



ST. MARY'S *Catholic High School, Dubai*



Saints Times

YEAR 2024-2025
VOLUME - 1

Winter 

Saintz Times

ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-2025
WINTER ISSUE

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first issue of our school's newsletter for this academic year 2024-2025! As we begin this journey together, filled with aspirations and challenges, our chosen theme – Resilience – could not be more fitting.

Resilience is the quiet strength that carries us forward when the road gets tough. It is the ability to rise after a fall, to adapt when circumstances change, and to grow stronger with each experience. In the world of learning, resilience is not just a trait; it is a skill we cultivate every day. Whether it's overcoming a challenging math problem, navigating friendships, or pursuing a dream despite setbacks, resilience is the cornerstone of success and personal growth. As we begin this new academic year, we aim to celebrate and nurture resilience in all its forms.

In these pages you will find stories of the experiences our students had in the first term; you will discover how our students have shown determination and creativity in the face of adversity. From science experiments that were quite tough but led to unexpected discoveries, to art projects born from mistakes, and sports victories achieved through perseverance – our community is full of inspiring examples of resilience. And interspersed with those reports you will find evidence of the amazing creativity our children possess; in the form of stories, articles, poems, artwork and even comics. It's their take on 'Resilience' and we hope you enjoy it all!

As we embark on this academic year, let us all embrace the spirit of resilience. Let us encourage each other to persevere, to learn from failure, and to find joy in growth. Remember, every setback is an opportunity to bounce back stronger, and every challenge is a stepping stone to success.

We hope this newsletter becomes a source of inspiration and connection for our school community. Here's to a year filled with resilience, learning, and growth!

Sincerely



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A Message From Our Principal



My Dear Marians

How quickly the month of January 2025 has come to a close and we begin the second term of this Academic Year. As always, I pray for the health and wellbeing of all those in our school community.

The theme of this newsletter is 'RESILIENCE'. As educators and parents, we can take steps to help our children become resilient and confident adults by empowering them to cope with small, age-appropriate personal and learning-based challenges. I would like to refer to the attributes of being: a risk-taker, a thinker, knowledgeable, a communicator, open-minded, caring, an inquirer, principled, balanced, and reflective. These dispositions are the ones that will help our children fulfill their potential and become useful, compassionate, capable, and action-focused members of society. But we need to teach these, and give opportunities to our children to experience situations where they can practice these; it won't happen on its own.

I would like to congratulate all our parents and teachers for doing such an admirable job of raising our children, we know that there is no 'how to' manual, but we keep trying in our own ways to raise strong, empathetic and compassionate young people who are of course the face of the future.

I wish you all a bright and successful term two and may you always remember that resilience is a skill that you will need for the rest of your lives. Build it, live it and share it.

Sincerely and warm blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Asir Joseph".

Mr. Paul Asir Joseph
(Principal)



NEW YEAR, NEW HOPES!

... Jewindu Sechitha - Year 10F

After a refreshing summer break, St Mary's was ready to open its gates to its students, and begin another year of fun and learning. Classroom doors once again opened, lights were switched on, and the students, pens and pencils in hand were ready to embark upon yet another enriching journey and the teachers were prepared to sculpt young minds once again.

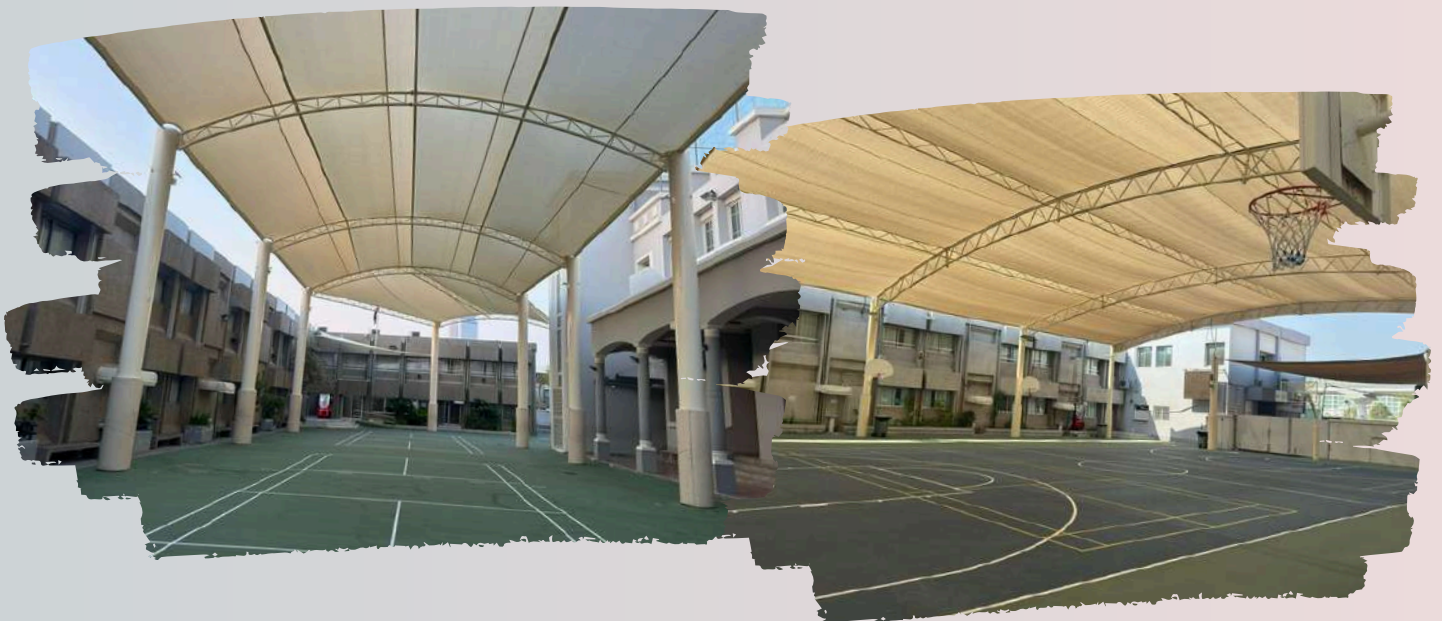
For most of us, it's just "back to school" but for some, like Year 1 students, it's a whole new experience; coming to learn at St Mary's for the first time.

"All the kids coming in for year one, they are coming from different schools. So we are really excited to get new children every year and even the kids are very excited to come to a new big school," - said Mrs. Sheeba Lal, a year one teacher.

And it's not only the year 1 students who are excited to start the school year, the excitement was palpable in all the students.

"It's a new year. It's a fresh start. I'm going to make the most of it," - said Nathan Pereira, Year 12.

The whole school was bustling with excitement for the new school year, as students got new teachers and started new topics. It's not just about the lessons, it's when friends are made and goals are set! Together, we can make this year one of growth, achievement, and lasting memories. So here's to another wonderful and prosperous year at St.Mary's!





FIRST ASSEMBLY OF THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

... Jillian Olivar - Year 11A

On the 16th of September, Monday, the students and teachers of Saint Mary's gathered outside in the quadrangle for the first assembly of the academic year 2024-25. When the school year started after a rejuvenating summer holiday, the students had to stay cooped up in the classrooms for a few more days in the mornings, owing to the extreme heat of the UAE summer. But the outside assemblies soon started and not a moment too soon, coz school doesn't seem complete without a morning assembly out in the quadrangle, all classes lined up in order.

The theme of the first assembly for the year was 'Leadership'. On this day, the students were welcomed back into the Saint Mary's school life with a special prayer and a profound thought for the day, in an effort to inspire the students to hone and harness their leadership skills and qualities.

The assemblies were conducted by class 11A for the girls and 11B for the boys, where different viewpoints of leadership were discussed. Students spoke about the skills and appreciated the values displayed by leaders. It was an inspiring assembly which not only reminded us about the values upheld by the school but also the ones that we need to inculcate as responsible world citizens.

Needless to say, school assemblies are an intrinsic part of the school experience, especially since it holds a very important part in welcoming students back to school after a long break. During the school year, whenever our students achieve something, do well in some competition or make us proud by doing something extraordinary, they always get facilitated in the morning assemblies. And the special assemblies conducted for cultural celebrations are always a class apart. They are colorful events with cultural programs, quizzes etc.



Hopefully, our students will get inspired by such assemblies this year as well and give their best in all that they do. The first school assembly certainly re-charged students and brought us back on track and geared us for the entire new term. After all, this is why assemblies in school are so important.

A Winter's Promise

Danielle Avillanoza - Year 11A

the city glistened beneath the winter fog—
a place she thought only existed in dreams,
now alive before her.

katerina stepped off the bus,
the cold air biting at her skin.
her suitcase in one hand,
a familiar anchor in an unfamiliar world.

it had been with her through every journey,
each scratch and scuff a memory of where she'd
been,
a quiet witness to the chapters she'd closed.

now, as she stood in this bustling city,
it felt like an old friend,
the one familiar thing in a sea of new beginnings.

she left behind
a small town too familiar,
a life that felt too narrow—
now here, where anything could change.

the streets buzzed with life,
students rushing to lectures,
coffee shops alive with chatter,
university banners promising new paths.

she found her dorm,
a simple room with bare walls,
that held the promise of something new—
a space to learn,
to explore,
to find herself.

katerina took her time unpacking,
her most loved items scattered across her desk,
as if to say,
"i'm here, but i am becoming more."

the city outside pulsed
with energy and dreams—
students just like her,
chasing something greater
than what they left behind.

she sat by the window,
watching the first snowflakes drift,
feeling the weight of change,
yet also the thrill of what might come.

this was only the beginning—
a winter of new beginnings,
a season of growth.
and with every snowflake,
she knew she was exactly where she needed to be.

Brushstrokes of Brilliance

Showcasing Talent at Our School's Art Competition

... Qazi Ali - Year 10F

This Year, our school hosted its "Saintz Art Jam 2024" competition to showcase the artistic talents of our students, hosted by our dedicated teachers Ms Shalini, Ms Loida, Ms Ajaya, Ms Lanih and Ms Renthi. Every student from years 1 to 4 took part in the colouring competition, while children from Years 5 to 8 signed up to create a piece on the theme of "Sustainability for a better future." The seniors, (Years 9-11) however, were tasked with "illustrating their alter ego."

Ms. Renthi remarked, "We saw some truly remarkable artists emerge in this competition, from the tiny tots who coloured perfectly within the lines to older children who brought their imagination to life on paper. We hope to give our students more such opportunities in the future."



The day was filled with creativity, where everyone was a winner, and the judges were amazed by all the drawings. For years 1 to 5, three winners were chosen from each class. For years 6-8, three winners were selected from the girls sections and three winners were selected from the boys section per year group. Finally, as years 9 to 13 was one single category, we had three winners on the girls side and three from the boys side.

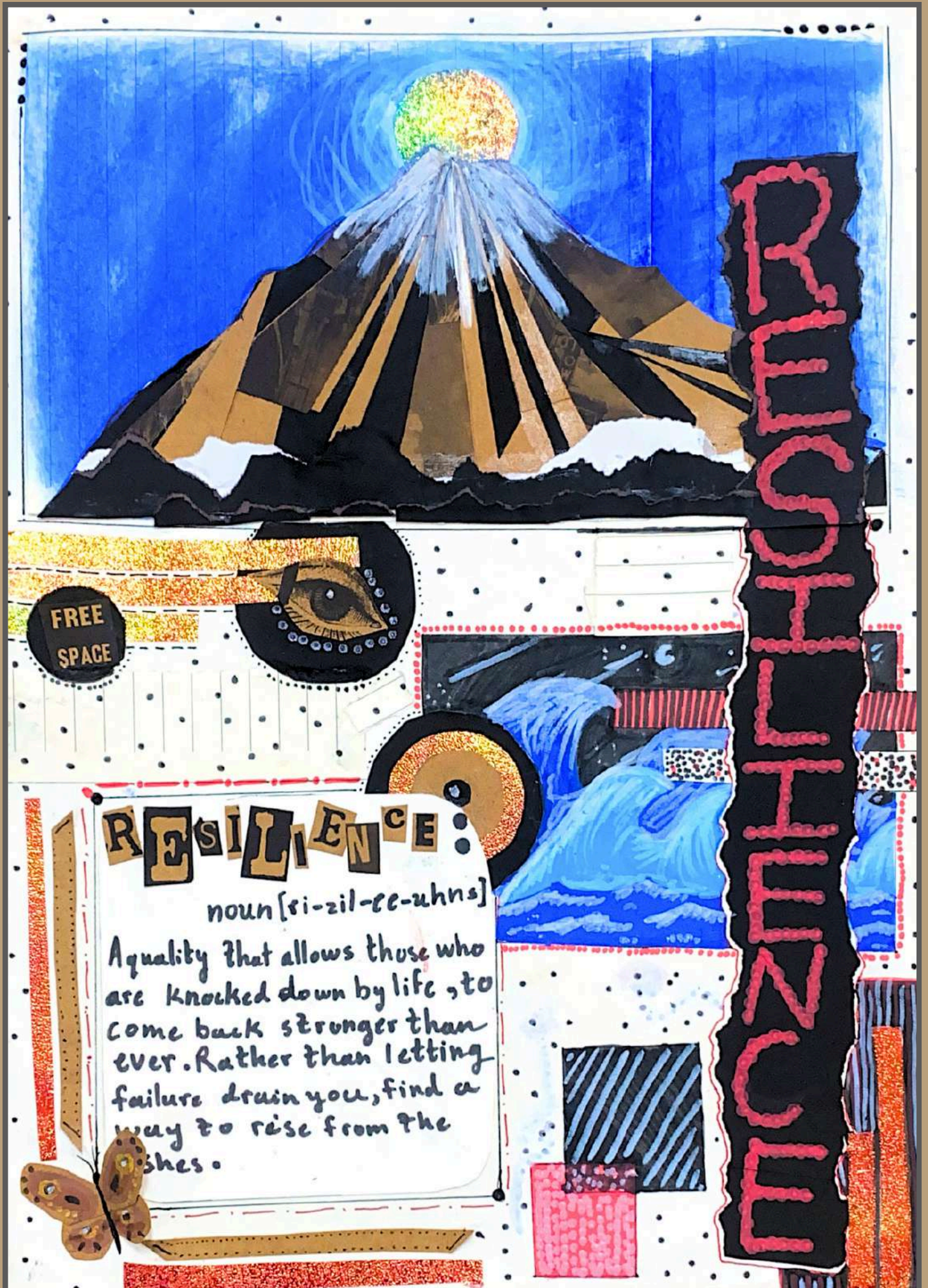


Some of our wonderful entries

One of our winners, Aashika Mohandas, shared her enthusiasm, stating, "The Art competition is one that I truly enjoyed since the theme pushed me out of my comfort zone with many people working on amazing pieces."

The event was a fantastic display of talent and creativity, bringing the entire school together.





Rouelle Almeida, 9A

DIVING INTO VICTORY

... Gerleeza Rodrigo - Year 12

It is often said that being a great swimmer is not just about winning, but it's also about pushing your boundaries until the pool feels too small. Bethany and Ava from our school pushed their boundaries when they participated in recent swimming competitions. They put on amazing performances in the glittering waters of the Al Hamriyah Cultural and Sports Club and competed with talent and commitment, bringing in a wave of accomplishments.



Bethany Fernandes from 11D demonstrated her strength and determination in the Apex Fundamental Swimming Championship while participating under the guidance of Cleopatra Sport Academy. She competed in four challenging events. "Before the races, I was incredibly nervous," Bethany shared. "It was my first time competing in four events during a single competition." Nevertheless, she turned her anxiety into commitment and showcased her abilities as a swimmer with just two-years of experience by securing gold medals in 50 meters and 100 meters backstroke including a silver in 50 meters butterfly. Bethany mentions how the races weren't just about medals for her; they were about perseverance: "After the race, I felt a sense of pride—not just because I won, but because I completed the races."

Even more impressive was the performance of 4E's Ava Seprado, who shone at both the Al Hamriyah Fundamental Swimming Championship as well as the Water Warriors Swimming Competition. Ava won an incredible ten medals for her extraordinary talent, some of which included: gold for 50-meters in butterfly, freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke. The fact that Ava won gold in every single event she participated in is nearly unbelievable; it's even more remarkable as she has accomplished this at such a young age. It came as a surprise to no one when she won the individual championship trophy as well!



