



Cover Art by Teoh Khai Xiin (Year 9)

“My final piece of artwork is a composition in a vintage and wood theme. I really like using wood because I love the various different textures, colours and grains. At the bottom right I added vertical strips like shutters to make more collage 3D, to add more depth and interest. The parts that really make the collage work well is where I have added tonal shading using charcoal. I think this gives it a Cubist effect. I chose to cut the wood in clean, simple shapes to contrast with the rough, natural textures and patterns on the wood surface. I love the range of materials used which really make the collage lively. I did this collage as an extra piece of work and I definitely had a lot of fun doing it.”

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Message from the Principal

Dear Parents, Teachers, Staff, Students and Friends of HIS

It has been an amazing two and a half years being involved in the setting up of HIS. There have been so many challenges every step of the way that we have faced as a start-up school; from delays in the handing over of the building, which then led to a shortened school year, to teacher recruitment to setting up systems and policies in readiness for day one of school. Recruiting students was certainly a major challenge. In the months leading up to the start of school, we heard from so many who questioned our ability and capacity to run a good school. We were told that we had no track record. However, for every parent who was not convinced, there were 5 others who were. Your continued trust in us is what makes us work as hard as we do to ensure we keep the promises we made to you. I thank all of you in our parent body for your trust and support in our start-up year.

For every challenge, there has been moments of great joy and happiness. We have so many parents giving their valuable time and energy in supporting the different activities in this school. What started off as a small group of parent volunteers under the leadership of Ms Lee Pei Shee has now grown to more than 50 over regular volunteers who come in whenever the call



for help goes out. You have helped us in our two major school productions, in setting up our library and sorting out the food issues and you have been our strongest advocates. Thank you so very much for all the support that you have given to me personally. I ask only that you continue to give this unwavering support to Ms Davina as she leads the school in the coming years.

Our students are our source of greatest pride in the school. We had 575 students in our first academic year coming together as strangers, but what a joy they have been to our teachers. Their enthusiasm for learning, their willingness to avail themselves of the opportunities the school provides to develop their potential and talent in every sphere of school life. Thank you students for being an amazing bunch of HELPIans. Continue to be open to learning but more importantly, continue being kind to one another. Reach out to new HELPIans who join us. Model for them the essence of our spirit of togetherness. Be proud of your school and wear the badge with honour wherever you go. Know that you are the main reason that we have all come together to build this school. Work with your teachers to help you succeed in school and beyond.

We are now coming to the end of the first term of our 2nd academic year. We have just under 900 students and over 100 teachers and staff in the school. I look back at my two and a half-year journey with HIS with a deep sense of gratitude for the wonderful opportunity and trust that was placed on me to lead the school. I have learnt much as an educator and as a person. There is still a long way to go before we can even say that we have reached any measure of greatness as a school but the foundations laid so far are firm and strong. For this, I have so many people to thank for being that bedrock of support in these very challenging but fulfilling early years.

I thank our CEO, Datin Low-Chan Kam Yoke, President Dr Paul Chan and members of the Board of Governors for their guidance and support of the school leadership team in running the school. I thank Dr Goh Chee Leong for his very significant contribution in spending months battling so many people just to make sure that we had the





school ready to start in January this year. He continues to provide wise counsel on critical issues in the school.

I thank every member of my administrative and support team, especially Ms Patricia Yong, who herself will be moving on to a different challenge next year, for setting up our administrative systems and handling a tremendous amount of work and pressure on a daily basis. With the new administrative set-up soon to be announced, they can now breathe a little easier. On that score, I would like to also welcome our new COO, Ms Eng Yoke Har and Ms Pat's replacement, our new school manager, Ms Susan Fong. They will help strengthen our administrative team and improve on whatever short-comings we have in our current set-up.

There are many unsung heroes in the admin team. For example, our two maintenance boys working 12 hour shifts practically every day just to ensure that the building is well kept and ready for any activity the following day. They do their work quietly and without any fuss. The same too with our finance personnel, driver, nurse, librarians, IT technicians, cleaners, cooks and security personnel, all doing an honest days' work but not always recognised and acknowledged. I take this opportunity to say thank you to each of them.

I thank every member of my teaching faculty, and members of the academic and learning support team

for their utmost dedication and commitment in giving their best each day to care for their students. They have shown a lot of initiative and a high-level of professionalism in carrying out the many tasks expected of them. Many go above and beyond the call of duty taking on additional lessons and duties whenever they are called on to do so. I have said this like a broken record: "No school can exceed the quality of its teachers" and if we are where we are today, it is in no small measure due to all of you doing what you need to do to the best of your ability as professionals in your field.

I thank each member of the middle level leaders in the school, our Heads of Years, Key Stage Coordinators, Subject Leaders, and Subject Area Coordinators. Many of you were already doing the work of leaders in the school in our early months without any formal appointments and extra pay. Good leaders are the cornerstone of any organisation and your dedicated service and guidance to those under your supervision will set HIS on a very sure footing for greatness in the future.

