquez, Caitlyn Cowie, Delisha Dias & Ethann Danthi

Mercithon – initiated originally by Susan Carvalho
– is a walkathon organized by our St. Mary's Catholic Church, aimed at increasing awareness and alleviating the suffering of cancer patients around the world through a fundraising event. The 2023 Mercithon is the second rendition, with the first in 2017 involving more than 12,000 participants, collectively raising over AED 500,000 and aiding 11 cancer patients.

Mercithon

The 2nd rendition of the Mercithon took place at Creek Park, on the 19th of February, with a number of incredible events taking place within it. Aside from the Walk for Hope, there were live bands, food stalls, shows, games in the Kid's Zone, a photo booth and even a Grand Draw! The Mercithon was a fantastic experience for all who participated and worked towards a great cause, bringing people in the community together.

Patients battling cancer also joined, one patient expressed, "Every one of us deserves a second chance." Another patient showcased her defying resilience, "I need to fight, I need to be strong," which inspires so many people to keep pushing forward. The affirmations and encouraging advice motivate all cancer patients to surmount and enlighten all that no matter what they are going through, they should always be strong.

In honor of Mercithon 2023, students from our very own Saint Mary's Catholic High School selflessly participated in an enthralling formation with beautiful symbolism. Students had almost 2 weeks to practice under the harsh sun and spent 2 periods on average every day practicing, some even missing their Sports classes and March Past practice, yet our Marians gave it their all and did their best for a good cause.



Some pupils gave their opinions on the experience: "It was fun to be part of something that had a deeper meaning to it and I was able to contribute to (spreading) the awareness." Others felt happy to do good for people in need. Another said; "The experience was truly amazing, it felt great knowing the efforts our school community put together and all the practices we had paid off so well." The formation consisted of three symbols, all having deep meanings to the cause; the hands in prayer signify praying for those patients going through treatment, the ribbon represents peace and spreading awareness and the 51 denotes the number of years of Unity amongst the Emirates. Their captivating performance can be viewed here:

<https://youtu.be/h9o1K5PGCJU>



In addition, the church saw an influx of volunteers ready to help raise awareness for the event. They worked on web design and social media, with many volunteers also setting booths in malls and local churches to sell tickets.

Susan Carvalho says, "Each day we had several needy patients who would appeal for help. This made the journey worthwhile. Our parish has been able to bring a smile to several needy patients through Mercithon (Walk For Hope). Through Mercithon 2023 the community of Dubai stepped up to support over 55 needy cancer patients."

With the fresh, cool morning breeze and the view of the radiant sunrise, excitement and enthusiasm filled the air, as volunteers and supporters from the community started to trickle in. It was incredible to see 14,000 people of different ages and walks of life join the "Walk for Hope" to support their community. In addition, many representatives from various government offices also joined the walk.

The day started with the release of 50 doves and a candlelight vigil, symbolizing the flame of hope and solidarity. Soon after, they walked around Creek Park in unanimity beside the gentle waves of Dubai Creek as music proudly played from the habbān and drums.

When asked about their thoughts, Seon Sequeira from Year 10 said, "I felt empathetic towards everyone suffering from cancer globally and felt happy while walking knowing that it could make a difference to someone less fortunate than me and perhaps change their lives for the better. It also made me value my own life more as some people aren't born with the blessing of good health."



The day continued on with live band and singing performances, dance choreographies, and music ensembles spotlighting different genres of music and cultures. On top of that, the crowd was also challenged to a "dance off" and participated in different challenges and raffle draws.

When performers from Saint Marys were asked about their experience on stage, "Performing was an amazing experience and the appreciation of the crowd was fantastic. I thought it was a wonderful opportunity to help cancer patients and give them hope through song," said Jason Akhtar, from Year 10.

The highlight of the event was the sentimental section called the "Champions of Hope" catwalk, where cancer patients walked up on the stage and shared testimonies about their battle with cancer and their struggle mentally, emotionally and financially.

Once diagnosed with cancer, many people's identities start to fuse with their disease and their adversity. Mercithon emphasizes the fact that they are much more than that. We were reminded of their humanity as we watched different people of all ages and walks of life talk about their journeys of healing. Stories of how challenging life can be, but also how fragile, delicate, and beautiful it is.

When we interviewed Susan Carvalho, she mentioned the beneficiaries and some of the miraculous testimonies. A Sri Lankan nanny was able to complete her surgery which was supported by Dubai Hospital. Furthermore, a young Indian student (age 22) is currently receiving treatment and significant progress has been observed.

Carvalho said, "All of this is only possible through the kind hearted support of the generous sponsors and participants who came together to make a difference."



THE MUN CLUB TRYOUTS !

Students excitedly tried out to join the MUN club, delivering speeches worthy of the UN.

- Tanuja Kumarasiri, Delisha Dias & Hayley Viegas



The MUN conference is more than just educating children about world issues and peace; it teaches them crucial skills regarding public speaking, debating, and researching skills. For the 2022-2023 edition, around 166 students from years 7 - 10 attended the orientation, showing their willingness to learn and ability to rise above the challenge.

Primarily focusing on the GSL (General Speakers List), which is a prime feature of the MUN, attendees were also guided through the flow of the committee, helping them understand how it all works. The attendees were very enthusiastic; jotting down notes, and being attentive!

An anxious week later, on the 14th, the years 8, 9, and 10 would be judged based on their speeches.

Another week later, the year 7s participated in their tryout.

After these tryouts, the MUN club brought in 68 proud new members whose commendable efforts earned them the spots to join the MUN club.

"MUN has been a breathtaking experience for me. It has changed my whole perspective of the world today, helped me build confidence, and meet many new people."

- Jose Vincencio.

"This MUN club has grown so much over the course of these years; from helping delegates progress and watching them grow, to now attending their first conferences very soon, has been a touching experience and an honor."

- The MUN leadership team.

And now a message from our oldest member, Nicole Rachel of Year 13:

"My journey with MUN started in another school in Year 5 when I had a thirst for politics, debate, and socioeconomic issues; in Year 8, I moved to St. Mary's and realized the need for a school club that focused on MUN. When I was in Year 9, 4 years ago, with the support of Sir Trevor, I approached Ms. Lise Ann with the idea of starting a club training students for conferences that could include the younger grades to help ramp up their personal statements and life experiences overall making them better candidates at university applications.