Ava Seprado and Bethany show us that you're never too young to achieve greatness and that hard work really pays off. Ava's amazing feat of winning gold in every event, even at a young age, and Bethany's determination to overcome nerves and win medals prove that anything is possible with dedication. Their stories inspire us to go after our goals, face challenges head-on, and always do our best.

SWIMMING





BRINGING

BRILLIANT MINDS TOGETHER

St. Mary's participates in MASE 2024

... Jane Miracline - Year 12

MASE is an annual inter-school exhibition and competition hosted by Gulf Medical University, Ajman. It boasts of an average participation of over 3000 students from various universities and schools across the UAE.

This year our school had 24 'A' level students participating in the Project and Poster categories with one team even managing to bag a win despite the tough competition.

The event occurred over a period of two days, the 24th and 25th of October 2024. Ms. Mary Augustine and Ms. Christina Dawson brought our teams to the venue from school.

The first day of the event mainly focused on exhibiting and judging students' work. On this day the students were primarily focused on setting up and presenting their projects and in tangent explaining their posters to both judges and students. The busy participants did not let go of the amazing opportunity to explore the exhibition as well as taking their time soaking in the girth of knowledge and creativity of other exhibits apart from their own.



When asked about her experience, one student stated, "It was interesting to see the different ideas participants had, especially the coding related projects. I also really loved how amazing everyone's presentation skills were."

The entire team greatly enjoyed the first day of the event as it permitted them to not only appreciate the hard work of others but opened up an avenue to learn new things at the same time.

On the second day along with having the prize distribution ceremony, the students were given time to explore the entire university. The participants seized the moment by embracing the opportunity and thoroughly enjoyed their exciting university tour, while some even captured the memories in pictures of the curiosity instilling displays and laboratories. For our students this was a golden opportunity as they are all in the phase of their academic career where they are looking towards the future and exploring different options for universities after high school.

BRINGING BRILLIANT MINDS TOGETHER

The key highlights of the the tour included a gross anatomy lab that showcased a real cadaver and other human organs that had been preserved, some of our students even got the unforgettable chance to touch the dead body, an experience that those who are inclined towards a career in medicine will never ever be able to forget.

One of those students described the experience as being 'cool' as medicine is a career she plans on pursuing in the future and this opportunity has helped her confirm her tolerance for it.



An actual human brain



Preserved organs on display

The event then concluded with the prize distribution ceremony which presented the winning students from the various competition categories of Poster, Project, Painting, Music and Business with awards appreciating their effort and accomplishment.

One team from our school managed to secure 5th place amidst the impressive competition in the project category, allowing them to highlight our school and showcase their hard work.



Our winning team receiving their hard earned reward on stage

BRINGING BRILLIANT MINDS TOGETHER



When asked about their proud accomplishment, the team members shared similar sentiments. Ayushi, who worked on the nanoparticles section of their project, revealed that “Winning felt amazing. It was very unexpected as the competition was extremely tough. Although we weren't expecting to win we put in a lot of effort into every minute detail. The time we invested definitely paid off”.

Wenuri, who expertly explained gene editing, gives us an honest introspection of her state of mind prior to and after winning "I kept telling them that we were going to lose because others had working models while ours was a simple cardboard model. Winning in spite of that helped us realise the true merit of our core idea."



The winning team's award worthy display:

A look into Medical Advancements: Biosynthesis, Nanoparticles, Gene Editing Reuben, Shalom, Ayushi, Wenuri, Jeremy

When asked about their proud accomplishment, the team members shared similar sentiments.

Ayushi, who worked on the nanoparticles section of their project, revealed that, “Winning felt amazing. It was very unexpected as the competition was extremely tough. Although we weren't expecting to win we put in a lot of effort into every minute detail. The time we invested definitely paid off.”

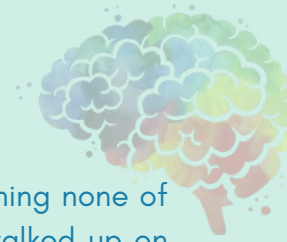
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The increasing nervousness that came from seeing other impressive projects appeared to be a common highlight among the brilliant yet humble team, making the unanticipated win even more exalting.

Jeremy, who introduced the project said, “All the projects were impressively sophisticated and complex. The sheer amount of knowledge available in each and every room and project stood out the most as every project had its own knowledge screaming at me.”

Reuben, who worked on a model representing the topic added, “It was shocking when we made it to the top five. It made the event pretty surreal and thrilling, I am truly grateful for this experience

BRINGING BRILLIANT MINDS TOGETHER



Shalom, who presented biosynthesis for the project concluded, "Overall, it was something none of us could believe. I could feel the adrenaline running through my veins as the team walked up on that stage."

Despite the team members feeling that they wouldn't measure up, seeing the unique takes on innovations within the medical field from other teams, their project obviously showcased an immense amount of originality, hard work and perseverance, and our school is extremely proud of them.



Even though our other four teams did not feature in the top five, their projects were none the less impressive. Our school is proud of all the participants, especially for their resilience in seeing it through. Hard work always bears fruit and the experiences and memories they get to take away from this enthralling educational event is a priceless reward in itself.



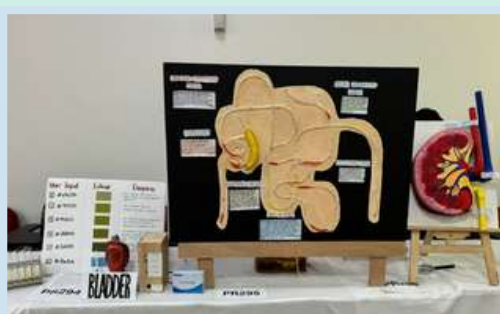
**Ailments of the Mind:
Anorexia Nervosa**



**Bloody Genius: Autologous Blood Transfusion
Ruthra, Wayne, Eleasha, Ysa, Anne**



**Karing for your Kidney: Hemodialysis and Peritoneal Dialysis
Erika, Rishona, Muntaha, Ginelle, Jerusha**



**Now You See Me: The Nephron and Urine analysis
Suhaani, Ananya, Andrea, Serena, Sarah**



**Protein Power: Medical Applications of Protein synthesis
Abiha, Delaine, Jane, Seanelle, Vanessa**



Kratagya Purbia - Year 10F

"The Iron Within"

... Nahyan Adnan - Year 8F

Gaunt from storms, I bide my time,
A tree with roots in earth's deep grime.
Though winds may rage and clouds may shred,
My heart is iron, bold, unshed.
Each scar, a tale; each tear, a song,
A testament I've been strong all along.
Through shadows vast and endless fight,
I rise again, drawn to the light.
In ruins where hope softly roams,
A spark of courage still finds homes.
In every fall, a wisdom grows,
In every tear, a fire glows.
The flame within will not resign,
A lion's heart, its strength divine.
Through trials deep, my will refined,
I conquer dark and seek to shine.

GEMA-NATING CREATIVITY

Writing the Future, One Story at a Time

Victor Swaraj - Year 11C

They say that the pen is mightier than the sword. When it comes to stories, it captivates the hearts of readers and serves as a written testament to the creativity of the human mind. This October, students from all year groups in more than 150 different countries took to the canvas of literature as they participated in the GEMA Story Writing Competition 2024.

A healthy sense of competition, bolstered by the prospect of becoming an author and having their stories published, inspires GEMA to bring out the best in youth. An organization established in 2020, GEMA is an educational platform that offers a wide range of online classes – accessible from the comfort of home – taught by experienced and independent educators. The organization quickly gained attention from many schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, proving to be a valuable lifeline for students to maintain their passions alongside academic and social activities.

From our school alone, 24 talented students volunteered for the competition. Juniors and seniors alike participated, reflecting the rich and holistic approach our school embraces. It's a reminder that anyone, regardless of age, can be a writer. After all, at the heart of every author is someone who had the courage to pick up a pen. Kudos to these 24 students!



SOME OF OUR STAR WRITERS WITH MS. ROSE

GEMA - NATING CREATIVITY

Among them, a student from Year 5F managed to make the biggest mark. In an immensely proud moment for the entire school, Gagana Wathsanda Perera, a quiet yet expressive student with a kind personality and thoughtful nature, won 1st place in the competition! Gagana said he spent six hours finishing his story by 2 a.m, beating the deadline of the competition by a few hours, producing an impressive four-page piece. His story, titled "The Mysterious Thief ", follows the narrative of a young indigenous boy who finds himself unknowingly stealing crops from a farm; the story highlights the value of being honest and illustrates the importance of communication. In a competition where, surprisingly, the subject matter was left for the authors to decide, Gagana chose the themes of honesty and obedience - values that we can all agree the world needs today.



GAGANA PERERA, 5F

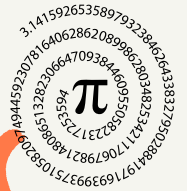
A firm believer in the craft of writing, Gagana is very happy that he was able to take part. He says, "It is a great opportunity for many students to write." An exceptionally talented child whose stories have been published before, Gagana's journey is a story in itself - one that reflects the aspirations of many children around the world, who, like him, dream of becoming authors. It is amazing to see how this opportunity empowers the youth and brings them together like no other force, instilling values and morals that shape them into better citizens for the future.

We would like to thank GEMA for conducting this competition, and our wonderful, brave students who took up the challenge. However, to any future prospects reading this article, don't let it become a burden to you.

Stories are an expression of yourself, and not every one of them needs to be for competitions. They are, at the very least, an expression of emotion and feeling - and that's what truly matters. What we can all learn from this is that it all starts with one: one person, one passion, one competition, and most importantly, one pen. In a world of endless possibilities, it is up to us to choose our story. After all, it is our story that makes us who we are.



MATHEMATICS MADNESS



... Karis Glenna - Year 10A

The Mathematics Inter-School Competition held by Al Diyafah High School brought together masterminds from many schools to create a short educational and entertaining two-minute video that displays not only the students' understanding but also their interest in the subject. From our school, both a primary and secondary team participated with fervency and enthusiasm under the efficient guidance of our math teachers, Ms. Meethu, Ms. Riji, Ms. Asha Binny and Ms. Reema. The Primary team produced a video explaining a few fun tips and tricks to further understand Math and the Secondary team made a video about the Trachtenberg Method.

Number Ninjas (Primary Team):

The Number Ninjas was a team of five students: Ahmed Rafi, Daniel Rimon Armanios, Danniell Chirag D'souza, Halwin Eldho Lijoy, and Mohammed Ahmed Aboukhadra. These pupils collaborated to showcase a brilliant range of strategies for simplifying calculations and quickly recalling multiples of any number. The Number Ninjas earned first place in the primary category, thanks to their exceptional effort and strong teamwork.

The Mathletes (Secondary Team):

The Mathletes were a team consisting of: Antonio Colin, Cecilia Phollib Matta Ayman, Jewindu Sechitha Panawennage, Karis Glenna Sam Kingston, and Zenaida D'Souza. The Mathletes were awarded second place in the secondary category for demonstrating the Trachtenberg Method, a technique developed by mathematician Jakow Trachtenberg during his time in prison in Nazi Germany. This method allows for much faster multiplication, all without the need for pen and paper.

"Teamwork makes the dream work," said Zenaida D'Souza when asked how the teams managed to create such impressive and insightful work in such a short time, and no one could have said it better! They not only represented our school with great pride, but also learned something new throughout the process, enriching their ongoing educational journey.



Congratulations to these young mathematicians.

$$\begin{matrix} y \\ x = \sqrt{36} \\ y = x^2 \\ x \end{matrix}$$

$$f(x)$$

$$\tan \theta = \frac{\sin \theta}{\cos \theta}$$



St. Mary's Recycles to the Top!

SECOND PLACE IN THE DGRADE BIC PEN CHALLENGE

... Shen Rodrigues - Year 10B

From the beginning of April to the end of June, the students of St. Mary's showed that small actions can lead to big impacts, securing an impressive second place in the DGrade BIC pen recycling challenge. Through their teamwork and creativity, they collected and recycled hundreds of pens, turning this activity into a powerful statement for sustainability. Their dedication and hardwork has helped raise awareness on the importance of recycling and reducing waste in a fun and creative way.

As a reward for the students' efforts, DGrade arranged an awarding ceremony in the main hall. The enthusiastic students attended the event along with Ms. Lise-Ann, our Vice Principal, and Ms. Bindu Harikumar, who successfully coordinated the pen recycling drive.



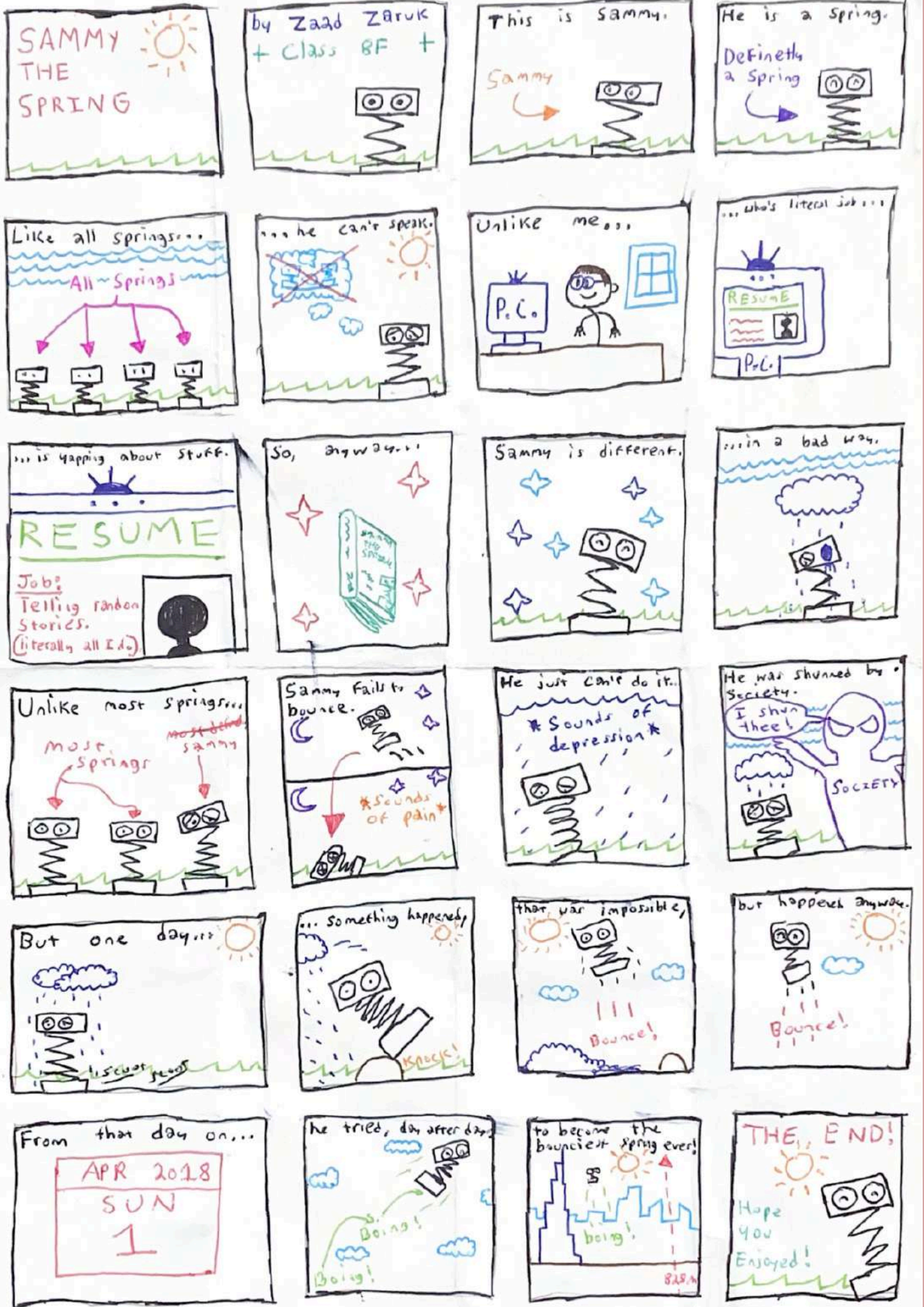
After an enlightening talk and presentation emphasising the importance of recycling, reusing and sustainability, the DGrade and BIC staff announced the results of the competition. To the students' absolute joy, they revealed that the students of St. Mary's had secured second place among all the schools that participated, while collecting and recycling an astounding 8470 pens and markers for the challenge. Amid roaring applause, the school received a trophy, along with the main award of a bench that is fully made from recycled materials. Today, this bench is kept outside the main hall to be displayed and used by all, being a true symbol of sustainability, showing how a small action leads to a big difference.



