



ST. ANDREW'S JUNIOR SCHOOL

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Our Vision

St Andrew's Village - Home of Servant Leaders who Bring Life to the Nations

30 March 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians,

1. Introduction

Welcome back from the short break! I trust that our boys are well rested and recharged for a relatively fast-paced term ahead.



The beautiful photos above, speak of the image that has etched in my memory on my first Saints Games Day. I was awed by the enthusiasm of parents and your overwhelming support for the house that your boy is in. It was indeed a great time of bonding and display of loyalty and **Unity**. For the record, **Venn House has emerged champion for the third consecutive year**. Heartiest congratulations to the teachers, boys and parents from the Venn House!

In my letter this month, I will not consolidate the “Celebrations” in one segment but I will include them within the school’s Strategic Thrusts to highlight how the school provides learning experiences for our boys to develop the traits of Servant Leaders.

2. Strategic Thrust 1: Nurturing Holistic Thinkers and Skilled Communicators

2.1 National Story Challenge

The format of the competition was daunting as participants had to improvise and create stories based on a given topic within 15 minutes. To make it more intense, there was a hidden condition which was revealed only in the last 3 minutes of preparation.

In September 2016, a group of adventurous Saints embarked on a challenge to tell better stories. After arduous training, two teams and two individuals were selected to represent the school in the National Story Challenge (English) 2017.

Despite these challenges, the boys displayed a high level of creative thinking and good communication skills. Our teams displayed **Unity** and **Empathy**. They cheered their friends on in good sportsmanship even though they did not make it through themselves.

Ajay Srinivasan and Timothy Lawrence Ng, progressed on to the semi-finals and displayed much confidence and skilled communication. In the Grand Finals, Timothy emerged as the runner-up!

Our boys have done us proud in the National Story Challenge (Chinese) Competition too. We congratulate the following in qualifying for the Grand Finals:

Individual	Owen Kee
Team	Kayden Tok, Ho Kah Howe, Thaddeus Tan & Desmond Kwong

The spirit of **Excellence** that the boys and their teachers displayed in this endeavour is commendable. We are also thankful to the teachers for their dedication and sacrifice made in providing our boys with this enriching experience.

2.2 Wits & Words: Inter-school Debate Championship 2017

This year, the school's debate team consisting of Kieran Khoo (P6 Thanksgiving), Ezra Ho (P6 Thanksgiving), Marc Tan (P6 Resilience) and Ethan Mu (P6 Resilience), won two out of three preliminary rounds of this championship. Ethan Mu and Ezra Ho were also chosen as best speakers for the two rounds. Although the team did not make it to the quarter-finals, we want to celebrate the strong demonstration of the school value of **Unity**. They worked well as a team, encouraging one another to make improvement after each training session and each round of competition.

One of the debater, Marc Tan, with the support of his parents, had chosen to forgo his ABSRM Grade 5 music theory examination when the competition time clashed with the music theory examination. It was not an easy decision on the part of Marc and his parents as a lot of time, effort and finance had been devoted to the preparation of this examination. I was heartened when Marc's father shared that the reason why they had sacrificed the piano grading examination to go on with the debate was because they wanted to support the team and not let my teachers down. This really exemplifies the spirit of **Unity**!

2.3 IDE Lego Robotics Competition

Media Club participated in the IDE LEGO Robotics Competition 2017. The competition challenged students to be **Resilient** and quick-minded as competitors were required to programme the Lego robots on the spot. There were more than 60 teams which took part in this competition. We are pleased that one of our teams came in 2nd for the Primary School Category. Congratulations to Matthew Low (P4 Resilience), Josiah Long (P4 Resilience) and Daniel Soh (P6 Integrity)!

2.4 Chess Competitions

Over the past months, two of our boys have been participating in various Chess Competitions. We celebrate their success and we trust that they would do better in future competitions as they continue to sharpen their analytical thinking skills.

