



CHIJ ST JOSEPH'S CONVENT

MARCH NEWSLETTER

2018

Dear SJC Community, March continued to mark the exciting, competitive Semester 1 sports calendar with SJC's much loved annual Sports Day, Sports Experience Programme for SJCians to experiment with and have fun learning a plethora of sports activities ranging from self-defence muay thai and aikido classes to kpop and Zumba classes, SJC's netballers forging inroads into Zonal competitions and numerous other sports opportunities by our sports CCAs such as Shooting, Swimming and Fencing. We will feature these highlights in our April and coloured May newsletters when the competitive seasons for semester 1 are concluded.

As April beckons, here are other highlights from our March calendar. March is also extra special because she marked the first of our 80th anniversary celebrations and our annual Awards Ceremony.

ST JOSEPH'S FEAST DAY MORNING MASS AT ST ANNE'S CHURCH



St Anne's Church in a sea of IJ blue on St Joseph's Feast Day, 19 March, 2018

SJC's 80th Anniversary Celebrations began with St Joseph's Feast Day on 19 March being celebrated with morning mass at St Anne's Church. Staff and students were given the option to experience the morning mass on 19 March in church or to view it via a live feed in the school hall. This simple, beautiful and meaningful morning mass at St Anne's Church marked a mass in church for SJCians after over a decade. St Joseph is SJC's patron saint as well as the Patron of the Universal Church and the Patron of Workers.



SJCians listening attentively as Father Edward Seah, our priest, led us in prayer

In the weeks leading up to this, Mdm Karen Chen, our English HOD, who was overall I/C for the event worked with various stakeholders in the community to organize the event, while Ms Mary Charles, our RE-Coordinator and I/C of the mass proceedings worked with Sister Agatha and the Catholic teachers to practise the hymns with the student choir. This occasion was also a good opportunity for SJCians to learn about the important role that St Anne's Church has played within the Sengkang, Punggol Catholic Community.



SJC staff and students contribute during prayer



Together as one in worship and prayers of thanks for the community



Catholic parents, students and staff partaking in holy communion for baptised Catholics



SJCians watching intently and deep in prayer.



Ms Ho addressing the congregation at the end of mass



This mass at St Anne's Church was a beautiful way to mark St Joseph's Feast Day. We would like to thank the many people who worked hard to make this possible not only for the SJCians in church but also the SJCians who were viewing this in the school hall via the live feed.

17TH AWARDS CEREMONY, LEGACY OF LOVE

After morning mass at St Anne's Church, SJCians continued with regular lessons and in the evening, gathered again for our 17th Awards Ceremony. The 2018 ceremony to recognize and acknowledge the achievements of students and the contributions of staff and parent volunteers had an additional special touch as it was held as a sit-down dinner with one parent of each student award recipient being invited for the special occasion. Our guest of honour was Ms Vivienne Lim, Chairwoman of the IJ Board. This awards Ceremony also saw 2 new awards, the Lucy and Philip Kho Bursary Award and the Sister Deirdre O'Loan Award.

The evening was a lovely occasion for ex-students to catch up with their teachers and brought together ex-staff, ex-students and their proud parents, our supportive parent volunteers, and members of the IJ Board and other IJ schools in celebration. During the dinner, performances were put up by the Angklung Ensemble, the Choir, the Concert Band and the Handbell Ensemble. Student councillors helped out behind the scenes as the efficient AVA Crew and at front of house assisting teachers, awardees and guests, while our bubbly student emcees chaired the evening. Here are reflections from some of our student participants:



My experience at this year's AC was truly enjoyable but challenging. The first obstacle I faced was the physical discomfort of having to wear a blazer and court shoes for almost 5 hours. Seeing the rest struggle through the same difficulty gave me a sense of comfort because I knew we were all going through it together. The second challenge was registering the guests at the registration table. We had to tick names off about 7 lists in the shortest time possible and run up to give the lists to the emcees. Being with Dessy and Isabel definitely made everything better. After the event, I reflected about the lessons learnt from AC. I



realised that I could not have overcome the challenges without my friends. As councillors, we have a duty to serve the school and through doing this we also form bonds with one another. This event made me appreciate the people around me and I am very grateful for learning this lesson through this event. I also learned that we all face obstacles but what matters most is to have a positive attitude towards overcoming them. - Sonia Ranjiv, 3F

Helping out at AC was both exciting and nerve-racking. My job was to help out backstage as AVA Crew. We had to shift chairs and AVA equipment very quietly behind the curtains. I was very excited as I was happy to contribute to this event. Yet, I was very nervous that I might accidentally do something that would ruin AC so I was very careful not to do so. Through AC, I became closer to the seniors. It was an opportunity for us to work together as a team, we encouraged one another when we were nervous and the seniors guided us through the tasks as it was the Secondary 2 students' first time. I also learnt to remain calm and give my best in stressful situations. – Sandra Wong, 2E, AVA Crew.