A competition like this can teach our students about the importance of sustainability and foster a sense of community and creativity when working together. Ms. Bindu Harikumar said, "Our students learn to understand that a small item, such as a pen, can be recycled for various purposes. These actions promote sustainability and teach the importance of recycling in the modern world."

The students of St. Mary's have shown how they take initiative and lead through recycling and sustainability programs using teamwork and creativity in order to raise awareness and adopt eco-friendly habits. The DGrade BIC pen recycling challenge was extremely successful and proved that small steps towards sustainability can leave bigger footprints.

Sammy the Spring



Resilience

... Bryan D. Pereira - Year 9B

Scilla, the genus Scilla,
Enliven by its desire,
Enduring any weather,
Dynamic in blooming,
Sturdy always in growing.
Flaming bright is the blaze,
Intensely burning through the tempest,
Rigorously pushing ways,
Evermore of a point to prove,
Striving to keep its bright hue.
Waving, the sea,
Abused thoroughly,
Tremendous is its roar,
Eager and sturdy to grow,
Rhythmic and serene free of storms.
At this time, as we ponder,
Bouncing back, how, we wonder,
Astonishingly honest,
This is the key; Resilience!

AN OUTDOOR REWARD WELL-DESERVED

Victors of Recycling Get Their Day At the Mai Dubai Picnic

... Yafet Admassu - Year 11F

In the 2023-24 academic year, our school held a contest that tested the boundaries of competition, teamwork and perseverance – funnily, it was over plastic bottles. When Mai Dubai in collaboration with the DGrade organisation announced the “Simply Bottles Recycling Challenge”, our school took it a step further and put our own spin on it. Specifically, our entire school competed to see which class could collect and recycle the most number of used plastic bottles. All of us actively participated in this, as I am sure you remember from last year. Together, our school collected a whole lot of bottles and sailed to an easy victory in this competition which was open to all schools in Dubai.

As for the winners of our school’s internal competition, three classes emerged victorious in their respective year categories:- 10D and 8D from this year, and last year’s 4D (now 5E and F). And with victory, comes, of course, a reward. On the 13th of November, this group of peers spent the day not bound by the walls of their classes, but free in the green that is Creek Park, in the care of Ms Bindu Harikumar and their class teachers.

The students departed from our school at about 8:45 a.m. on the day, representing the Saintz house colours in their sports uniforms. After a short drive they arrived at their destination. Once there, students were allowed to relax as they liked, with supervision from class teachers. Older students had fun playing badminton and even faced the disaster of the shuttlecock lodging itself in a tree branch. On the other hand, year 5 students enjoyed playing ball and experienced the same tragedy of losing it too! However, despite the misfortune of it all, they met their challenges with an air of optimism and positivity.

Yet one experience resonated with all three classes, a student even reflecting that it was “especially the most fun”; of course, it was none other than the swings!





While the students did bring their tiffins from home, they were also provided with goody bags with juices, chocolate biscuits and other refreshments and snacks that kept the victors energetic and active throughout their picnic.

After a fun day at the park enjoying the lovely weather and the fun outdoors, they packed up and left the park, reaching school carrying memories of an unforgettable day that will last a lifetime. Naomi Dsouza, from 10D, struggled to put into words how “amazing the picnic was” and was grateful to the school for the “opportunity to compete” and this “day to chill”. Gagana, a student in 5F, exclaimed that he really enjoyed the picnic and emphasized the “sense of reward” that it brought too.

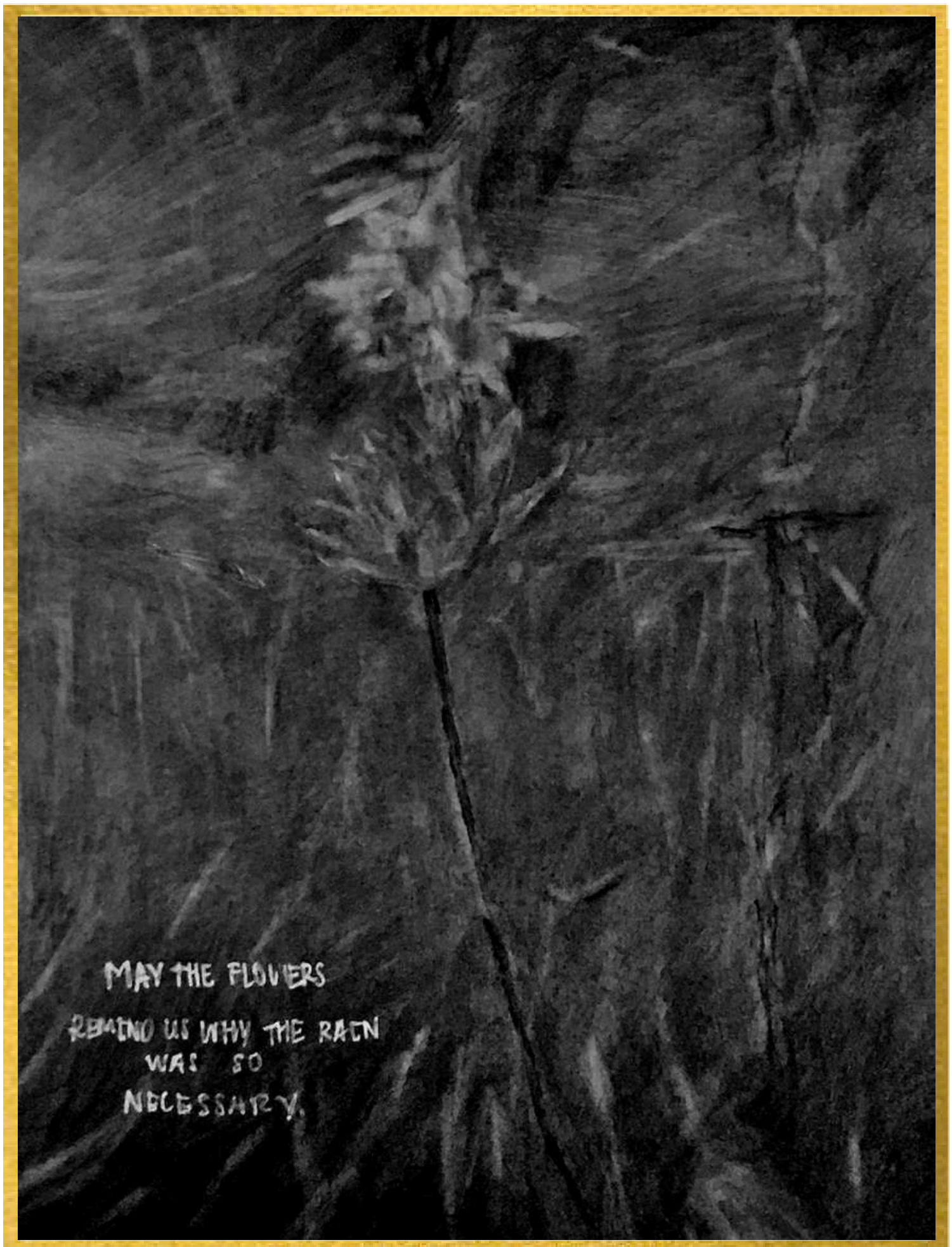
Reflecting on her students’ experiences, Ms Bindu, who spearheaded the competition, noted:

“This bottle collection event was organized to instill the value of recycling; making it a class competition made them aware of their collaborative work and team effort. And for the winners, a picnic was arranged to award their hard work and team spirit, but most of all, to enjoy, relax, and gain wonderful memories!”

These students truly embodied the communal spirit of our dear school, especially in an age where the smallest bottle recycled can make the biggest difference in our Earth’s climate. Without a doubt, the trip was well-deserved, and of course, it will serve as inspiration for the students in the years to come.

PS: Following the success of last year, once again the Simply Bottles challenge has started this year and the entire school is engaged again in friendly competition to see who will earn that class picnic this year. Good luck everyone!





MAY THE FLOWERS
REMINO US WHY THE RAIN
WAS SO
NECESSARY.

"Vanquished Solitude"

Marcus Brandis, 11F

Resilience: Overcoming Challenges

... Thisasni, Year - Year 10E

Life isn't always easy. We all face challenges that can sometimes feel too hard to handle. But what I've learned is that resilience isn't about never struggling—it's about getting back up, no matter how many times we fall. I first understood the true meaning of resilience during a time when I felt overwhelmed with schoolwork. There were days when I felt like I couldn't keep up, especially with all the exams and assignments piling up. I started doubting myself, wondering if I was good enough. But then, I realized that feeling this way doesn't mean I'm failing. It just means I need to try harder and keep going. Instead of avoiding my work or running away from the stress, I started breaking everything down into smaller tasks. Little by little, I managed to complete them one by one. Whenever I made mistakes, I didn't give up—I learned from them. I also found strength in the people around me, like my family and friends, who reminded me that it's okay to struggle, as long as I keep trying. Resilience, for me, means not giving up when things get tough. It's about finding the strength to move forward, even when you feel like you can't. The challenges I faced didn't break me; they made me stronger and more determined to keep pushing forward. I've learned that resilience is something we all have inside us. It's not about being perfect, but about getting back up every time we fall. We all have the ability to keep going, no matter how hard life gets.

EMPOWERING YOUNG MINDS

... Shourya Salian- Year 10F

The Lions International Peace Poster Contest is an annual art competition for students aged 11 to 13, promoting peace and understanding worldwide. Participants create artwork based on a unique theme, such as the 2024-2025 theme, "Peace Without Limits." Winning entries advance through various levels, with the grand prize winner receiving \$5,000 and recognition at an awards ceremony. Additionally, visually impaired students can participate in the Peace Essay Contest.



The Lions International Peace Competition has been instrumental in inspiring and empowering the creative potential of young individuals by offering a distinctive platform for them to express their personal interpretations of the concept of 'Peace.' This competition encourages participants to tap into their artistic abilities—whether through writing, visual arts, music, or other forms of expression—allowing them to showcase their unique perspectives and cultural backgrounds.

Through their creations, participants can convey messages of hope, unity, and conflict resolution, contributing to a broader conversation about the role of peace in fostering harmony in their communities and beyond. The competition takes place globally, attracting talented participants from around the world.



In the first round, our school proudly had 18 entrants competing in this prestigious event. After thoroughly evaluating their work, our art teacher selected the top three artists who stood out due to their exceptional creativity and skill. Our top three artworks were then submitted to the Lions International Peace Poster competition. Their unique contributions not only represented our school well but also highlighted the artistic talent within our community.



Our top three picks were:

- **Sesandi - 7A**
- **Methumsa - 7E**
- **Shivangshi - 8E**

"Peace is essential, but sadly, not everyone in the world has it. There are still so many challenges and conflicts around us. My picture reflects my vision of what true peace means and what I hope for the world."- Methumsa, from year 7-A who was one of the participants and a winner.



The beautiful artworks showed each artist's unique vision of peace. Each piece told a personal story, sharing the artist's dreams for a peaceful world. These creations were more than just displays of talent—they were a call to imagine a world filled with kindness and understanding. By providing this space for creativity, the competition serves not only to cultivate artistic talent but also to deepen participants' understanding of peace's significance in our global society. It enables young people to explore and reflect on the various dimensions of peace—social, emotional, and communal—engaging with this profound theme in a thoughtful and impactful manner.





Resilience takes time, strength, and help from those around you. Gaara was close to going off the deep end, until Naruto came along. Naruto had taught him resilience, to not let his inner demon take over him, to let other people into his life. Naruto was what guided him back to the light- a shining example- and Gaara would forever be grateful for that.



REIMAGINING MARKETING

A COMPETITION SHAPING THE FUTURE

Apple International School holds a riveting Business Competition to unleash groundbreaking ideas in Marketing and Entrepreneurship

... Nishika Manish - Year 12

An opportunity, for the youth to be recognized for their entrepreneurial ideas, adapted by Apple International School on the 24th of September, 2024. The smart businesswomen of Saintz: Megan, Kyara, Alice and Nessa under the guidance of Ms. Glenis participated in order to showcase their ideas at the captivating competition that delved into the future of marketing.

The objective of this Marketing and Advertisement competition was "Innovation with the aim of transforming the marketing field." Competitors from Pristine School, The Sheffield School, Al Diyafah School, The Indian Academy and many more were present alongside St.Mary's Catholic High School displaying their innovative concepts.

Our Saintz squad went forward with a vision under brand revitalisation. Through which we attempted to revitalize the brand 'Rainbow Loom' into the more commonly known 'Loom Bands'. New product sets were made, lots and lots of data was gathered and even an advert was created in order to boost and demonstrate our vision!

The team emphasized on their innovative aspects that could transform the future of marketing and proved themselves to the audience and the judges. With the criteria of judgment being effective time management, communication capabilities and the originality of concepts, remarkable ideas from each school created a highly competitive environment fueled with adrenaline.

At the end of the day, even though our team did not manage to clinch one of the coveted top positions, they all came back richer for the experience, making Saintz proud and inspired by their perseverance and resilience.



The Power of Resilience: Stories of Strength and Perseverance

... Antonio Colin – Year 9B

Resilience is that characteristic which enables one to stand up towards an adverse situation, and overcome the challenges thrown at a person, and emerge stronger than ever. It is a force that cannot always be seen, but its impact cannot be ignored. As said in the poem, the poem shows us that resilience is born into quiet strength and unseen battles. "Through trials fierce, through battles long, the resilient heart beats loud and strong," highlighting the essence of those who are able to persist through life's hardest moments. History is filled to the brim with examples of people who, in the face of most terrible trials, have managed to show incredible resilience and prove the indestructible human spirit. All the way from famous figures like the great Nelson Mandela and Malala Yousafzai to everyday heroes, resilience is a universal trait that changes peoples lives in unbelievable ways.

Perhaps one of the most extraordinary examples of acts of resilience in history textbooks has been Nelson Mandela. Prisoned and tortured for almost 27 years in South Africa, Mandela faced a lot of hardship. As the poem suggests, resilience "stands its ground, though bruised and riled." Mandela's spirit was tested again and again, yet he never gave in to the cruelty he faced. His resilience didn't just help him thrive within the borders of captivity, it helped him become a symbol of hope and inspiration for millions of people around the world. Years of increasing torment

could not keep Mandela from rising above his suffering to fight for justice, mirroring the lines stated in the poem, "With every fall, it rises high, a force that will not fade or die." Upon his awaited release, he did not seek revenge or retribution but instead worked toward reconciliation and unity for the community of black people. His perseverance and RESILIENCE as well as the determination helped break down a regime of racial injustice and paved the way for a more inclusive society.

Another powerful example of resilience is Malala Yousafzai, a young Pakistani girl who, after surviving an assassination attempt by the Taliban (Taking a full shot to the head like seriously imagine the doctors are one day operating on you taking a 50 caliber bullet and pushing the doctors away asking your friend and I quote "Did I scream? Did I try to run away?" she asked her friend. "No," her friend responded" however she lived to tell the tale and had a job.), became an advocate for girls' education worldwide. As the poem goes, "For resilience is not the absence of pain, but the courage to rise and try again." Malala's story is no different. At 15, Malala was shot in the head for speaking out for girls' education in Pakistan. The physical and emotional toll did not deter her from her cause. She instead used that experience to fuel her mission-to ensure that every girl has a right to learn. The resilience of Malala helped her not only recover physically but also empowered her to become one of the most influencing voices in global education. It is a testimony to the power of resilience: the bravery, the determination to better a world in the face of personal tragedy.



On a personal level, resilience is often reflected in ordinary life through everyday struggles and triumphs of people facing personal loss, illness, or hardship. Think about the case of professional surfer Bethany Hamilton, who at age 13 lost her arm due to a shark attack. Within one month after the accident, she was surfing again. Her story has been that of physical recuperation, accompanied by a steady psyche. She is since then an inspiration to many people. As the poem goes, "In every scar, in every tear, it finds its strength, it conquers fear." Bethany's resilience is not only in overcoming the physical limitations of her injury but also in how she can keep a positive outlook and share her story with others who face their own challenges.