To members of my senior leadership team; Ms Amy, Ms Evelyn, Ms Nisha and Mr Carroll, I pray that you will continue to grow in strength in your roles. In the short time that most of you have been appointed to your positions, you have helped Ms Davina and I see to so many aspects of our continuing evolution into becoming a better school. Thank you.

Finally, to my deputy and successor, Ms Davina McCarthy, you have a huge heart. You act from a deep sense of what is fair and right. I could not have asked for a better deputy to work alongside me. Thank you for agreeing to continue on this great race that we started together. I have no doubts that HIS will arrive at some measure of greatness sooner than later under your watch.

I sign off for the last time with a deep sense of gratitude to all of you for all that you have been to me as principal of this fantastic school. I pray God's blessings on all of you.

THANK YOU.

Vita ad plenitudinem,
Dr Gerard Louis



A Poem for Dr Gerard

by Kevin Soertsz

Little Blue

Little you, looking blue,
All scratched up, and a little bruised.
Between the others, you're out of place,
Some would think, "That little disgrace".

All around you, polish and class,
Some are flashy, some are fast.
But little you, you don't mind,
Little you, you take your time.

The others scream, roaring loud,
Little you, you blend in the crowd.
You don't need bells, nor any whistles,
You don't need to rocket like a missile.

Uphill is your challenge, chugging and heaving,
No four wheel drive, only steaming.
Your tyres are smaller, it's harder to bare,
But when needed, you always have a spare.

And when night comes, and the road is unseen,
The others switch on, their techy high beams.
But little you, in their wake,
You shine your light for others sake.

Yes little you, little blue car,
Among the others, you don't look like a star.
But what I see, the truth to be told,
This rusty blue car, it's made of gold.

As part of our school development plan, we are in the process of strengthening our administrative unit with several key appointments. These include our new Group Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, Ms Eng Yoke Har, and our new School Manager, Ms Susan Fong. January will see the arrival of four additional administrative staff which reflects our commitment to improving our services to students and parents.



*Left to right:
Ms Eng and Ms Susan*

Ms Eng has more than 15 years of experience as a registrar and in senior management in the education line. She will oversee HIS' overall operations and administrative functions. She can be contacted at eng.yh@his.edu.my.

Ms Susan's last posting was with an international humanitarian aid organisation in Malaysia and China. With many years of experience in project and event management, she will be in charge of HIS' day-to-day administration. She can be contacted at susan.fong@his.edu.my.



Message from the Deputy Principal

Dear Parents

We have had such a busy but wonderful month, with many of our students involved in a number of special events. We have enjoyed the primary school's performance of *The Jungle Book*, preschool's performance of *The Littlest Christmas Tree* and carols, the *House Music Competition* and the *Charity Football Match*. Students and staff have been involved in fundraising drives to help support the two refugee schools we work with. We have had a guest speaker, Dr. Grainne, raising the profile and our awareness of cyberbullying. Our Year 2 have had their *Flowers and Insects* IPC exit point and KS2 have held their *Meet and Greet*, showcasing their work and inviting parents into the classrooms. Years 8, 9 and 10 had their *PSHE Evening* and Year 7 parents took part in their *Back to School* event. ECA and CCA activities have been in full swing. We had author Cheeming Boey, joining us for a talk about his career and signing a few copies of his books "When I Was A Kid".

Our first set of Cambridge Checkpoint exam results are in and have been distributed to students and parents this week. During November and December, the senior leadership team visited classrooms and conducted lesson observations, with a view to looking at our teaching and learning. This gives us the opportunity to support our staff and develop their academic pedagogy, classroom management and pastoral skills. We were pleased with the good practices observed. We will set up staff-to-peer observation next and look at the good practices that can be shared across the school. Our training focus for next month will include the development of teaching assistants' involvement in teaching and learning in the classroom and ways to increase academic extension for the students. We are also continuing to interview and recruit new staff for the next academic year to supplement our team and a growing school cohort.

