

the Grapevine

A Newsletter of Tanjong Katong Girls' School | May 2015



*Sometimes you will never know
the value of a moment until
it becomes a memory*

Principal's Foreword

I love the wisdom of Dr Seuss. The Class of 2014 would remember how all they got from me on Graduation Day was a poem by Dr Seuss, but one so filled with poignant meaning, if they only pondered the words within.

Indeed, you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory. The TKGS newsletter chronicles learning about life -- a celebration of TKGian experiences bound by our theme for 2015: sororis a cordis. Within the newsletter, you will find the musings of TKGians and their teachers as they recollect the stirring moments when they came together as one community after the passing of Mr Lee Kuan Yew among other shared experiences. You will also recall how you were inspired by the larger-than-life role models such as Singaporean singer-songwriter Corrinne May and social entrepreneur Elim Chew of 77th Street who visited our school.

An education in TKGS is about life. It is as much about the daily grind of managing one's academic work, CCA training and the multitude of things to do, as it is about self-discovery and the testing of the human spirit. May you discover, through this newsletter, the value of those learning experiences even as they become memories to be stored in your Truly TKGS data-bank. As Dr Seuss said:

*"Don't cry because it's over,
Smile because it happened."*

Mrs Mary Seah

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THE PASSING OF A GREAT MAN

Singaporeans were aware of founding father Mr Lee Kuan Yew's worsening health in March but still hoped he would recover to celebrate the nation's 50th birthday in August. This was not to be and on the first day of Term 2, the school heard the news of his passing from Principal Mrs Mary Seah during the flag-raising ceremony. From that day and for the rest of that week the national and school flags were at half-mast.

On the next day, 24th March, TKGS held a simple but meaningful tribute for him during which three teachers shared their thoughts on how Mr Lee had impacted them. Mrs Seah (on the violin) and Mrs Cherry Goh (on the piano) ended the tribute with a beautiful musical rendition of the song, "You Raised Me Up". Below we present the reflections of the three teachers who represented the school community in paying tribute to the leader Singapore had been fortunate to have at the right time.



I have been an ardent admirer of Mr Lee Kuan Yew since young and have been particularly influenced by his emphasis on bilingual excellence. I was also awed by his leadership in transforming the country from the third world country it was just 50 years ago into the first world country it is now. I grew up along with Singapore and I will miss him, having heard many of his rallying speeches on TV over the years.

I also had the opportunity to meet him personally and thus saw for myself his friendly, humble and caring personality. This was because he and his wife had come to my flat during a visit to my housing estate in 1994. I was impressed by the way he took the time to check on things personally. Over the years, he has instilled in me the following values:

- Patriotism for my country
- Respect for its leaders
- Gratitude for the opportunities I have been given

Most importantly he has inspired me to contribute to my nation with passion.

*By Mdm Meenatchi
(Tamil Language Teacher)*

I am one of the earliest beneficiaries of Mr Lee's bilingualism policy which is why I am here to share about my experience. What I am going to share is the story of most Chinese-educated Singaporeans who were directly influenced by this policy. In multi-racial Singapore, English was chosen as the common language to be used by all races. This was because Mr Lee felt that English would be a unifier among the races and would also give Singapore an edge in the international arena. But he also believed that knowing one's mother tongue would build a sense of belonging to one's roots. And so he championed bilingualism.

In 1980, Mr Lee made the decision to merge the Nanyang University with the University of Singapore to become what we now know as the National University of Singapore. As a result of this merger, many of my generation who had done our secondary education in Chinese medium schools were forced to continue our junior college and tertiary education in English.

My educational journey in English was a very tough one and I faced many difficulties. For example, I had great difficulty with spelling the English terms used in Biology lessons. I had to memorize scientific words in English even before I knew how to converse eloquently in English. It was a tremendously challenging experience but I learnt to persevere and I have succeeded.

As a Chinese language teacher in a multicultural society, I am proud that I have been able to bridge language differences between myself and non-Chinese Singaporeans while guiding the younger generation in appreciating Chinese language and culture. Therefore, if I can persevere, I'm sure all of you will also be able to overcome obstacles in your learning journey and become successful leaders of tomorrow.

*By: Mdm Adela Chee
(Senior Teacher, Chinese Language)*

Tributes to Lee Kuan Yew



My first awareness of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew was in the early 1980s. I would ask myself:

“Why is this man talking for hours during the National Day rally speech?”

“Why is he always dressed in white?”

“Why does he always appear so stern?”

I was in primary school then. My teacher had only told me he was our Prime Minister. Exactly how he, as Prime Minister, had impacted me and the rest of Singapore society was not explained to me. Only when I began to study Singapore History in secondary school did I come to know of the things he had done. To me, it was amazing how someone could do so much in his lifetime. I learnt that he had fought against:

- British colonial rule.
- the Communists
- and communalists (i.e. those who think along communal (or racial) lines)

History is filled with examples of revolutionaries who were also outstanding when they were fighting for their countries' independence. When they became rulers and tried to govern their newly-independent countries, a lot of them ruined their countries -- but not Mr Lee Kuan Yew. As a nation-builder, he was equally outstanding. What made him different from revolutionaries who had ended up destroying their countries? I found out the reasons when I went to University in the 1990s. That was also the time he had started to write books on his memoirs, political ideas and worldview. The titles are:

- The Singapore Story Vol. 1 and Vol. 2
- Hard Truths
- One Man's View of the World

I read every single one of them and I realized the reasons behind his success in nation-building. Actually, there is only one main reason -- his sense of realism. He did not indulge in idealistic talk. Instead he went for what was workable and sustainable. That's why he insisted on a meritocratic system so that the best men and women would always be chosen to do a job. That's why he insisted on zero tolerance towards corruption so that citizens and foreigners would always have faith in Singapore. That's why he insisted on multi-cultural policies so that our country would not be divided and become unstable.