On September 17th, 2019, we had our first ever public orientation for students, and over time this club has become a family encompassing year groups of students, 50 plus have gone through the cycle and were immersed in the world of debate that teaches them to be more empathetic, open-minded, tolerant and grows them into critical thinkers."

In the words of Ban Ki-Moon, former UN Secretary-General, "As the young leaders of tomorrow, you have the passion and energy and commitment to make a difference; what I would like to really urge you do is to have a global vision, go beyond your country, go beyond your national boundaries" and this is the best vision statement we could ever imbibe, opening our Marian family to the world and teaching them to stretch their hands, hearts, and minds over borders to join people together.

THE GMU COMPETITION

Revolutionizing Medicine one Science Fair at a time



Written by : Erin Amy Fernandes, Fariha Mahmood and Josna Ouseppachan

"Curiosity is the wick in the candle of learning" ~ William Aurther Ward.

Days after Gulf Medical University, Ajman announced their annual inter school exhibition contest, Year 12 and 13 students from St Mary's had begun ruminating over the wise words of William Aurther. As 66 students seized the opportunity to create a poster/project that emblazoned their creativity, innovation and intricate presentational skills featuring a wide array of topics ranging from medicine to physics and chemistry.



PREP WORK

And thus began the journey that would take the students upon the road to setting their skills onto the table. After countless hours of intricate research and hard earned analysis, students had managed to set their minds on a topic that had truly ignited their passions. From experimentation with online simulations to acquiring hard earned confidential intel from the lab teachers, students had found themselves sacrificing countless hours under candlelight into building and refining the perfect project/poster worthy of a win. "My initial thoughts going into the project was that this was a really cool opportunity to better my research skills and my innovation + creative side." says Kiah from the Droplette's team in Year 12.

EVENT DAY



Event day had begun with an intense one to one battle between the students' projects and the strong wind, followed by an intense search to find a reliable power source to use, and all of this amidst the harmony of crowing from the random chickens present that day. But in spite of it all, the students had finally managed to set up their projects indoors. Although the day seemed to have stretched on for forever, the students waited patiently to present their projects to the judges. And in biding their time, they were kept entertained with the endless line up of competing presentations that were exhibited within the competition. The rival projects ranged from emergency water purification sachets to electric stimulation models, innovative medicine and much much more.

GROSS ANATOMY LAB AND OTHER WORKSHOPS



Despite a long overdue awarding ceremony, the university had offered mini workshops like the Gross anatomy Lab where students were offered the opportunity to explore real body cadavers and organ systems. The air in the room was suffused with odor from the embalmed corpses and disinfectant chemicals, but the room was set ablaze with excited, squeamish students fascinated by the world of medicine.



Furthermore, the uni also featured some other workshops including a dental lab where students stepped into an alley of dental molds and dental related infographics. Few students were also given an opportunity to partake in the university's hands-on activities in the sterilization room.

Insights by Maryam:

"I was invited to a medical room with other students. There they gave us a quiz with rewards, then in the next challenge we took part in a lab safety training with hands-on experience in a sterilization room. We were taught how to maintain a sanitary lab environment by covering our feet, hair, and body. Towards the end we were tested again through a Kahoot quiz, and you'll never guess who won second place (hint: it's me 😊)."

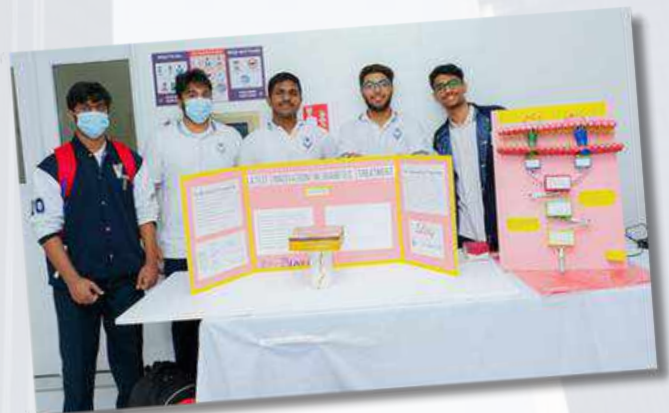
~Maryam bin Maher Chehadeh Helaleh, from team JAM

AWARD CEREMONY

After the 2 taxing days spent at GMU, the competition finally came to a close with the award ceremony. The whole ordeal lasted two hours in a glamorous parking lot, with the relentless sun making it seem even longer. It was not all in vain, however, as they were presented with thrilling performances and the long awaited results announcing that 'Living and Curing PCOS', our team from Year 13 had won second place in the poster criteria. The charisma and dedication exemplified by this group (Nicole Rachel, Rachel Govias, Nicole Kimberlyl) had paid off handsomely, with the team earning a well deserved trophy and 500 dhs cash prize! Their project explored PCOS and focused on bringing awareness to 'Alternative Medicine treatments such as Ayurveda into mainstream treatment options.', amping up their presentation with a legitimate period simulator and a stunning poster.

Following the awarding ceremony, the time came for students to leave the campus. Despite an exhausting time waiting for buses to arrive, students left with insightful learning and a cherished experience





IMT DEBATE

DEBATING OUR WAY TO DIPLOMACY!



Shaivi Cardozo

To debate inspite of disagreements, to prevail and to win: these are skills we all aspire to have and are considered essential diplomatic abilities. Four of our gifted, eloquent and brilliant 13th graders participated in a Young Vision debate competition, which was held at the prestigious site of International Management Technology, Dubai campus.

Our students prepared well on the given topic “ Use of AI in the classroom” and reached the venue with a full arsenal. The participants from each institution were divided into two groups: affirmative (Rachel Maria and Vanuja) and negative (Damian and Ashlyn) teams. Our school teams got to work on their speaker notes and began their discussion with the attendees from other schools.

Teams were led to the debate location along with their assigned opponents for the first round. In the interest of fairness the debate was not open to spectators. Our opposing team went first against Bloomington Academy's affirmative team. Our affirmative team had their turn next.

Thanks to long hours of preparation from our pupils, it turned out that both of our school's teams advanced to the second round!

In the last round our affirmative team were initially alarmed when they noticed that the other side had no notes. However, our team's points were direct and they took note of any potential opposing points and tackled them, thus dominating the debate.

The negative team soon had their turn and argued with a different school. There was one specific encounter where the opponent only considered the students' support of AI, not focusing on the situation as a whole; so the negative team took that opportunity and stated how teachers and parents benefited, finishing rather well.