The above is testament to HIS being a busy, vibrant school

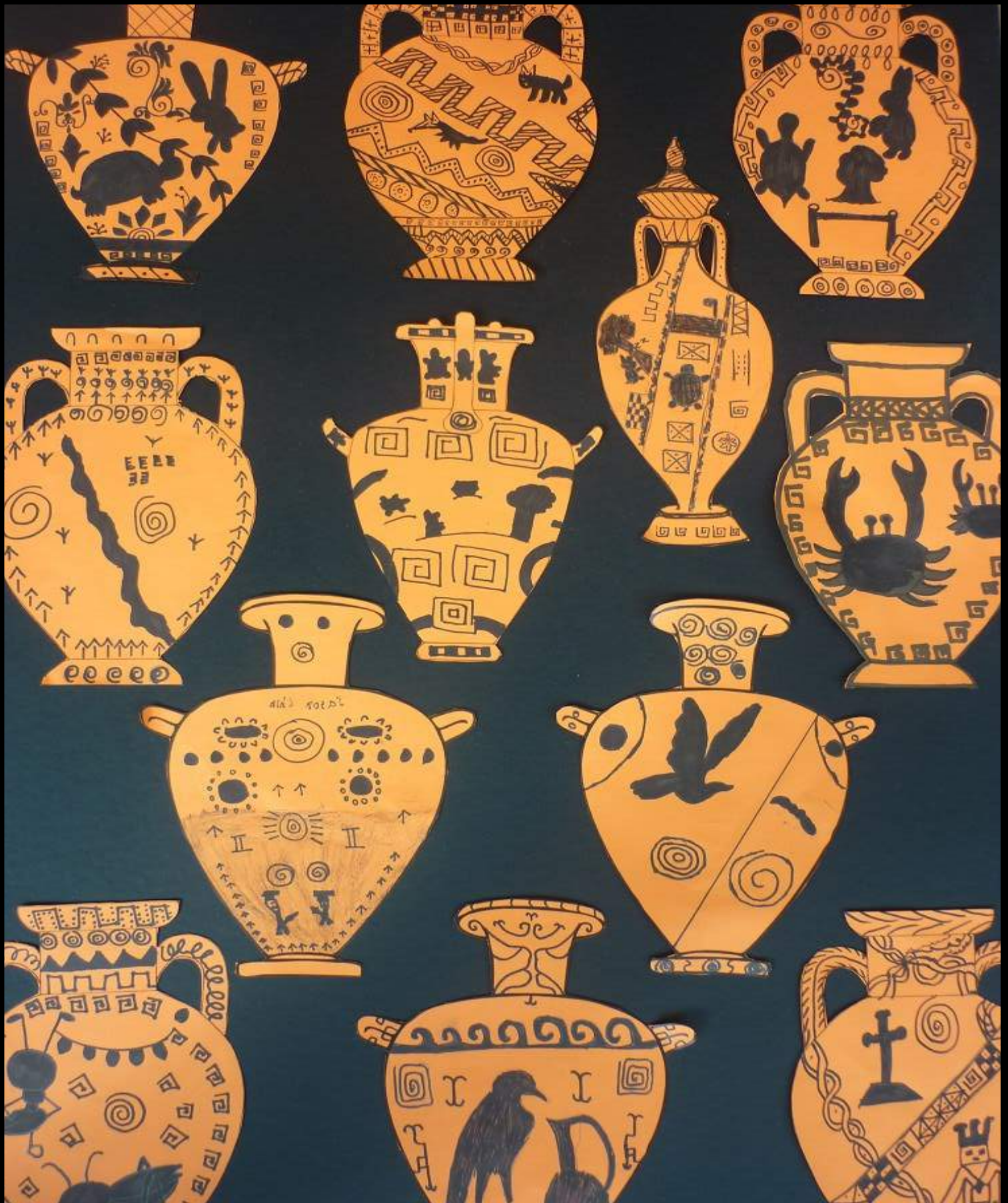


community with a great range of activities but also with a clear focus on academic success.

We are now readying ourselves for the Christmas break and for an emotional farewell to Dr. Gerard. We will also be saying goodbye to four of our staff members. Mr Andy (Mandarin) is going to Ireland to further his studies. Ms Julia (ESL) is moving on to new challenges, possibly returning to Australia at some point and Ms Patricia and Ms Sui Mei are leaving our administrative team. We wish them every success with their travels and future. They have been an amazing support in our set up and inaugural year.

In January, we will be welcoming Mr Mark Jones to the school as our new deputy principal and, as you already know, I am assuming the role of principal at HIS. I am excited with the challenges ahead, but I am also determined to ensure that we honour Dr Gerard's vision for our school. Thank you again for all the support and good wishes that you bring to our staff and students. On behalf of HIS, I would like to wish you a happy and safe holiday. I look forward to seeing you all in the new year on Monday, 5th January 2015 for Term 2.

Vita ad plenitudinem,
Davina McCarthy



For the IPC Myths and Legends unit, Year 5 students were encouraged to use a variety of materials, forms and techniques to express themselves.

5 Newton learned about Greek pottery and had the opportunity to express their understanding of it by designing their very own Greek vases using Athenian red and black-figure techniques.



ACADEMIC CORNER



The Year 1s ended their IPC unit 'Ourselves', with a celebration of their differences. Each class represented one of the following countries: Kenya in Africa, Spain in Europe, Japan and Malaysia in Asia. Everyone took part in the preparation, including our wonderful parents who contributed by providing food from the various countries. Presentations included small group research projects on the country that each class represented, as well as lots of exciting group and pair work.



On December 8, our Year 2 classes celebrated their Exit Point for the Flowers and Insects IPC unit with a "Bug Ball". The students looked great dressed up as their favourite flower or insect, and brought insect themed food for the lunch party.



MEET THE PARENTS

Preschool, KS 2, Year 7, Year 8,
Year 9 and Year 10





HELP International School @ Running To Stop the Traffik

By Andrew Lee Boon Yew (Year 9), Head Marshal for HIS' volunteer team

The 24 Hour KL Race was held November 15-16 at Nexus International School Putrajaya (NISP). The Race is an endurance relay, where groups of students form teams (7 for an all boys team or 9 for an all girls team) and run a continuous relay for 24 hours. They are sponsored for every lap they run, raising funds and awareness to benefit anti-slavery charities.