There are a lot more things I could say about what he did right in building our nation. But there is one common trend -- his commitment to the well-being of Singapore. In all the books he has written, this was really evident. And that is really what I will always remember him as: a great leader fully committed to Singapore.

By: Mr Robin Leong
(Humanities Department)





A JOURNEY TO LEARN ABOUT OUR FOUNDING FATHER

The Student Leaders' Network of TKGS was supposed to represent the school at Mr Lee Kuan Yew's lying-in-state ceremony on March 26th together with 7 teacher-chaperones. However as the queue at Parliament House exceeded all expectations, another way of paying our respects had to be considered. The decision was taken to go on a learning journey on March 28th to the Memorial Exhibition at the National Museum. This would enable us to reflect upon the foundation that he had laid for Singapore and the numerous contributions he had made to ensure Singapore's standing in the world.

Our unexpected learning journey also included a walk around the Civic District. We stopped by the Singapore River and saw the long queue outside Parliament House. History teacher Mrs Rita Lopez recounted how Mr Lee had managed to successfully modernise Singapore. When we passed by the River, she mentioned that today it is very easy to be distracted by the restaurants and shops in that area but in bygone years, people would have held their noses in this same location because the River had become a polluted waterway. Mr Lee initiated a clean-up of the River because he believed a beautiful environment was as important as economic development.



"Learning about Mr Lee's life has inspired us to reflect on the many contributions that we can make in our lives. We bid goodbye to a noble man, a leader and a visionary."

Our walk ended at the National Trades Union Congress building. This building also symbolized an important contribution made by Mr Lee – the formation of tripartite relations i.e. government, employers and workers working hand-in-hand to ensure that socio-economic development would proceed smoothly. This lesson had been learnt by Mr Lee when he saw how in the 1950's, workers' unions had been made use of by the Communists, causing many strikes to occur in Singapore.

We realized during our learning journey that what we have now would not have been possible if not for Mr Lee's hard work and that we have often taken things for granted. This was one of Mr Lee's greatest fears prior to his passing i.e. that the younger generation would lose sight of what is truly important for Singapore's survival. Having viewed the many photographs and heard the audio-visual recordings of Mr Lee at the Museum, we believe that the younger generation will keep in mind his noble deeds and repay its debt of gratitude to him.

This trip was indeed an eye-opener for us on the many contributions that Mr Lee had done for our country that we were never aware of. As the generation that was born in the 1990s, we have been the ones to enjoy the fruits of Mr Lee's labour. Learning about Mr Lee's life has inspired us to reflect on the many contributions that we can make in our lives. We bid goodbye to a noble man, a leader and a visionary.

By: Chan Jing-Ee Naomi 4/2 & Loh Kwan Teng Sophia 4/4
(Student Leaders' Network)

THE STATE FUNERAL SERVICE FOR A LION OF A LEADER

“The one feeling that people at home would not have been able to experience and also the one that I will never forget is that moment when our National Anthem, Majulah Singapura, was sung in the hall. It was not being sung for formality’s sake. It was a true spectacle. The entire hall boomed with the voices of proud Singaporeans who were not just singing the song, but living it.” Pooja Bhagwan 4/5

On 29 March 2015, I had the incredible honour of representing the school at the State Funeral Service of our late former Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew. When the news of the passing of Mr Lee Kuan Yew reached the ears of every citizen on the morning of 23rd March, Singaporeans mourned. They could feel a part of the nation leave with the man who lived no more. The week of mourning for the nation would hold a significant place in our history forever. It was a week of love, unity and strength.



The state funeral marked the end of the seven-day mourning period. It signified the final goodbye we could give to our founding father. For me, it was a form of closure. The time to mourn had passed and it was soon going to be time to celebrate the life he had led instead. To witness this historical event was more than an honour. It was a privilege that only few Singaporeans could receive and to be among those few Singaporeans made my heart beat with pride and gratitude.

Every school in Singapore had sent a representative on that day but at no point of time were we treated as inferior or unimportant. Every soldier, every officer, gave us as much respect as they did to the other distinguished guests although we were perhaps only half or one-third the age of the other people in the hall. As we sat on the third level of the University Cultural Centre, we were amongst businessmen, representatives from other countries, senior government officials as well as Singaporeans from all walks of life. There was no divide, no favouritism, and no hierarchy. It was simply evidence of the democratic nation that our former Prime Minister had spent his life building.

As we sat, listening to the eulogies being delivered one after the other, there was a cloud of grief in the hall, constantly hovering over us but never actually descending upon us, almost like Mr Lee was trying to say that he was happy where he was and that it was now time to move on and take the responsibility of growing the nation. Even then, as our eyes gazed at the coffin lying in the center of the stage, we could not help the feeling of tremendous

sadness at the thought that our once fiery leader, who had led the nation with the determination of a lion, was now lying helpless and motionless in a box.

Every eulogy was unique and spoke of a special trait of Mr Lee or an encounter with him. However, they all had one thing in common - they spoke of Mr Lee’s humility. More often than not, we characterize leadership as responsibility, perseverance, charisma, etc. but humility tends to come in last. Mr Lee’s frugality and modesty had shaped him into a man people wanted to respect and this respect was the key to building a happy and successful nation, the nation that we peacefully live in today.

Of course, these are things that could have been picked up by watching the procession in the comfort of one’s own home on television. So what was so special about witnessing the event itself?