Overall, the debate went well and our students got to learn a lot, despite not making it to the awardees list. From teamwork to smart impulse reactions, and positive networking to diplomacy; they got to make some remarkable memories throughout this trip!

Young Explorers



at the Mohammed Bin Rashid
Space Centre

– Zenaida Maria Victoria D'souza

On May 31st, 2023 there were five students from our school who were waiting impatiently to get going. Justaf (5F), Dulithi (8E), Aric (6C), Jane (8A) and me, Zenaida (7A). Because our school was invited by the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre and Emirates Literature Foundation to participate in a HAM radio contact session with UAE's very own astronaut, Sultan Al Neyadi who is currently in space on a mission and we were the lucky five who got selected!

We were provided with reading material and websites to familiarize ourselves with UAE's space mission, Sultan Al Neyadi, MBRSC etc., before we went for the event. Our first steps into the MBRSC were exhilarating! We saw many officials, researchers, and pictures on the wall depicting the UAE's space missions, astronauts, and those who helped make UAE's mission a reality. The exterior of the MBRSC displayed the astronauts chosen to make UAE's space mission a reality — one of them being the astronaut we soon would make contact with, Sultan Al Neyadi.

We were seated for a briefing session along with some students from four other schools. We were given small gifts like wristbands and magnets as the MBRSC staff made a visual informative presentation about space, with information such as 'How many major space stations are there in space?' and 'Which countries have released them?' It helped us further expand our knowledge about space. One thing that surprised us was knowing that there were only 3 major space stations!



Throughout the presentation, it was evident that they valued their astronaut, Al Neyadi, as there was genuine interest shown in the presentation, and countless photos and videos of him. The meeting was interactive and interesting. We witnessed how HAM radio is used to contact different space stations. We were invited to ask questions and interact with one another. We acquired extensive information on satellites and their importance to our lives, and we even got to see some satellites being built, during the tour of the facility!



Interestingly, as we entered the facility, there were these adhesive blue tape-like pieces on the floor, to collect shoe dust and dirt so that the facility could stay dust free. This precaution is taken because even a speck of dust could interfere with the satellite functions. We were quite amazed to learn that it could withstand temperatures so high that no human could ever survive, and temperatures lower than in Antarctica. There were huge balloons to test if the solar panels would deploy properly. However, we could not go too close for safety reasons.

The electrical rooms were also shown to us. These were much more complicated and consisted of a network of wires, once again being a reason for why we could not enter. You had to wear special equipment to go in, and there were few engineers working on components that are vital to help the satellite work.

We were trained to make radio contact with astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi in space, from Earth. We were guided to make use of alphanumeric; the use of coded language and some relevant questions we should be asking. Justaf from amongst us, was fortunate to ask the astronaut a question after which the connection was lost.

It was a breathtaking experience listening to Al Neyadi respond to all of the questions, and we found it hard to believe that we were actually listening to a real astronaut, in space! It was also fun to recognize the alphanumeric alphabet being used to refer to the ISS as 'India Sierra Sierra' when the officials were trying to connect the radio to the specific frequency. Three of us were interviewed about our opinion on the astronaut and our learning experience at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Center: MBRSC.

It was an amazing, eye opening experience, and we all enjoyed the day to the fullest. It indeed was a wonderful learning experience.



A FUTURE OF CREATIVITY

FOSTERING A NEW GENERATION OF INNOVATORS AND DESIGNERS..."

Erin Fernandes, William Max Rodrigues, Y12.

What is DIDI?

The Dubai Institute of Design and Innovation (DIDI) is a private, non-profit university which strives to promote creativity, innovation and sustainable design globally, as well as to develop a new generation of designers who are capable of addressing complex problems through various skills.

This year, students got the opportunity to participate in Project Design Space, Season 7, in which they were presented with challenges from various real-life clients, ranging from AUS to Nestlé. Essentially, the students who participate in this event get divided into groups where each one is assigned a client to work with. Each client holds their own competition, such that it's Saint Mary's versus the other schools. According to the assignment, the group with the most eye-catching design moves onto the finals.



Samsung Electronics:

For starters, William, Jacian, Danish and Kemith were given the task to design a new and innovative use of eco-friendly packaging for, lo and behold, the outstanding Samsung Electronics! After all, packaging waste can leave a big carbon footprint, which is a detriment for our planet.



After a heavy dose of zoom meetings, face-to-face meet ups and an exorbitant amount of procrastination, the students came up with a variety of ideas, including animal shaped containers, costumes, board games and much more.

Following the head bashing, they settled on a small, elephant-shaped storage compartment designed to showcase the topic of endangered animals. But of course, that was just the easy bit... they were also instructed to create a manual guide and a video pitch dedicated to form the product; the team pushed through the difficult tasks, reminding themselves, "we're doing this for samsung electronics!".



Erin, Elizza, Madiha and Gynelle decided to tackle Nestlé's challenge to design a new product using dates as a primary ingredient. With no date-based products by Nestlé in the market, the possibilities were endless!

They were faced with the task of coming up with a memorable product, recording a final recipe, and designing packaging to attract MENA customers, all before pitching their ideas through a short 3 minute video. After months of extensive discussions and research, they managed to create a series of energy balls, or Orbits, using the entire date fruit, including the seeds! Through sketches, digital mockups, and 3D models, the team created sustainable product packaging in the shape of a lantern



Next, Sky News Arabia Academy proposed a marketing challenge to students, in which they had to design a social media competition to increase followers on Sky News Arabia Academy's social media channels, in response to a plateau in followers growth.

Maliha, Krithika, Kate, Jliana and Valeska made a social media campaign lasting 4 weeks, the main theme being culture. Their ideas include a cooking, singing, skits, and photoshoot competition, where people all over the world can participate.

Conclusion

The last few months seem to have flown by, with the spring break appearing to be a wake up call to most groups! With last minute zoom calls and edits to videos, the 3 groups were able to construct captivating pitches for the judges to critique. Over the course of the competition, the students were able to learn and apply problem solving, prototyping, and most of all, collaboration and teamwork skills.



A Quest for Confirmation

IT WAS A HARMONIOUS ACHIEVEMENT

Year 9's Community Service

JAC HERNANDEZ, ALYANNA MASAHUD, CAITLYN COWIE - Y12

Year 9 confirmands are here to serve! Students of the year 9 batch 2022-2023 attended a mandatory community service program in preparation to receive the sacrament of Confirmation later in the academic year. It took place in the school itself, back on November 19, 2022.