In conclusion, resilience is one strong force within us. Resilience is the ability to stand up to anything life may throw at us, no matter how huge. The stories of resilience go from historical figures such as Nelson Mandela to modern-day activists like Malala Yousafzai and also to the unsung heroes, such as Bethany Hamilton. These people show us that no matter the obstacle, we all can rise above it and grow stronger. Resilience is not about survival; it is a thriving ability, even in the worst adversities. As the poem says, "A resilient soul will always wake", a fact reflected in how the lives of such people shine above their struggles.

RESILIENCE

Psyched for Psych!

Psyched Conference at Manipal Academy

... **Chloe Braganza - Year 13**

Psychology has become a prominent topic in today's society, with its influence evident in various aspects of popular culture. From characters in movies seeking therapy to mental health awareness campaigns on social media, the portrayal of psychological concepts reflects how we relate to stories and events that captivate us. Simultaneously, pop culture shapes our understanding of human behaviour, emotions, and identity.

On October 22, 2024, Academic City buzzed with excitement as it hosted the PsychED competition, organized by the Manipal Academy of Higher Education. Student representatives from across the region gathered to showcase their knowledge and passion for psychology and its intersection with pop culture. The event featured a diverse array of activities, including quizzes, interactive sessions, and the main event – a round table conference. Additionally, participants engaged in a creative "dope-a-meme" challenge and vied for the prestigious young scholar award.

Our school was proudly represented by four talented students: Daniela Adhikari, Chloe Braganza, and Ryann Magpantay from Year 13, along with Trisha Fernandes from Year 11. Daniela Adhikari participated in the highly anticipated round table conference, where she demonstrated exceptional poise and intellect. Speaking with clarity and confidence, she addressed the complex topic of the democratization of Psychology and Media, along with its far-reaching effects. Her well-informed points contributed significantly to a thoughtful and engaging discussion, ultimately securing her the prestigious first place and a well-deserved award.



Daniela Adhikari

Reflecting on her experience, Daniela shared, "I'm very happy I got to attend the roundtable conference because it was so insightful. Everything the delegates had to say about psychology in popular culture was relevant and informative, and it was so much fun interacting with them and our moderator."

The other three student representatives took part in the prestigious Young Scholar Award competition. Chloe Braganza and Ryann Magpantay collaborated on an innovative study exploring the correlation between stalking behaviour depicted in the show 'Baby Reindeer' and Bowlby's attachment theory. Meanwhile, Trisha Fernandes conducted her own research on 'Mental Health Balance & Choice of Subject'. Their dedication and academic prowess were evident as they completed these studies under significant time constraints, with only four days to prepare their submissions.



Chloe, Daniela, Trisha and Ryann

Psyched for Psych!



The students' commitment to excellence was praised by Mrs. Mary Ann, their guide in this endeavour, who commented on their performance: "The competition was well participated by four psychology students. Trisha, Chloe and Ryann enthusiastically planned out the studies to present in their poster for the Young Scholars Award competition. They gracefully worked under pressure from the abstract of studies to qualify in the first round of poster exhibit."

She further elaborated on the competitive nature of the event, stating, "It was tough screening among almost 18 schools who participated from different emirates in UAE. Even though they didn't qualify for the presentation round, it was still a significant experience to showcase their skills in research."

Despite the intense competition, the school's representation at the event was not without its triumphs. Mrs. Mary Ann proudly noted, "Our school was able to reassert its academic prowess with Daniela Anika Adhikari securing the 1st place winner delegate of Roundtable Conference competition. She displayed exceptional eloquence. It was an extremely proud moment for me to have experienced this."

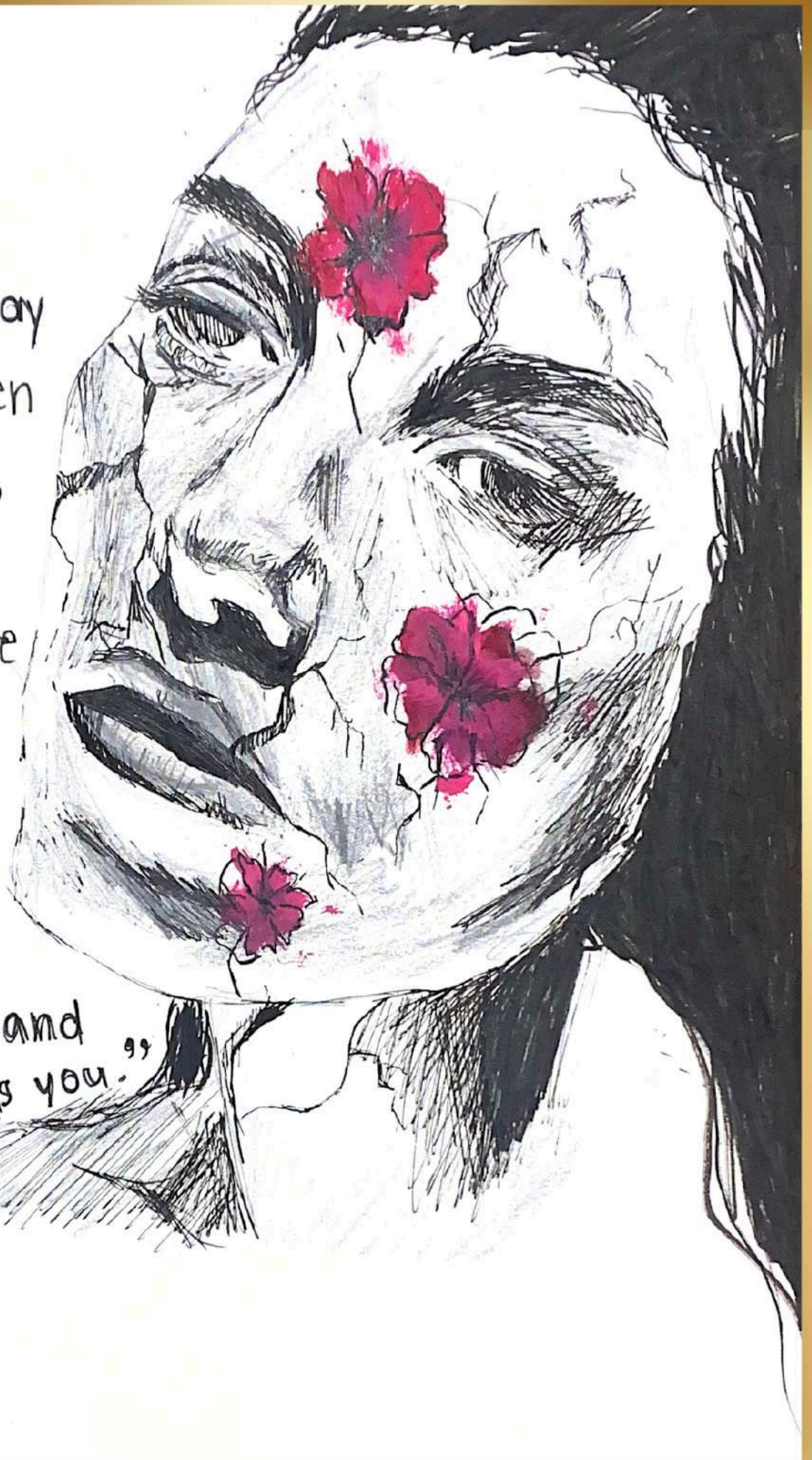
The PsychED competition provided a unique platform for students to engage with psychology in creative and meaningful ways, emphasizing its relevance to the world around us. The participants' outstanding efforts and achievements not only showcased their individual talents but also exemplified the school's commitment to academic excellence and innovation in the field of psychology.

The success of our students at the PsychED competition not only highlights their individual talents but also underscores the growing importance of psychology in our daily lives. As the field continues to evolve and intersect with popular culture, events like these provide valuable platforms for young minds to explore and contribute to this dynamic discipline.

Looking ahead, the impressive performance of our school's representatives at the PsychED competition is likely to inspire more students to delve into the fascinating world of psychology. This event has undoubtedly paved the way for increased participation in similar competitions and fostered a deeper appreciation for the role of psychology in shaping our understanding of the world around us.

Congratulations to all the participants for their outstanding efforts and achievements!

"You may
have been
broken,
but the
cracks are
where
your
strengths
seeps
through and
rebuilds you."





جائزة الشارقة للاستدامة
Sharjah Sustainability Award

SHARJAH SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

A LEAP FORWARD TO A GREENER FUTURE

... Jane Jerushlin - Year 10A

The topic of sustainability and sustainable development is of paramount importance in today's world. With the natural resources depleting from planet earth without the prospects of replenishment, preservation of our natural world and resources has become extremely significant.

In keeping with this urgent need, the Environment and Protected Areas Authority hosted the event 'Sharjah Sustainability Award- 12th Cycle', inviting various schools and universities spread across UAE to design innovative projects that promote sustainable educational environments and inspire boundless creativity.

It is such an honor for us, as individuals and as a school, to take part in this journey of making a more sustainable world.

The participants had a wide range of topics to choose from such as artificial intelligence and protection of human health. And the students definitely did not disappoint - they submitted working models, films, and even entire stories that displayed unique ideas and points never seen before; after all, sometimes the best ideas don't stem from seasoned professionals but rather from young, aspiring minds!

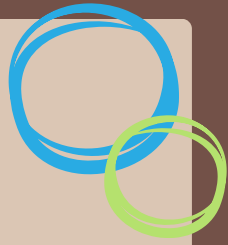
Representing Saint Mary's, six A-Level students, Joshua, Tasnim, Shantel, Tanisha, Allen, and Zuriel bravely stepped forward to take part in this highly competitive challenge. Despite having to go against a startling number of 142 schools, our Saintz team did not waver in their effort, as they got together and began to brainstorm their best idea yet.

Following the theme of 'The Best Environmental Project in an A.I Domain', our students proposed the idea of...a garbage can! From this simple base, our Saintz Team tirelessly built upon it before finally coming up with an entirely new product that is straightforward yet highly effective.

It can be argued that one of humanity's greatest flaws is their sheer laziness. We certainly could walk all the way to the store, and yet we constantly decide to pollute the air with the fumes of our cars. And we most definitely can spend an extra minute to find a recycling bin to dispose of our waste - and yet, we simply decide...not to? To combat this silly yet highly damaging decision, our Saintz team proposed the idea of 'Burney Boi'! A garbage can that sorts your trash for you!

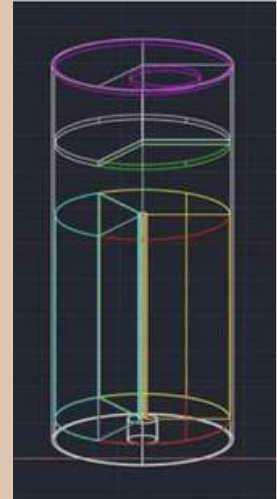


جائزة الشارقة للاستدامة
Sharjah Sustainability Award



“Burney Boi was the brainchild of our efforts. Through the power of AI image recognition and gravity, the device can distinguish between various types of material waste and ensure that these items are sorted correctly, eliminating the difficulties of manual separation, and reducing the risk of contamination.” – SSA Saintz Team

Not only did they come up with this idea, they even planned out every nook and cranny of their prototype to explain how exactly it would function and how it should be produced; with motors, rechargeable batteries, power harnessed from the sun and sensors to bring it all together.



The bin itself would be composed of different sub-bins (which are removable to be easily emptied, of course!), and each sub-bin would be assigned to a different material, for example a bin for paper and another for plastic. A sensor along with a camera would be able to recognise the type of waste being thrown into the bin, before using an A.I program to sort the waste into its respective bin.



But of course they couldn't stop there. Our Saintz Team went above and beyond by conducting real-life research to decide exactly what each bin would store. They examined the waste thrown in various bins across our school and community, noticing that the majority of it consisted of paper, organic waste, plastic bottles and other plastic disposables. In consequence, it was decided that 'Burney Bois' employed in schools would consist of the sub-bins: Paper, Plastic Bottles and General Waste.

However, despite the immense amount of effort put into this project, 'Burney Boi' was not among the prototypes selected to be made into real-life models. But that doesn't mean that 'Burney Boi' has burnt to the ground, no, not at all! This prototype can still serve as a basis for many other innovative projects, and maybe one day we will be able to witness it being implemented in real life. After all, a good idea never dies.

Volatile Escape

Rachel Joanna Ediriweera - Year 9E

They've done it again. They took my father to the army. I tried to plead with him to stay; I couldn't look after my sibling by myself, yet he said he had to leave or else they'd kill him. My younger brother, Kang Su Juk, was on the verge of collapsing. I couldn't find a doctor who'd help him with his leg. They all said it would cost a fortune. They all said he would die either way. 'No,' I thought, sitting on my bed trying to get to sleep. 'There's got to be a way.'. Yet my mind was completely blank.

He woke up crying. I rushed towards him and I felt like vomiting. His legs were completely black, and his nails were yellow in colour. His skin was pale. He tried to move but he couldn't. He cried out to me, "Jiwoo," He called out, his voice barely a whisper. "I can't feel my legs." I covered my face with my hands, so he wouldn't see me cry.

I dedicated that day to brainstorming ways to cure if not help him. Hospital? No, they already said he's dead. Neighbours? No, they're dying as well. I couldn't think of anything. Appa wasn't there to help me. He wasn't there to tell me it was going to be okay. No, he's out there, suffering in training and fighting until he dies.

I kept thinking and thinking, pulling my hair and crying as no solution could pop out of my head. I threw my books off the table. My head was spinning, and tears were clogging my throat. 'You have to think of something,' I said. I wrapped myself in my arms. I looked up and saw my history textbook was open. I looked at it. 'The South of Korea', the title read. There was a map, the top being South Korea and the bottom being us, North Korea. That was my answer. Go to South Korea and find help.

Volatile Escape

But how? I heard evil stories, and that they were our enemies. But, they were my only chance to save Kang. I would rather die trying than die here. I packed my bag; just ten Won, a few clothes and nothing else. My hands were trembling; 'Am I going to do this? Escape?' I eyed a picture of me and Appa. 'I can't leave appa... but I have to.' I tried to fit the picture in my small bag, but there was no space. Tears filled my eyes. "Sorry appa," I kissed the picture, helped Kang to get on my back, tied his legs around my waist with rope, then we left.

The streets were empty, only a few cars passing by and people like me walking; thin and alone. I had my textbook in my hands as a map of where to go. My back ached with Kang on my back, for he fell asleep once again. 'Come on,' I told myself, 'Push. He can't walk so you have to do this.'

The map showed that we were near the border. My heart was beating out of my chest, my hands were trembling. I pushed through the pain of my feet, the aching of my backbone, the cramps on my stomach. I had to take a rest to put tape on my feet because they were badly damaged. I wanted to give up, but I couldn't. Not when I came so far.

The border. Soldiers were stationed everywhere, a towering chicken fence stood at least 6 feet high. Mines were everywhere on the floor. Walking would be like playing a dangerous game. The floor is lava. My head was hurting and my stomach was growling. I wanted to fall down.

"Jiwoo?" Kang had woken up.

"Shush don't talk," I told him quietly, "They'll find us." he nodded and stayed quiet.

