



# ESPOIR

a publication of Kuo Chuan Presbyterian Secondary School

Issue 4 2013



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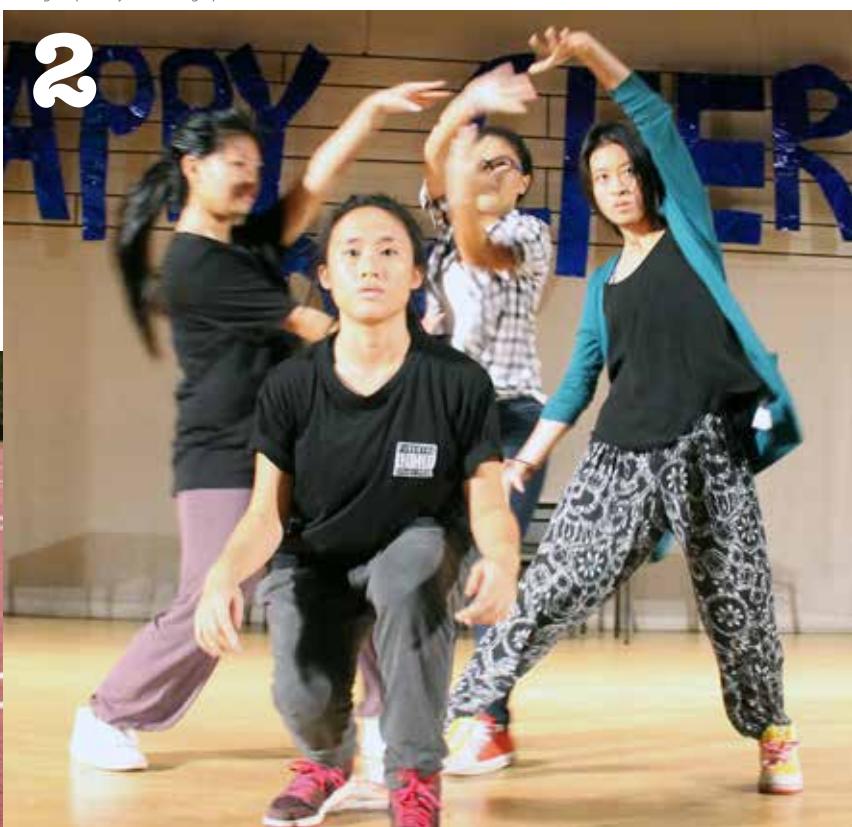
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# *Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end*

**"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever"**

– Psalms 136:1



As we come to the end of another year at KCPSS and watch another batch of promising KCPians graduate, we pause once again to reflect on all that our Heavenly

Father has generously bestowed upon our community of learners, leaders and community contributors.

Indeed, we have much to be grateful for this year. We began the year with a focus on *Building Bridges, Strengthening Relationships* as a means to achieving a richer, more meaningful school experience for all KCPians. In this final issue of Espoir for 2013, we see KCPians sweeping a number of accolades across different fields and celebrate new depths in our relationships with key partners. With the appointments of our Subject Head for Partnerships, Mrs Dorothy Goh and Alumni liaison officers, Ms Jasline Pan and Mr Serwin Leong, we have strengthened relationships within the school and with our key partners – parents and alumni. In this issue, you will be reading about some of the new ways in which we have engaged with our students and parents and the strengthening of the school-alumni bonds. We believe this is just the beginning of the relationships that will continue to make the Kuo Chuan experience a unique one for every child who walks through its gates.

It has been said that '*every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end*'. As we end the year, I would also like to share with you some of the exciting new opportunities that will be coming our way next year. In our quest to strengthen relationships within the school, the school will be putting in place the Student Development Team to better provide social-emotional support to students and strengthen teacher-student relationships. This initiative was announced by the Minister for Education, Mr Heng Swee Keat at the recent MOE Work Plan Seminar and KCPSS is privileged to have been selected for phase one implementation. We are confident that this new structure, with its attendant resources, will help further strengthen home-school partnerships and support the school's ongoing efforts to ensure an engaging and enjoyable school experience for every KCPian.

The Kuo Chuan Schools will also be celebrating our 90th Founders' day in 2014. Celebrations for this significant event in the history of the school will focus on learning from the rich heritage of our founding fathers who gave sacrificially

to provide educational opportunities and a brighter future for the less privileged in their community. We hope to use the lessons from the past to help every KCPian come one step closer to being a *community contributor* in the year ahead. As Ernest Hemingway has said, "it is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters, in the end". We look forward to your continued partnership with us in the journey ahead!

My staff and I take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones a blessed Christmas and meaningful times with family and friends during the school vacation!



# Let Us Celebrate Our Educators!



"Kids don't remember what you try to teach them. They remember what you are," said Jim Henson, a famous screenwriter and filmmaker. The Teachers' Day Celebrations this year was undoubtedly a show of appreciation to these educators who hold more roles than one. Not only are they our teachers, they are our friends, our confidants and our source of inspiration.

Although the day started gloomily with the rain incessantly pouring down from the sky, this did not dampen the moods of the students and teachers who were looking forward to a day of fun-filled activities. Many students perked up when they heard that they would be doing the ACES DAY mass dance in the hall. It was indeed fun to see all students trying their best to keep up with the steps and tempo of the dance. Sporting teachers also joined in, much to the students' amusement.