From 8 am to 12 pm, a total of 6 classes (~100 students) took part in their Community Service. Each class had been assigned to a specific part of the school with their own tasks – some were assigned to cutting out templates for the bulletin boards, others to a wall collage. It acted as a way to build communication skills and enhance an individual's ability to work in a team.

Our diligent Marians worked at their tasks, doing the best they could to brighten up our school. They hung up beautiful art projects completed by the lower grades to mimic an art gallery. Some students worked on our Merit Tree, Pearson Awardees portraits and the Top 3 from the boys and girls to showcase all our incredible high achievers! An amazing mural expressing our pride for our nation was put up, with intricate decorations and posters, as well as a traditional piece of clothing. There was also a wall collage in the shape of a heart showing off the students' love for reading, with several quotes about books and many beloved Disney movies.

Students enjoyed their experience, with one saying, "We were able to combine ideas and create something that would represent our school." Many participants also felt proud seeing their hard work pay off as other students and teachers are continuously awed by the newly organized boards in the hallways. "I was able to improve my teamwork and communication skills," said another child, perfectly portraying how this community service brought several students together and taught them the importance of cooperation.

The Community Service project was a resounding success; not only did it serve as a requirement for confirmation, but it also served as a timely preparation for KHDA week. The students that weren't part of the service had mentioned that, "It gave more life to our school with all the unique combinations of colors and designs." Despite the hot conditions the students had to endure and the fatigue accompanied by the community services, it was all washed away with the products of hard work as well as the feelings of pride and collaboration. Students and teachers were quick to recognize the significant aesthetic appeal of the school, elevated by the students' commendable efforts. Sir Anthony expressed, "We can see that they put their hearts and minds into the production, not just students but teachers from different departments as well. It was a harmonious achievement."

Overall, the project was an innovative plan to highlight the significance of cooperation in their school community, which will serve them well in their future endeavours. As the school begins to phase back to normal life, there are indeed plans to initiate more community service projects beyond school grounds, following on the success of this project.

SAINTZ MUN 2023

A platform for diplomatic discussions and resolutions.

By Delisha Dias and Tanuja Kumarasiri

Saintz MUN conducted a 2 day conference on the 19th and 20th of June 2023, exclusively for those SMCHS students who are part of the MUN group in school. After meticulous planning and tons of preparation, the conference started off with an opening ceremony on the 19th of June graced by the presence of our senior leadership team. Mr. Warren Dsouza and Mr. Trevor Quinny addressed the gathering with their encouraging words. It was thrilling to witness the number of St. Mary's students attending the ceremony brimming with enthusiasm, smartly attired in their western formals. The conference was officially declared open by the Secretary General, Tanuja Kumarasiri



The conference had three committees with these respective agendas:

UNICEF

○Addressing the issue of child labour in China for fast fashion and its impacts on child welfare

UN Women

○Tackling the harmful consequences of cultural practices on women

UN Security Council

○Tackling long-term solutions to the Russia-Ukraine war

Over the course of 2 days our delegates were seen defending their countries when questioned about their policies by fellow committee members, backing their claims with real time research, lobbying and forming blocs to strengthen their positions and generally being effective committee members. However for many of them this was their first real experience in attending an MUN conference and they needed guidance at times, which was patiently provided by the senior leaders of Saintz MUN. Be it on correct committee etiquette, terminology to be used and sometimes even on how to effectively raise a query or provide a response.



The chairs of the committees summed up their experience:

"In UNICEF, After 2 days of Egypt and China's never-ending feud, demanding apologies, and a riveting crisis that violated multiple human rights, us, the chairs believe that the UNICEF committee was quite successful and overall was great fun " - Malavika Sujith & Jane Rego, chairs of UNICEF

"UNW was undoubtedly one of the most determined committees I've ever chaired- what they lacked in experience they made up for in determination, we may have started off slow but by the end, I couldn't have been prouder of their progress both as people and as delegates" - Delisha Dias, chair of UNW.

"UNSC was by far the most active committee of them all, we started the first day with a motion to challenge! There was never a dull moment in our committee. At one point, the delegate of the UK offended the leaders of 3 separate nations and was forced to give an apology to each one. The delegate of Russia defending a nuclear strike was also in sight to be seen. Overall, the committee was unequivocally, fire" - Tanuja Kumarasiri & Jose Vicencio, chairs of UNSC



One of the most exciting aspects of Saintz MUN 2023 were the crises, which were beautifully written by the Saintz MUN Secretary General, Tanuja Kumarasiri. All the delegates were absolutely thrilled to be debating in a crisis, there was never a moment of pause during crisis sessions, the heat of crisis was engaging for both our delegates and the chairs, with rapid fire updates keeping everyone on their toes.

After 2 days of negotiations and deliberations, the conference came to an end with a short closing ceremony. Our Vice Principal Ms. Lise Ann addressed the assembly and Mr. Paul, Ms. Lise Ann and Ms. Vichitra presented the awards to the exceptional performers in each committee.



The senior team of Saintz MUN, Tanuja Kumarasiri, Delisha Dias, Malavika Sujith, Jose Vicencio, and Jane Rego had worked hard for weeks to bring this conference to fruition. In appreciation of their efforts, certificates were presented to each of them.

Last but not least was a heartfelt closing statement from the Secretary General, Tanuja, who will be stepping down from his post after this, following which the conference was officially declared closed.

The winners were:

UNICEF

- Best delegate:
DANIEL KINNY
- Runner up Best delegate:
FILZA ALI
- Honourable mention:
VERONICA MALUBAY
- Best Position Paper:
RITCHIE RITESH

UNW

- Best delegate:
JEWEL ALNASRALLA
- Runner up Best delegate:
RHIANNA NICOLE ROSARIO
- Honourable mention:
MENA ANDENET ADMASSU
- Best Position Paper:
NAOMI REBECCA D'SOUZA

UNSC

- Best delegate:
MAHIN MAJID
- Runner up Best delegate:
QAZI UMER FAROOQ
- Honourable mention:
QAZI ALI AHMED
- Best Position Paper:
EMILY AMGAD LOTFY

For many, this was their first real conference and we are so proud of them for making this step in their MUN journey. Watching the delegates debate with such ferocity gave us hope for the next generation of Saintz MUN.