I enjoyed the finale the most because I feel that everybody sang together as a school and it was such a carefree moment. Through participation in the Awards Ceremony, I have learnt that to sound good, I have to put in a lot of effort regardless of the pain. This effort does not only come from throwing my voice out. To sound good, I also have to work my core muscles that I have strengthened for a very long time, and to sing out loud. - Nurul Afiqah, 5A



It was truly a rewarding and memorable experience performing for the IJ Fraternity during the 17th AC. I learnt how to work well with my teammates within a short span of time. It was beyond just ringing my own notes, but rather, going on site to observe and explore all possibilities to put up a flawless performance. From putting the song together as an ensemble to encouraging one another's hearts and minds, I understood the importance of progressing as a team. Another crucial factor for a successful performance is your attitude. Our team was clearly

aware of the unfavourable acoustics in the hall but we played to the best of our ability and enjoyed our moment on stage. This performance allowed me to view music in a different light. Music is beyond putting the music notes together. It is playing with your heart and soul. A sincere, determined performer will win the hearts of her listeners through her smile and confidence. -Beatrice Looi, 4D



AC performance was a stepping stone in our journey as an ensemble. As this is the last performance for the seniors, the sec threes and twos will now have to step up and fill the gap. Throughout this journey, we have grown close as an ensemble and we are sad to see our seniors go. However, we know that they need the time to concentrate on their National exams and we will do our part to help support them as much as we can. At first, we were a little disorganized and were rushing for time. This disorganization made us nervous and confused. Many of us were not ready to play. It is important to be aware of what is happening around us and to calm ourselves if we are nervous as the nervousness will

cloud our judgement and then we are unable to do what is needed. It is also important to communication with one another so that we can be more effective. As the performance got closer and we were able to rest and gather our thoughts, I learnt the meaning of trust and teamwork. I had to trust the other members of the ensemble and that they would play their part well and if everyone did their part, we did not have to worry about mistakes. It is through this trust that we have with one another combined with the many hours that we practiced, that we are able to perform to the best of our abilities. We also had to trust our teachers and instructor to show and guide us on what needed to be done. It is through our teamwork that we can be efficient and carry out our duties swiftly. There will always be someone there watching and if I need help, another member will be there to help straight away. I must also do the same so that we can help one another and this will help the ensemble greatly. I feel as a Sec Two member of the ensemble, I have lots to learn from the teachers, instructor as well as seniors. I am eager to learn more and help the Ensemble scale new heights and work through our challenges. - Anniston Koh Wen Ai, 2C



Congratulations once more to the Class of 2017 and may you keep the IJ Spirit Burning Bright wherever you go!

SINGAPORE SECONDARY SCHOOLS' DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIPS

SJC's Debate Circle participated in Division II of the Singapore Secondary Schools Debating Championships this year. The team of 5 needed to be ranked as 1 of the top 8 schools at the end of these 3 rounds to move on to the quarterfinals. In the first round, which took place on 9th February, they went against Tanjong Katong Girls School and lost by a very small margin. In the second round, they improved immensely and defeated Pasir Ris Crest Secondary School. In the final round, they went against Crescent Girls School and won with a unanimous vote of 3-0. Best speaker award for round 2 and 3 went to Isabell Chew and Avryl Chaar of 4D respectively. The team never lost faith and worked very hard throughout this journey. They displayed determination, courage, and fighting spirit. They have greatly inspired the juniors in the CCA.

Even though the team won 2 out of 3 rounds, their overall scores were not high enough to make it to the top 8. Nevertheless, the team gained so much from this experience.