The form teachers' appreciation time which was held after recess, allowed students to surprise their teachers by doing something special for them. Many students exhibited the traits of being effective leaders and innovative learners as they racked their brains to shower 'surprises' on their beloved teachers. Some classes planned a party for their teachers and even brought food! Some came up with interesting powerpoint slides, with pictures of their form teachers in

action and even included their teachers' favourite phrases!

The highlight of the day however, was undeniably the concert that was put up by the students. Just like in previous years, the teachers did a walk-in into the hall to the loud clapping and joyful cheers of the students. Various items like rope jumping, dancing and singing kept everyone captivated and engaged.

To prepare for this concert, auditions were conducted and students whose items were chosen had to practise hard for an entire month before the event. The intense preparations definitely displayed our students' ability to work effectively in teams and to strive to do their best at all times.

Mrs Mavis Low who was the overall teacher-in-charge of the Teachers' Day celebration was very proud of the way our student leaders planned and facilitated the events of the day. Mrs Mavis Low added that it was a good opportunity for the councillors to be servant leaders as they were able to serve both the school and the teachers in preparing and executing the plans for the concert. In the end, it was the students who made her day. 'It is really nice to receive cards and words of thanks from your students after a long and tiring day,' said Mrs Low.

By Jovan Faldo, Nur Asyurah Bte Ahmad,  
Kautham s/o Kobilathan and Jeraldine Leong Jia Yi of 1 Truth

# 'CARRY THE



## - 4E5N Graduation Ceremony

By Tan Zi Qi Crystable, Justin Chong Yee Siong, Dylan Tan Yan Hao, Toh Hong Feng of 1 Truth

The candles were aflame – aflame for truth. That picturesque sight of every KCPSS graduating student holding a lit candle symbolised the essence of their four to five years of journey in this school – the journey of adversities, struggles, joys and all warring emotions came to a culmination on 11 October this year when the graduation ceremony was celebrated with great aplomb and zeal.

Like a dam bursting through, an overwhelming sense of gratitude, nostalgia and anxiety over the forthcoming 'O' and 'N' level examinations could be palpably felt. With an aura of grandeur and formality, this hallmark event was held in the school hall replete with an atmosphere befitting a formal occasion.

The theme this year was "Carry the Torch," inspired from the bible verse taken from Matthew 5:14 – 16, where we are told to be the light in this world of darkness. In a spirit-filled speech, the Guest-of-Honour for the event, Reverend Dr Christopher Chia, urged students to move on in their life journeys with courage and to glorify the name of God in all their speech and actions.

The ceremony started with exhortation of the Word followed by a walk down memory lane through a video presentation put together by the teachers. A heartfelt rendition of a special song item entitled "Carry the Torch" by the teachers was a deeply inspiring moment, surely to

remain indelibly carved in the hearts of every graduating KCPian. Following this, certificates for recipients of the Colours Award, CCA certificates and collar pins, signifying that each student is ready to take a leap of faith into the next phase of their life, were handed out. A specially personalized pen, a gift from our PSG Chairperson Mdm Bella Ng, was also given out.

Finally, the traditional ceremony of lighting of candles signifying the passing of the Kuo Chuan flame from the school leaders to graduating students took place. Mrs Elsie Rajaratnam, our school principal, "carried the torch" by lighting the first candle. The significance of this ritual lies in the belief that every graduating KCPian will steadfastly continue to be a shining light in the community.

After a closing prayer led by Pastor Stanley Soh, the 349 graduating students adjourned for fellowship among teachers and friends and enjoyed a sumptuous tea.



# For THE ❤️ OF FITNESS, FUN... AND FRUITS!

From the 2nd to the 5th of September, the Physical Education Department organised a Healthy Lifestyle Week, which proved to be a roaring success. A sizable number of students participated and the event promoted great team spirit, sportsmanship and most importantly, a love for fruits!

Intertwining technology into this event, a "photo of the week" fringe competition was organised, where students simply had to post unique snapshots that captured the juicy flavour of this event, on Instagram. For this multimedia endeavour, individual winners received an Ipod shuffle, and SD card and X-mini speakers.

In a "Fun Hunt" organised for Secondary One students, station games were organised and these culminated into a Treasure Hunt, where winners were awarded medals for their relentless search.

The Secondary Two students participated in an inter-class Track and Field competition, which was organised by Mr Raymond Ng. Determined participants pitted against each other, vying for the top prizes. Finally, 2 Love emerged as the overall champion while 2 Peace settled for the runner-up position.

Secondary Three students unanimously voted for football as their choice sport of the day. After a fast and furious match, the boys' football teams of 3 Joy and 3 Hope entered the finals, with 3 Hope clinching the first prize! In a show

By Teh Yew Ming Darren, Joseph Cheng Yuet Chin, Koh Zhi En Emmanuel, Low Jit Huat of 1 Truth



of sportsmanship, 3 Joy and 3 Hope congratulated each other on their performance. Another tough match took place between the girls from 3 Joy and 3 Peace, and this was ultimately won by 3 Joy.

Next up, it was fruits galore – the highlight of the day! What better way to teach students the importance of consuming fruits than to present on a platter a wide spread of fresh fruits to students, free of charge? With meticulous precision, Mr Tan Kok Lum ensured

that only the freshest and most nutritious fruits were consumed by our students. Seedless fruits such as grapes, sliced watermelons and bananas were generously doled out. A big 'Thank you' to Mr Tan!