The closing ceremony was by far the most emotional part for us, the culmination of our years with Saintz MUN and the fruition of weeks of meticulous planning. We thank everyone who attended, the delegates, the senior leadership team and the teachers and staff who came to observe and support. This MUN could not have been made possible without all of them. We also want to express our gratitude to our faculty advisors Ms. Renthii, Mr. Trevor, Ms. Sreeparna and Ms. Kiara for working with us and supporting us in this endeavor. A special thanks goes to Nicole Rachel, our founding Secretary General whose warm presence (in spite of her A Level exams) was truly special for us..

In conclusion, we, the secretary and deputy secretary general of Saintz MUN, are proud to announce that Saintz MUN 2023 was a resounding success."

Tanuja Kumarasiri, Secretary General
Delisha Dias, Deputy Secretary General
Saintz MUN



The background features a light green gradient. In the top-left corner, there is a large green circle with a small black four-pointed star on its edge. In the bottom-center, there is a smaller green circle with a similar black star on its edge. The word "Cultural" is written in a dark green, cursive script font, centered horizontally. Behind the text is a faint, stylized illustration of two figures in traditional attire, possibly dancers, in shades of blue and purple.

Cultural



FLAG DAY - 2022

Renewing National Spirit and celebrating the prosperity, peace, solidarity and strength of the Union.



- Gabrielle De Guzman and Gerleeza Rodrigo

Flag Day is a national holiday celebrated to remember the efforts of the founders of the UAE. It is celebrated annually on the third of November, the day of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan's accession as President of the UAE; government offices, businesses and schools (just like ours) all gather to sing and stand at attention for the UAE national anthem, along with flag-raising ceremonies and other traditions.

UAE FLAG

The UAE staggering colours each hold a unique meaning:



Red symbolizes courage, strength and power.



Green symbolizes hope and prosperity.



White for peace, honesty and transparency.



And lastly, black for bravery and the defeat of enemies.



Celebrating Flag Day at school is something different from the other events we celebrate; this day is something that makes us understand and appreciate the country that we all live in. Therefore, to showcase our appreciation, we were invited to come to school dressed up in either one or multiple colours of the UAE flag whilst also carrying a small flag with us.



Before Flag Day, the majority of the students at our school collaborated to decorate their classrooms with pictures of flags hung on the walls, decorations draped in the four colours, and many others/more they felt would make their classes seem more festive and colourful. In addition, some year 12 students had a fantastic idea for Flag Day; they had worked together to create an origami-styled version of the UAE flag which was an impressive creation and a great addition to our school decorations.

We were all gathered at our respective premises, standing in line in order of our classes, ready for the flag hoisting and to sing the national anthem. At exactly 11 o'clock, Mr. Paul raised the UAE National Flag in front of the school and as the music commenced, everyone began to rise in union as we all sang the national anthem with enthusiasm, respect and dedication. It's definitely special seeing and being part of a group singing the anthem together; it's hard not to feel a sense of pride and delight towards ourselves and the country we're living in. When the anthem ended, we were to raise and wave the flags we had brought.

Some of us had brought fabric flags, some paper flags, but all with different sizes, each unique from the rest. It was a remarkable display watching the sea of red, green, white and black swinging in the air.

A student from the boys' side of Year 11 was asked about what he thought about Flag Day and its importance and he quoted:

"I think that flag day is a joyous occasion as the teachers and students of school come together and wear colours that represent the flag of UAE. I think it is an important celebration as it honors the roots that built the country we live in today."



[See More](#)

UAE National Day

A time of pride, patriotism, and most importantly, diversity.

- Alrick D'souza, Earl Mindanao



On the morning of December 2nd, our school celebrated UAE National Day. A day in which we remember and embrace our Emirati heritage, a day where multiple nationalities celebrate the country that welcomed them with open arms, and remember to continue the progress our country has started.

Students were dressed in the vibrant colors of the Emirati flag, more commonly known as the colors of pan-Arab countries. This break from the traditional and monotonous uniform was one that the majority enjoyed!

Students were assembled in their respective quadrangles and in anticipation of the entertainment to come. Firstly, the events commenced by remembering how our country had been formed: with the Trucial States, announcing the formation of the United Arab Emirates in December 1971; soon afterwards, Ras-Al-Khaimah joined the federation a year later. This was followed by a performance of the traditional 'Al Ayyala dance' by the boys, a popular and highly expressive dance form, traditionally performed during weddings, celebrations, and other events. Similarly, the girls performed traditional Emirati dances, such as the 'Khaleegy' a joyful, lively, expressive and gestural dance performed at weddings and other events involving merriment and celebration performed by 10E.



Moreover, the assembly entered a round of trivia questions, where they were quizzed on their knowledge of the United Arab Emirates' history, national anthem and geography, with those giving the correct answer earning a prize. The crowd had participated with such enthusiasm that words alone cannot describe the exhilaration. As we neared the end of the assembly, students felt united and bonded in an enigmatic manner, truly portraying the unity and diversity that is present and has pridefully become a part of our identity as residents of the UAE.



Celebrating TRADITION AND CULTURE

VIBRANT DAYS OF COLOURS
AND WARMTH AT ST. MARY'S

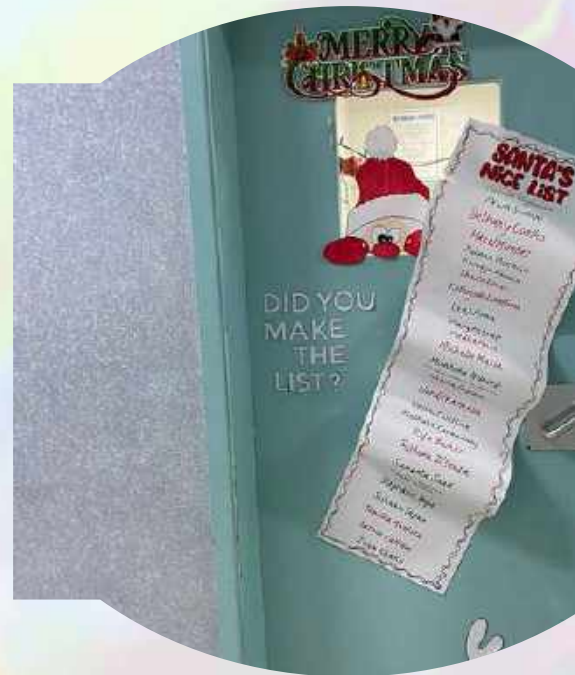


- Sofia Perol & Althea Fernandes

Christmas:

T'is the season to be jolly! December 9th, 2022 marked the second Christmas to be celebrated in school after the pandemic, and the students of St. Mary's made absolutely certain to go all out. With the lethargic from weeks of schoolwork, the students have long been yearning to relax and were excited for the annual festivity! Thus, 2 weeks before the last day of school for the year, classrooms were already preparing to party—decorating walls and doors, planning snacks, even looking for music— in hopes of having a blast before relishing the comfort of their homes.