Name	Event	Achievement
Daric Sim (P4 Wonder)	- Punggol North Chess Tournament, U10 Category - January Chess Rapid Tournament, Challengers Category - Spring Festival Rapid	Third Fourth Gold Band Trophy
Jovan Chow (P6 Thanksgiving)	- High Performance Excellence South Zone Senior Boys - National Senior Boys Category	11 th 30 th (top 10%)

3. Strategic Thrust 2: Developing Exemplary Character, Growing Community Builders

3.1 Value of the Month

The value for March is **Unity**.

A Saint is responsible for treating all persons with **respect** – myself and others.

Finally, all of you have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. - 1 Peter 3:8 (ESVUK)

It is important to emphasise to the boys that apart from the need to respect themselves as individuals, they are also to be responsible for treating all persons with respect and to also be collaborative in achieving group goals.

3.2 P5 Camp

The camp seeks to bring out the Servant Leader in the pupils through the various adventure experiences and give them the wonderful opportunity to bond with their peers. The P5 boys were engaged in activities such as Rock Climbing, Abseiling, Zip-line, High and Low Rope Element as well as Teaming Building Games over a span of 2 full days at the Labrador Campsite.

The camp was purposeful in creating an environment for the boys to collaborate and work effectively and respectfully with others. Boys had to make use of their interpersonal and problem-solving skills to influence others to achieve a common goal. They also learnt how to plan and prioritize and be adaptable to changes in a new environment. These valuable skills and attitudes are fundamental to the holistic development of the boys.

There were many anecdotes where our boys had exemplified traits of a servant leader during the camp and we can only highlight a few.

- Xavier Chen (P5 Thanksgiving) was very thoughtful to offer his wet wipes to the teachers when he noticed that the teachers were also feeling the heat from the activity.
- Many boys from P5 Self-Discipline overcame their personal challenges and fear with the constant and endless cheers from their classmates.
- While having their hike at Labrador Park, Sheikh Elviss Ahmed (P5 Resilience) picked up a can from the ground on his own accord and disposed it into a bin.
- Ian Lim (P5 Resilience) came forward to offer his spare pair of shoe when he heard that a friend from another class had lost his pair of shoe.
- Tarang Sharma (P5 Wonder) decided to sweep the floor after his meal while his friends were having a short break before their next activity.
- Kevian Ong (P5 Integrity) took his own initiative to account for and arranged all the helmets and harnesses after his rock climbing activity.
- Abraham Akhil Sam (P5 Unity) offered his only pair of long pants to his friend so that he did not have to miss out on the high rope element. While he was waiting for his friend for his turn, he helped to keep the equipment away.

It is heartening to see our boys rising to the occasion to be Community Builders, exercising initiative to put the needs of others before theirs. The camp could only be a success because of our dedicated and skilful teachers who were constantly watching over the boys throughout the two days, seizing every teachable moment to impart and inspire. I trust that parents and boys of the future cohorts are looking forward to the “growing experience”.

3.3 Rugby & Boys Brigade

Our Senior Rugby Team faced stiff competition at the South Zone Tournament. They played their hearts out with **Unity** and emerged 1st Runners-up at the Tournament. We trust that the team will strive to improve their skills and continue to spur each other on to push beyond their limits to achieve what they have aimed for.

Our Boys Brigade's hard work paid off at the BB Adventure Quest 2017. The teachers and Chaplaincy Team have led the boys to the best achievement ever in the competition. For the first time:

- one of our teams emerged Champion
- we have two teams in top-10 position (1st and 5th)
- we have three teams in top-20 position

Congratulations to our teachers, Chaplaincy Team, parents and boys from the 7J Company. The achievement is a timely gift to the 7J Company's 80th Anniversary Celebration.

3.4 Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing (Bruce Tuckman, 1965)

I thought it would be appropriate to share about the "Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing" process in this month's letter as we have witnessed how quickly our boys have settled in with their new classes and new friends in term 1. They have started to play and interact more with one another. At the same time, they do expect others to understand their needs and wants almost immediately. Understanding the minds of boys – how they communicate differently and anticipating that some of the classes are going through the *Storming Stage*, our school has taken proactive steps to inculcate appropriate social skills in our boys.