For this inaugural event, HELP International School was represented by six Year 9 students who volunteered as Marshals. The volunteers were Cheong Joe Ee, Corey Ong Tze Xian, Joey Lim Xiao-Xin, Sulyn Khoo, Vickey Goh Shu Yi, Andrew Lee, while our teacher-supervisor was Mr Carroll Moreton, Head of Student Affairs.

Besides volunteering as Marshals, the HIS volunteer team also gave presentations on human trafficking and raised funds during the week leading up to the Race. We went from class to class to inform students about the Race, and sold Carnival coupons and admission tickets to students and parents after school. Despite only a week's effort, we managed to raise RM 800 in ticket sales and donations, which was handed over to the Race Director, Ms Kasumi Higewake.

The KL 24 Hour Race ended at 9am on Sunday, November 16.

All of the schools collectively ran 6,027 km over the 24 hours with the host school, NISP, emerging as champion - having run a total of 437 laps of 1.5km per lap. What a remarkable feat!



Prefect Camp

Last month, our Head Boy Joshua Fedelis and Head Girl Loh Rachel, led our 60 prefect strong Prefectural Board in a productive day of activities designed to foster better relationships, discuss positive discipline, and learn about our SEN programme.

Prefects also began planning future activities such as a gaming awareness campaign, community outreach and a prefect camp for next term.

The Prefect Board would like to thank Mr Ed, Mr Daniel, Mr. James, Ms Sanali and Mr Moreton for helping to facilitate the event.



DANCE EXCURSION TO ASWARA FOR TARI 14, INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL

Caitlin Baptist (Year 8)

Tari '14 is an event where basically a group of people from different parts of the world come to Malaysia to teach and perform their cultural dances for us. We attended 2 different dance lessons, Korean and Cambodian... New dance moves were learned, like how to walk the Korean way. When we moved on to the Cambodian dance, there was once again some unusual warm ups which made our toes sore. We transformed into monkeys, by learning to walk and run like one, including the unique three legged monkey. It was an unforgettable experience and I had a really great time. Can't wait for Tari '15!



Joshua Fidelis Susai (A-Levels / Head Boy)

We went for the dance showcase where we saw international artists present their craft. Each performance was unique and moving, and I felt absolutely inspired. The artists showed us how dancing is such a natural form of expression and how it can touch the hearts of anyone and everyone. All in all, I feel absolutely blessed to have been given this chance to attend Tari-14. I will treasure all the experience it has given me. Many thanks to Ms Joanna for having let me join the excursion to ASWARA.

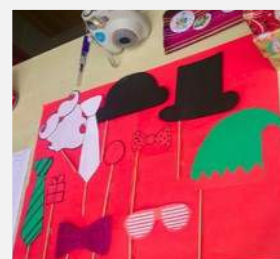


Charity Club Update

On behalf of the Charity Club, I would like to give the most heartfelt thank you to all the parents who have been so generous with the donations to the Christmas Charity Project. In the spirit of Christmas, these acts of giving and sharing cross all boundaries of religion and race have shown us how wonderfully supportive parents at HIS are.

If you have any inquiries about further donations, especially to inquire about what we are still lacking from the wish list by the Refugee Center please email me at sanali.h@his.edu.my. We look forward to sharing with you pictures and messages from the teachers and children at the Center once we deliver all the gifts.

Sanali Hennayake
Special Education Needs Teacher



EVENTS AT HIS



Ms Jamie, our parent volunteer and resident story teller conducted numerous workshops with the KS1 and KS2 students for Universal Children's Day in November. Here is what she has to say;

"KS1 were very surprised, shocked even about the 100 million street kids yet posed a lot of thoughtful questions. I was genuinely pleased at some of their suggestions. I presented a more in depth talk with the older kids in KS2; again I was pleasantly surprised, the kids were attentive even though the subject was somber. They peppered me with both questions and suggestions.

Here's what I realised: when you present an actual problem to kids; they strip it down to the basics no race, religion or politics involved in its place was compassion, friendship and in my humble opinion some workable solutions."



Charity Football Friendly : Parents vs Teachers

The recent football friendly match between the parents and teachers turned out to be a loud and boisterous match ... mainly from the sidelines!!

In all, both teams got a good workout and despite it being the first time they had come together as a team, each put up a good fight. The final score was a tie, with each team scoring 3 goals.

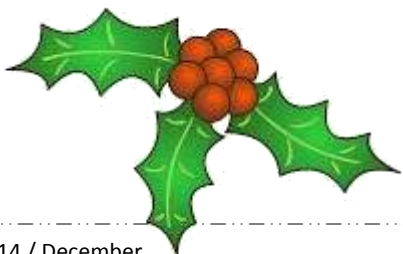
In total, through donations and the sale of drinks, RM 1,500 was raised for Faisal Cup 2014 tournament, organised by the "Dignity for Children Foundation".