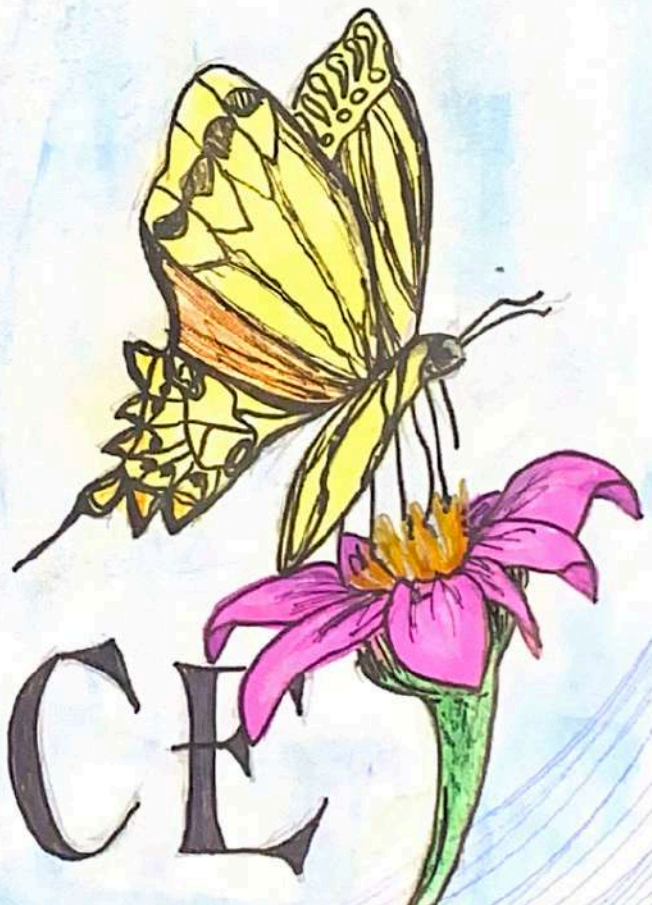
Volatile Escape

I looked around, trying to find a way out. I could almost taste freedom but I couldn't get over myself. 'Alright, the opening of the gate is right there, but there's 4 guards... I could cause a distraction.' The mines. If enough weight was placed on them, they'll set off. I searched the ground for one. Once I did, I took a heavy rock, with difficulty, and threw it against the mine. I ran for my life and it exploded. The guards shouted and started to run towards the explosion with their guns. I ran towards the opening. "Go!" I told myself. "Keep running!" I never felt so alive than that day, running as if there was no tomorrow. The guards noticed me and started to shoot. Bullets came flying everywhere, just a few barely grazing on my skin. I was scared out of my mind, afraid the bullets would hit Kang. After what felt like forever, I reached the South Korean post. Guards over there noticed me and immediately took me in. Kang was crying out loud, so they took him off my shoulders and started to get an ambulance. I couldn't believe what had just happened. I did it! I escaped in one piece!

Kang ended up getting treated for his foot. Though he had to get it amputated, at least he's alive. Escaping was the best thing I ever did.



RESILIENCE





Young Einsteins Inspire Innovation

THE SCIENCE ADVENTURES OF OUR
PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

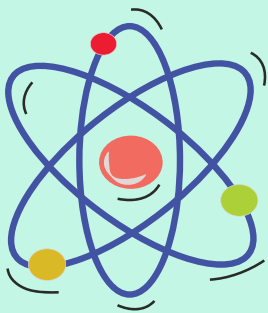
... Qazi Umer Farooq - Year 11F

"Science is a way of thinking much more than it is a body of knowledge." - Carl Sagan. Everything around us is a beautiful phenomena of science and understanding akin to unlocking a chamber of secrets. Recently, our school's youth took on this difficult challenge to test their science skills and answer mind-boggling questions about humans, plants and animals.



Science Fair 2024

In June, 2024 St. Mary's hosted a school wide science fair in the hopes of encouraging our students to participate and come up with technical and complex inventions thereby expanding their learning beyond the classrooms. It quickly became clear that primary sections exceeded expectations, impressing the judges and our student community with ideas like pressure chambers and dialysis machines - ideas not practical for your average 10 to 12 year-olds. It was on this note of scientific exploration that school closed for summer holidays.



Evidently, holidays did not dim the students' interest in science and innovation, for our young science lovers jumped back into their natural habitats - the biology lab - with the beginning of the new academic year. A new year of investigation and discoveries started yet again in their classrooms, but did not end there. With their science teachers guiding them, the students were all set to start their very own scientific journey in the great outdoors.

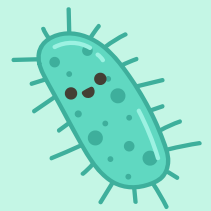
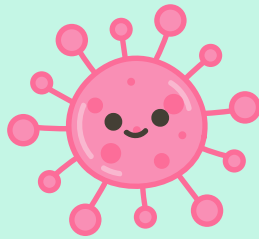




Young Einsteins Inspire Innovation

Micro Magic

In September, along with Mrs. Lovey, classes of Year 5 visited the school surroundings to observe Micro Habitats. Realising the importance of ecosystems, many enthusiastic students made models of a “wildlife corridor” of their own accord. The venture was a clever way of highlighting the importance of endangered species in the midst of urbanization – a bold topic ignored by many. Undoubtedly, Mrs. Lovey and the other primary science teachers are successfully and subtly weaving the idea of sustainability into these curious young minds.



Healthy Hearts

Exercising your brain is important, and equally important is exercising the body. It is a pivotal part of developing a successful life. Exploring this idea further, Year 6 investigated the effect of outdoor activity on their pulse rate and explained how a fit person will have a slower pulse rate as the heart pumps blood more effectively. One young student also mentioned “that the activity helped them realize the importance of physical sports.”



The efforts of these are symbolic to the idea of knowledge through experience, or as Mrs Lovey put it, “To make science learning fun, sustainable and innovative.” Making lessons fun and challenging automatically means students who are eager and interested to learn. Hats off to the efforts of our primary science teachers for their contribution in shaping our future generation into enterprising and promising individuals. They are evidently doing everything possible to educate our young scientists about what is truly important.



**SCIENCE FUN
FOR EVERYONE!**

THE BRICKS OF LIFE

"CLARITY PRECEDES SUCCESS." – ROBIN SHARMA

... Mariya Unneesa - Year 11E

Public speaking is no easy feat. But Emily Amgad crushed it at the AMPS TedX event, delivering an inspiring and often overlooked speech on "The Bricks of Life": Clarity and Connection.

The path to the stage, however, was not smooth sailing. After the initial excitement and gratitude for this opportunity, nervousness soon succeeded due to the looming audition process. Moreover, she recalls initially being sceptical about the topic, clarity and connection, that she had been given to talk about. "At first, the topic seemed so abstract and vague," she admits.

Her journey into understanding the essence of the theme began with the people around her. With the guidance of professionals and counsellors around her, she got back on track with a better understanding of how to tackle the speech. Most important was the introspection that this topic required. Listening to her words made it clear that it came from within, from her personal experiences, connecting it to her past experiences and future aspirations. After all, before sharing the importance of clarity with others, she had to first find it herself. And try she did, leading her to succeed in sparking this new idea in the minds of the audience.

With her speech prepared, Emily reflects humorously, "When I got on stage up there, in front of the crowd, I felt like running away." However, despite her jittery nerves and intrusive thoughts in front of the packed auditorium, her prior reservations melted away. The words just flowed as she improvised some of her thoughts in the moment, which she mused, allowed her to get the message across more naturally



"I was holding the compass and trying to figure out what career path to pick. If you are my age or know someone who is, you'd understand the immense pressure that comes with this decision. What if I make the wrong choice? I was terrified. To untie this seemingly complicated knot, all I needed was clarity. When I understood what I was good at, things became easier and my options narrowed down."

The event itself was inspiring all around, each speaker bringing something unique to the stage. A number of esteemed speakers, like the TedX professional who shared his expertise and the school principal, who opened up about her personal journey, enlightened the audience with something that gave them food for thought once all the student speakers were done with their talks. The audience was engaged and respectful making the experience even more special.

Here's to cultivating clarity and connection!

By Pen and Will Alone

Isabella Lauren Mayogba - Year 11A

A young writer named Henry wrestles with self-doubt after facing repeated rejections of his works. Struggling to find the strength to continue, he receives a visit from his mentor, Arthur, who shares wisdom about the power of resilience. Through their conversation, Henry learns that failure is not the end but a stepping stone to growth. Inspired, he takes up his quill once more, determined to finish his tale.

A study, lit by a single candle. Books are stacked on shelves, and papers are scattered across a wooden desk. A quill rests on an ink-stained blotter. Enter Henry, a young writer, weary, bearing a pile of rejection letters.

HENRY

O fickle fate, how thou art cruel and stern,
That sends me none but scorn for my labour!
These pages, once so full of dreams, now churn
With grief as I, in vain, chase glory's favour.

He throws the letters upon his desk.

How many times must I fall to rise no more?
How many words shall spill upon the floor?

A knock at the door. Enter Arthur, a fellow writer.

ARTHUR

Why, Henry, dost thou sit with a brow so grim?
What burden weighs thy soul, so taut with care?

HENRY

The burden, dear Arthur, lies within this chest:
A thousand words, unspoken, yet unborn
Rejected, mocked and torn from me in jest.
Each letter brings new pain, each page feels worn,
A threadbare cloth that once held dreams aloft.
What folly it is to strive, and yet be lost!

ARTHUR

O, thou art young, and yet too quick to fall!
For not in ease doth greatness come to men.
Resilience, Henry, is the highest call.
To rise again, and rise again, and then
to rise again once more, though hope seems afar.
Thine own words are thy strength, and that is far
more potent than the harshest critic's scorn.

HENRY (*shaking his head*)

But how, dear Arthur, dost thou keep thy faith,
When every turn doth lead to naught but pain?
I write and write, yet all I find is wraith,
The shadows of a future, frail and vain.

ARTHUR (*picking up an unfinished manuscript from Henry's desk*)

See here, thy tale, though rough, hath strength
enough.
What man may build a tower in a day?
'Tis stone by stone, and word by word, though tough,
The edifice shall rise, and none may say
'Twas born of haste or folly's fleeting hand.
To trust thyself, though doubts like shadows stand.

HENRY

Then, by thy words, I shall not let it go.
Though far the road, I'll walk it, come what may.
I'll write, I'll fight, I'll strive with all I know
And in failure, strength to light the way.

(Henry takes up his quill and begins to write once more.)

Though time may seem my foe, I'll not retreat.
For every word I write, a victory sweet.
And though this tale be wrought with endless strife,
It shall become my story, my own life.
My work, though flawed, is pure in its intent.
And though its end doth seem so far from view
Still shall it grow, like roots beneath the soil—
For through my toil, my tale shall find its spoil.

ARTHUR

That's the spirit, Henry! Forge ahead,
For resilience lies in every word we spread.
When pen and soul together blend as one,
The battle's fought, and thus, it is undone.

Every story begins with uncertainty, but resilience gives it life. Keep writing, even when the ending feels out of reach.





Aashika Mohandas - Year 10E

Together in Pink

Empowering Action, Inspiring Hope

... Faseeha Abubaker - Year 11E

Standing in solidarity with those who are facing some of the harshest phases of their lives, battling a chronic disease, and educating children - the very pioneers of the future - are some of the meaningful ways to raise awareness about critical health conditions.

Breast Cancer— a debilitating illness accounting for 1 in 3 cases of cancer for women annually – is a topic of profound significance worldwide, and especially within our Marian School Community.

On the 4th of October 2024, our school was immersed in a soft pink glow as we united in support of the countless women courageously battling this harrowing disease. At St. Mary's, the wellbeing of our community has always been of utmost priority. By coming together, dressed in shades of pink, we expressed our heartfelt sympathy for the families affected and with those whose lives have been ravaged by this challenging illness.

Inculcating students with the core values of empathy, fortitude, and perseverance was also instrumental in raising awareness about breast cancer. Through Pink Day, these values have not only been learned but also embraced, encouraging students to support those affected by the disease. Naomi from 7D expressed her thoughts on the importance of Pink Day: "Dressing in pink enables us to come together to truly respect and appreciate the resilience of the women battling breast cancer."

While Pink Day may just be a single event, it leaves an indelible mark in our school community, fostering a spirit of compassion and activism that will continue to influence our actions long after the day has passed.





ANNUAL COMEBACK OF THE LEGENDARY SAINTZMUN TRYOUTS

... Filza Ali - Year 11E

Keeping the legacy going, the new leadership team organized the SaintzMUN Tryouts 2024 for both the returning and new aspiring delegates with the will and power to impress their chairs and take a part into the SaintzMUN Team.

The planning and effort that went into this event had started long before delegates stood at the gates of the school. For two months, prior to the tryouts, the leadership team with support from the faculty advisors Ms. Renthil and Mr. Trevor, was engaged in detailed planning to ensure every aspect of the event was seamless. From scavenging for the committee rooms to finalizing the selection criteria for delegates, no detail was left to chance.



As the countdown started, the excitement was palpable for both – the team and the delegates. Allocations were sent out to the delegates informing them of the committees and countries they would represent. The anticipation created a buzz among the delegates, each eager to take on the challenges that lay ahead. The responsibility laid on the team was great. Their job did not merely end with sending out the allocations, but also extended to guiding the delegates, to make it a successful event. They needed to prepare the delegates for what they should expect on the day, so training sessions were conducted to introduce the delegates to the workholds of a Model United Nations. From research skills to debating tips, everything necessary was provided. This pre-tryout training was essential in helping the delegates get comfortable with the MUN environment and feel more confident in their abilities.

On the day of the tryouts, the SaintzMUN core team and admins arrived early along with Ms. Renthil to make sure everything was in place. The rooms were quickly arranged to accommodate the various committees. The team worked with incredible efficiency, ensuring that the delegates would walk into a well-organized environment that would set the tone for a professional MUN experience.



At the beginning of the event, the Secretary-General, Mena Andenet Admassu, and the Deputy Secretary-General, Veronica Malubay, took to the dias to address the eager crowd. Their words set the tone for the day, emphasizing the importance of diplomacy, collaboration, and hard work. Then our Secretary General formally declared the SaintzMUN Tryouts 2024 open!

Throughout the day, Mena played an instrumental role in observing and managing the entire event. With keen attention to detail, she ensured that everything ran smoothly and that any concerns were addressed in real time. Meanwhile, the rest of the leadership team was busy with their respective committees, where they played the critical role of chairing sessions and carefully marking delegates.



The leadership team's work was far from easy; they had to organize an event for 120 delegates, assess each of their abilities. It was a day full of intense action, as they meticulously marked and provided feedback to the delegates.



As the day came to a close, it was clear that SaintzMUN Tryouts 2024 was yet another successful event. Here is to another successful year of MUNs for the Saintz MUN group. And we are sure that the saga of awards and accolades won by our delegates in MUNs will continue. And not to forget, the school is eagerly awaiting this year's edition of Saintz MUN. With our efficient core team in place, there is no doubt it will be a resounding success.

LET'S GO SAINTZ, LET'S GO!

5th February, 2025

Embracing Resilience

Sarah Flory

Enduring Struggles

Building Resilience



For emotional resilience, find meaning.



For physical resilience, seek wellness.



For social resilience, make connections.



For mental resilience, maintain healthy thinking.

Resilience is clarified as the way to successfully respond to challenges, preserving mental health in the face of adversity. To students, it may look like identify difficulties as opportunities for learning, controlling one's emotions and expressing them in suitable ways, concentrating on what you can influence rather than obsessing about what you can't.

It assists individuals, groups, and systems in managing struggles, coping with uncertainty and strain, and improving over time. Such distress as pressure with time management with overwhelming schoolwork, catching sickness, suffering mental illness, or losing a loved one. With the lack of resilience, you bury yourself in issues and even burden yourself in more affliction.

Research on resilience from 2015, Resilient pupils are those who view troubles as less troublesome and are more capable of handling difficulties. However, according to studies in 2018, students were more likely to have lower GPAs if they felt that their troubles were more significant and said they had fewer tools to deal with them. Additionally, they stated that they were less resilient in the face of hardship and less able to handle the stressors.

Whether someone is resilient or not, isn't established by their birth. However, resilience is developed over the course of a person's life, and the social environment is crucial to this function.

I recall, anecdotally, being overloaded and exceedingly burnt out with the unbearable amount of schooling work to perfect in a minuscule period. I suffered through long, dragging school hours to only reach home with another pile of questions to complete for the next day. This was an exhausting cycle where I found no peace or rest, until I discovered the 5 pillars that resemble resilience.

It consists of :

1. Increasing self-awareness

Self awareness is your capacity to recognize and comprehend the elements that contribute to your unique identity, such as your behavior, values, beliefs, emotions, and thoughts.

2. Being mindful

We can improve our ability to be self-conscious by practicing mindfulness and meditation. In the practice of mindfulness, you concentrate on being fully aware of your current sensations and emotions without passing judgment or understanding.

