

# Weekly School Newsletter

## Message from the Head of School

Earlier this week, Prince Harry announced, on behalf of the Varkey Foundation, the 10 finalists for the 2017 Global Teacher Prize. In its third year, the Global Teacher Prize is a significant effort by the Foundation to raise the profile and importance of teachers in the development of learning opportunities around the world.

The 10 finalists represent a diverse group of backgrounds, ten different nationalities and school contexts. They have been selected out of the top 40 teachers, who in turn had been short-listed out of the initial top 100, which included educators from Singapore and Malaysia.

We really encourage you to take time this weekend to look at the backgrounds of each of the finalists, to listen to the announcement from Prince Harry, and to delve further into the commitment of the Varkey Foundation to change lives by making education accessible to all children around the world.

**Global Teacher Prize Link:** <http://www.globalteacherprize.org/2017-finalists/>

The evidence of the importance of teachers is undeniable. During our review of GWA (Singapore), we consistently stated that other than parents, who are a child's first teacher, the most important people in the lives of your child are their educators. It is why I write this article whilst sitting in Dubai, conducting a teacher recruitment trip with our Secondary Years Principal, Mr Jan Stipek.

Our approach to teacher recruitment is very simple and follows four clear areas of review:

1. The educator must demonstrate that they love children and love being a teacher
2. That they are committed to education beyond the classroom
3. They have evidence of working in leading international schools, from around the world
4. They possess recognised qualifications from appropriate tertiary institutions

The GWA (Singapore) belief in teachers aligns to the larger mission of GEMS Education and the Varkey Foundation. We hope that you enjoy reading and listening to the profiles of the ten finalists, and that you will follow the efforts of the Foundation now and in the future.



**David Edwards**  
Head of School  
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### IMPORTANT CONTACTS

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**Congratulations**  
to Huimin on the birth  
of her baby boy  
(23.02.2017)



### Parent Event

Peranakan Heritage Home  
Museum



Awarded Best Tour  
Experience by Singapore  
Tourism Awards 2016, the  
Intan is a Peranakan Heritage  
Home-Museum.

**Date:** 9 march (Thursday)

**Time:** 11am

**Venue:** The Intan

**Address:** 69 Joo Chiat  
Terrace, Singapore 427231  
*Fees Apply \$45 per pax*

**RSVP:** [j.lee@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:j.lee@gwa.edu.sg)

## Message from the PYP Coordinator

This week the Early Years and Primary Years classes have been participating in different Book Week activities. The major goal of creating a lifelong love of reading in children is something that book weeks all over the world strive to achieve. Our parent engagement session that was held on Wednesday focussed on Language and literacy. For our EY and PY parents, various workshops were offered that explored: what literacy looks like in the Early Years; how to support your child who has English as an additional language; and what phonics is.

Books and stories help children develop language and thinking. Children who enjoy reading are likely to become confident learners. Stories can help children deal with the problems and fears they face in everyday life. The research into the benefits of reading in children is vast. Research has found that reading storybooks to children is one of the most important activities for developing the knowledge required for eventual success in reading. Reading to young children has been found to be related to language growth, emergent literacy and reading achievement. (Bus et al., 1995). There are various ways in which parents can help cultivate this love of reading in their children:

- Whenever possible, read to your child for a few minutes
- Encourage grandparents to tell stories about when they were young
- Make a life story book for each child to show where they have been, what they have achieved and important milestones
- Let your child see you reading lots of different things such as books, magazines, letters, cards, recipes and newsletters
- Have lots of books around the house
- Talk to your child about what you read so they can see reading is important for you
- Let your children know you are proud they are reading



**Olivia Burke**  
PYP Coordinator  
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## Message from the MYP/IGCSE Coordinator

This week during the Parent Engagement workshop the focus was upon literacy, both within and beyond the curriculum. Ms. Laura Grigson began the SY session with consideration of what literacy is, how it relates to reading practices and how literacy can be supported within the home. She highlighted many different factors which impact upon literacy skill development and also considered approaches within an international school setting in which students have many differing cultural literacies and how these can bring opportunities for investigation and development. Mr. Jay Thompson then considered the perspective of media literacy, looking at the importance of developing skills to ensure students are ready for the future workforce.

In addition to these two presentations, the session continued with of focus upon literacy within the Middle Years Programme (MYP). The constructivist approach to teaching and learning, which embraces learning through experience, permeates our curriculum and provides a dynamic and multifarious environment which nurtures and supports literacy development throughout all subject groups. The integration of Approaches to Learning skill development across all subjects also engages students in developing a wealth of skills which support literacy development, such as communication skills, critical thinking and evaluation. It is these literacy skills which will be vital to our students in the future as they are faced with a rapid changing environment and will be required to make informed judgements and consider the reliability and accuracy of information they access.

If you would like to know more about the MYP then do not hesitate to contact me.



**Mark Gardner**  
SY Deputy Principal/DP Coordinator  
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Click [here](#) to view detailed Events Calendar

27 Feb -  
3 March 2017

**GWA  
TALENT TIME!**  
LUNCH-TIME  
PERFORMANCES IN KG  
LOBBY

1-3 March 2017

**GRADE 4  
CAMP**



9 March 2017

**POP CONCERT**

*Music Department is happy to announce a Pop Concert, which will take place on Thursday, March 9th at 6:30pm in the Auditorium.*

*Please join us for a great evening of contemporary favourites.*

13-17 March 2017

**STEM  
WEEK**



## SPORT AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

58 of our swimmers entered yesterday's friendly meet at GEMS World Academy (Singapore), with the French School and the Canadian School also taking part. This was our largest-ever team and we continue to break barriers. There were lots and lots of first-time participants and most of our swimmers were on their feet the entire meet, cheering for their teammates and having a great time. Oh, and by the way, our kids swam really fast!

Next week we have 17 swimmers flying to Bangkok for a competition and 22 other swimmers racing at Orchid Country Club on Sunday.

Great job swim team!



**Steve Betts**  
Aquatics Coordinator  
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## MESSAGE FROM GWA PARENT ASSOCIATION (GWAPA)

### Community Service Update\_ - Johor visit on March 4th

We are happy to announce that the new, confirmed date for the charitable visit to Villa Paulos Orphanage ([www.villapaulos.org](http://www.villapaulos.org)) in Johor, Malaysia is **Saturday, March 4th**.

If you are willing to join us with your child/ren, please let us know by **Monday, February 27th** by sending an email to [gwapa.communityservice@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:gwapa.communityservice@gwa.edu.sg) Please note that every child must be accompanied by his/her parent or guardian.

Departure time - 7:00 am we estimate leaving the orphanage around 12:30.

There will be private bus from GWA to Villa Paulos - we will take all the collected items and personalised gifts. The cost of a bus (if any) depends on the number of participants.

You can check the following website for visa requirements in Malaysia: [www.kln.gov.my](http://www.kln.gov.my)

Please save the date Thursday, March 24th for our next GWAPA evening social event - Clark Quay river cruise. Details to come soon so check your email in the coming days.

Thank you and look forward to hearing from you.



GWAPA TEAM

### Community Service

4 March  
7am - 12:30  
Johor Orphanage

### CONTACT GWAPA TEAM

[gwapa.singapore@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:gwapa.singapore@gwa.edu.sg)

Share your sports news with us, join our Facebook page

### GWAPA Social Event

March 24th  
Clark Quay river cruise  
details to come soon