School Leaders, the Discipline Team and teachers leverage on morning devotions and assemblies share with our boys on character development and appropriate behaviour which demonstrates **respect** to others. Our school has also made an explicit stand of its 'Zero Tolerance' on bullying. In this aspect, our school seeks to explain to the boys what constitutes bullying so that our boys can distinguish between accidental hurt caused during play and disagreements versus a persistent behaviour pre-mediated to cause hurt. Our boys were taught how to express their emotions and disagreements in appropriate manners and were reminded to be mindful to apply what they have learnt in any disagreement or during play. We know that disagreements are inevitable especially in 21st century where people have to network and collaborate frequently, hence we hope to seize every teachable moment when our boys encounter disagreement with their friends to educate them on how to manage such situations positively and be a **Resilient Community Builder**.

I trust that when our boys are given the time and space to be independent, they are able to work through what they have learnt from this "Storming" stage to move towards the "Norming and Performing" stages. We aspire to help our boys shine as **Community Builders** who are able to thrive in a society which is growing increasingly diverse and volatile.

4. Strategic Thrust 4: Harnessing to Connect, Connecting to Harness

4.1 It Takes a Village to Raise a Child

While the school continues with our effort to grow the character of our boys and equip them competencies to manage themselves and work with others, I appeal for your support to walk this journey with us. I deeply appreciate parents who role-model our school value of **Thanksgiving** as I have received many thank-you emails from supportive parents to compliment teachers' good work. I would also like to thank parents who have written in to provide feedback or to share concerns in a **respectful** manner as you are role-modelling what we have been reminding our boys to be respectful in all situations. I also appreciate the trust that many parents have in our school as we stand in **Unity** to provide the best learning experiences to the best of our ability to our boys.

I would like to share some good practices which parents who are positive role-models adopt when our boys relate their problems in school to them. Our role-model parents:

- a) Remain calm and not jump to conclusion (**Resilience**)
- b) Ask objective questions to clarify and help our boys explore different perspectives (**Holistic Thinker, Unity and Empathy**)

- c) Encourage our boys to take ownership of the problem such as exploring different solutions (**Holistic Thinker and Resilience**) and trying out these solutions (**Unity**)
- d) Encourage our boys to share with their teachers (**Skilled Communicator**)
- e) Inform and work with our teachers to guide our boys to overcome their problems (**Unity**)

One of the most common problem which I have observed that our boys have is disagreement with their friends. Our school has adopted the approach of the Restorative Practice (RP) process to help our boys to understand the impact of their words/actions and to restore trust/friendship. This approach has worked well because we do see our boys growing in their **Empathy** towards others and emotional intelligence and many of them could resolve their differences and play together again. We want to focus on the positive actions which the boys can take to resolve any disagreement instead of dwelling on the negative emotions and we hope you can partner with us to help our boys.

4.2 Monthly Sharing

I shared in the February P's letter that I am introducing a new segment, "Monthly Sharing" based on the feedback given by several parents for MTP. In this monthly sharing, I hope to share articles related to education or articles which would help us understand our boys better. This month's article is from the Hey Sigmund website – Where the Science of Psychology Meets the Art of Being Human. The title of the article is "Phew! It's Normal. An Age by Age Guide for What to Expect From Kids & Teens – And What They Need From Us" You can access the website via this link <http://www.heysigmund.com/developmental-stage/> I hope you will enjoy this article and gain some insights from it. I have extracted some key points from it for your easy reference.

Summary of Key Points	How we can support
At 7 years old , boys can be dramatic about school, friends or life in general.	We want to encourage parents to moderate our responses when our boys share about their experiences. We need to refrain from being drawn into the dramatics and think that things are a mess because they are saying they are. Let us jump on the positive to help our boys to focus on the positive.
At 8 years old , boys may be very sensitive to what you think of them. There won't be a lot of grey. Things will be black or white, right or wrong, good or bad. This tendency to think in absolutes might cause a little trouble with friendships.	We want to encourage our boys to explain their point of view and encourage them to see things from different angles because with their black and white thinking, an argument will just mean that someone is right (them) and someone is wrong (others). Hence we need to guide them to see things from others' perspectives.
At 9 years old , boys will care about about what their friends think. They will narrow their friendship field which also means some others would be excluded. They will push against rules and directions and develop the capacity to be selfish, argumentative and abrasive.	We do want to encourage our boys to show empathy and reach out to people without friends. When situations happen, encourage them to start thinking about things from another point of view, 'What would so-and-so say about that?' 'How do you think he felt when that happened?' We also want to encourage our boys to understand the rules and show respect to teachers and fellow peers when they are corrected.
At 10 and 11 years old , boys will try to explain away misbehaviour through excuses and justifications. They will fight hard to find the loophole in the rule.	We do want to encourage our boys to try different things, express their own opinions, and make their own decisions when appropriate. However, as a parent and as a school, we need to know where our boundaries are and be ready to implement