The events were certainly fun-filled and it is hoped that the Healthy Lifestyle Week will continue to take place yearly. We thank all teachers and Physical Education Leaders involved in the planning of this event.

# S7 CLUSTER SCRABBLE TRAINING AND COMPETITION 2013

What do America's President, Barack Obama, the Queen of England, and renowned author, Graham Greene have in common? They have all revelled in the all-consuming game, Scrabble, and have credited it to have a remarkable pull on the mind. What does this world-renowned word game which later became the basis for the most popular game application on Facebook, have to do with KCPSS?

Kuo Chuan Presbyterian Secondary School and Kuo Chuan Presbyterian Primary School together with Singapore Scrabble Academy organised the S7 Cluster Scrabble Training and Competition 2013 on 2 and 3 September. The two-day event comprised of a short training on the technicalities behind the game and the competition itself. Students from cluster schools were invited to compete under the junior and senior categories. KCPSS sent in two teams for the event. The teams were led by Darren Tan of 3 Joy and Oliver Leong of 3 Truth.

The clicking of three dozen tile bags being shaken simultaneously heralded the commencement of three exciting games. Outwit. Outplay. Outscore. Our very own KCPSS players were bolted to their seats as they tried to outwit their opponents. It is a strategy game, where words are used as tools to outscore the opponent. Elegant or flashy words are not necessarily the best tools to get a winning score. Our KCPians showed conscientiousness and resilience as they took time to create words from their seven letters. Some of the experienced players like Darren from 3 Joy displayed great skill and shrewd strategy as he paid attention to the leftover letters after making each turn. He sacrificed points in order to keep more options open for future turns. When the opponents steadily eroded his lead, Oliver from 3 Truth did not give up but continued to play on and showed commendable sportsmanship as he put in extra effort to find a play that used as many letters as possible, irrespective of score. Conversely, the 'tile gods' were kind to Shantan of 1 Faith who scored a Bingo in his first game!

Besides the players, student volunteers and NE Ambassadors contributed to the success of the event. Our students were good hosts to our guest players. Their enthusiasm and leadership was evident in the way they ushered the guests and facilitated the smooth running of the games.

KCPians involved in this event would agree that the learning strategies developed on the board overlap into their social lives. It was a tough fight but KCPians gained much from this invaluable experience.

By Tang Jun Cheng, Vaishan, Glenn Pang, Jayson Chia, Joshua Aw of 1 Hope



# A Day At The Museums

By Raseena Zubaidah, Esther Yee, Charlotte Yap,  
Jocelyn Loo of 1 Hope

We took our imagination for a workout. Little Red Riding Hood clad in a 'Sarong Kebaya' carrying a basket of 'Ang Ku Kueh', a surreal world of an expanding room where the walls expanded and contracted in response to voices and a dreamy adventure of swivelling beds and spooky monsters - the Secondary 2 students were in for an aesthetic adventure when they were taken to the Singapore Art Museum and 8Q for a learning journey. This learning journey which was co-organised by the English, Aesthetics and Craft and Technology teachers required students to appreciate and critique a series of art pieces and transfer these skills to complete authentic tasks.

There were excited conversations about Vicente Delgado's fantastical room of dizzying patterns and Mojoko and Shang Liang's "The Incredibly Magical Expanding Room". Brendan Ng of 2 Praise aptly put it, "It is very different when you learn the principles of art in class and when you see it in real life." The learning became purposeful and relevant when students got to see how different mediums were used to create art. "It was interesting to talk about art pieces and how they made me feel. Art is not something that we teenagers discuss very often but through this experience I learned to explain how and why the art pieces made me feel that way," said Cheryl of 2 Grace.

The learning journey which leveraged the skills brought in by the different departments is a way to prepare KCPians for the global community. Students not only learned to appreciate the art but also the human condition in the process. For instance, the spooky monsters in "Glossy Dreams in Depths" taught the students to conquer their



fears of unfamiliar situations and to become heroes in their own adventures. This experience empowered students to think, write and speak confidently. When learning was made relevant to the students they were fully engaged in the tasks. Ms Siti, one of the Art teachers said, "Other than the opportunity to express themselves artistically, I am glad that the students were inspired to see art beyond purely aesthetic perspectives."

KCPians are indeed privileged to be given such learning opportunities. Here in KCPSS, they go beyond equipping us for examinations and prepare us for life.

# A visit to the past, a walk into the future!

For the National Day Celebration, a learning journey to the Singapore River was organised for the Secondary One students.

We were reminded of the significance of the Singapore River and how it played a crucial role in Singapore's early years. From a busy trading port on which modern Singapore was founded on and from which much of its people and its wealth came from, the River is now one of many iconic tourist attractions.

During the learning journey, we were assigned to do engaging activities based on various subjects such as Mother Tongue, Mathematics and History. "I had to make observations of the beautiful scenery and use appropriate words to express my thoughts. Although I had difficulty finding the right words, the task was fun to do as I got to work together with my friends," shared Evelyn Tan of 1 Hope. For Mathematics, we had to measure the height of Sir Stamford Raffles' statue and then figure out a method to calculate its height by downloading applications from our smartphones. Researching on the background of the bronze statues along the river and explaining the significance of the river and how it shaped the Singapore identity was the task set by the History teachers. Ms Faye Tan shared that the main objective of the learning journey was to allow students to practise and apply the skills and knowledge they have learned in class to real life contexts. She also added that students in the process became self-directed learners as they had to rely on their own resources to solve the problems given. What is also crucial is how students have become concerned citizens as they learn more about the historical and commercial aspects of Singapore River and thus, better appreciate the strengths of this tiny island.