On the 8th of December, students of St. Mary's gathered in the church for Christmas Mass— where they were reminded to honor and follow Christ's way of life!



Being the last day of school for the year, and one of the only days where everyone is free to enjoy themselves alongside their friends without work by their side, students hold this day very close to their hearts. The doors of the classrooms reflect the holiday spirit— they are creatively decorated, and put on display for the teachers to witness and appreciate.

One of the students responsible for planning the Christmas party for the class of 10A describes their thought process:

"We wanted to make this year's party the best, because next year we might not be able to celebrate it properly. In the end, we weren't able to complete every single thing on our list, but it was still enjoyable and most things worked out in the end."

Merry Christmas

Paper snowflakes hung from the ceilings of the classrooms, and paper chains in Christmas colours flowed while the students danced. Gifts were exchanged in a guessing game of secret santa. Voices loud and proud, they unwinded by singing songs to their heart's content. The teachers came into the classrooms from time to time, taking a sneak peak at the activities, and snacking on homemade delicacies made with love by the students and their families!

Why do they go through such lengths to make this the best day? Christmas is the most time-consuming holiday. Possibly even the most expensive holiday for the students. But the laughter, energy, and unity is certainly something worth all the trouble.



Festival. _____ DIWALI AND ONAM



Onam

On the 9th of September, the school joined in on the spectacular celebration of Onam, the last of its ten-day event. It is the festival of Harvest, especially celebrated in the southern state of Kerala, India and though primarily a Hindu festival, everyone united in a wonderful spirit of festivity. Many teachers showed off their stunning Onam Sarees— a lovely cream and gold traditional attire.

The Pookalam, a floral design of thousands of different coloured petals arranged in an intricate outward pattern, was displayed at the entrance of the girls' building. It honors the return of King Mahabali, believed to return every year. This year's exceptional design was made by Ms. Anitha, Ms. Sheeba, Ms. Seena, Ms. Asha, Ms. Bindhu, Ms. Bala, Ms. Susanna, Ms. Meethu, Ms. Geraldine, Ms. Shobana, and Ms. Mridula, who came on-site early to array and exhibit their artistic vigour.



Diwali

On the 23rd of October, in the few days before Diwali (the Festival of Lights), teachers and students were invited to come in coloured clothes. It was a day of wondrous beauty, made alive with some brilliantly coloured Sarees, Salwars, Kurtas and Lehengas, while teachers shared delectable sweets (ladoo, jalebi, chakali) in a collective heart of goodwill; followed by a holiday the next day!



TOLERANCE DAY

Because peace begins with tolerance and respect!

- Enoch Musyoki



“One should always be merciful and peaceful towards his fellow brothers,” were the words of the late Sheikh Zayed, and they ring true even today.

The UAE is a bustling multicultural hub based on a fundamental value- tolerance. So it was certainly a great experience for many students and teachers of our school when they were able to experience and celebrate this virtue during an event held by the Dubai Police, at Rashid Center, in November 2022.

It was a bright Monday morning when the event began. The venue, filled with UAE flags and beautiful paintings and crafts, made for a wonderful sight. Those invited were dressed in traditional wear from many different countries. All eyes turned to the coordinators when they arrived, and everyone was instructed to gather together for the event to begin.

Once they had done so, the police band assembled and played the UAE national anthem, which everyone solemnly listened to, as well as other types of Arabian instrumental music. Afterwards, the coordinators began the program, commemorating the principle which Sheikh Zayed deeply saw in the vision for his country, as well as playing more instrumental music from different cultures. When the program ended, the group was shown UAE products through the ages, both traditional and new, displaying how far the country has come while preserving its long-established crafts.

Finally, to end it all, the group from SMCHS were invited to a large buffet hosted indoors, which consisted of a variety of cuisines from numerous countries. The guests from SMCHS were able to leave from the fun experience with plenty of memories and a better appreciation for the diversity of the country, and the glue that holds it together-the standard that keeps the cultures, behaviours and traditions of the world in harmony and cooperation- tolerance.

ETHNIC DAY

june 22, 2023

- Hayley Viegas

celebrating our diverse cultures, traditions and customs

Ethnic day at St. Mary's is a celebration of the diversity of our student population. It is a sight to behold with students and staff coming dressed in their country's traditional garb and bringing food from their respective cultures to share with their friends. With over 25 different ethnicities in the school, each ethnic day is invariably a colorful and splendid affair. Students also perform their traditional and cultural art forms in celebration of their country and traditions.

Held on the 22nd of June, SMCHS ethnic day this year was as enchanting as ever. The excitement this year was sky high since ethnic day was back in all its glory after 3 long years of being cautious and careful owing to covid. With energetic performances, vibrant costumes and lip smacking delicacies from around the world, the students truly got into the spirit of things. The classes were decorated with lights and paper string curtains which clearly showcased the ethnic spirit throughout the school. Many classes also sported welcoming phrases written in as many languages as possible!



Our Junior and Senior secondary programmes were emceed by our Year 12 students, Althea, Aryana, Carl, Spencer and Russell. While the primary section held their events in the primary section, secondary students were brought to the main hall in batches to enjoy their year groups' cultural programs, which included electrifying dances, mellow melodies and riveting plays! While the year 9 and 10 girls mostly performed dances, year 7 boys made some real noise with their energetic use of instruments, especially drums. Year 12 students later stormed the stage with a dance number set to a medley of popular bollywood songs. The entire crowd was roaring with delight as they clapped their hands to the beat of the songs and cheered on for their friends dancing and singing on stage.



Later when their hosts presented the students with a cross cultural quiz to test their knowledge, the students were clamoring to answer the questions, excited at the opportunity for a sweet as a reward for their correct answers. A special mention to our emcee's, for their entertaining commentary and overall hosting of the programmes, which made the event extremely enjoyable.

This year's ethnic day was a grand success, truly a feast to all the senses.





KATIE ASHLEE VELASQUEZ

OUR SECRET (SCHOOL)GARDEN

“People garden in order to make something grow; to interact with nature ... We feel whole as we make our personal work of art upon our land.” - Julie Moir Messervy, *The Inward Garden*

This quote truly encapsulates what I felt as I walked through our school garden. In fact, calling it a mere “garden” is an understatement; it’s more like a bustling, blooming farm. I am grateful to have gotten the opportunity to not only see the garden, but to interview Carlito as well, a staff member of our school, who took the time to build this garden from the ground up over the course of six years.