3. Self-care

The ability to function well in the world and face the many obstacles of everyday life with confidence, vitality, and energy. It also means taking care of physical, nutritional, emotional, spiritual needs as a whole.

4. Positive relationships

Positive relationships tend to be supportive connections in which people have the opportunity to express themselves, receive emotional support, and get help when *they need it*. *These relationships improve people's lives in many ways such as lowering rates of anxiety and depression, rising self-esteem, enhancing empathy, and building more trusting and cooperative bonds.*

5. Purpose

Purpose is a sense that we are a part of and contribute to something greater than ourselves. Our purpose influences how we think and feel about other people as well as the things that happen to us. Finding your life's purpose provides more than just a sense of direction, focus, and self-worth; it also has a number of other advantages, such as improved physical health and wellbeing, providing more happiness and success, and improving interpersonal connections.

In conclusion, Resilience is effectively proven vital to everyone in society, especially to the students who face the tension of intense constraint of balance between studies and personal well-being. It should be a foremost principle that students are able to handle their hardships in life as reveals numerous benefits for not only the present but for the future as well.

References:

- [How Grit and Resilience Predict Successful Academic Performance](#)
- [The five pillars of resilience > 301st Fighter Wing > Display](#)

Leaders of Tomorrow

... Jilliane Alinan Baldonado, Natalie D'Silva and
Maria Theres Kizhakkuden - Year 11D

“In dreams begin responsibility” - W. B. Yeats

On the 26th of September, the school witnessed the solemn occasion of this year's prefect investiture ceremony. It was held in the main hall, with the eager and excited cadre of our new student leaders filling the space. A new academic year, a new group of student leaders tasked with guiding and leading our student body. In the presence of our Senior Leadership Team, House Masters and Mistresses and other teachers, this year's Headboy and Headgirl, their Assistants, House captains and Vice captains, Well-being leaders, Sustainability leaders and the Year 8-12 Prefects swore their oaths to uphold their duties and assumed office.

The ceremony commenced with a procession, as the prefects and student leadership team entered the main hall, wearing their school uniform with a sense of pride and respect. The prefects were seated in their designated places as the captains went onstage accompanied with their vice captains, along with the head girl and head boy who held our school flag with great veneration and honour. As the flag was raised, a sense of fulfilment and unity was ignited within each student. To play an integral role in the school that not only shapes us academically but also instills in us profound regard for ethics and morals is a feeling beyond words –one that resonates within each prefect, a deep sense of accomplishment and purpose.



This was then followed by the oath taking of the Head Boy, Tanuja Kumarasiri and Head Girl, Jane Rego, after which they proudly accepted their badges from our Principal, Mr. Paul and Vice Principal, Mrs. Lise-Ann. Subsequently, their Assistants, then of each House Captains and Vice Captains, Sustainability Leaders, and Well being Leaders recited their oaths and received their badges. Following suit afterwards were the Years 8-12 prefects, who received their badges after they said their oaths. Each oath was a solemn promise to lead with integrity, to serve as a role model, and most importantly, to embody the values of what St Mary's stands for: honesty, respect, and courage, which were present in each student that attended the ceremony that day.

THE PREFECT INVESTITURE CEREMONY

Key Leadership Positions this year:

Head Boy:

Tanuja Kumarasiri

Assistant Head Boys:

Nikhil Joseph

Alrick D'Souza

Wellbeing Champions:

Reuben Mammen

Mehek Punjabi

Head Girl:

Jane Rego

Assistant Head Girls:

Rosy Leo

Althea Fernandes

Sustainability Champions:

Aadi Pankaj Katua

Jane Miracline Jebasingh



GRYFFON

Captains:

Benjamin Shehan

Wenuri Cole

Vice Captains:

Enoch Musyoki

Megan Dsilva

House Master/Mistress:

Mr. Trevor Quinny

Ms. Anitha Aseem



PEGASUS

Captains:

Dinaj Mathew

Abiha Amjad

Vice Captains:

Jayden Miranda

Nessa Fernandes

House Master/Mistress:

Mr. Arun John

Ms. Madhubashini Girihagama



PHOENIX

Captains:

Joshua Thapar

Kylie De Sousa

Vice Captains:

Nathan Peter

Inara Edirisinghe

House Master/Mistress:

Mr. Asterio Hernandez

Ms. Carol Thomas



UNICORN

Captains:

Seon Sequeira

Bianca D'Souza

Vice Captains:

Jaden Kotian

Tasia Dlima

House Master/Mistress:

Mr. Anthony Trias

Ms. Avita Franco

THE PREFECT INVESTITURE CEREMONY

We spoke to some of our new leaders: "I always wanted to be a house captain as I was heavily into sports such as basketball and football, so the honour to be the captain of Pegasus was indescribable," says Dinaj Matthew from Year 12. "I always wanted to support the school in any way I could."

Our Head Boy and Head Girl delivering heartfelt speeches inspiring our new prefects with their unwavering commitment to service and leadership. It was a poignant and symbolic moment to represent the outstanding dedication of our esteemed students, and the spirit-filled integrity of the prefects who were given their badges on this memorable day. Our headgirl, Jane Rego says: "This event was particularly memorable for me, as I took the oath to become the head girl of our school. It reminded me of the significance of my role within the school community and filled me with excitement for the year ahead."

And finally, the ceremony was brought to a close with an stirring rendition of the school anthem, a tradition at every significant school function.

"It was a very ineffable moment," says Kyara Lobo of Year 12. "Being a prefect meant that I have the responsibility to look after the school and the students, and it's been a goal of mine to be a prefect at this school since I was here from Year 1."



We extend our heartfelt congratulations to our newly elected prefects, our new role models, our leaders entrusted with responsibility to embody and uphold the core values of respect, integrity and all the fundamental values that our school is built upon.

Resilience is a trait

Antonio Colin - Year 9B

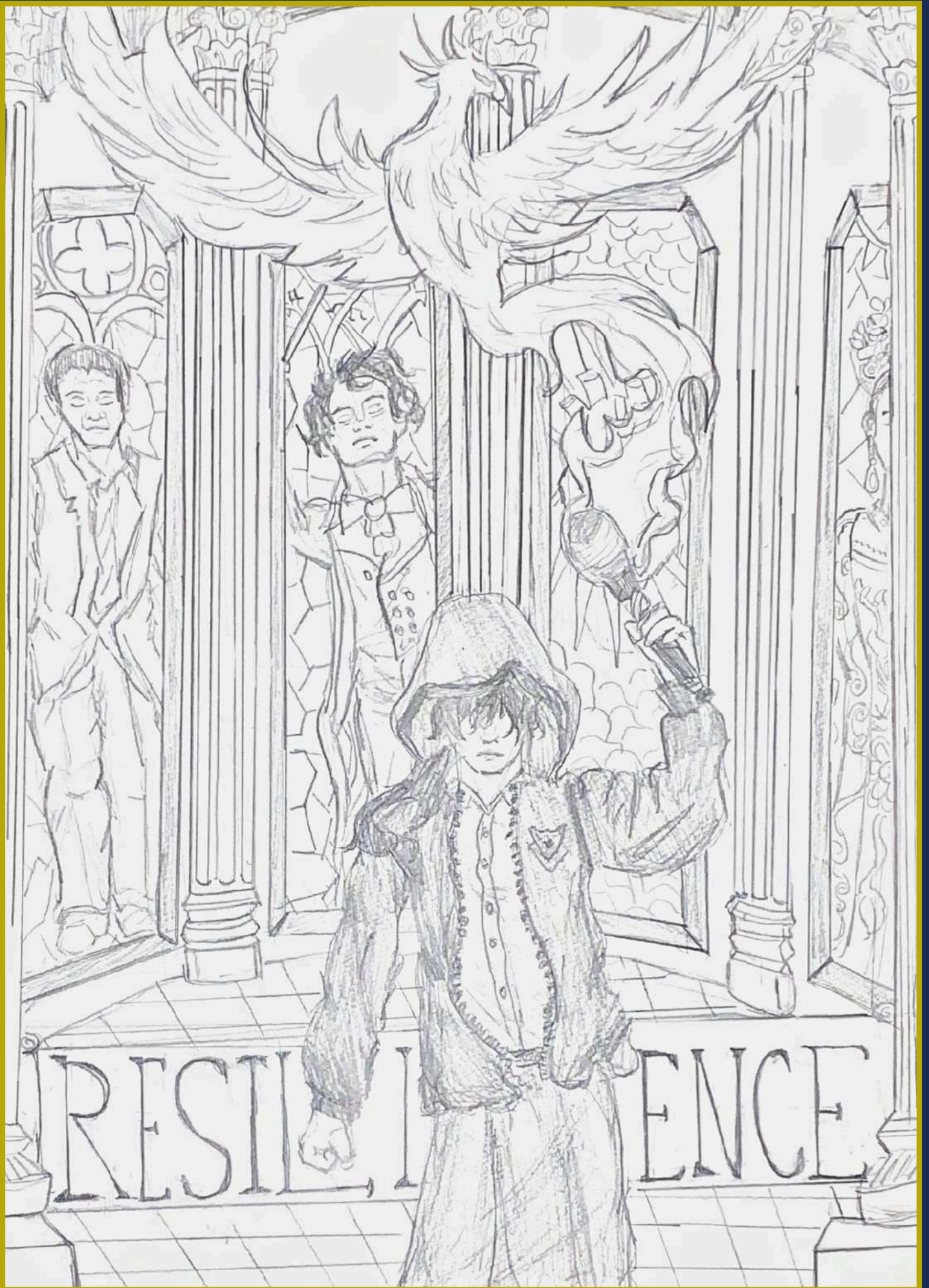
In the quiet storm, a strength is born,
Unseen by eyes, but never torn.
Through trials fierce, through battles long,
The resilient heart beats loud and strong.

Like roots that hold through winds so wild,
It stands its ground, though bruised and riled.
With every fall, it rises high,
A force that will not fade or die.

Through darkest nights and endless days,
It finds its path, it finds its ways.
For resilience is not the absence of pain,
But the courage to rise and try again.

No matter how the world may break,
A resilient soul will always wake.
In every scar as well as in every tear,
It finds its strength and it conquers fear.





The Pheonix

Veronica Malubay - Year 9D



CLASS OF 2024

... Natalie D'Silva, Jilliane Alinan Baldonado
and Maria Theres Kizhakkuden - Year 11D

The 8th of November, was a celebratory day for the batch of 2024 as they received their certificates, the fruits of their hard work in year eleven.

The evening began with students dressed in graduation gowns, sashes, and hats, lining up to take one last class photo to remember their high school days.

At around 5 pm, after our esteemed guests and the parents and family of the graduates were seated in the main hall for the long-awaited ceremony, the event began with the graduating class and their teachers entering the hall in a proud procession to the tunes of gently uplifting music. Every crevice of the hall was adorned with decorations.

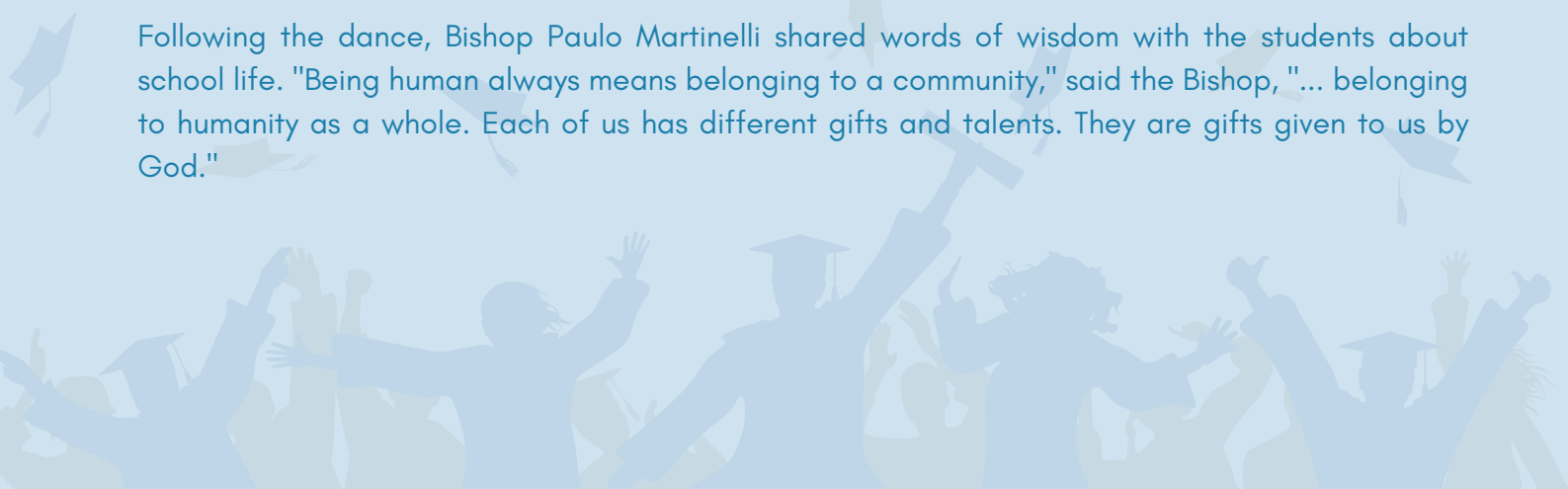
Our beloved principal, Mr. Paul Asir Joseph, began the ceremony with an inspiring speech, speaking on the journey the students partook in to get to the place they are today. He quoted the famous words of Helen Keller:

"The highest result of education is tolerance" which resonated with everyone sitting in the hall.



His uplifting oration was followed by a jaw-dropping performance by four of our teachers! Mrs. Sreeparna, Mrs. Asha Paul, Mrs. Anitha Anthony and Mrs. Arya (From left to right) moved with passion as they presented a classical Indian dance in honour of the graduating students in beautiful traditional attire. The grace and poise with which they moved to the music was indescribably beautiful, to say the least.

Following the dance, Bishop Paulo Martinelli shared words of wisdom with the students about school life. "Being human always means belonging to a community," said the Bishop, "... belonging to humanity as a whole. Each of us has different gifts and talents. They are gifts given to us by God."



2024



Soon after, the roll call commenced. Students queued by class and were called upon by Mrs Kankanika Dutta and Mrs. Susanna Verghese to receive their certificates and scrolls, followed by Mrs. Shobhana Krishnan and Mrs. Rose Libreja who called the High Achievers to come and accept their awards. The well deserving students who made it to the Merit List were called upon next by Mr Warren D'Souza, followed by Mrs Vichitra Gabriella who announced the names of GCSE and GCE Pearson Excellence Awards along with the Outstanding Pearson Learner Award. The smiling students and the proud parents were a true sight to see.



The Pearson Excellence Award is an award given to learners who achieve excellent results across multiple subjects, and it is with gratitude that we remember that our school has always had the honour of being home to many such studious, hard-working students whose excellent results have been our pride and joy!

Well, this year's batch was no different. They proudly brought home amazing results again. St. Mary's students achieved an impressive 40 GCSE and 10 GCE Pearson Excellence Awards, along with the following Outstanding Pearson Learner awards::

Highest Marks in the World Category

- Jane Miracline Jeba Singh, GCSE English Language
- Jasmine Mei Sevilla Madronero, IAS Accounting
- Samira Begum, IAS Accounting

Highest Marks in the Middle East Category

- Jane Miracline Jeba Singh, IGCSE ICT

Highest Marks in the Country Category

- Ryan Gurung, IGCSE Accounting
- Oshadhi Marissa Weeramanthiri, IAS English Literature



Kudos to these brilliant minds! We are so proud to witness your success!



Happy Graduation

Then came an announcement which was an unexpected and wonderful surprise to all. In what may be considered the highest form of victory for the school, St. Mary's Catholic High School, Oud Medha, received the **Pearson Outstanding School Award**, a testament to the dedication and commitment and the excellent quality of education of the institution, built with the hard work of our teachers and students alike. To win this award in the first year of it's institution is nothing short of a tremendous achievement. Mr. Paul, Ms. Lise-Ann and Ms. Vichitra proudly accepted the award from the Pearson representative.

Addressing the crowd next, Dr. Al Kindi (our school's sponsor who has never missed a graduation ceremony!) planted a seed of determination and growth in each of the graduates' minds. He delivered his felicitations with a reminder that education is never-ending; urging the students to not only make their parents proud, but to utilise their talents and knowledge to succeed in their future endeavors.