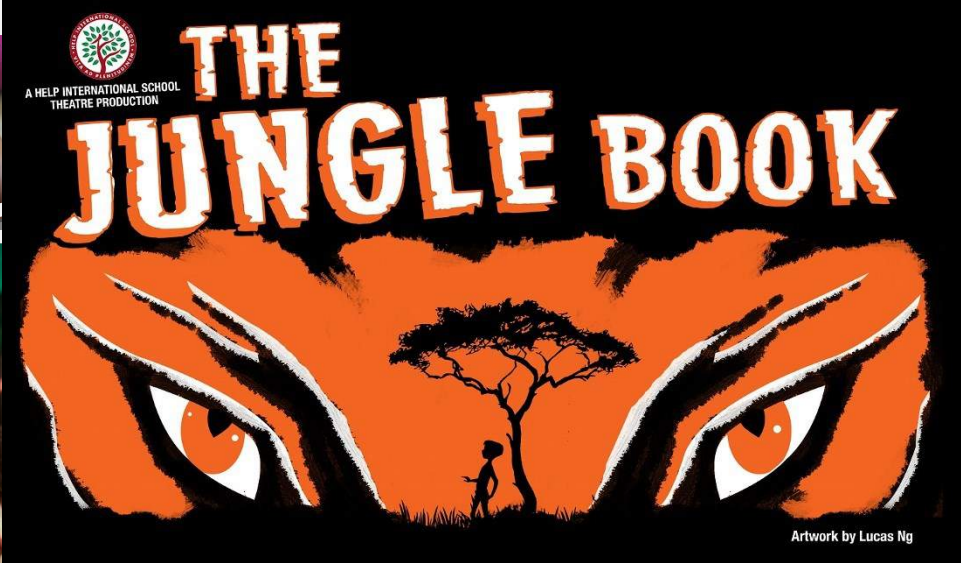




Preschool put on a great performance of "The Littlest Christmas Tree", a tale of a little fir tree who overcame all odds to be the most beautiful Christmas tree in the forest.

The students also helped kick off the festive season with dancing and caroling.





House Music Competition



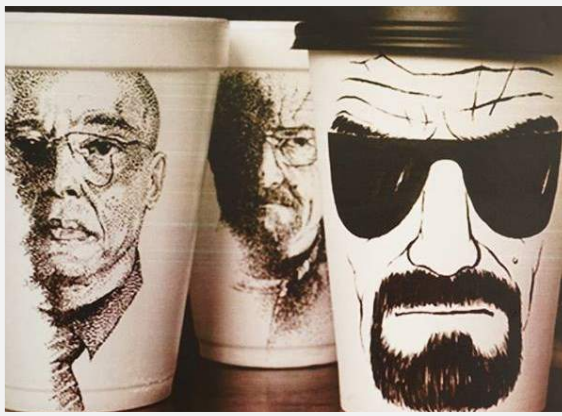
Choir:
1st Phoenix

Solo:
1st Dragon

Group:
1st Phoenix

Overall positions:
1st Phoenix
2nd Dragon
3rd Pegasus
4th Griffin

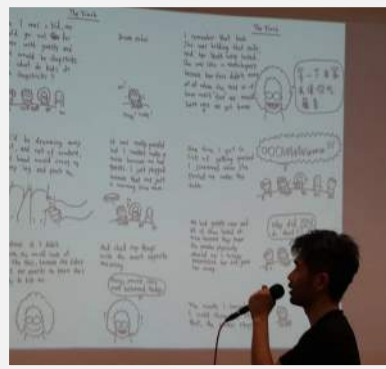




CHEEMING BOEY

Malaysian artist Boey is best recognised by his illustrations on foam coffee cups, his daily webcomic *I Am Boey*, and the autobiographical graphic novel *When I Was A Kid*.

During his recent visit to HIS, students queued to get his books (their iPad and phone covers) signed and to have a photo opportunity together. Boey also read excerpts from his latest book, and shared his life journey as an animator, artist and author with the students.



BON VOYAGE DR GERARD

On Wednesday, December 17 we had a farewell assembly for Dr Gerard. It was a touching tribute befitting an inaugural principal as tribute after tribute was paid to him by students, teachers, staff, and parent volunteers with speeches and song.

The highlight was a presentation of a cake to Dr Gerard, especially made by Ms Whai Whai, a parent volunteer.





CHRISTMAS ASSEMBLY

The school celebrated its 1st birthday with our first ever Christmas Assembly. Emceed by the Head Girl and Head Boy, Rachel and Joshua, with the MPH stage was decorated with gift boxes and donations. The theme this Christmas is the spirit of sharing, giving and spreading joy, as highlighted by the school-wide Christmas Charity Project.

The assembly time was shared with a Year 2 IPC song, a lovely dance with a meaning by the Secondary Dance club, Year 5 Newton performance tribute to Dr Gerard and the announcements for the first ever checkpoint results for KS 2 and KS 3.

Natasha Tai (Year 10) gave a special reading of the Christmas Story, followed by a very entertaining and unique video by the Languages Department. All the students and teachers were thanked for their support on the Christmas Project by the Charity club, with a thoughtful video sent by the Zec Kota Damansara Refugee Learning Center teachers and students. There were two wonderful solo performances by Han Ying (Secondary) and Kareena (Primary). The student performances ended with a selection of songs by a string ensemble accompanied by Year 4 students on recorders and percussion.