Carlito explains that previously, he planted herbs and leaves in the sisters' compound of our church, to harvest fresh vegetables for the Comboni Missionary Sisters.

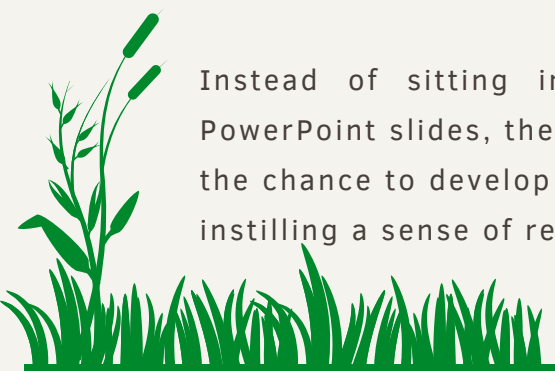
Then, a few years later, he started our school garden with immense support of the Senior Leadership Team.

As I entered through the gates, waves of nostalgia hit me — this was previously our school playground. Seven years later, there are now endless, verdure rows of 22 different crops; pumpkins, onions, papayas, sweet melons, aloe vera, green peas, chillis — to name a few, compost bins and most surprisingly, makeshift rooms surrounded with foliage of leaves that shade people from the harsh sun. I was also greeted by Carlito's mischievous 6-year-old black Persian cat, Calus, who roamed around the farm freely while attempting to chase the birds sitting high up in the trees.

Carlito describes his process, proudly unveiling his green thumb — firstly, he dug up sand to mould a path, next, he added manure to the ground. After that, he planted the seeds in rows and watered them every other day. Thanks to Carlito and his green thumb, we are now gifted with an annual harvest of fresh produce that the school sells in vegetable markets.

In addition, our school has used this as an opportunity to teach students about the value of gardening. "And our children proved to be very enthusiastic gardeners indeed. Ready to till, sow, compost, harvest and happy to get their hands dirty if it meant it was good for their garden," Mrs Lovey Ramos, the head of the primary school's science department, added, "The science teachers also used the garden experience to subtly encourage our more picky eaters to include more vegetables in their diet. Most of the time they were proud of 'their' produce and happy to try. In stages our children learned about germination, fertilizing, water conservation, sprinkle and drip irrigation, recycling, micro organisms, composting etc."

Instead of sitting in a classroom, reading the textbook and looking at PowerPoint slides, they were able to grow green thumbs of their own as they had the chance to develop gardening skills and learn about agriculture and nature — instilling a sense of responsibility, love of nature and discovery.



PINK DAY

Cure starts with hope



- Rhea Araujo Y12



Breast cancer is the most common diagnosis in women and happens to be the most recurrent cancer in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with the majority of cases characteristically occurring in women younger than 50 years. New breast cancer cases in 2020 totaled 1030 out of 4,807 total cancer cases, making up 21.4% of total new cancer cases in the region. An increasing number of younger patients are being diagnosed with breast cancer in the UAE.

Women's well-being has always been at the forefront of UAE's wellness efforts, and St. Mary's Catholic High School emulates this care as we participated in expressing this in the most proactive and inspirational demeanor that has aided the efforts of educating children from a young age regarding a battle that a plethora of women endure all around the world. The Breast Cancer Awareness Day is just one of the several initiatives the school undertook to raise awareness and promote good health.

The students of St. Mary's Catholic High School were invited to come dressed in pink clothes on the 28th of October 2022. Though the young men and women were cordially draped in a manifold of shades of pink, they radiated the aura of courage, hope, and solace. Our school's Senior Leadership Team aims to instill the all too forgotten idea that no one is truly lonesome in this battle. There will always be a loyal shoulder to depend on, and they will too often come from the most unlikely of places. Thus the tenderness, benevolence, and compassion of humanity is always present and in fact, exposed even more explicitly within the most unfortunate of circumstances such as this.



Together, the community of teachers and students sought to share their support and warm regards through the exchange of pink ribbons, which further accentuated the camaraderie within them, to each other and to anyone who they may know is grappling with this debilitating illness. We, as a school community have lost people over the years to breast cancer, and on this day they were all remembered, their battles, suffering, and most importantly, their loss.

The students in the primary section were encouraged to create posters, and through their ingenuity, and childlike innocence created simple artworks in the hopes of inspiring these brave women to persevere in spite of the hardship and trepidation they may face along their journey. Albeit limited in their understanding of the true ramifications of cancer, they did not seem impeded from extending their support and love in the most endearing of ways. The beautiful art that the walls of the school are now mantled with propagate the virtues of fortitude, fearlessness, and tenacity

When asked what they thought about having an entire day devoted to raising awareness about breast cancer, students shared their feelings of gratitude and security. One student said, "I am glad to be part of a community like this in such a considerate and generous country. Not everyone would have been shown the same care and concern about breast cancer as shown here. As a woman, I feel secure, cared-for, and over the moon with the determination of this school to diminish the notion of fear and loss of hope."

St. Mary's works to inculcate in these young minds a familiarity with the struggles of women around the world and to imbue in them the altruistic approach to have towards those suffering within this harrowing disease. The school remains proudly ardent in promoting health and wellness among its students and staff, and initiatives such as the Breast Cancer Awareness Day play a critical and influential role in achieving this goal. This day served as a reminder to everyone- that together, we can create awareness, show our support, and assist those who are fighting this battle.

Box of Hope

UNITING FOR A CAUSE: AN EVENT THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE



Gerleeza Rodrigo - Y10

The Box of Hope charity helps us, as a school community, to do our best to support and help the ancillary workers at school by providing them with holiday hampers. Donating to the charity is a powerful and wonderful way for us to learn about compassion and the importance of giving and helping people.

Our school takes part in a variety of charitable acts — for instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 and 2021, school staff members felt it would be a fantastic idea to provide gift hampers for the less privileged staff members in the school and church community. A majority of them made a small financial contribution to support this initiative, which ended up being a huge success

Simultaneously, the parents of the students who were then in year 6, especially the D section, came forward to initiate a similar charity work in 2021. Word spread about this idea and a few more people volunteered to take part in this provision.

