

# Weekly School Newsletter

## Message from the Head of School

On March 8, the world celebrated International Women's Day. Across different channels of media, inspiring stories were shared of pioneering women in sports, arts, academics, politics and social enterprise who have battled through challenging circumstances to blaze the way forward, benefitting following generations.

Great profiling has been in the media, surrounding the movie 'Hidden Figures'. The film is a riveting tale of the African-American female mathematicians who served at NASA as 'human computers', calculating by hand the intricate equations which allowed astronauts in the early days of NASA to travel safely to and from space. A short article on this story was published in Popular Mechanics, the link to which is provided here: <http://www.popularmechanics.com/space/rockets/a24429/hidden-figures-real-story-nasa-women-computers/>

Across so many industries, disparity in salary and opportunities remains, even during these modern times in developed countries. In education, the trend is that the majority of teachers globally are women. In the US for example, approximately 76% of public school teachers are female. For far too long however, this percentage has dropped dramatically when examining the number of females serving as senior school leaders. Again, depending on the country, this has ranged from 10-25%.

The solution to all of this, as with many challenges, is education. You'll have noticed during your time at GWA (Singapore) that we never mention gender, race or religion as a specific requirement for any of our programmes. As an example, the great work that Brendan Burke has been doing with STEM and Jay Thompson with Ed Tech, has been open to all students and is embedded throughout our main curriculum. In doing so, we remove the danger of gender bias and are encouraging every child to be inquisitive, active and involved in all opportunities presented to them. Our STEM activities at lunch time are at the very least 50% of each gender in participants, with some grade levels having larger involvement by our female students.

The problems of equity in access is real. In some places it relates to race or religion, globally the issues of gender rights prevails. We all have a role to play in ensuring that current and future generations look beyond the superficial, to provide opportunities to all.

As an international school, a core part of our function is to engage our community in acceptance, empathy and respect of rights, not bound by gender, race or religion. We do this incredibly well at GWA (Singapore).

If you'd like to explore this topic further over the weekend, please spend some time reviewing the links shared below:

- International Women's Day 2017 Site: <https://www.internationalwomensday.com>
- Trends In Education: <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=28>
- BBC 100 Women 2016: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-38012048>



**David Edwards**  
Head of School  
[d.edwards@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:d.edwards@gwa.edu.sg)



### IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Reception: +65 6808 7321

[info@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:info@gwa.edu.sg)

EY/PY Division Office:

Secretary: +65 68087313

[s.crot@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:s.crot@gwa.edu.sg)

SY Division Office:

Secretary: +65 68087312

[j.taillandier@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:j.taillandier@gwa.edu.sg)

Bus Enquiries:

HDT Service Line: 9777 4838

[gwa.transport@hdt.com.sg](mailto:gwa.transport@hdt.com.sg)

**Parent Event**  
**Peranakan Heritage**  
**Home Museum**  
**Date: 9 march**



## Message from the Primary Years Principal

As an EY/PY faculty, we constantly strive to offer the best teaching and learning experiences for our students. Each Friday afternoon our staff are involved in professional development and collaborative planning. Over the past several weeks every member of staff has been involved in one of four distinct focus groups looking at the following areas:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Collaborative Planning
- Assessment

These focus groups have involved a great deal of reflection, professional discussion and research. The discussions have been centred around what we believe is best practice and what we as a faculty are committed to in order to make this happen consistently and effectively in our classrooms and in our learning environments. Each member of our staff has had the opportunity to review the ideas and suggestions of each group and give feedback. This culture of reflection, collaboration and professional development is something we value highly and we will continue to seek out opportunities to further enhance what we do.



**Neil White**  
EY/PY Principal  
[n.white@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:n.white@gwa.edu.sg)

## Message from the Secondary Years Principal



Our Grade 10 students put on a very successful, engaging and informative MYP Personal Project exhibition this week. The Personal Project is one of the milestones of IB's Middle Years Programme and requires students to reflect on their learning and the outcomes of their work – key skills that prepare them for success in further study, the workplace and the community. Students, under the guidance of school-based supervisors, take full ownership of their project - they decide what they want to learn about, identify what they already know, and discover what they will need to know to complete the project. Following this initial stage, they plan their time and materials, record and reflect on the development in their process journal, and finally, create a product which they then share at the exhibition. Along with this, students also write a 1,500 to 3,000-word report which follows required guidelines and is assessed by four published criteria (Investigating, Planning, Taking action, Reflecting).

The range of products our students created was impressive and showed a high level of creativity, talent and skill. Be it a dress design, a robot, a photography exhibition, a safety video, a website, just to name a few of the products, I was overall impressed how well students used skills such as organization, reflection, critical thinking and communication.