I would like to thank Ms Jeannette, Ms Sarah and also Mrs Joyce Goh who was previously the teacher-in-charge of debates, for seeing the potential in me and giving me the opportunity to be part of the school team. Debating really helped me to grow as a person and in my studies. I learnt that I must always have integrity and be gracious even though debating is about proving why our case is better than our opponent's case. I learnt to craft effective arguments without sounding condescending. Furthermore, my writing skills have improved drastically as debating helped me make more nuanced arguments. Most importantly, I learnt that listening is extremely important in challenging the opponent's case and also in life. Listening allows us to understand different points of view and be open-minded so that we can improve ourselves. Even though the competition season was stressful, this journey has been a very enriching one. I am honoured to have been part of SJC'S Debate Circle. – Isabell Chew Pei Lin, 4D (School Team Captain)



I joined debates despite opposition from my parents. I defied their wishes, put debates as my first choice and never looked back since. With this competition season that passed, I made the best friends I could ever ask for and I am very thankful for that even though our journey was cut short. I have gained so much from it. I learnt the art of sounding posh from Avryl and how to be a ray of sunshine from Ria. I learnt that there are people who do share the same burdens as I have from Isabell and from Bijal I learnt that insecurities come and go with a little help and hope. My years in debates have been well-spent, filled with both laughter and tears. It was the best choice I ever made in Secondary 1. – Sylvia Tan, 4E

Personally, joining Debate Circle was something that was out of my comfort zone. At the start, I always shielded away from speaking during CCA sessions. This was a challenge I overcame and I was selected to be a part of the school team. Preparing for a debate was never easy; I stayed up countless nights to prepare and perfect my speeches, which ultimately led me to become a much "specialised" 1st speaker. Specialisation sounds like a fancy word, but in debates, it is not

considered to be a good trait. I was overly structured and found it hard to give immediate responses in the middle of a debate. However, throughout this competition season, with the help of the team, teachers and coach, I improved as a debater and public speaker.

My critical thinking skills improved greatly and I also improved as a person. The biggest takeaway on a personal level was probably the art of engaging in a civil disagreement respectfully without demeaning the other party. I strongly feel that my four years in debate have been well spent picking up life skills and knowledge that I would not have learnt if not for debates. – Chaar Tim Avryl, 4D

THE FINE LINE BETWEEN REALITY AND THE THEATRE:

On 23 March, Centrestage students had a learning journey to watch the TheatreWorks production, *The Good Farmer*. The play explores sibling rivalry and favouritism in the family. Twin brothers Jacob and Joseph are placed into different streams after Primary Four, and Jacob begins to feel that their father favours his twin, Joseph. *The Good Farmer* brings up questions about family, relationships and attitudes that many people may be afraid to openly answer. Here are our girls' reflections:

The play starts with the line, "All men are created equal but only the best are born in July". The protagonist of the play believes that his father prefers his brother, Joseph, because he was born in the month of July. This play focuses on the insecurities of Jacob- the protagonist- and how it affected his relationship with his father and brother. While I was watching this play, I was amused when Jacob mentioned that God is to be blamed for his predicament. This seemed like a familiar excuse used by many people today. Even I am guilty of this. Whenever something goes wrong in our life, we always victimise ourselves and blame others- God, Destiny or even our horoscope. We never look internally, at ourselves. Thus, this play clearly teaches us to realise that while there is injustice in the world, ultimately, it is us that determines what we make of ourselves in the world. – Michele Shu, 2D



I understood the significance of symbolism in a play. There were a few scenes that were eye-opening such as the use of Chinese Opera to signify the turbulent relationship between the land owners and the government and also when in the end, Jacob realised that he was supposed to be Joseph, that they were switched at birth. I was impressed as the ending was unexpected. It taught me that inevitably it is our own actions that determine our life. It is not who is born earlier or later, or the month one is born in, but rather our intentions and actions that determine the choices that are presented to us and how we make use of them. - Stephanie Gomas, 2B

The 'Good Farmer' is about twins and how one outshines the other leading to sibling rivalry. I found this a relatable topic as sibling rivalry is not uncommon. As such, I do empathise with Jacob. Another theme in the play was about the conflict between those who have land and those who don't. The government was taking away land and using it for commercial developmental purposes. These plots of land were used for farming and the products of it were given to the poor. However, the government needed the land for economic purposes, thus causing a conflict between the owners and the government. I think this part was interesting as it showcased the complexities our society faces and how it can affect relations within a community, or a family. In a nutshell, I enjoyed the performance as it was a heart-warming and relatable play. - Kribha Varadharajan, 2D