Certainly, there are many things that I could list but most of them are intangible. The one feeling that people at home would not have been able to experience and also the one that I will never forget is that moment when our National Anthem, Majulah Singapura, was sung in the hall. It was not being sung for formality’s sake. It was a true spectacle. The entire hall boomed with the voices of proud Singaporeans who were not just singing the song, but living it. With every word that we sang, we could feel the spirit of Mr Lee Kuan Yew living within us.

The song signified independence, unity and progress -- none of which could have been accomplished without the lifelong dedication of our founding father. My heart had never pumped like it did in that one minute and thirty seconds. That rush of adrenaline, that intense feeling of gratitude. These are memories that will remain with me forever.

I would like to thank the school for giving me the opportunity to witness this historical event. Mr Lee had given countless great speeches in his time, many of which consisted of impactful quotes, so I will end with one of my favourites: “To the young and to the not-so-old, I say, look at that horizon, follow that rainbow, go ride it.” Thank you, Mr Lee.

By: Pooja Bhagwan (4/5)

The following poem was written in 2008 by our very own Mrs Lai Fun Smahon when she was residing in Canada

I WROTE A POEM FOR LKY

I wrote a poem for LKY
and hesitantly sent it to the newspaper.
They thanked me for the effort,
but said they had too many letters to publish.

How could they?
I wanted LKY to read the poem,
I wanted to tell him I would come back,
I wanted him not to worry about Singaporeans leaving his shore –
They were just curious and needed to explore.

I wanted him to know he'd done a really great job – don't you agree?
He'd changed the lives of millions,
And that includes my parents and grandparents,
made jobs for hundreds of thousands: gave them dignity,
built houses at breakneck speed,
making us owners, not renters or squatters,
and literally caused the 'developed world' to wonder,
something odd is going on down there!

He built primary schools that look like universities, taught us
English,
gave us a second language, and even a third language.
The whole world marvels at my abilities
and tells me what an excellent country I come from –
They always ask me, very earnestly,
is it true that Singapore is a very clean country?
I am surprised he did not get a Nobel Prize for doing what he did –
now, that's an idea to work on, isn't it?
I am puzzled:
I went to University and studied everything about
Capitalism, Communism and Socialism,
but did not spend a single moment on Pragmatism!

BUILDING BONDS BETWEEN LOCAL & FOREIGN STUDENTS

Describing the local and international students' bonding activity during the March holidays to the Singapore Zoo in Mandai as 'meaningful' would be an understatement. The Zoo is famous for having some of the most beautiful wildlife park settings in the world with animals roaming freely in open and naturalistic habitats. The 28 hectare rainforest zoo was a relevant and conducive place for us to learn and more essentially fulfil the aim of forging stronger bonds with our local peers.

The visit comprised a hunt for clues, which would require meticulous observation of the wildlife. We were required to answer the worksheet based on what we had observed in small groups of 5 to 6 students. The fundamental principle behind this 'hunt' was teamwork because logic would tell us that it was not within one person's capability to cover 240000 square metres within the time limit.



We shared many ideas along the way, and exchanged opinions about the animals and shows that we had seen as well as certain social issues. For example, all of us disapproved of the ivory trade and discussed the causes and consequences of this intolerable activity. Being exposed to current world problems is a good way to promote the bonding which we may need to fight against injustice in the future.

This activity provided us all with a precious opportunity to know more about each other outside school. As all international students live in a hostel, we are unfamiliar with the life that local students experience outside school. It was a pleasure for me to take the opportunity to share the snacks I had bought with others and indeed, we became closer after getting to know each other personally, instead of regarding each other merely as a member of a project team or a partner in academic work.

The prestigious award-winning Singapore Zoo definitely lived up to our expectations. Whether on the trams or on foot, our visit took us through some of the most distinctive global wildlife habitats -- from the savannah grasslands of Wild Africa where lions, zebras and rhinoceroses roam, to the rugged canyons of the Great Rift Valley of Ethiopia.

By: Liu Xiaoyu & Dorothy Ting, Sec 4/5

TKGIANS HOST VISITORS FROM BRUNEI



“There was an aura of awkwardness when the two sets of students met. However, this soon turned into endless conversations and warm laughter.”

From the 20th to 24th of April, 16 TKGians had the opportunity to host students from Brunei, as part of the twinning program between our school and Sekolah Menengah Sufri Bolkliah, Brunei. The objective was for students from both countries to learn about each other's unique culture and educational system

Our girls were at the edge of their seats, awaiting the arrival of their buddies at Changi Airport. For most of them, it was their first time participating in a twinning programme. There was an aura of awkwardness when the two sets of students met. However, this soon turned into endless conversations and warm laughter.

Our students hosted their buddies at many attractions in Singapore including the Science Centre, NEwater Plant and

Gardens by the Bay. These trips besides being educational also gave them the chance to bond with each other. The students also participated in school activities together. The Bruneians found the classroom experiences enriching and enjoyable. There was also a friendly netball match between both sides!

The twinning program was an extremely rewarding experience because it encompassed many important values. Most importantly, TKGians learnt the value of maintaining strong friendship ties with people from foreign lands. This is the kind of global perspective that Singapore needs in the 21st century. Our girls had thus taken the first step in becoming global citizens.

By: Ms Hafizah
(Teacher, ML Department)



AN INSPIRING ENTREPRENEUR

On 10th April, Ms Elim Chew, founder and President of 77th Street came to our school to give a talk during our School Assembly period. For the uninitiated, 77th Street is a leading young adults' fashion and accessories retail chain in Singapore, with six local outlets and a huge shopping mall in Beijing!