The exhibition could not have happened without the support of the entire GWA (Singapore) community. Thank you to PY and SY teachers who brought students along, as well as the parents who came to support the class. A final special thank-you goes to Mr Mark Gardner and the Personal Project supervisors who have spent the last 10 months guiding the students.



**Jan Stipek**  
SY Principal  
[j.stipek@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:j.stipek@gwa.edu.sg)

Click [here](#) to view detailed Events Calendar

13-17 March 2017

**STEM  
WEEK**



29 March 2017

**PARENT  
ENGAGEMENT  
WORKSHOP**

20-24 March 2017

**IGCSE MOCK  
EXAMINATIONS**

31 March 2017

**END OF  
QUARTER 3**

## SPORT AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

It was a big week for the GWA swim team with two competitions. 22 swimmers competed at Orchid Country Club on Sunday, guided by Coach Dempsey, and 17 swimmers flew to Bangkok and raced in a 600-swimmer competition at International School Bangkok. It is safe to say that our swimmers had fun and performed well.

We had multiple medal winners at OCC including Emilia Foerster, Ashling Burke, Jack Powell, Cianah Illingworth, Elsa Mackintosh, Mango Gui, Hana Dvorakova, and Scarlett Coleman.



BANGKOK



At the Bangkok meet, the mighty Jaguars finished ninth out of 20 teams. Alicia Soosai led the way with three gold medals and Arnav Divaker won two individual events. Our 9-10 girls relay of Femke Olde Bijvank, Amber Van Deursen, Asia Jones, and Lola Camara took the bronze in the medley relay. Swimmers at both meets raced very well and represented GWA in fine fashion!



**Steve Betts**  
Aquatics Coordinator  
[s.betts@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:s.betts@gwa.edu.sg)



OCC



## MESSAGE FROM GWA PARENT ASSOCIATION (GWAPA)

### Community Service

Thank you to all parents, students and school staff who helped and supported our orphanage visit to Johor last Saturday. Your big hearts and generosity really gave the orphans many reasons to smile. For details please read the story written by Harry, a 5th grade student and enjoy some of the photos on the Community Service board in the main lobby or on GWAPA Singapore Facebook page. To see all the photos, click on the following link [Johor photos](#). We hope this visit is just the beginning of a beautiful friendship with the Villa Paulos Orphanage children - our students already have great ideas for the next visit.

Please join us for the next visit to The Lee Ah Mooi Old Age Home on March 18th. If you are interested, please email Ms. Lei directly [r.lei@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:r.lei@gwa.edu.sg) and she will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

### Social Event

Sign up for our next GWAPA evening social event - **Singapore River Bumboat Cruise on March 23, Thursday, at 7:30pm**. Enjoy seeing Singapore from a different angle, listen to the tale of 2 Quays and be amazed by the laser show. On the iconic bumboat you will be served nibbles, soft beverages and (optionally) a glass of wine. If you feel like having something to eat or drink prior to the cruise, we will be waiting for you from 6:30pm at a meeting place in the area of Clark Quay, exact location to be confirmed. We need 40 sign-ups by March 12th for the event to happen so click this link to sign up now! [Social sign-up](#)

Two options to chose:

\$30 - including river cruise, nibbles and soft beverages

\$35 - including river cruise, nibbles, soft beverages and a glass of wine

Money back guarantee in case of bad weather.

### GWAPA Meeting

Please join us for a gathering that is full of surprises, next GWAPA meeting right after the Parent Engagement Session on March 29th at 9am. See you there.

### GWA Fair

The GWA Fair is another exciting event on the school calendar for GWAPA members to get involved and support the school. The GWA Fair aims to promote the school within the wider community, ensuring a fun day for existing families and celebrating all our children's accomplishments. **This year the GWA Fair will be held from 10am - 2pm on Saturday April 22nd.** We have a wonderful chance to be involved as parents and the opportunity to decide how we can be fully engaged (by running mini-workshops for other parents on craft, cookie decorating, favourite holiday locations and fitness techniques as an example). We are very interested in hearing your ideas of how we can successfully engage our community at this event, so please share them with us by sending an email to [gwapasingapore@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:gwapasingapore@gwa.edu.sg) ASAP. Thank you!



GWAPA TEAM

**Community Service**  
Old age home visit  
18 March  
RSVP: [r.lei@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:r.lei@gwa.edu.sg)

**GWAPA MEETING**  
29 March  
Following Parent  
engagement session

**GWAPA Social Event**  
March 23rd, 7:30pm  
Singapore River Bumboat  
Cruise