The students had a real treat watching almost 60 teachers get on stage for HIS' first staff choir. Finally the whole school was surprised by a performance by our dear principal, Dr Gerard, singing a 'White Christmas', while playing a guitar. Assembly ended with Dr Gerard's HELPian cheer, led by Ms Caroline and snow sprayed on the students as a send off to a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Thank you to everyone who contributed and participated in this very momentous assembly.





Alyssa Wong (Year 5) won The Best Poster award in the Poster Art competition in Japan beating 36 other participants from 12 countries in the Asia Pacific region. Alyssa's winning poster, based on the theme of "Space for the future", represented Malaysia in the Asia Pacific Space Regional Agency Forum (APDRAF21).

STUDENT CORNER



Alyssa Wong was also awarded the Gold medal for the ICAS Writing Skills by the University of New South Wales for achieving the Top 2 Primary 4 in Malaysia.



Congratulations to:

- * **YAP SENG KUANG** (Year 8)
- * **LINUS THEO DENGGAH** (Year 7)

for qualifying as members in the Malaysian Mensa Society.

Both SK and Linus obtained a test score of 180 on the Ravens Advanced Progressive Matrices Scale, placing them at the top 2 percentile.



*Singapore & Asian Schools
Math Olympiads
Medal Winners!!*

(left to right)

AIDAN WONG (Year 7)
* Individual Gold, Team Gold

YAP SENG KUANG (Year 8)
* Individual Gold, Team Bronze

LINUS THEO DENGGAH (Year 7)
* Individual Silver, Team Gold

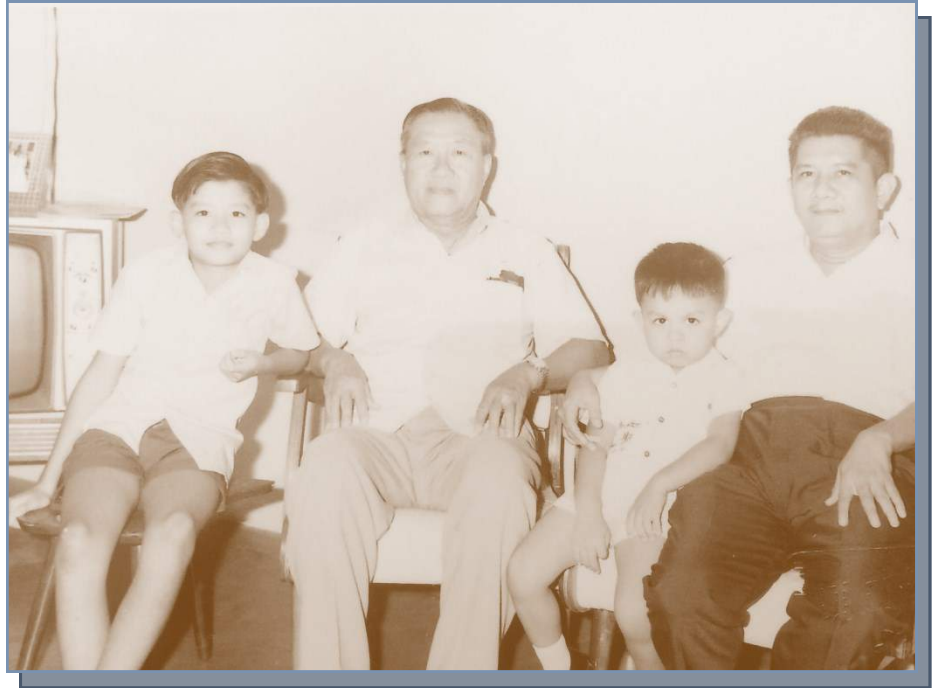


Conversations on Family and Parenting with Dr. Gerard: Lessons my father taught me

An interview by TAN LAY FERN

My late Father, D. Louis, was among the pioneer group of teachers that help start my alma mater, La Salle Klang, together with the De La Salle Brothers in the late 1950s. He remained with the school until his death in 1978. He was the Senior Assistant (or Deputy Principal) and discipline teacher in the school and gained a reputation as a no-nonsense teacher who enforced the school rules impartially. At home, my brother and I were both brought up with the cane our father wielded with full authority. Perhaps due to his temperament and the fact that I was the youngest in the family of seven children, I was always closer to my mother as a child.

When my father was 51 years old, he suffered his first heart attack. I remember to this day how dire the situation was. As he was rushed to hospital, I stayed up alone in the house, lighting candles and praying for him. His heart stopped in ICU but against all odds, he survived. Back in 1975, treatment for patients of heart attack entailed months of complete bed rest in hospital. Family members were asked by the hospital to assist in the care of the patient during their convalescence period. As my older siblings were either sitting for major



*4 generations of the Louis family (L-R):
Dr Gerry, his grandfather, his nephew and his father*

exams or working out of town, I was tasked with taking care of him. My routine for the first few days was to cycle to hospital in the early part of the evening and spend the night in the ward taking care of him.

