

# THIS WEEK'S NEWS

## Message from Head of School

### IMPORTANT CONTACTS

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### CALENDAR UPDATE

**23 March** - Senior Years

Play

**24 March** - Early Departure,  
1:30pm

**25 March** - Good Friday

**28 March-8 April** - School  
Holiday

**11 April** - Start of Quarter 4

### PARENT EVENT

Tuesday 19 April - Chinese  
Calligraphy

Learn the history of calligraphy in China, introduction and demonstration of Chinese Calligraphy characters. Each participant will have the opportunity to practice writing.

**Duration :** 90 minutes

**Time:** 10am-11.30am

**Location :** 130 Cairnhill Road  
Singapore 229717

Judy - [j.lee@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:j.lee@gwa.edu.sg)  
[gwap.singapore@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:gwap.singapore@gwa.edu.sg)

It was an absolute pleasure to represent GWA (Singapore) at the Global Education and Skills Forum (GESF), held in Dubai this past weekend. Organised by the Varkey Foundation, the GESF brought together politicians, business leaders, educators and NGO stakeholders, to discuss, review and take action. Chairman Varkey articulated well the importance of learning, when he commenced the conference with his belief that "No problem in the world cannot be solved without education". It was a focus that was reiterated by the various government ministers, former leaders such as Tony Blair, and industry dynamos such as Sir Martin Sorrell.

GESF was also a timely reminder of how fortunate we are here in Singapore and in particular at GWA. Globally, there are 58 million children who do not have access to any form of education. More than 100 million more children, only have access to the very basics and in many cases are in areas of civil disturbance. These are frightening figures.

During the conference, three children joined delegates via tele-conference, sharing their hopes and aspirations. The children from Nepal, Kenya and Singapore had very different backgrounds and stories, yet all three had similar passion for learning. The 14 year old student from Nepal talked of how even after international aid, many children still do not have access to schooling since the devastating earthquake. In Kenya, the children talked about their eagerness to ultimately become teachers themselves, having experienced first hand as ten year olds, the positive impact education has had on their community. The student from Singapore talked about the importance of creativity in schools and how this passion for problem-solving has been central to his aspiration of becoming a film-maker.

The culminating event of the conference was the presentation of the Global Teacher Prize. Previous newsletters have shared the focus of this award and connected families to the stories of the ten finalists. The winner for 2016 is an inspirational educator from Palestine, whose personal story was a catalyst for changing the education initially for her own children, which spread to her immediate neighbours, and has grown to be so much more.

We can have no doubt that education impacts positively the lives of so many and that at the heart of quality education is the teacher. As members of the GWA community in Singapore, it is an appropriate time to reflect on how fortunate we are. Students, parents and staff are consistently provided with outstanding learning opportunities. Our perceived issues as students, parents and staff are so insignificant when put into perspective of the 58 million with no access to learning, and the larger group who face daily challenges of simply surviving.

I again encourage you to visit the Varkey Foundation and Global Teacher Prize web sites, to learn more about the incredible work our philanthropic arm of GEMS Education is doing in so many parts of the world.

Varkey Foundation: <https://www.varkeyfoundation.org>

Global Teacher Prize: <http://www.globalteacherprize.org>

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

## Message from the Deputy Principal

Theory of Knowledge (TOK) is a core element of the IB Diploma programme and its goal is to encourage critical thinking about knowledge itself. The TOK course examines how we know what we claim to know. It does this by encouraging students to analyse knowledge claims and explore knowledge questions.

While there are arguably many ways of knowing, the TOK course identifies eight specific Ways of Knowing (WOKs). They are language, sense perception, emotion, reason, imagination, faith, intuition and memory. In addition to analysing WOKs, students will examine different Areas of Knowledge (AOKs). Areas of Knowledge are specific branches of knowledge, each of which can be seen to have a distinct nature and different methods of gaining knowledge. TOK distinguishes between eight areas of knowledge. They are mathematics, the natural sciences, the human sciences, the arts, history, ethics, religious knowledge and systems and indigenous knowledge systems. In the TOK course, students must explore a range of areas of knowledge.

Through the TOK class, students' thinking and their understanding of knowledge as a human construction are shaped, enriched and deepened. Many former IB students have said that this inter-disciplinary course was the most rewarding experience of their IB programme.

If you have any questions about the IB Diploma programme, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Arnelle Grundhoefer**- Deputy Principal /DP Coordinator  
[a.grundhoefer@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:a.grundhoefer@gwa.edu.sg)

### MAP TESTING

During the week of April 11th, students will undertake the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) standardised assessment. This tool provides additional external information related to current skills development in reading and mathematics. The goal is for teachers to then use this data to differentiate and adjust instruction so that all students work at levels appropriate for each individual. Testing will take place as follows:

Grades 3 - 10: Week commencing April 11-15

Should you require further information, kindly contact Ms. Meline [m.meline@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:m.meline@gwa.edu.sg)

## Swimming Update

The March 5-6 weekend was a big one for our GWA swim team. Two events of note:

- 34 swimmers entered the Orchid Country Club swim meet on March 6, a very large group that represented GWA well under the guidance of Coach Ryan Dempsey
- Six swimmers flew to Bangkok to take part in the ISB Splash meet, our first-ever travel meet for the GWA swim team.