Through this learning journey, we have learned to work together and to tap on our classmates' varying strengths in order to solve the different challenges at the various stations. This in turn has enabled us to know our classmates better through the exchange of ideas during our discussions. We definitely look forward to more of such engaging and memorable learning journeys.

By Felicia Liaw, Sophia Chong, Evelyn Tan and Camille Teo of 1 Hope



# Let Us Stop To Smell The Roses!

On the morning of Teachers' Day, the teachers in Kuo Chuan found themselves treated like celebrities as students swarmed them trying to show their appreciation, with gifts and cards. The exciting day did not just end there. In the afternoon, the teachers proceeded to Gardens by the Bay for a fun and meaningful learning journey.

The teachers were in high spirits as they chatted and laughed during the journey. Once there, the teachers did not waste any time as they quickly gathered into their allocated groups to embark on KCPSS' own version of 'Amazing Race'. The learning journey took place in two areas, the Flower Dome and the Cloud Dome. The teachers had to go through different stations and solve questions from the different disciplines to progress in the race. The groups which comprised teachers from different departments brought in different strengths and knowledge to solve the questions.

The Flower Dome which housed some of the stations had

a spectacular display of flowers from all over the world. Although groups were trying to rush to solve the questions and riddles, many did not waste the opportunity to take pictures of the gorgeous scenery. Teachers had to find a 100 year old Olive tree and a non-Chinese speaking teacher in each group had to recite a poem in Chinese. One other interesting station that most teachers remembered was the last station in the Cloud Dome, where groups had to draw the landscape of Marina Barrage and include their own version of an iconic building that would complement the landscape. One group drew a majestic building which was supposed to be the new site of KCPSS! They wanted the building to be in the hub of the city as it would represent our vision of an exciting school of choice.

Not only did the teachers have fun, they were also able to bond with their colleagues. It was an unforgettable afternoon indeed.

By Mrs Tang Lai Chan



# Battle of the S7 Staff Cluster Games

By Mr Joshua Xiao



The S7 Staff cluster games were held on 30 August and 13 schools from the cluster met at Guangyang Secondary and Primary School grounds to have a friendly challenge in 7 sports - Badminton, Basketball, Floorball, Frisbee, Netball, Soccer and Table Tennis.

This yearly event aims to encourage a lifestyle of sports and exercise among teachers and staff. It also creates a platform for staff within the cluster to get together, bond and have fun.

The Kuo Chuan family was represented by staff from both the primary and secondary schools, who participated with gusto and enthusiasm. The event proved to be a wonderful opportunity for the KCPian family to re-ignite the sense of oneness and belonging to a rich heritage.

At the end of the day, the Kuo Chuan family emerged as the champion for Basketball, runner-up for Badminton and in fourth-placing for Floorball and Frisbee. The fun-filled day brought lots of laughter and fond memories will surely remain.



# TRAP

By Toh Yi Hui of 5 Hope

Azan crept quietly amongst the tall grass blades. He was sick and tired of listening to his mother's warnings on not entering the jungle and how ferocious beasts dwelled in it. He was 18 years-old and not once had he left the village. He was all grown up and had decided that no one should be able to tell him what to do anymore.

The young man stooped low to look out for signs of danger. He felt like an ant being surrounded by the towers of trees. He ventured deeper into the heart of jungle, not knowing what he was looking for. Something was calling out to him, but what? His heart

was beating furiously, bewildered at what awaited him. Then, he saw it.

Standing in front of him, lay a metal contraption that was bigger than him. It looked rather familiar to him and he remembered that it was one of the cages that the hunters brought out with them when they went hunting. What shocked him, however, was not the size of the cage but the presence of the beast inside it.

Afraid to take another step closer, he stood afar. Much to Azan's relief, the beast seemed unaware of his presence. He looked at it in awe. It had a bushy mane

around its neck and fur that glistened under the sunlight. Its body seemed stronger than anything and its legs looked as if they were able to outrun any living being. "Beautiful," he thought. The stunning creature was growling and pawing at the cage, trying to break through the metal bars and taste freedom. Azan took a step forward to observe it better. He froze.

It was looking right at him, as if staring into his soul. The terrifying yet stunning creature fixed its eyes onto Azan, moving in circles as if ready to attack. Its eyes were dark and fierce, unafraid of the kind that had laid the trap

out for him. Azan inched towards the cage and started fiddling around with the release. Confused, the beast let out a roar. Azan fell back and got back up to continue with his attempt. Success! The gate lifted and out sprung the creature. It stared at Azan momentarily before running off to enjoy its newfound freedom.

Azan let out a sigh of amazement and relief, fascinated by his near-death encounter with the creature. Despite it being trapped, it still stood resilient and proud. As the sun was setting, Azan snuck back to the village before anyone noticed his absence.

## "WHICH IS THE Happiest PERIOD IN A PERSON'S LIFE - CHILDHOOD, ADOLESCENCE OR OLD AGE? Discuss the things that make us happy in this stage of our life?"

Many people would say that the golden age is when we retire. "Old is gold" as my grandfather once told me. However I have to disagree with him. I believe that our childhood is the happiest period. Even though we will not be able to remember everything from our childhood, one thing is for certain – when you are a child you do not have many complicated responsibilities to juggle with as compared to an adult or an elderly.