<p>Our boys tend to challenge norms and justify their own wrong behaviour as they process their thinking and reflect on their actions.</p> <p>They will remember all the promises others make to them because these promises become important to them.</p>	<p>consequences when they make a bad decision.</p> <p>We need to help our boys to focus on ownership of own behaviours. We also need to send a strong signal to correct them if their behaviour is inappropriate regardless of the trigger.</p> <p>We need to remind and affirm our boys that the consequences is about their behaviour, and it does not determine the worth or value of who they are. Keep to the promises we make, even as simple as coming on time to fetch them from school.</p>
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5. Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Extra Lessons	Remarks
Week 1			
20.3.17	Beginning Of Term Service	P5 & P6 MT	
21.3.17		P3 – P6	
22.3.17			
23.3.17		P3 – P6	
24.3.17	PAL & CCA (7)		
Week 2			
27.3.17		P5 & P6 MT	
28.3.17		P3 – P6	
29.3.17			
30.3.17		P3 – P6	
31.3.17	PAL & CCA (8)		
Week 3			
3.4.17		P5 & P6 MT	
4.4.17		P3 – P6	
5.4.17			
6.4.17		P3 – P6	
7.4.17	PAL & CCA (9)		
Week 4			
10.4.17		P5 & P6 MT	
11.4.17		P3 – P6	
12.4.17			
13.4.17	Saints Learning Festival		
14.4.17	Good Friday – Public Holiday		
17.4.17	SA1 Written Paper (P3-P6)	P5 & P6 MT	
18.4.17	SA1 Written Paper (P3-P6)	P5 - P6	
19.4.17	P3 SA1 MT Oral Exam (PM) P4 SA1 EL Oral Exam (PM)		
20.4.17	Home-based Learning P6 SA1 MT e-Oral Exam (AM)		Only P6 boys taking MT/FMT will come to school
21.4.17	PAL & CCA (10)		

Date	Event	Extra Lessons	Remarks
Week 6			
24.4.17	P6 SA1 EL Oral Exam (PM) P5 SA1 MT Oral Exam (PM)		
25.4.17	P5 SA1 EL Oral Exam (PM) P4 SA1 MT Oral Exam (PM)		
26.4.17			
27.4.17	P3 SA1 EL Oral Exam (PM) P5 SA1 MT Oral Exam (PM)		
28.4.17	PAL & CCA (11)		
Week 7			
1.5.17	Labour Day – Public Holiday		
2.5.17			
3.5.17	SA1 Written Paper (P3-P6)		
4.5.17	SA1 Written Paper (P3-P6)		
5.5.17	SA1 Written Paper (P3-P6)		No CCA Dismissal at 1.45pm
Week 8			
8.5.17	SA1 Written Paper (P3-P6)		
9.5.17	SA1 Written Paper (P3-P6)		
10.5.17	Vesak Day – Public Holiday		
11.5.17			
12.5.17	PAL & CCA (12)		
Week 9			
15.5.17		P6 MT	
16.5.17		P6	
17.5.17			
18.5.17		P6	
19.5.17	PAL & CCA (13)		
Week 10			
22.5.17			
23.5.17		P6	
24.5.17			
25.5.17	End of Term Service PCTC* (2.15pm – 5.15pm)		Last Day of Term 2
26.5.17	PCTC* (8am – 5pm)		

***PCTC: Parent-Child-Teacher Conference**

Thank you once again to many of our parents who are **UNITED** with us in love and trust as we develop exemplary character and build community builders in our boys.

Up and On!

With warmest regards,

Ms Patsy Neo
Principal