After a few days, I decided I would arrive later in the hospital as there was practically nothing for me to do since my father would already be asleep immediately after dinner. I remember watching an episode of “The Waltons” before making it to the hospital around 8:30pm. When I arrived, Father was sitting in bed instead of resting as per usual. He asked me why I was late and I explained that since he was already in bed early and I had nothing to do in the hospital when I arrived, I stayed home to catch the news and a bit of television. He explained to me how worried he was about my safety, wondering if something happened to me on the way to hospital. He shared that he had spent all his life caring for the family while asking little in return, until now. He was sad that I seemed reluctant to be with him in his hour of greatest need.

His frankness shamed me and I made a promise to myself that from then on I will be a better son to him. For the next two to three months, I made the effort to spend time with him every day. Eventually, he mellowed down and started to open up to me; revealing a side of him that I never knew existed. I was privy to stories from his past that he had never shared with others in the family, even my mother. My bond with him grew strong during those months.

Of the time he spent in hospital, I remember one incident vividly. After three months of bed rest, he was given permission to go in a wheelchair for a breath of fresh air within the hospital grounds. I remember him asking to stop next to a rose bush, in order to smell the roses. For me it was a poignant moment, watching him appreciate beauty in the simple things. It was akin to him getting a second chance at life. This was a man feared by practically every student in the school but was now, a mere shadow of his former self. His very close encounter with death seemed to have had a major impact on the way he now dealt with everyday life.

That time with my father also deepened my desire to want to be of service to my God and the Church. Later on that year, I left home to join the De La Salle Brothers, a Catholic religious order whose mission was to serve the poor through education. I was 15 years old at that time. Father and I communicated through letters, sharing a lot more of our lives on paper than in person.

I recall a day when I was in Lower 6 when I realised that I had not written home in quite a while. I remember ending my letter to my parents telling them how much my siblings and I appreciated them

for all that they had done for us, despite earning so little as teachers. On behalf of all my seven siblings, I told my parents that we loved them very much. It was the first time ever that I had said this to them.

Two weeks later, I received a call from home to say that my father had passed away. Throughout the six hour journey back to Klang, I kept praying that my letter reached him on time. It was a comfort to me that it did and I was told by my mother that it made

his final days very happy. At least before he passed on, he knew that I loved him.

There are so many lessons I learned about family and parenting from those experiences with my father. With my own children, I want them to know how much I care about them. That my wife and I are committed to each other, and our children are secure in our love for them. It took being away from home at such a young age to finally understand all that my parents had done for me and how much I had taken them for granted. I am glad that I had the opportunity to share with them my appreciation and love before they passed on from this life.

Both my parents were teachers. It's not by accident that two of my older siblings and I followed after them. My parents sacrificed so much to put my siblings through university. My father modelled for us dedication and hard work. When he passed away, thousands attended his funeral, among them old boys that he had taught and disciplined but who bore no ill-feelings towards him as they knew that he cared for them. The lesson I learned from watching him is that parents are role models to their children. For better or worse, our children learn from role models in their lives. If our parents are our heroes, we will take after them in

I learned that it's important to tell your family how you feel about them. Don't wait till it's too late when they will not live long enough to appreciate how we really feel about them.

terms of our values, behaviours and the way we relate with others; how we treat others with respect, how we apologise if we make a mistake, how we are fair and most importantly, how much we care. Those are lessons we pass on to them without us having to say it in words.

Setting clear boundaries was something that my siblings and I understood quite well as there were certainly consequences to boundary violations. It kept us on the straight and narrow, whether in our behaviours at school or in our studies. This principle remains true in the 21st century style of parenting. Trust in your instinct to make decisions in the best interest of your child. Act with consistency and follow through on consequences to boundary violations, not in a harsh way but certainly in a firm manner.

Finally, appreciate each moment you have with your family, learning from each other. Life is so fragile. I have seen friends pass away very suddenly. There have been many times in the last 36 years since my father's death that I wished I had spent a little more time with him, learning from his wisdom and finding out a little more about who he really was as a man. He still had so much to offer but life ended for him so abruptly at 53 years. I wished he could see the things I had done in my own life and how I wished I had someone whom I could have consulted with in my early years as a teacher and school principal. His legacy of his faith in God, the love of his family and his dedication to his work however remain a very cherished treasure for my siblings and I.

Mr D. Louis was recently given a posthumous Gold Award for Distinguished Service as a Teacher by the Old Boys Association of La Salle Klang.



The power we exert over the future behaviour of our children is enormous. Even after they have left home, even after we have left the world, there will always be part of us that will remain with them forever.

➤ Neil Kurshan

*Left to right:
Gerard Andre, Dr Gerard, Anne and Gabrielle*

Up Close and Personal With Michael Quah

How did you become the artist you are today? Was it an 'accidental' career or have you always known that you are meant to be an artist?

I have never looked at myself as an artist. Perhaps I do not fit into the traditional classification of an 'artist'. I have no patrons; no supporters; no traditional art school training; no dependence on an art market for financial support. This indicates on hindsight, that I've not invested time and commitment to produce a body of work.

Now that my commitments to my job as a trained teacher and a family man have diminished significantly, I have time to use for my own interests.