As a child, I believe that happiness is something that is easily found. Something as having a friend who is there for you can make one feel happy. It seems easier to forge friendships when you are a child, because as we grow older, friendships sadly, dwindle. We become too bogged down over many other concerns such as affording basic necessities, career aspirations and relationship problems. Having that one true friend makes us feel appreciated and that there is someone who understands us, can make our childhood that much more enjoyable. After all, "the best things in life are free". Friendships and relationship problems are

much more simple when we are children.

Another way to feel happy in this stage of life is having access to simple luxuries like sweets and toys. Though such 'happiness' seems superficial, there is no doubt that a child's mood can turn drastically for the better he or she is given such treats. A simple toy can instantaneously stop the cries and tantrums of a raging, upset child. Even a lollipop can distract a tearful child from his impending trip to the doctor's. However, the effects of such superficial 'happiness' does not last very long as we grow older. Eventually we will get bored and we can no longer be satisfied by such simple treats. As we grow older, our wants will change. Our appetite to be satiated will increase. As a child in primary school, getting good grades was all I wanted. However, as I grew older, the desire for good grades eventually became a thing of the past.

Knowing that our parents are there for us no matter what, makes a child happy. I remember when I was a child and no matter what I said I wanted to be when

I grew up, my parents always supported my choices. People fail to realise how much our parents matter to us, some might not agree with me but once our parents are gone, we will regret not appreciating them. Family is really important as in our childhood. Although not all of us have a perfect family, knowing that our parents care for us gives us that warm, fuzzy feeling. Knowing that there are two people who will supply your every need in your life. To encourage and support you no matter what, this is something we must never take for granted. I feel that family is one of the best things to have in life, and this is what makes our childhood the happiest period of our life. However, as we grow older, cynicism sets in. We tend to get embarrassed by our need for affection from our parents. We distance ourselves from the ones who bring us joy, and search for other means to make us happy.

Most of the times, it is this search to fill the empty hole in our hearts that make us even more unhappy. And when we become parents, or grandparents, it is our turn to shower such love on our kin, whether it is reciprocated or not.

As we get older, our bodies become weaker, although as a retired elderly, we have all the time in the world but we cannot do anything exciting. However in our childhood, we are full of energy and courage to seek out new adventures. We can always do whatever we want. Being able-bodied as a child is one of the best perks there is. Once we are a teenager, we will begin to realise although this is where we should be enjoying life the most, we become too obsessed with petty things. Such as self-image which in turn makes us question our abilities and leads to insecurity. Moreover as a teenager, we need to worry about examinations and complicated relationships. Thus as a teenager we have too many concerns to actually enjoy simple forms of happiness that exist around us.

Therefore, I believe that our childhood is the happiest stage of our life because only as children do we have the time and ability to enjoy life and not be too concerned by too many complicated expectations.

By Joshua Ezekiel Moses of 4 Joy

# "Spare the rod and SPOIL the Child."

## DO YOU AGREE WITH THIS STATEMENT?

It should be a worrying trend that the youths of today are becoming much more brazen. The 'Gen Z' or our generation, has been labelled as narcissistic, selfish, disrespectful, rash, the list goes on. Do you think it is because parents have been much too afraid to use force on their little darlings? I should think so. Spare the rod, and spoil the child.

Parents are much too afraid to hit their children these days. If their child has done something wrong, they would, at most give a word of caution as they do not wish

to see their progeny heavily punished. So, over time, the child grows into a teenager, with the skewed mentality that he will go unpunished for his misdemeanours. He thinks he can talk rudely to the teachers, after all there will be little repercussion. His parents will defend him anyway, won't they? He thinks he can talk down to his peers, after all nobody would be there to show him the rod. Avoiding punishment altogether thus leaves the child with the grave misconception that everything will still be well when he does something wrong.

A person who has grown up with the cane knows what it is like to delay gratifications and temptations, whereas another who has not, is less accustomed to delaying his hedonistic desires. The rod teaches children to wait and work persistently towards their goals and is thus more disciplined.

Of course, with one side of the argument, there are bound to be some outliers. You may have heard of cases where the parent goes overboard and disciplining the child becomes child abuse. Using the rod

should not be associated with child abuse, which leaves permanent emotional and physical scars. Some parents cross the limits and beat the child so heavily that the child becomes withdrawn instead of being properly disciplined.

Overall though, physical punishment has merits. After all, it has survived for generations and built up sturdy characters. The rod has been purposeful in ensuring the child is well-grounded and humble.

By Irene Lai of 4 Faith

## = A CHANCE ENCOUNTER =

It was a three-hour flight back to Singapore. I sat on the seat nearest to the window and sighed. My heart pounded fast at the thought of the interview I attended last week. I lost my job two months ago, and have been looking for another one ever since. Seemed like lady luck was not on my side, because I never managed to impress the employers as much as the others who went along with me for all the many interviews I attended. Last week, I had an interview in Hong Kong for a job recommended by my friend. If I was selected, I would be receiving a call today. I would anticipate the call upon reaching Singapore.

There was a young man next to me whom I did not notice.

He broke my chain of thoughts when he asked, "Hello. My name is Simon. You are?"

I returned the greeting and introduced myself. He asked why I was looking stressed. Being another man roughly of my age, I told him what I was facing, the problems about being jobless and the family back home that is highly dependent on me. I could not believe that I was telling my problems to a complete stranger, but somehow I felt slightly relieved doing so.