During her talk, she shared her experiences in setting up a business in Singapore and some of the challenges she had faced when expanding into overseas markets. She also reinforced the importance of keeping up with trends and staying relevant to survive by quoting the example of Kodak which went bankrupt when it hesitated to switch to digital photography.

Ms Chew had succeeded in opening up a retail outlet with no qualifications other than an 'O' Level Certificate and a degree in hairdressing from Europe. Having succeeded as an entrepreneur, she said the secret to success in any endeavour is to have the passion to make a positive impact and be prepared to work hard. She said she strictly abides by the principle stated in Malcom Gladwell's Book "Outliers" which recommends that one has to put in 10,000 hours to succeed. She also shared the story of Nick Vujicic, who was born without limbs and yet managed to do all the things a normal person can do. His 'never give up' attitude was the reason for his extraordinary success today.

Ms Chew understands the problems youths face in fulfilling their dreams because



she went through many problems herself. Thus she tries to pave the way for Singapore youths by providing them with an outlet to connect with like-minded peers, encouraging them to share their ideas and exchange their experiences. Ms Elim Chew also mentioned that many youths have succeeded in following their passion under her guidance. She mentioned Minn, the creator of the local game PlayMoolah. Minn had found the motivation to venture into entrepreneurship when she listened to Ms Chew during her own school Assembly period at the age of 14.

All TKGians were indeed inspired by Ms Chew and no doubt, some will indeed take on the challenge to start on their entrepreneurial journey one day.

By: Nandika Ramachandran &
Visali D/O Thamilchelvam,
Sec 4/1

LEARNING ABOUT THE CHINGAY PARADE AND SINGAPORE

“...halfway into the show all of us had gotten to our feet and started dancing!”

Most people may not realize it but the Chingay Parade which is always held on the last day of the Chinese New Year season began as a way to ‘compensate’ for Singapore’s ban on fire-crackers a long time ago. This ban had become necessary due to the many fires and casualties which always resulted when fire-crackers were let off as part of Chinese tradition.

The Chingay Parade has now become a permanent feature in Singapore but the forty Sec 2 students who signed up to attend the preview or full-dress rehearsal of this year’s event, had never attended this Parade before and did not know what to expect when we went to the F1 Pit Building on February 14th. However, halfway into the show all of us had gotten to our feet and started dancing!

Being seated at the highest row of seats meant that we had a picturesque view of the entire parade, which lasted for about two hours. We were mesmerized by the beautiful display of lights and costumes worn by the performers. The floats were in diverse colours and each was dedicated to Singapore’s 50th birthday. The one that I liked most was the one where a few people displayed their terrific wushu skills. We also liked the float depicting a pioneer cutting the SG50 cake.

The last float was breath-taking. It was a tree with huge red flowers and on the tree was a tree-house on which four women representing the main racial groups in Singapore and dressed in their ethnic costumes, performed several crowd-favourites. At the end of the show we were entranced by a captivating display of fireworks. We certainly had no regrets about signing up for this show even though it meant returning home at 11 pm, because we had had an unforgettable experience. More importantly we learnt about what makes our nation a vibrant place that we can be proud of.

By: Tabassum Nazir 2/3



WHAT TOTAL DEFENCE MEANS TO SINGAPORE

Total Defence Day commemorates the day colonial Singapore surrendered to the Japanese Imperial army on February 15th 1942. Various activities are held in schools during the week to remind students and teachers alike of the hardships and sacrifices our forefathers endured to defend the country. The lessons learnt from this episode led to the development of the five pillars of Singapore's Total Defence policy: Military, Civil, Social, Psychological and Economic.

In line with this year's theme of 'Our SAF -- Giving Strength to Our Nation', students were given a glimpse into staff members' army days during the school's Family Time on Monday morning. Photographs of the teachers serving the country during their National Service days drew gasps of disbelief and admiration. Some teachers were unrecognisable as their faces in the photographs were covered with camouflage paint, a must for carrying out military exercises in jungle terrain. Despite the camouflage, the pride in their faces was unmistakable. Some teachers shared their experiences in National Service, and the lessons they had learnt, thus showing how Military Defence links with Psychological Defence.



Legacy lessons during the week were geared towards raising awareness amongst students on the importance of the Social Defence pillar. Students analysed various scenarios which Singapore had faced through the years including the 1964 race riots and the recent terrorist threats. The government proactively tries to maintain racial harmony and national pride, so as to prevent unfortunate incidents.

An emergency exercise involving the whole school was conducted in the morning, to replicate what could happen if a fire broke out in the school. The message was that if everybody plays their part, the emergency will end without casualties and in very little time. This was Civil Defence in action.

The highlight of the week was a skit put up by the Singapore Discovery Centre during the school Assembly period. The multi-racial and colourful characters infused humour and got the audience involved while reminding students of the importance of a solid Civil and Economic Defence. This together with the other pillars is what keeps Singapore strong, stable and safe.



AN INSPIRING SINGER-SONGWRITER

TKGians were treated to a wonderful Assembly session when Corrine May was invited one Wednesday afternoon in January. She shared her experiences as a singer and interspersed her sharing with several songs. Of course what everyone in the audience wanted to hear her sing was erstwhile National Day Song, Sing a Song for Singapore which she said she had felt truly honoured to perform.

Finally the moment we had been waiting for arrived and she began the beautiful introduction on her keyboard. Indeed the whole audience felt inspired with a wonderful sense of belonging to Singapore when she crooned her beautiful lyrics and the haunting melody of the chorus:





LEARNING ABOUT TAMIL CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

The late Mr Lee Kuan Yew once said “English for trade; Mother Tongue to preserve identity” when he made a speech on bilingualism and language policy in 2004. We all know the importance of having a Mother Tongue and how it allows us to have a better sense of our diverse cultures.