Adding to the cultural flavors of the evening, Samadhi Fernando, a student from Year 11-E performed a beautiful, elegant dance. Dressed in traditional Srilankan attire, she personified the beautiful culture of her homeland through dance, captivating the audience by her delicate and precise movements.



After this charismatic performance, the school toppers were announced and received their awards from Bishop Paulo Martinelli and Sir Paul. As the names were announced, everyone in the hall rejoiced in the incredible achievements of our Top 6 Graduates, whose dedication, hard work, and perseverance have set them apart. These students have consistently demonstrated excellence, not just in academics but also in upholding their character and commitment to growth. Their journey has been one of resilience, curiosity, and a determination to strive for the best.

Congratulations to our Top 6 — you make us all proud!



School Toppers - Girls:

- Katelyn Dsouza,
- Althea Kate Fernandes,
- Jane Miraclene Jeba Singh

School Toppers - Boys:

- Nikhil Joseph,
- Aadi Pankaj Katua,
- Mahin Majid





Our Valedictorian Katelyn D'souza, then addressed her fellow graduates and the assembled gathering. She thanked all the people who helped her in her success, including her parents, teachers, and friends, who were with her and supported her every step of the way. "...you are capable of incredible things" Katelyn declares, and quotes Dr. Seuss - "Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened."

The last item on the agenda was a fusion dance performed by the graduating class themselves. It was as if the happiness and excitement built up by everyone in the hall burst in the form of this dance. The stage was filled with energetic dancers, dressed in black, moving to the rhythm of a traditional and pop song fusion. Self-choreographed and put together, the students celebrated their batch's achievements, dancing their hearts out, footloose and happy.



As the ceremony drew to a close, the students realised that graduation is more than just a ceremony; it is a celebration of their perseverance, growth, and accomplishment. It marks the culmination of years filled with learning, challenges, friendships, and unforgettable memories. As they bid farewell to this chapter, they carry forward the lessons they've learned, the bonds they've formed, and the dreams they've nurtured. That moment marked not an ending but the beginning of a journey filled with new opportunities, adventures, and milestones waiting to be achieved.

To our graduating class, may you step into the future with confidence, courage, and a heart full of hope.

The world is yours to shape—go make it extraordinary!

"A big thank you to you dear graduates and for all of us, congratulations."

- Katelyn Dsouza, School Valedictorian

... | One Tough Day

Krysten Aggiao - Year 11A

7:55 PM. In her bedroom Lara sits with one of her nostrils blocked and the other taking up Dubai's 30 x 30 fitness challenge, just returning after the marathon. Outside was dark and her family had taken up the living room to give her space to recover from this cold plaguing her.

She sniffs with difficulty. It's a strange combination, she thinks: feeling your body simultaneously deny you your right to air, making you dizzy with the lack of oxygen, yet also spilling out every ounce of liquid within you. Like it can not decide to be a flowing river or an obstinate dam. The clock ticks with regular endurance.

Hearing her own voice in her head like it was pressed down under water, a thought crossed her mind. The way the body builds up its immune system; its practice of resilience against illnesses. Being exposed as much as it can from childhood to all kinds of pathogens, in hopes that the body learns to catalog all sorts of microbial villains, and its methods of handling them for Lara when she faces them in adulthood. A rather complex sort of example, but a form of resilience nonetheless.

Then she looked over to the side of the room where her cat lay sleeping. There's also that sort of resilience that builds off this initial front of uncertainty and adds from past endurances. Milo, a sweet, shy, long dark-furred cutie, just a few days ago had her luscious coat cut so thinly. Oh, Lara's father could not believe just how white their usual black-and-gray baby was truly under the smoky veil of her overcoat.

And, she was so strong about it in the groomer's place too. Lara remembers her first time at a groomer's. She had tried to escape the table by pulling away from the strange man, and yowling out for their aid. But, yesterday, she was an angel--purring, even, when the man several times larger than her scratched behind her ear.

Resilience is a funny thing, Lara reasoned. It was such a simple concept at first, barely needing any more than a few minutes to analyse fully in her mind, yet at a quiet and vulnerable moment like this... The mind's train of thought could lead to strange places sometimes. She turned to the books on her table: a mix of school notes and paperbacks, a few hardcovers, and her personal journals. There too was a story of resilience etched onto their pages, based in both fiction and not.

A weight suddenly calcified on her shoulders and it insisted she lay down. Despite the stuff in her ears, the clock on her desk's ticking grows obnoxiously loud. Her stiff shoulder blades rested awkwardly against the plush bed, and a twist took to her chest. Just how long does she have to weather this cold? She had plans this weekend to hangout with her friends. She can not miss school either. School. Dewey sweat permeated her forehead. School **again**. Just how long until school returns to being the fun place and experience it was in her primary days? Until learning is enjoyable and **worth it** again?

Being resilient. For how long must she stay resilient? With her hackles raised and mind proactive to the next task, next assignment that will apparently alter her life forever--grades wise at least. The twisting in her chest turned vicious and she fought down a few tears. Resilience: to weather adversity, to be tough, to bounce back. Until where was her breaking point? What if Lara had already passed it?
What then?

Mow! Me-mow!

... | One Tough Day

Milo jumped on Lara's bed, fuzzy little face comically rotund with the lack of her neck fur and a little bobble of fur at the end of her tail. She looked positively hilarious; like a realistic balloon animal. A little laugh escaped her.

“She looks just like a lion!” Her mother exclaimed with glee. “A tiny little lion!”

Lara looked at her mother with an incredulous look. “She looks more like a sphynx. Naked rat, almost.”

Her mother gasped softly. “Don’t say that about Milo! She is a lion. A tiger. A tiny, skinny, fierce queen of the jungle. And by jungle, I mean this house.” She regarded Lara and her brother sharply, still with a hint of mirth in her sparkling eyes fixed on Milo. “I want you all to clean your rooms. Now that Milo is all pretty and clean, we should be as clean as her. Go. Go!”

“Just like a tiger,” Lara breathed, and Milo revved up the little engine in her throat.

As Milo took a few turns then dropped down at her comfiest position on Lara's chest, she breathed in her faint scent. The cat purring through her chest turned the tough on her shoulders to dust, and the tension flowed out of her fingertips with Milo's vibrations. Lara took a few moments to pet her cat, smiling as Milo pushed her fluffy head against her fingertips.

What a resilient little cat. She recalled how cooperative Milo was at the salon. Just as Milo had learned that not all people were strange and worthy of mistrust, she had also learned to trust the groomer's firm and guiding hand at the pet salon. Just as her body had caught the cold before and learned how to defend, it was presently working to rid her of it.

She inhaled and exhaled, wavering with Milo's strong purrs. This illness will get better. Milo will regrow her fur.. Another day will dawn, Lara will have another chance to get better, learn more effectively, then--she hears her mother and aunt laugh loudly at a particularly funny joke--the time spent with her loved ones will be sweeter for it. She closes her eyes. Milo keeps purring. The clock keeps ticking.

Resilience takes time. These storms will pass, and she will be tougher for it.



Saint Mary's Catholic High School Inter House Tournament 2024

A Thrilling Display of Athleticism and Spirit

... Abiha Amjad - Year 12

The air was charged with anticipation at Saint Mary's Catholic High School on November 15, 2024, as students gathered for the highly anticipated Inter House Tournament. The vibrant energy of the day electrified the atmosphere as four houses—Pegasus, Phoenix, Unicorn, and Griffon—faced off in an unforgettable showdown of talent, heart, and fierce competition. The stakes were high, and with each passing minute, the drama of the tournament intensified, bringing heart-pounding moments and exhilarating triumphs.

The Day Unfolds: A Schedule of Excitement

The tournament kicked off in full swing in the afternoon, with Volleyball and Badminton taking place simultaneously on the school's courts. The competition was fierce, as fans eagerly bounced between the two courts, their cheers filling the air. The electric atmosphere set the tone for an unforgettable afternoon of sporting excellence.

Pegasus House Soars to Victory in Volleyball and Basketball

In Volleyball, Pegasus House was unstoppable from the moment the whistle blew. Their team was a whirlwind of coordination and power, dominating the court with rapid serves, strategic blocks, and thunderous spikes. The energy from the crowd gathered around the volleyball court was contagious as their opponents struggled to keep up. Pegasus showed no mercy, claiming victory with a decisive win that left their supporters roaring with excitement.



At the same time, Badminton was heating up. Unicorn House displayed exceptional focus and precision as their players glided across the court, executing each shot with perfection.

Every rally was a nail-biting contest of reflexes, with the shuttlecock flying back and forth with remarkable speed. Unicorn's doubles teams were a well-oiled machine, and their hard-fought victory was met with thunderous applause, as they were crowned the Badminton champions.

Saint Mary's Catholic High School Inter House Tournament 2024

Phoenix House Ignites the Field in Football

The excitement continued as the tournament shifted to the Football field, where the House of Phoenix was ready to make its mark. The match was a true spectacle, with each pass and tackle raising the stakes. The crowd gathered along the pitch, watching in awe as Phoenix's players exhibited strategic brilliance and sheer determination. Their star forward stole the show, scoring a breathtaking goal that sent the crowd into a frenzy. As the game reached its finale, Phoenix's defense held strong, securing their well-deserved victory and sending their supporters into a raucous celebration.



The Final Showdown: Basketball Takes Center Court

As the afternoon transitioned into evening, all eyes were on the Basketball court, where the final event of the tournament unfolded. The atmosphere was electric, with the crowd packed around the court, waiting to see which house would take home the final championship of the day. Pegasus House, having already claimed victory in Volleyball, had one final chance to solidify their dominance.

The game was a thrilling back-and-forth, with both teams exchanging quick breaks and spectacular shots. The tension was palpable as the scoreline remained tight. In the final moments, Pegasus House's players showed incredible composure, sinking key shots and executing flawless plays under pressure. With the final whistle, Pegasus House emerged victorious once again, securing their second win of the day and capping off a perfect tournament with the basketball title.



Saint Mary's Catholic High School Inter House Tournament 2024

And here is a heartfelt shout out to the Griffon House for their undying spirit of passion and resilience. Though victory eluded them, their performance was nothing short of inspiring. With every match, their athletes gave it their all, displaying an indomitable spirit that ignited the crowd. They fought fiercely, their passion radiating from the court in waves, their unwavering determination never faltering. It is only fair to say that Griffon House, true to its name, roared in defiance against the odds, proving that the heart of a champion lies not just in the trophy, but in the fight itself.



The event was a testament to the hard work and dedication of the individuals who organized the event. However without the support of our Senior Leadership Team and our sports teachers, and especially our Vice Principal Ms. Lise-Ann, this tournament would not have happened. Their unwavering commitment to fostering the school spirit, sportsmanship, and excellence in our students was evident throughout the day. Ms. Lise-Ann, whose leadership and vision made this tournament a reality, worked closely with the sports teachers and house captains to ensure a smooth run.



And then there were the spectators—the pulse of the tournament. The courts and pitches were alive with energy, a sea of faces cheering, clapping, and chanting for their houses. The rhythmic beat of music blasted through the air, lifting spirits, igniting passion, and adding an extra layer of excitement to the already electrifying atmosphere. The energy from the crowd was infectious, turning every serve, every shot, and every goal into a moment of shared joy. It was not just the athletes who were on fire that day, but the entire school community united in their love for the game and their school.

Saint Mary's Catholic High School Inter House Tournament 2024

A Celebration of Sportsmanship, Spirit, and Excellence

In the end, the Inter House Tournament was more than just a competition—it was a celebration of the values that make Saint Mary's Catholic High School so special: teamwork, perseverance, sportsmanship, and community. While the winners basked in glory, all participants showed incredible respect for each other, embodying the true spirit of competition.

As the evening set in and the final whistle blew on the Basketball game, the echoes of the crowd's cheers lingered in the air, and the anticipation for the next event began to build. One thing is certain—the legacy of the 2024 Inter House Tournament will live on in the hearts of all those who were fortunate to witness it.





Shivangshi Mitra - Year 8E

SAINTZ IN ACTION:

HEART, HUSTLE, AND HIGHLIGHTS!

... Jaden Kotian and Alrick D'souza - Year 12

At St. Mary's we believe in cultivating not just the agility of the mind, but also of the body and as such, sports plays a big role in the students' life at our school. Our energetic girls and boys teams for football, basketball and volleyball are our pride and joy. Our teams regularly play in tournaments both in and outside of school. After a long summer break, the teams returned to the court, perhaps a little rusty, but filled with enthusiasm. In this new academic year our teams took on a number of challenges across the board.

Here are a few highlights.

Basketball

The basketball team has painted a picture of resilience and glory for our school. Through the four tournaments they have competed in so far, their journey has been nothing short of spectacular.

With Rosy Leo as the team captain and Ms. Aevelyn as their unwavering guide, the girls entered their first challenge of the year, the Sundee Batavya Memorial Basketball tournament at DPS. To be fair, our girls were off to a rocky start in their first match of the season against WIN. However, by their second match against IHS, they were back in form, redefining their strategy and securing their first win of the year. This victory wasn't just a score on the board; it was a spark of hope, a comeback that ignited motivation in every player.

Riding this momentum, the team powered through the tournament until their decisive semi against the DPS Dubai team. After a fierce match, in extra time our girls unfortunately lost the game, by ONE point!



Skyline Tournament: A Victory for the Ages

Next up was the Skyline Tournament, where our basketball team truly shone. Team captain Ananya was determined to make every second count, as it was her last game for our school. Inspired by her leadership, the team fought their way into the finals.

The championship game against The Philadelphia Private School was a nail-biter, and our team triumphed by a single point. Rosy's swiftness and agility made her an undeniable standout, earning her the MVP title. She outscored the opposing team combined, showcasing her exceptional skill.

It wasn't just another competition; it was a masterclass in sportsmanship. The team won gold, marking the tournament as one of their most memorable achievements. While the trophy symbolized their victory, the true reward lay in the experience and the display of their teamwork and effort. They played with sharp focus as a cohesive and confident unit under Rosy's able leadership and Ms. Aevelyn's encouragement and unerring guidance. The team left their coach and all of the school beaming with pride!



Boys basketball teams were also actively participating in tournaments this term. For their first go against other schools this year, our boys participated in the Sundeeep Batavya Tournament at DPS.

In the U12 category, the team led by Gabriel of 6C was on fire! From their very first match against DPS Sharjah, our boys did not yield an inch, tackling all that came their way like a well oiled machine. At the end of a terrific run, our junior firebrands went up against TWS in the finals. After a truly spectacular show of team work and perseverance, our boys fighting with all they had, the team returned as runners up of the tournament. And in an extremely proud moment for all of us, Jayson Jared Camero (Yr5F) was awarded the Most Promising Player of the tournament.

The U16 category unfortunately did not fare as well. This tournament took place simultaneously with the one at TMS and our school made a critical decision to reserve some of the players for the TMS match later in the day and this made things harder on both fronts. It made sense tactically, but it definitely left the Saintz team shorthanded for both tournaments. Two of our key players got injured in the course of these tournaments, and our team was not able to realize their full potential. In spite of giving it their all, they had to accept defeat and return home.

Still, team captain Ethan Xavier was proud of the effort. "The team gave it their all, and I'm really proud of everyone. There's so much potential here," he said.



Football

Football girls and boys teams also tested their mettle against other teams this season.

The football girls teams have scripted a tale of resilience and pride for our school. Starting with the tournament at GMA.

The football pitch resonated with determination as our girls took on GMA in the U18 tournament. Battling adversity, including a sidelined player due to injury, the team played not only for themselves but also for their injured teammate.

The team gave no quarter the entire tournament, winning against all schools that they went up against right from the first match against GOOEHS.

In the finals they faced off against the hosts, GMA. A standout moment came when Tasia stepped up to take a penalty. Bearing the weight of her team's hopes, she delivered a precise, confident strike, securing a crucial point. Cheered on by the enthusiastic parents and teammates from the sidelines, which lifted their spirits, our team fought valiantly.



This match held special significance for the team's captain, Erika, as it marked her final season with the school team. She gave her all, inspiring her teammates with her poise and experience. Her leadership and Ms. Fredita's guidance proved to be the glue that held the team together.