"I have to get a job soon, or my

wife and children would have to suffer."

I felt tears in my eyes as I said it. Simon patiently listened to my story and, as though he really felt my pain and struggles, he patted my back and said he understood my problem and would pray for me to get the job. He was very encouraging as he spoke. It gave me some hope as everything he said seemed to sink into my mind. I began to believe that maybe I may get the job and to be more positive about it.

He said, "God helps those who help themselves."

I was sceptical at first, but he made me believe that losing your job is not the end of your life, you just have to keep trying for other options and not give up hope.

Simon and I talked for about two hours. I learnt a lot more about his life too. He was a fellow Singaporean and owned a business. He said he needed more assistance in his administrative department and would love to have me in his business. He needed someone who was young, energetic and approachable for that department and he thought I could do a great job. I felt some hope in my life. Simon made

me feel like I could make my devastated family smile again. The thought warmed my heart. The plane finally touched down. I arrived in Singapore with so much more enthusiasm and energy. Simon and I exchanged contacts to keep in touch. I thanked him for allowing the heart to heart talk with him and how much better I felt after speaking with him. We were about to go our separate ways when I switched on my phone.

Almost immediately, my phone rang. It was from the company in Hong Kong. I answered.

"Sorry, Mr Lee. It was a hard decision to make between another applicant and you, but the employers did not select you. I am sorry. Thank you for coming down for the interview," she said in a strong Hong Kong accent.

I grabbed my luggage and sat at a bench nearby and cupped my face with my hands. "What was I going to do? How am I to go home and tell them I did not get this job too? How am I going to support my family?" I thought as I felt a gentle grip on my shoulder. It was Simon. I did not even notice that he was still standing beside me. "Didn't get the job, I suppose," he said calmly. "You know, there is a spot available for you in my office if you're interested," he said cheerfully.

I looked up at him bewildered, "No interview? No criteria? How can you select me when everyone else turned me down?"

He smiled and explained that he needed a young, vibrant and approachable person for the job. He wanted someone like me. The words rang in my head.

I did not know what to say. I got up and threw my arms around him. I felt tears roll down my cheeks.

"You don't know how much this means to me, Simon. My family and my own life depend on this. Thank you for so much. I don't even know how to thank you for the impact your words and actions have done to me. Thank you." I felt as if a huge burden on my shoulder was gone.

Meeting Simon was a chance encounter on the plane, but it became a turning point in my life. Today, I have grown in my career. I have been working there for four years now. I did work very hard to ensure that Simon would never regret employing me. My family is proud and happy. This was all thanks to Simon for pulling me up and helping me through my darkest times, though he was a complete stranger. Today, he is one of my closest friends.

Divya of 4 Truth

# National Fire & Civil Emergency Preparedness Council (NFEC) Digital Photography Competition 2013

In May 2013, some of the Photography Club members participated in the inaugural National Fire & Civil Emergency Preparedness Council (NFEC) Digital Photography Competition 2013 organised by the National Fire & Civil Emergency Preparedness Council (NFEC). The objectives of the competition are to promote fire safety and civil emergency preparedness among the students in secondary schools, ITEs and Polytechnics and secondly, to provide students with a platform to express themselves creatively through digital photography.

The competition was intense as the students from various secondary schools submitted photograph entries that depicted the theme with a creative stance. It was great news and a pleasant surprise when we were informed that one of our own members, Yang Xiling from 5 Praise bagged the Third Prize out of 104 entries, in the Secondary School category! Needless to say, Xiling was thrilled by the result. It was a fitting testimony of the hard work that she has put in as a student photographer and the Chairperson of the Photography Club.

On 27 September, she received her trophy and \$200 cash prize from the Chairman of the National Fire and Civil Emergency



*Winning Photograph: This picture shows us that firefighting is no easy feat as it requires much skill and bravery. It is a testimony of the brave people who risk their lives everyday to save others from fires and other civil emergencies.*

Preparedness Council, Mr Allan Loh. When asked how she came up with her winning photograph, she informed Mr Loh and guests at the Prize Giving ceremony, that her picture showed how the Singapore Civil Defence Force is dedicated in spreading the fire prevention message through their student outreach programme.

When asked to reflect on her winning photograph, Xiling said, "I really did not expect to win. I hope that this prize will encourage my fellow Cub members as well as KCPians to continue to work hard to achieve their dreams. I also wish to thank the school leaders for giving me the opportunity to take photographs at various school events, which eventually sharpen my photographic techniques. I would also like to thank Mr Sebastian Lim, teacher-in-charge of the Photography Club, for teaching us to see life through the camera lens and express ourselves and our ideas creatively through our photographs."

By Sebastian Lim



# S.U.R.E National Library Board Competition

The explosion of information that is available online makes it easy to believe that everything we need to know is on the Internet. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, much of what is on the Internet is inappropriate and some even inaccurate. Our KCPSS librarians became frontline advocates to inform students about how we have to be discerning recipients of knowledge using the 'SURE' formula.

In July, four of our school librarians participated in the S.U.R.E. Club Library Advocacy Display Competition organised by the National Library Board. SURE stands for Source, Understand, Research, Evaluate. The librarians displayed an information literacy exhibit which displayed how information can be received and evaluated for accuracy and reliability. With the growth of digital materials, users are gaining more direct access to information. Their exhibits showed the shift in resources from reference services to Information Literacy research. The KCPSS librarians had researched information about books and online resources. For instance, their exhibits explained how students

"AS THE TEAM LEADER, I HAD TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND INSTRUCTION TO MY TEAM MEMBERS. THIS PROJECT HAS TAUGHT ME THAT TEAMWORK IS ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS!"