However, with our busy lifestyles, not many Singaporeans have the time to explore the finer details of their various cultures or have the opportunity to learn about them. Therefore it is a golden opportunity for us students to have Mother Tongue fortnights to help us gain knowledge and valuable cultural experiences.

Accordingly the Tamil Language Department organized a Tamil Language Fortnight coinciding with the Tamil harvest festival, Pongal on 14th Jan. This festival also marks the beginning of the Tamil Thivalluvar year 2046. The two weeks were filled with many interesting and engaging activities for Tamil students of all levels during after school hours. We also incorporated SG50 celebrations in many of the activities.



<p>Sec One's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attended face-mask painting workshop wrote good wishes for Singapore in a poster competition 	<p>Sec Three's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> put up skits expressing the meaning behind selected Thirukural couplets wrote poems based on their feelings for Singapore
<p>Sec Two's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attended Pongal pot- painting workshops conducted classroom debates created comic strips which depicted Singapore's growth in the past 50 	<p>Sec Four's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> conducted a round-table discussion on Singapore's progress in the past 50 years and what they expect to see in the next 50 years

A guest speaker, Mdm Azeza Jalaludeen (co-founder of Self-Help International Network enterprise) was invited to share her reflections on her secondary school life and why she felt Tamil had been important to her. It was a motivating speech for TKGians as we learnt about the challenges she had to overcome to attain success.

The highlight of the Tamil fortnight was the Pongal Assembly programme. Our friends from other ethnic groups learnt a lot about this festival which had been unknown to them till then. TKGians got to know about the significance of Pongal as well as how it is celebrated. The programme included interesting performances by two ex-girls and the award-winning local dance troupe known as the Manimaran dancers. It also included a Tamil song performance by a Chinese singer, Mr Chan! The wonderful programme kept the audience enchanted.

In conclusion, the Tamil Language fortnight was a fruitful one for both Tamil and non-Tamil students. It definitely fulfilled its purpose because it encouraged Tamil students to pursue their interest in the Tamil language.



By: Brinda D/O Veerappan (3/1)

CL FORTNIGHT: A CULTURAL EXPERIENCE FOR ALL

The Concert to welcome the Year of the Goat in February began with a twist. All classes were told to compose original Lunar New Year greetings and the best pieces would receive prizes. The Hall was filled with noisy enthusiasm as students cracked their brains to remember auspicious Chinese characters. As TKGians of all races gamely took the opportunity to showcase their creativity, the Chinese Language teachers meandered among the masses of students to shortlist the winning pieces.

Following the "Greetings" competition, several girls went on stage to try the Chinese art of "bowl-spinning" under the tutelage of experts brought in by the organizers. Of course, our girls were given durable plastic equipment of course instead of real porcelain bowls. Some students bravely attempted diabolo juggling as well.



Towards the end of the concert, rhythmic drumming signaled the arrival of the Lion Dance troupe into the Hall. The "lions" pranced around the students, eventually making their way to the stage, where Mrs Seah received 'blessings' on behalf of the entire school.

Coinciding with the Lunar New Year period a Mother Tongue Fortnight was also organized. It was a platform for students to learn about various Chinese cultural activities. Sec One's learnt how to do Chinese string art, or Chinese knots, as it is more commonly referred to. The instructor Ms Zhou told us that the knots were used to send 'blessings' and were often made during Chinese New Year to decorate and beautify the house. We were indeed mesmerized by the various intricate pieces done by others and could not wait to get started on our own pieces!

Finally armed with one short and long string each and 2 beads, we were ready to make our own dragonflies. We followed Ms Zhou's instructions carefully and diligently. However, it was not easy! The instructions were complicated; but with the help of our teachers, we successfully managed to make our own dragonflies. We were very contented with the end product; so much so that some of us even bought more string so that we could make dragonflies for our family members and teachers. I felt delighted after completing my first piece of Chinese string art and could not wait to show it to my parents!

On the second day, we used different types of beans to decorate a Chinese character. The instructor Ms Tan gave us different types of beans and lentils,



all of which were of different colours. All we had to do was to apply glue on the stroke we had drawn earlier and stick the beans or lentils on to the glue. However it was not as easy as it looked. The glue often spread all over our fingers, making it difficult to stick the beans neatly on the paper. But I must say we all had an enjoyable time and eventually completed the art-work.

It was indeed a meaningful experience for us because we not only got to bond with our classmates, but also learnt more about Chinese culture. Coming from a non-Chinese background, I also gained insight into some of the things my Chinese friends do during Chinese New Year, therefore making these activities even more memorable for me.

By: Nazneen Farhad Vasanwala (1/3)



TKGIANS WIN HEARTS DURING MALAY DEBATE SERIES

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The TKGS Malay Debate Team with Ms Hafizah



Nurul Khalisah receiving her Best Speaker Award.



Priya Lakshmi with her Overall Best Speaker trophy

Following the "Greetings" competition, several girls went on stage to try the Chinese art of "bowl-spinning" under the tutelage of experts brought in by the organizers. Of course, our girls were given durable plastic equipment of course instead of real porcelain bowls. Some students bravely attempted diabolo juggling as well.

DEBATERS MAKE IT TO SEMIS IN NATIONAL COMPETITION!

Five Upper Secondary TKGians dutifully stayed back after school three times a week for one and a half terms. They were either training for debate competitions or sparring sessions with other schools. This was their usual 'timetable' every Monday, Wednesday and Friday:

- Lessons
- Lunch
- Debate training
- Leave school at 6 pm
- Dinner
- Homework
- Revision
- More debate preparations
- Sleep

In the prestigious Singapore Secondary School Debating Championships 2015, the team went through three gruelling Preliminary rounds, breaking into the Quarter-Finals in third place (out of 22 teams) and then breaking yet again into the Semi-Finals. They had beaten



Westwood Secondary, CHIJ (Katong) Convent, Crescent Girls' and Anderson Secondary, much to their delight and relief.