After the COVID-19 pandemic struck, many supporting staff had to face a lot of tribulations. Their work is usually overlooked by people, and we often fail to recognize the crucial impact that they have in making our school environment safer and more secure for students and staff



In 2022 December, a group of parents, notably of the students of 7D, joined forces with the school staff, other parents and students from grades 12 and 13 to fund this contribution, mainly to showcase our appreciation towards these unsung heroes. Though these individual donations were small, together they made a powerful act of kindness. Additionally, some students among the year 13s aided Sr. Jacintha with the packaging of the gift hampers; these supplies were then distributed to the workers by the students.

It was a valuable experience for both the givers, and the receivers. It provided the givers with an opportunity to make a positive impact on other people's lives, whereas for the receivers, it gave them a reminder that there are people who appreciate them for what they do and care for them during times of hardship

The Box of Hope initiative ultimately helps foster a sense of community and unity within everyone at school as we work together in order to fulfill a common goal.



Box of Hope

A SCHOOL OF FISH



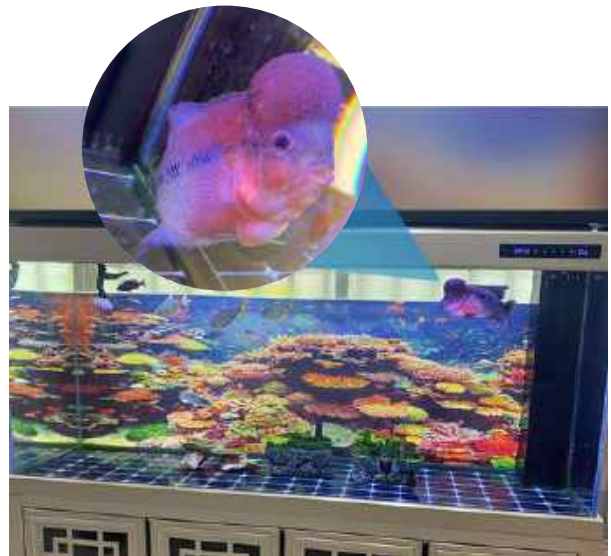
Pets of peace in times of stress

Althea Fernandes, Delisha Dias

In the hassle of daily life, we often forget to pause, for just a moment, and appreciate the little things we have come so far for. There is a fish tank near the receptionist's office, and one in the primary section. Amidst the rush to the next class, many of us, students and staff alike, stop and take a breather here, taking in life's simple pleasures.

The Unnamed Big-brained Fish

He is hideous, yet profoundly stellar, aimlessly drifting at a distance from the other, more carefree fish. Despite his seeming solitude, he often interacts with the people that come near him. Many have befriended him, christening him with a variety of imaginative names, like Megamind, Fishigan etc., fascinated by the way he comes to bump their hand on the glass. Occasionally, our unnamed hero will move to the glass and kiss its cool surface with agape drool-ly lips and wide doleful eyes.



The fish is a three-year-old Flowerhorn Cichlid, brought in by Mr. Ashfaq Sardar from the IT department due to larger tank requirements. "He's a smart guy," he remarks, "sometimes when I pass by, he turns to watch me, and comes to my hand whenever I feed him. I still take great care of him. I love him."

His presence in the school is intensely consoling. In his unique charm, our future days in his company will be lit up with that passively wonderful spark they call contentment.



MARK - THE AROWANA

- a friendly, unassuming fish residing in the primary section of our school. His impressive mustache (actually his mouth), aids him in catching dinner while lurking from below. Mark was a gift to Sr. Jacintha, our Directress, from a parent. She generously donated Mark to our primary school section. He paces arduously around his tank, tasked with the noble duty of a guardian peering watchfully over the cheery children that roam the halls. An adorable unnamed pet turtle sits above his tank, accompanying him.



These children adore the big fish and rightfully so, his solemn presence never ceases to improve our mood.



The school fishes are an essential part of our community, reminding us that no matter how stressful life may be, there will always be comforting presences around us, to make our time just a little bit easier.

A MESSAGE FROM THE TEAM

Congratulations dear reader on reaching the end of this newsletter! It became quite long because we covered all the exciting events that occurred over the past academic year — and there were too many to count on just 2 hands. We want to express our sincere gratitude to you for taking the time to read through it all. The entire newsletter team worked hard on this for quite a long time conducting interviews, researching, and collaborating to create this comprehensive issue.

Our editors and proofreaders did meticulous corrections, reviewing the articles multiple times, practically sacrificing their eyes in the process.



From left to right: Caitlyn Cowie, Ethann Danthi, Mikylla Almirol, William Rodrigues, Saba Dargahi, Aryana Perera

Our media and tech wizards, who spent weeks compiling pictures, carefully selecting suitable media for each article, doing some of the layout, templates, fonts, and colours to bring this newsletter to life — their efforts comparable to planning a wedding!



From left to right: Jac Hernandez, Saba Dargahi, Kyle Tarrobal, Hayley Viegas, Caitlyn Cowie, Fariha Mahmood

We would like to thank our school's Senior Leadership Team for entrusting us with this unique opportunity. It has been a wonderful foray into the world of journalism for us all. We extend our gratitude to Mr. Ashfaq Sardar from our IT department for patiently doing most of the layout and design on this humongous project. Lastly, a big thank you to our teachers, the queens, Ms. Renthi Sebastian and Ms. Kankanika Dutta, who provided all of us with the opportunity to dip our fingers into the world of journalism. We had a great time and are grateful for your guidance, wise words, and countless ideas that contributed to this newsletter



From left to right: Ms. Renthi, Katie Ashlee Velasquez, Kate Nicole Velasquez, Shaivi Cardozo, Rhea Araujo, William Rodrigues, Josna Ouseppachan, Fariha Mahmood, Aryana Perera, Senara Fernando, Althea Gamarose, Erin Fernandes, Hayley Viegas, Kyle Tarrobal, Chengetai Mushayahembe, Mikylla Almirol, Ms. Kankanika, Aaron George, Caitlyn Cowie, Alyanna Masahud, Ethann Danthi, Saba Dargahi, Priyasha Chugh, Enoch Musyoki, Sofia Perol, Jac Hernandez, Tanuja Kumarasiri, Earl Mindanao, Tanisha Raghavan, Delisha Dias, Alrick D'Souza, Maleesha Fernando, Gerleeza Rodrigo, Jabrielle De Guzman, Althea Fernandes

We value your support more than you know. Thank you, dear reader.

Sincerely,

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