TSANG LING

"I have developed more confidence in myself. I was able to present my points clearly to the delegates and it's a good feeling."

Jeryl

Reference Services. They presented to an international audience, consisting of delegates from countries such as Canada, Australia, United States and Indonesia. It was a very good learning experience for them.

By Mrs Chow Mei Chee



"The presentation has helped me improve on my communication skills. The delegates were friendly and they shared about their lifestyle with us."

PHILLIP

can seek information if they want to know more about a mobile phone. Their presentation showed how potential buyers can seek information about the product from various resources, interpret this information and discern the persuasive language displayed in the various resources. The students' creativity and communication skills were put to the test. "As the team leader, I had to provide guidance and instruction to my team members. This project has taught me that teamwork is essential for success," said Tsang Ling of 3 Peace. Jeryl Tham from 2 Hope was pleased with himself and was grateful for the opportunity to present at such a prestigious event.

The judges were impressed by the eye-catching posters and the informative presentation which drew reference from their daily lives. The four librarians, Tsang Ling and Phillip Tan from 3 Peace, Jeryl Tham from 2 Hope and Joe Ong from 2 Truth were also invited to showcase their display at the National Library Board Building during the International Federation of Library Associations and Institution Satellite Meeting on Information Literacy and

"I learnt how to search for reliable information on the internet. I would be able to apply this knowledge for my future school projects."

Joe

# SOUTH ZONE MILLENIUM CHALLENGE

In May 2013, a group of Design and Technology students participated in the annual South Zone Millennium Challenge organized by Saint Andrew's Secondary School. This competition seeks to explore the creative talents in design thinking and making, among secondary school students.

This competition comprised three categories - Bridge Building, Mechanical Toy Vehicle and Motorized Toy Vehicle. We sent a total of six teams to participate in this competition. The students were Nikki Low and Tearin Tan (3 Hope), Tracy Tang, Carmen Lee, Chua Boon Hui, Alex Chua, Oliver Leong, Jordan Ng and Shawn Neo (3 Truth), Chia Zhen Da and Yeo Zhi Yong (4 Love) and Chia Joon Kiat (5 Grace). Hu Mingmei and Low Jin Yik (3 Truth) also helped the teams in the preparation phase. After all the hard work in conceptualising, testing and realising our ideas in the workshop, the team members felt ready for the competition.

We were assigned to design and construct a model bridge which would display high structural efficiency. However, the model bridge could only be constructed with ice-cream sticks and glue! A mammoth task indeed! After numerous nerve-racking discussions, we finally produced a model bridge that could withstand a total weight of 60 kilograms!

When the results were announced, we achieved 4th position in the Non-Motorised (Distance) category, 1st and 2nd position in the Motorised (Speed) category and 2nd and 3rd position in the Bridge Building (Strength) category. We were elated by the good performance by the various teams! After the judges had totalled up the scores, our school emerged as the Overall Champion in this competition!

The experience definitely taught us to find appropriate solutions to solve the challenges posed to us. It was indeed a great learning experience!



By Tracy Tang and Jordan Ng of 3 Truth

# Celebrations and Achievements

## Singapore Junior Physics Olympiad 2013

36 students from Secondary 4 Joy and 4 Faith took part in this year's Singapore Junior Physics Olympiad that was held on 31st July. The objective of this competition was to encourage the study and appreciation of Physics among all secondary school students. It was also to challenge the students in the field of Physics. 2 of our students Thormund Tay and Aaron Teo qualified for the special round which was held on 31st August 2013. Congratulations, young physicists!

## Plain English Speaking Award 2013 (PESA)

After coming out tops in the iSpeak Oratorical Competition in school, two eloquent and confident students, Jonathan Lim (3 Truth) and Sean Koh (3 Love) were chosen to participate in the Plain English Speaking Award (PESA) 2013. PESA provides a platform for secondary students to sharpen their public speaking skills and build self-confidence. Both students were shortlisted as Bronze Honour Roll recipients out of hundreds of participants. This is definitely an achievement they should be proud of. Well done!



## Green Wave Environmental Care Competition 2013

This competition which was organised by Sembawang shipyard aimed to teach participants to learn about protecting our environment. 'Ocean Peril', a project initiated by 4 students from 1 Joy, was shortlisted by the panel of judges for the finals. This was no mean feat as only a total of 16 projects were shortlisted. Our heartiest congratulations to C. Niranjana, Lee Zheng Qi, Haw Jia Xuan, Joey Shua and Cassandra Jing Wen for making it that far into the competition.



## 2013 Singapore Grand Prix Online Challenge

In this competition, 5 students from the Library Club raced to find answers to questions related to Formula One Grand Prix, using online and physical resources. Through this competition, students developed strategies for teamwork, thus fostering cooperative learning and developing their skills in research and information literacy. One team won the second prize while the other team won the third prize. Job well done indeed!

## New Staff



**Mr Chelliah Trevor Devendran** "In my short time here, I have already experienced the warmth and spirit of camaraderie shared amongst the staff. The students are a friendly and bubbly lot who are witty and knowledgeable. I was particularly impressed with the leadership exhibited by the students during the Youth Day Carnival held at the school. It is indeed truly an honour to be a part of the KCPSS family. I pray that I am able to serve the school well in my time here."