Our swimmers at OCC performed very well, with personal best times for every swimmer and medals galore. 14 different swimmers earned a medal for finishing in the top three places in an individual event.

Nearly 500 swimmers from over a dozen teams took part in the ISB Splash meet in Bangkok, with teams from Thailand, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines, and Singapore splashing about over the course of two days. Each GWA swimmer recorded multiple personal best times, and more importantly some of our younger swimmers had their eyes opened to what serious swimming is all about.

Swimmers were ranked according to their performances compared to the top FINA international standards: Arnav Divaker finished fourth of all the male competitors in the meet, and the TOP performer among all female swimmers was our very own Alicia Soosai!

Congratulations to all of our GWA swimmers who competed in this fantastic weekend of racing!

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

## ECA and Sport Update

The 14U Girls Basketball Team and the 8U Boys Football Teams were back in action this week. While the basketball team was on the road again, visiting Dulwich College Campus, our footballers had their first opportunity to play at home.

Our 14U girls again dominated their opposition and proved that they are definite contenders for the title this year. Charlotte Jaeger led the way for the Jaguars. She controlled the tempo of the game and orchestrated scoring opportunities for her teammates. Weronika Broda used her height and athletic prowess to wreak havoc on the Dulwich defence. The final score of 27 - 4 was a true reflection of the difference between the two teams.

The girls are looking forward to their first home game of the season on Tuesday 22nd March against UWCD. The game tips off at 4:30pm and it would be great to have a supportive, vocal home crowd to cheer the team on. One day later, our 14U boys team will take on UWCE in their first home game. Again the game will begin at 4:30pm.

**Tony McMullen** - Activities Coordinator  
[t.mcmullen@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:t.mcmullen@gwa.edu.sg)

## EY/PY Curriculum Update

This week we welcome back our Grade 5 students from their camp to Rider's Lodge in Malaysia. During this experience they learned how to care for and ride horses. They learned more about the culture and traditions of Malaysia through cooking local foods and creating batik painting and participated in team building and leadership activities.

These experiences all helped to develop their social, communication, thinking and organisational skills. These skills are crucial for our Grade 5 students as they progress towards Grade 6.

When our Grade 5 students return from holiday they will begin their PYP Exhibition journey. This is the culminating experience for all PYP students at the end of their experience in the PYP. This requires that each student demonstrates engagement with the five essential elements of the programme: knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action. It is a transdisciplinary inquiry conducted in the spirit of personal and shared responsibility, as well as a summative assessment activity that is a celebration as students move from the PYP into the middle years of schooling. Each of the four IB programmes have an event that allows for students to demonstrate their understanding of the essential elements of their programme. The exhibition represents a significant event in the life of a PYP school and student, synthesising the essential elements of the PYP, and sharing them with the whole school community.

**Olivia Burke** - PYP Coordinator  
[o.burke@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:o.burke@gwa.edu.sg)

## SY Curriculum Update

Each year the International Baccalaureate (IB) in the Asia-Pacific region presents its annual conference. This week's SY newsletter comes to you from India as I attend this year's conference which is being held in Hyderabad.

The annual conference provides an opportunity for educational leaders, decision makers and practitioners from schools, universities and governments to come together to share best practice around the way we are educating students. The conference fosters partnership and participation and provides a forum for discussion on educational quality, pedagogical leadership and international mindedness.

Over the three days of the conference a range of Middle Years Programme (MYP) sessions will explore key areas including interdisciplinary learning and developing international mindedness through collaborative learning in addition to providing updates of the latest practices and procedures from the IB. I look forward to sharing feedback from the conference with you in the near future.

If you would like further information about the MYP then please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Mark Gardner** - MYP/IGCSE Coordinator  
[m.gardner@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:m.gardner@gwa.edu.sg)

## Senior Years Play - Wednesday, 23rd March, 6:30pm

On **Wednesday, March 23** students in the Senior Years will be performing "A Thousand Cranes" in the theatre. This is the story of Sadako Sasaki, a young girl who was affected by radiation from the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. It tells the story of Sadako through her own experience, and takes us on her journey with her family and friends by her side. This production includes a number of our senior students in all grades from 6 to 10 who are performing onstage and behind the scenes in every aspect of the theatre. We welcome you to join us for an evening performance not to forget.

**Date:** Thursday, March 23

**Time:** 6:30pm

**Where:** GEMS World Academy (Singapore) Auditorium