Although they lost to the Singapore American School in the Semi-Finals, we are still tremendously proud of them for having gone that far and putting up a good fight. This gusty, intelligent and hardworking group of girls are (see photo) Priya Lakshmi (4/5), Pooja Bhagwan (4/6), Brinda Veerapan (3/1), and reserves Charmaine Loh (3/5) and Rachel Loy (3/1)

By: Hannah Zou, (Sec 2/3)



TKGIANS' JOURNEY OF INNOVATION

Three Humanities students from Sec 3 were selected for the Youth Innovation Challenge organised by the Singapore Management University. Azzahra Nurriszky Salsabila (3/8), Eily Hung (3/4) and I were tasked to come up with a new product or service that would help solve a problem that people face in this day and age.

For the preliminary round, we were required to submit a business plan on our product. The plan had to show the problem we had identified and how our product would help to solve it. For the semi-finals we had to do a ten minute presentation on our product, and answer questions by a panel of judges from various business fields.

Our journey was not easy. There were problems in just coming out with an innovation. After researching and thinking of people's needs in life, we agreed on a final idea of a 'technology bracelet'. Then we faced technical issues with our product. We also had to ensure our product was indeed novel in the market and if it was feasible. To check on the feasibility, we did a survey to gather people's opinions.

A lot of time had to be sacrificed for this project because it required a tremendous amount of research. However, we encouraged each other and persevered. We are thankful to Economics teacher Ms Charissa Lim for helping us through the ups and downs our group experienced while doing the project and sacrificing much time and energy to support and guide us.

Even though we were not able to advance to the finals, we learnt a lot about the world of business. We also learnt that we have to give more than 100% effort to succeed after looking at our competitors' efforts. Needless to say we learnt how to cope with stress and work as a team.

Overall, we are thankful for this wonderful learning experience.

By: Group Leader, Koh Yu Ning (Sec 3/4)





MATHSCIENTIZ DAY – AN AMAZING ‘WHODUNIT’!

We Sec One’s became ‘detectives’ for a day and our task was to solve the mystery behind ‘Cookie Monster’s’ kidnapping on 6th March! As TKGians new to this school, my classmates and I were very impressed with our Science and Mathematics teachers as well as their remarkable team of over 40 student leaders for organizing such an engaging event.

We had to conduct experiments which were very different from the ones we would do during our regular Science lessons. I expanded my knowledge of both Science and Mathematics skills, and applied what I had learnt during lessons on authentic tasks, such as using technology to determine the quality of sound waves and the testing of blood. The activities definitely tested our cognitive abilities, stretched our minds and challenged us to work within tight time constraints.

While my team was not one of the winning ones, we felt a sense of achievement at the end of the event because we realized that each and every one of us had contributed our best towards a common goal, i.e. to get as many clues as accurately and quickly as possible. On the whole we had thoroughly enjoyed ourselves that day and the experience will always be remembered especially the part when we got to see Cookie Monster all safe and sound at the end. We had also benefitted from this programme because we could now better appreciate Science and Mathematics.

“We left school at the end of that wonderful day, with the words of our School Song ringing in our heads: “Then let us fill the hours with minutes truly spent, in helping one another towards a true content.”

By: Nuratina Julia Zahari (1/1)



CROSS COUNTRY DAY: MORE THAN JUST A WALK IN THE PARK

Pasir Ris Park was bathed in a sea of red, blue, purple and yellow on the morning of 13th March as TKGians, decked out in their House colours, prepared for the annual Cross Country event. Staff and students bonded in a day full of fun and laughter. As usual there were Competitive and Recreational categories so that everyone could participate and have a good time.

Teachers also joined in the fun: there was a 'Sports for Life' event for them and everyone cheered enthusiastically as participants raced against each other. Of course, it was all in the name of good fun and promoting a healthy lifestyle! The school spirit shone bright that morning, with every girl cheering for their friends regardless of which House they belonged to. At the end, the park was filled with exuberant applause and cheers as the winners of each level were called out. The Yellow House emerged victorious with the most points, snagging most of the trophies in the competitive category.

The morning ended with the school song and a rousing cheer led by the Student Leaders. It was truly a morning well-spent and it also showed that keeping fit and healthy certainly does not have to be boring!



AN INTERVIEW WITH TWO PUBLISHED WRITERS

How to avoid writers' block?

How to choose a title for your book?

What is your most unforgettable memory of your time in Mediacorp?

These were some of the questions thrown at TL teacher Mdm Meenatchi during our library event known as the Press Gang interview. She was there along with another guest speaker to converse with aspiring writers among TKGians.

The event, held on 31st March aimed to give participants an opportunity to interact with published writers. Two writers were invited to share their thoughts with staff and students their experiences and insights on their work. The speakers were our very own Mdm Meenatchi, (TL & EL) and Mdm Siti Hanifah (ML & EL)

Mdm Hanifah, a former TKGian shared her experiences as a former librarian. Her literary works in both Malay and English were on display during the event. She explained how she had collected and saved relevant information before collating them to produce a book.

Mdm Meenatchi too spoke about her bilingual books as well as her experiences as a broadcaster and presenter in MediaCorp. She also provided valuable information on the various avenues of sponsorship and mentorship available for creative writers in the four official languages of Singapore.

The student-audience had a good time interacting with both authors and gained a good perspective of issues related to writing.