**Mr Muthucumar Suppiah** "A new journey for me at KCPSS. I look forward to the support of our Student Leaders, Teachers, Staff & Students. My hobbies include running, golf, photography and recreational flying."



**Miss Mardiana Jamaludin** "True teachers are those who use themselves as bridges over which they invite their students to cross; then, having facilitated their crossing, joyfully collapse, encouraging them to create their own." - Nikos Kazantzakis

Blessed to be posted to KCPSS. I am very grateful to be given the opportunity to meet great teachers here who are able to lead and guide me to become a better teacher. I look forward to work with and guide the little artists of KCPSS.

## Miss Emilie Mc Kernan

"I am Miss Emilie from Ireland. As a new teacher in Singapore, I am delighted and honoured to join KCPSS. I feel welcomed by the students and staff so far and am looking forward to playing my part in the next academic year."



Before coming to Singapore I spent time working in Ireland and London. Singapore presented a very exciting opportunity, to work and explore new environments, and I am enjoying the sights and tastes so far.



## Mr Mervyn Tan

"I am extremely blessed and thankful to be back here at KCPSS, received into the Kuo Chuan Family. I am looking forward to learn as much from colleagues and hope to guide and nurture students to their fullest potential in preparing them for life beyond secondary school. Physical Education and Geography are my choice subjects as I believe that they are very inter-linked, especially when we travel, explore and experience the interactions between our body and the environment around us. I look forward to grow as a person here in KCPSS!"

# The Day We Got Bowled Over!



On 31 August 2013, Alumni and KCPians from both Kuo Chuan Presbyterian Schools came together at Yishun Safra to participate in the annual Kuo Chuan Presbyterian School Alumni (KCPSA) Bowling Competition. However, for the first time, our very own Physical Education Leaders (PELs) of Kuo Chuan Presbyterian Secondary School were the organisers of the Competition! The organising committee, led by Tan Jeng Woon and Inez Chan, started planning months ahead to prepare for the mega event. The event began with an opening speech given by our KCPSA Chairperson, Mr Choo Chin Teck.

This year, a series of special awards and fringe activities were introduced. Participants tried their best to win the First Strike and Turkey King trophies by scoring the first strike of the competition and first turkey of the competition. Eventually, Mr Mervyn Tan from the PE Department and John Tan from 3 Joy won the awards respectively. Haagen Daas vouchers were also awarded to the teams with the most number of spares in the entire tournament! The KCPS staff edged out their competitors to earn themselves the yummy ice cream treat. Interestingly, the Best Bowling Award was also given to the bowler who had the best bowling pose! Student photographers went around taking snapshots of the participants' glamorous poses and the panel of student judges agreed that Tinesh Brendan of 3 Peace had the moves to win the trophy. For individuals who were clueless about bowling and came just to have a great time, they had something to look forward to as well! For the player with the most balls in the gutters, he would be given the 'Long Kang' King Award! Jettana of 2 Truth walked away happily with the trophy.

A Kuo Chuan Fringe Quiz was also planned to engage all participants when they were not busy bowling. The quiz included questions revolving around the school's heritage, building and some fun facts. It was also a great chance for ex-KCPians from various years to get to know each other better through the interaction.

The alumni bowling this year turned out to be a fun and memorable experience for all KCPians to bowl and also to bond with one another. KCPians, thank you for contributing to the success of the event and do join us next year!

By Mr Alex Chu

# Art Jamming

Some people jam music, in KCPSS we jam art. On 18 May 2013, 20 parents and their children came for the Art Jamming session organised by the KCPSS Parent Support Group (PSG). PSG planned this activity to promote parental involvement with the school and to allow parents to have a great time bonding with their children through art.



Art Jamming was about carefree painting that inspired both parent and child to unleash their individuality and creativity in a comfortable setting. The Art Room was transformed into a social art space. Ms Quek Imm Ki guided them through a session on simple painting techniques and even provided the parents with different pictures to give them ideas on what to draw.

The parents and children put their artistic talents to work

using acrylic paint. At the end of the session, the participants showcased their art through a Gallery Walk. Both parents and children shared about their paintings enthusiastically. The canvas was set for beautiful art work and meaningful interactions to unfold. Everyone who attended had an engaging and a delightful time bonding..

## Ties that Bind

On 7 September, a total of 44 parents attended a talk organised by the Parent Support Group. The purpose of the talk was two-fold. Firstly, it sought to empower parents with tools that can strengthen family ties. Secondly, it sought to inform parents of school matters.

In the first session, Ms Ellen Leong from Touch Community Services, shared with parents the importance of family rituals and how that is a deep foundation for the health and well-being of today's busy families. She further expounded on the difference between routines and rituals and encouraged parents to find time to build relationships with their children and shared some examples on how this could be achieved. Creating meaningful rituals for the family to enjoy, was a key point put across to parents.



In the second session, Mr Trevor Chelliah (HOD of Humanities) and Mrs Tang Guat Peng (HOD of Science), engaged parents by sharing on how they could help their children to be better prepared for the secondary school syllabus. They also spoke of effective learning patterns and methods on how to encourage their children to excel in the respective subjects.

Parents provided positive feedback as they better understood the demands of the subjects and how they could help their child move forward.

The PSG events provided a wonderful platform for parents and teachers to come together for networking and sharing, underscoring the important partnership between parents and the school.

By Mrs Dorothy Goh



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