I discovered that a lot of my interests from childhood till today, has always been with creating products or providing services that have a strong preference for creativity. This awareness has fuelled my desire to use my time more creatively.

Currently, watercolours excite me. So I spend time investigating and exploring the flow of colour pigments on different types of papers and canvases. Brush lines and marks make mesmerising textures with the combinations of colours dancing with salt and soap suds.

Now, that I have a body of work to look at, I suppose that I can say that I am an artist!

As an artist, what inspires your work? How have you evolved your style through the years?

Water. Bird. Fish. Mountain. Rock. Cloud. Wood. They fascinate me. Their textures, lines, shapes, colours, patterns. Their make-ups. I love looking at them. They are wonderfully put together.



My thirst for knowledge and conversations with passionate individuals, has awakened my senses to the intriguing dimensions of permutations and interpretations of life. And of course, the mind-skills and habits of creative gurus has guided me in constructing my works.

I can see a style in my work; but it is only apparent when I view them as a whole. On reflection, my artistic signature must have evolved from a consistent theme over time. I've been told recently by a few that the style is distinctive and original.

Do you think that an artist is born or made? In other words, is it an innate talent or it's something that could be developed with the right guidance?

Nature. Nurture. I suppose both.

In my case, my teacher Brother Joseph McNally gave me a good boost in school and in teacher training college. Mr Yeoh Jin Leng took me to deeper levels in specialist teacher training, and at work, generous and talented colleagues.

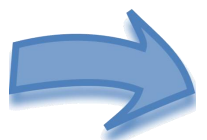
With me, I think it is an inherent desire that draws me into fresh areas of investigations. This curiosity may be the catalyst that

integrates nature and nurture.

Do you think Art enhances a child's education? How does it enhance?

Art provides hand, eye, body, mind, heart, feeling, imagination, soul, service, self-esteem, play, material, social, and entertainment opportunities. It is a holistic exposure to an all-comprehensive experience of the 9 intelligences that Howard Gardner shared.

Like fusion cuisine, art combines many aspects of the disciplines due to its creative nature.



Do you think a society that appreciates artistic expression is a more civilised or evolved society? What part do individuals play in creating this kind of society?

If love is the energy that will drive the future development of a compassionate civilisation then imagination will be the vehicle to take this civilisation to exquisite heights.

Imagine imagination being seeing what the eyes have not yet seen. Hearing what the ears have not yet heard. Feeling what the heart has not yet felt. It is awesome!

The core of art creation is imagination!

The roles that imaginative individuals will be playing will be simply astounding.

If you are given one super power, what would it be?

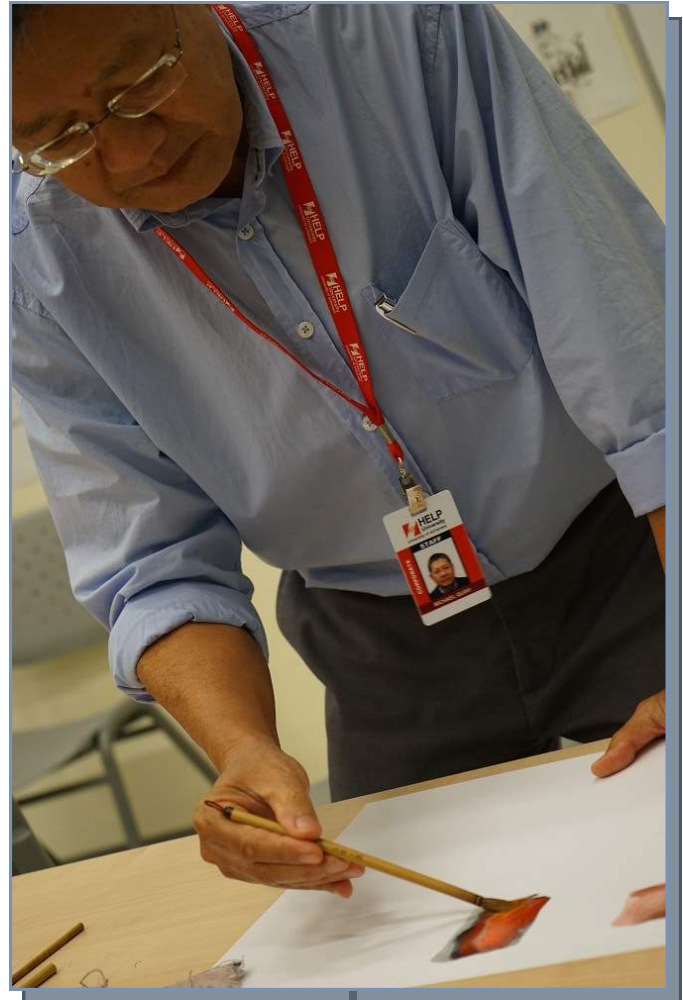
To open the eyes to see.

Sight: seeing wonders in simple everyday things.

Insight: seeing fresh meaning and significance.

Hindsight: learning from mistakes to rectify and make right.

Foresight: predicting and preparing.



Born: 18 March 1943

Hometown: Penang

Hobby: Reading, Photography,
Walking, Swimming