Kristal Lim (3/4) had this to say:

After attending the Press Gang event, I have gained new insight into how authors write their books. In order to be a writer, a strong command of language is necessary. Both authors mentioned that practice in language, mainly through reading and speaking, is highly beneficial in helping budding writers write more effectively. It is also important to immerse ourselves in the role of the character when writing a story, to give the reader a deeper connection to the story.

I have also learnt that it is important to speak our mother tongue well and understand our own culture. For example, Mdm Hanifah has a wide knowledge of the Malay culture. Both speakers also spoke about their past careers, which allowed me to have a deeper understanding of the working world. I find the process of writing books very intriguing and hope to find out more about writing through similar events in the future.



LIBRARIANS GET CREATIVE

The Problem:

Records had shown that more than 70% of the books borrowed in the library were on the theme of romance. Concerned about students' lack of interest in other themes student-librarians Ranice Tan, Wong Jun Mei and Shruti Ravindran (all from 4/8), Zarith Sofea (4/2) and Zhang Chuwei (4/3) set about promoting the genre of science fiction.

The Strategy:

One always thinks of outer space when it comes to science fiction. Therefore we had the galaxy in mind as our backdrop, and used recycled materials such as a black cloth, old CDs and cardboard to create planets and stars hanging from the ceiling to bring out the mystique of the galaxy and create the effect we wanted. We also planned an information board with recommendations and interesting facts to attract students to read science fiction.



The Process:

Researching, printing, cutting, painting and hanging up the decorations was hard work but our team remained focused on the goal of introducing the wonderful world of science fiction to our students. We knew that making creative use of spaces in the library would help inspire a school of readers.

The Outcome:

Our Library Board emerged 3rd place in the Decorate and Display Competition organised by Civica which is an international library organisation!



From left: Mdm Begam (School Librarian, Ranice Tan, Zarith Sofea, Shruti Ravindran & Zhang Chuwei, with their creation

By: Wong Jun Mei (4/3) & Ranice Tan (4/8)

MEDIA CLUB SHOWCASE: IGNITE

The Media Club put up their second annual showcase in late April comprising flash animation and photography. On 15th April, TKGians, members, teachers, and parents attended the opening ceremony. Then our top photographers and animation groups presented the ideas and motivation behind their pieces. This was followed by a guided tour of our exhibition at the Art Gallery. The overall winners were:

Most Promising Photographer Award:	
• Jewelle Woo	(4/8)
Best animation:	
• Judy Ng Ming Yee	(3/1)
• Shannon Wong	(3/5)
• Nur Sabryna Bte Shaifullah	(3/7)
• Syaza Bte Azhar	(3/8)
Top 3 Beginner Photographers:	
• Soh Zuan, Azumi	(1/1)
• Danielle Tay Si Ning	(1/6)
• Eunice Ter Wei Wen	(3/7)

This showcase was an accumulation of the girls' creativity and hard work in the first semester. They had honed their skills by attending a course on flash animation by Ms Amalina and a Visual Diary Course conducted by renowned local photographer Ms Deanna Ng. The newcomers had attended a beginners' photography course by Ms Charissa Lim.

All in all, 'Ignite' certainly lived up to its name by sparking an interest in the visual arts among TKGians. It also achieved its objective of showcasing the many talents of the Media Club girls.

By: Ms Charissa Lim (Teacher-in-charge, Media Club)



Photography Exhibit



Flash Animation





STRING ENSEMBLE GOES 'LIVE' ON NATIONAL TV

The Ensemble performed at The Float @ Marina Bay on 27th February as part of the Lunar New Year celebration event known as River Hongbao. We presented two pieces:

- 'Waltz' -- the second movement from Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings
- 新春乐 (*Joy of Spring*), a Chinese festive piece specially-arranged by our conductor, Mr. Edward Tan, to welcome the Lunar New Year.

The entire experience was rewarding and eye-opening. We are proud to have pulled it off successfully during the 'live' performance despite the many constraints that we faced. Yes, the event was televised live on MediaCorp Channel 8!

For many of us, it was the first time we had ever performed on national television. On top of that, though some of us had been to The Float @ Marina Bay, for most of us, it was the first time that we were actually on the floating platform itself.

The event was jointly organised by the:

- Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations
- Singapore Press Holdings
- Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Singapore Tourism Board
- People's Association

By: Charmayne Low Jing Wan (3/6) and Tang Lexin, Esther (3/4)



TKGS ALUMNI SAIL HOME FOR THE SEA GAMES WITH PRIDE

Two of TKGS's alumni, Savannah Siew and Kimberly Lim, obtained the Team of the Year Award in the Asian Games 2014 in Incheon. They have also won the prestigious John Merricks trophy, and gold award for the 420 Class Girl in the 420 World and Ladies World Championships in Valencia, Spain.

Kimberly and Savannah knew each other ever since they met at TKGS in Secondary 1. After completing their secondary school education, they went on to Raffles Junior College and participated in many competitions and events together.

However, after the Incheon Asian Games 2014, they had to head in separate directions. Kimberly will be sailing the 49er FX (a two-handed, high performance sailing dinghy) with Cecelia Low while Savannah will move to the bigger 470 (a double-handed, single hulled dinghy with a centreboard) with former windsurfer Amanda Ng as they bid to qualify for the 2016 Olympics in Rio De Janeiro. After the Asian Games ended, they were interviewed by Simon Evans for the Incheon Daily, on how they felt:

"It is a really, really good feeling to end off on such a high note. This is our last event together and we can't really describe how it feels. There was obviously pressure coming into this event as we didn't really perform how we wanted to at the World Championships and so, coming into this we just had to give everything we had. This meant so much for us," Kimberly said.

"It has been an amazing day," said Savannah, whose father Mr Siew Shaw Her had sailed in the Olympics.

"It feels like quite a long day and we are so happy to finish like this. We have worked for so long together, we just know how each of us work. We tried our best and we got the results. We will definitely miss each other," she added.

Fortunately, they were able to return together to their alma mater, TKGS, on the 10th of October 2014 as part of the Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) "50 Waves of Cheer" roadshow. Softballer Guo Yan Xiu, another alumni of TKGS, also came back to TKGS on the same day.

The roadshow started off with a "question and answer" session and the students were able to interact with the athletes. After that, both students and athletes played "Charades" on the topic of Sports.

Clinic sessions were also held as part of their efforts to drum up more interest for the upcoming SEA Games, Kimberly and Savannah were in TKGS's courtyard talking about their experiences of sailing together. They also spent time bonding with TKGS's sailing team and imparted tips to hone their skills. They also taught the students how to control the dinghy according to the wind's patterns.

Now, Kimberly and Savannah are training for the SEA Games that will be held in Singapore Sports Hub at Kallang from the 5th to the 16th of June 2015, so, do support them!

By Jois Chan 2/3 (TKGS+ student essay 2014)

EXCITING REASONS TO ENROLL IN TKGS

Tanjong Katong Girls' School (TKGS) is filled with athletic and brilliant pupils who have a 'can-do' attitude. It is just that straightforward. We are also the only school in the whole of Singapore who are very proud of our Go-To-Green uniforms.

'Moribus Modestus' which means demure and resolute is the motto of TKGS. TKGS does not just focus on just moulding your child to be exam-smart and to get good grades. It also grooms her in terms of her character as well.

There are many reasons why TKGS should be the first school of your choice. The list just goes on and on. However, to name a few I will start on the core values of Tanjong Katong Girls' School.

They are Determination, Integrity, Humility, and Graciousness.

You may wonder whether these values are inculcated in us or whether they are just there on paper. TKGians indeed exemplify these values. We do not just treat these words as words. We uphold and lead our lives according to these values which motivate and encourage us.

An excellent example of these TKGS values can be seen in the hard earned victory attained by the TKGS Softballers, in 2014. Many may have the mentality that victory is something that is destined but this story proves them all wrong. Softball being a tough sport, involves a lot of concentration and hand and eye co-ordination. The Softballers trained at least thrice a week with every practice session lasting for up to four hours. Sounds challenging doesn't it?

Many would have given up on this sport, unable to cope with both the academics and Co-curriculum Activity (CCA). Not many would have persevered as they had lost the championship a couple of times before and they did not have a recent victory to encourage them and boost their self-confidence. But it is indeed the TK Spirit of determination that drives the girls to perform their very best at every match they played. Putting aside all their differences, sacrificing every precious minute they had and even leaving class early to participate in matches, the TKGS softballers indeed made the school proud by emerging as the champions in 2014. They have proved to us that with determination even the impossible is possible.

As the saying goes "Some people succeed because they are destined but most because they are determined." With determination, one is sure to go a long way no matter who they are.

Following that, what makes TKGS a friendly and warm environment is that everybody feels comfortable mingling with others in the school. The student body forms a key group in school though we certainly can't forget the teachers who educate us with all their love and care.

I interview a few classmates on why they feel that TKGS is the ideal school for them. Here are their responses.

"Tanjong Katong Girls' School is a wonderful and an amazing place to be in ...such inviting company. Academic subjects taught are of high standard and are a key top priority here. Being part of the student body in this school, I am sure that I will be guaranteed a good education.

Teachers also put their heart and souls into giving us the best education they can. They never fail to encourage us in times of need and are always there when we need their help. Even learning new things, which I used to dread, has now become a joy for me with all the new techniques my teachers incorporate during their lesson.

When I was in Primary Six, TKGS was not amongst the list of schools I wanted to be in as I had other schools in mind. But after attending its open house and talking to my sisters who were TKGians themselves, I truly believed that TKGS was the ideal school for me and I am sure I am not wrong in my choice."

By Viveka 2/4 (TKGS+ student essay 2014)

EXCITING REASONS TO ENROLL IN TKGS

“After coming to Tanjong Katong Girls’ School, we feel that we have become much more confident and outspoken. We found it much easier to share our views with everyone in class.

As we were not as outspoken in our primary schools we feel that TKGS has given us wonderful exposure on how we can better develop ourselves. This then allows us to achieve greater heights. Also being part of the TKGS+ programme, we now get to see a totally new perspective to learning and we appreciate it even more. We always had the mentality that studying is purely book based, however the TKGS+ programme has proved to us otherwise.

Moreover after participating in this year’s open house, we feel that TKGS is really doing a lot to make its environment a conducive place for current and future TKGians. Many booths showcasing the various talents of the students in TKGS were visible around the school. They were not just educational but interesting as well. Upon seeing this, we really felt very proud of our school. This is why I am proud to say ‘Once a TKGian always a TKGian!’ Wherever you may be the TK Spirit will always be with you.”

- Joni Tan 2E4

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One can confidently enroll herself in TKGS as this is a school which develops its students holistically through a balanced approach in academics and character development. Every student who enters the school as a young girl, leaves the school as a mature and confident young lady ready to meet the challenges ahead of her.

-Laiyinah and Ilya Soia 2E4

STAFF NEWS



Ms Serena Lee and her husband



Ms Dawn Quek and her husband



Siti Sakinah Zaqirah, daughter of Mdm Siti Aishah and her husband



Alex, son of Mrs Kang Ai Wee and her husband