Their efforts earned them the runners-up position, a result marked by a rollercoaster of emotions—highs, lows, and unforgettable moments.

Adding to the glory, Nathanya Fonseka, the team's fearless goalkeeper, was awarded the title of Best Goalkeeper of the Tournament. Her agility and sheer determination made her an impenetrable wall against opponents.



Nathanya Fonseka Best Goal keeper of the Tournament, Team captain Erika and Ms.Fredita

SAINTZ IN ACTION:

In their debut match in the U14 category, the team faced an unfortunate loss in the first game. However, this setback became a critical learning opportunity, sparking their growth and development.

In the Skyline tournament, the boys team went up against Apple International in their first match, cruising to a spectacular win. Our boys in white crushed their opponents with precise footwork and amazing team effort. After a nail biting match, the teams went into penalty kick offs, our team winning by an incredulous 5-1! Off to a great start!

Next up was the match against Arab Unity, which proved to be a tough one to take. In the first half, they scored a goal, bringing the score to 1-0 in their favor at halftime. But in the second half Arab Unity clinched what turned out to be the decisive goal. Despite taking an early lead and much to the disappointment of the supporters for our team, the final score was a hard-fought 2-1 victory for Arab Unity.



This sadly, took our team out of the equation at Skyline, ultimately being unable to secure a spot in the quarterfinals. However, the Saintz players gave everything they had on the ground with remarkable fighting spirit. With this same determination, we are confident that Saintz will return stronger and triumph in their future battles.

All our sports teams are eagerly preparing and looking forward to new tournaments, including the Saintz Sports Festival. We wish them the best of luck going forward.



UNIVERSITY FAIRS

Exploring New Horizons

... Faseeha Abubaker - Year 11E

At last, the much-awaited event that the senior students eagerly look forward to, with unbridled enthusiasm, was organised during September 17-19: UNIVERSITY FAIRS! These fairs offered an unmatched opportunity to explore countless pathways for a thriving future, and served as an ideal occasion to collect a wealth of mementos!

Students from St.Mary's Dubai, rejoiced as they welcomed the numerous university and career-guidance oriented events, as soon as the school year began.

Imagine the excitement when you could explore the diverse facilities and programs offered by a university in an interactive, double-decker bus! Year 12 students embarked on Middlesex University's MDXplorer bus, which introduced a distinctive approach to help students meet their academic queries and interests. Loaded with games, VR Headsets and even a ball pit, it was an experience to behold!



Additionally, representatives from 17 Universities based in the UAE, equipped students with some essential knowledge about programs, scholarships, alternative education pathways and exciting exchange opportunities with universities abroad, thus providing students with a comprehensive overview of a plethora of options available to them. Similarly, education consultants such as Qadri International, UniHawk and Gyanberry also presented students with their resourceful, tailored career-guidance sessions, extending their assistance and guidance to university entrance examinations.

Aliza Asif from 11E while reflecting on the experience said, "Initially, I was excited about the university merchandise, but after attending the fair, my perspective about my future goals broadened. Many students struggle to find purpose and direction, and the fair was invaluable for offering prospects aligned with their career interests."

On the 19th of September 2024, the School's main hall was filled with a large number of representatives from prestigious international universities— from the US to Australia— sharing valuable insights with ardent, prospective students. It was indeed an exhilarating opportunity for students, as they could delightfully interact with university representatives and gain a real glimpse into campus life abroad.



The Main Hall buzzed with zealous minds, keen on understanding and exploring the education pathways that were well-suited to their aspirations. Ms.Tina, the School's Career Counsellor emphasised on the significance of this meet. "These events provide our students with a unique opportunity to connect with universities and gain firsthand knowledge about their future educational paths."

The University fair held in School did undeniably open students' eyes to the previously unfathomable ocean of possibilities that exist in the horizon of higher education.





Kathlin Celestine - Year 10D

BREATHTAKING VIEWS AND RICH HISTORIES

Switzerland & Germany!

... Brianna Dsouza - Year 11A

In late June, a group of 27 enthusiastic students from St. Mary's set out on an international adventure to Switzerland and Germany, accompanied by our teachers Miss Lise-Ann and Miss Renthil along with Miss Lavita, the tour manager.

The journey began at Dubai Airport, where we gathered on June 26th to board an early morning Swiss Airlines flight to Switzerland. The anticipation in the air was palpable, our excitement for the days ahead, a chance to see new places and make new friends kept our spirits high.

DAY 1 -ARRIVAL ● ● ● ● ●

We touched down in Zurich early on June 27th, greeted by a cool breeze and the promise of great fun. After checking into our hotel, we had a quick bite, freshened up and set off for a guided city tour of Zurich.

We started our tour with a visit to the ETH Zurich, alma mater of the world famous physicist, Albert Einstein. Later as we strolled through Zurich, the city's blend of modernity and history captivated us all. The shimmering lake was a sight, particularly as we spotted elegant swans and ducks gliding across the water. The architecture of Zurich was a feast for the eyes—each building seemed to tell a story, some with their vintage charms and some with their contemporary designs. It was like stepping into a wonderland—a kind you've never seen before. It was a place that tempted you to click a pic wherever you turned. And we did, we tried to capture it all through the lenses of our phones as well as our eyes!



After lunch at a local cafe, we continued on to the highlight of our first day, exploring the rich history of football at the FIFA Museum. We were amazed by the souvenirs and displays that showcased the passion for the sport worldwide—the museum even displayed the jerseys of FIFA's 211 member associations!





Switzerland & Germany!

DAY 2 - GERMANY & NATURE

Our first stop on day two was Rhine Falls, a stunning place formed during the last Ice Age and one of the largest waterfalls in Europe—almost 15,000 years old! It was a strange sight indeed to see the border of Switzerland and Germany marked in the middle of the water with a flag! The falls were surrounded by lush greenery, evoking a magical fairy tale like atmosphere, with the roar of cascading water.

Next we went to the Black Forest, known for its evocative wooden chalets and deep, gloomy forests. "Black Forest" refers to the thick canopy of evergreens that creates shadows on the forest floor! We were later treated to a demonstration on creating a sweet dessert. What dessert, you wonder? A Black Forest cake of course! It was a unique experience for all of us ,with some even helping to make it!

After a filling meal of local German cuisine, followed by (naturally) black forest cake that we made for dessert, we proceeded to the cuckoo clock factory. The classic cuckoo clock originated in the Black Forest region in the 18th century, and we learned that these clocks are renowned for their exquisite carvings and endearing, hourly bird noises that are handcrafted with meticulous care. In a moment of wonder we witnessed the very factory, which is shaped like a giant cuckoo clock, come alive and chime the hour before we left



Our adventure followed at Lake Titisee, a lovely glacial lake encircled by mountains. The scenery was breathtaking. We also indulged in natural ice cream from a local vendor. The rich flavours melted in our mouths as we enjoyed the stunning views, snapping countless photos against the lake's sparkling waters.





Switzerland & Germany!

DAY 3 - ADVENTURE AT MT. TITLIS

June 29th dawned bright and early as we prepared for a great day at Mt. Titlis. The views on the way were breathtaking, with endless snow-capped mountains and lush valleys with domestic animals below.

We warmed up with lunch that included unfamiliar but comforting local staples and chocolate mousse, a perfect treat that was the best way to end our meal. A winter wonderland met us upon reaching the top of the mountain, cold air freezing us the whole way, but not enough to deter us. The pretty white snow invited us to immediately set out to build a snowman (Jerry!), which soon led to a playful snowball fight, echoing with laughter as we enjoyed each other's company.

JERRY
The Saintz
Snowman



After that, we travelled to the charming city of Lucerne, where we visited the famous Lion Monument; a poignant memorial to Swiss Guards who lost their lives during the French Revolution.

DAY 4 - THRILLS AT EUROPA PARK



On June 30th, we headed to Germany to the most awaited attraction of all... Europa Park! One of the largest theme parks in Europe; our hearts beating with excitement. The predicted rain and cooler temperatures did not deter us at all. We dove in with enthusiasm, navigating the thrilling roller coasters and attractions, making the most of it. The park was a wonder, with each area themed uniquely, transporting us to different cultures and adventures.



Rides like Blue Fire, Voltron and Silver Star had us screaming in delight, and we may have even dragged Miss Renthli along on a few heart-pounding rides, her laughter ringing out amidst the thrill.





Switzerland & Germany!

DAY 5 - CULTURE & CHOCOLATE

We started the first day of July with a tour of the Swiss National Museum, where we were engrossed in Switzerland's rich history and culture. We studied its history, from its infancy to its development into a neutral state known for its wealth and inventiveness. The interesting and educational displays stimulated our interest in the world.



Next on our itinerary was the long-awaited Lindt Chocolate Factory. As we learned more about its history and production process, the air was filled with the intricate aroma of chocolate. After a delicious selection of samples, we each took home a supply of chocolates for our families. The experience felt sweeter than fiction, a delightful ending to a culturally rich day.



DAY 6 -

It was the last day of our trip and it was time to gather our belongings and travel home. The six-hour flight back to Dubai was not one of exhaustion but rather one of joy and treasured memories.

Everyone was busy trying to commit it all to memory, the things we did, the sights we saw, the newness of it all and most importantly the friendships forged. We will miss all those Migros trips (the local supermarket that quickly became our favourite haunt for snacks and essentials throughout our trip (literally every day!), the fun and games after we returned to the hotel everyday and looking forward to new adventures each day.

This trip was a journey of adventure, friendship, and personal development rather than merely a vacation. We found new things about our companions, like the fact that Spendian and Sancia were terrific photographers, that Ms. Lise-Ann knows the lyrics to every ABBA song there is, that Reuben is this powerhouse of energy that never runs out and many other such small things. With hearts full of gratitude and minds full of stories to share, our school trip to Germany and Switzerland was undoubtedly the best time ever. In addition to souvenirs, we returned with unforgettable memories that we will cherish forever and a fresh sense of awe and a desire to see more of the world. It truly was a trip that felt like it had been plucked from our wildest dreams.



Will

... Naomi Rebecca Dsouza - Year 10D

A delicate seed in the waste ground,
No gentle touch, no soft sound,
Just wind and frost, a world so unkind,
Yet the life within, it starts to find,
A tiny root, pushing, unbound.

The storms may rage and branches may break,
The fragile stem begins to shake,
But deep within, a will to thrive,
To bend, not break
But to stay alive,
A silent strength, all goodness to intake.

The sun may burn, drought may wither,
But whispered tales of doubt and fear linger,
Those roots run deep, and hold on tight,
Through darkest days and lonelier nights,
A hidden spring, always so near.

Though scarred and worn, it stands so tall,
A story to rise and call,
To face the world, with courage so bold,
A story whispered, one that should be told,
Resilience blooms, embracing all,
Let none feel like a nobody at all.





"from the ashes"

Delaine Adel Gonsalves, Yr 12



An Onam-atic STAFF PARTY



... Olivia Roy - Year 12

An occasion of fun and joy, a culmination of cultural unity, and a cacophony of celebrations marked the harvest festival of the Indian state of Kerala, Onam, as it was observed by members of the Marian family on the 13th of September. The festivities were enjoyed not only by the students, but also by our beloved teachers and office staff.

Members of our staff took the initiative to make the day exceptionally memorable for all the teachers and administrative personnel who work tirelessly to ensure that the students at St. Mary's always experience a sense of cultural warmth and comfort.

This sentiment was conveyed by the event organisers, Mrs Shobana Krishnan and Mrs. Susanna Verghese, who shared that preparations for the Onam staff party included "organising a variety of cultural events and activities while keeping in mind Kerala's traditions."



A vibrant exhibit of the traditional Onam 'pookalam' was displayed at the entrance of the girls' quadrangle, intricately arranged by some of our teachers. To the surprise of many, the pookalam remained fresh and untouched for an additional week. Upon further investigation, the reason for this was revealed: it was made with coloured desiccated coconut instead of flowers!

In the festive spirit, as the afternoon's events progressed, Mr. Chandra, our subject leader for Physical Education, brought great delight to the party by dressing up as the generous King Mahabali, the beloved king of Kerala, who is closely associated with the origin of the festival of Onam.

It is often difficult to imagine teachers engaging in any other activities beyond preparing lesson plans for the students. However, the teaching and non teaching staff of St Mary's captivated everyone present that day by embracing their creative talents, performing a mellifluous medley of 4-5 Malayalam songs that showcased the profound depth of lyrics when rendered with heart and soul.

This was followed by a resplendent performance of the traditional Onam dance, 'Thiruvathira', by 12 teachers, all adorned in the white and gold sarees traditionally associated with the festival.



HAPPY ONAM



According to many teachers, the preparations gave them a chance to relax, excel within their comfort zones, and enjoy quality time with one another during practice staybacks and quick in-between rehearsals.

Mrs. Anita Anthony, one of the dance choreographers, expressed her pride in seeing how the culture of Kerala fostered a profound sense of unity within our Catholic school community. She noted how everyone came together in joy and celebration, transcending the boundaries of religion and cultural differences.

She further added, 'It gave me such a nostalgic feeling of my younger days, when I took part in such events like school and state competitions.' The true extent of the impact of these lovely activities was relayed in the endless applause of the audience as they cheered for their colleagues and friends. This was a touching reminder of the fact that the fountain of youth lies not in the age or body of an individual, but rather within their heart.



Happy Onam



To conclude the eventful afternoon, the staff were treated to a traditional Kerala lunch meal, known as the Onam 'sadhya', a decadent blend of savoury curries, spicy mixed vegetables, tangy pickle, crispy papadams, and last but definitely not the least, a variety of sweet payasams, all served with piping hot white rice. For many staff members, it was a completely different experience, and our Malayali teachers enjoyed showing them the right way to partake in it.

Many of the teachers interviewed here at Saintz highlighted just how the Onam celebrations were unlike any they had seen before. "Onam is a celebration of Kerala's cultural identity, values of compassion and sense of community," a feat that was effortlessly achieved by our dearest staff. It was more than a simple commemoration of tradition - it was a beautiful display of tolerance to see the teachers come together with the true motive of representing 'unity in diversity' to the Marian family and prioritising their colleagues' party memorabilia over their own.





A SPLASH OF COLOR, CULTURE, AND UNITY!



... Mehek Punjabi - Year 12

Onam came to life at Saintz School in the most spectacular way! The energy was infectious as students, teachers, and staff all came together to celebrate this beloved festival from Kerala. Dressed in their most dazzling traditional attire, students brought the spirit of Onam to life, while teachers and staff worked their magic, creating a vibrant “Pookkalam” in the school’s reception—adding a pop of colour and warmth to the day’s celebrations. It was a day filled with joy, cultural pride, and a deep sense of community.

Onam is so much more than a harvest festival; it’s a celebration of unity, fairness, and the triumph of good over evil. It’s about remembering the return of King Mahabali, a wise and just ruler who brought prosperity and equality to his people. Here at Saintz, where we’re proud to celebrate a tapestry of cultures, Onam is a powerful reminder of the importance of coming together as one community, no matter where we’re from.



Behind the scenes of this colorful celebration was the effort of many teachers and staff, like Mrs. Shobhana Krishnan, Mrs. Susanna Verghese etc. As Mrs. Shobhana put it, ‘Onam brings us together to not just celebrate a tradition, but to honour the values of respect, and inclusivity. To recognize the beauty of diversity and create a space where every culture is celebrated.’

In the UAE, tolerance and diversity aren’t just ideals—they’re the foundation of who we are. With the National Tolerance Programme launched in 2016, the UAE is leading the way in promoting mutual respect and peace across cultures. The programme encourages young people to embrace diversity and build understanding, ensuring that future generations grow up as global citizens free from extremism. Celebrating Onam at Saintz fits perfectly into this vision, as it not only highlights the richness of Kerala’s culture but also reinforces the UAE’s commitment to fostering an inclusive and respectful society.

At Saintz, every celebration like Onam is a chance to deepen our sense of unity, embracing our differences and growing stronger together.





A Kaleidoscope of Light:

SAINTZ DIWALI 2024 CELEBRATION

... Mehek Punjabi -Year 12

Diwali 2024 at Saintz was a testament to the beauty of simplicity. The usual humdrum of uniforms gave way to a riot of colourful outfits, with students and staff alike embracing the spirit of the festival of lights. The festive cheer spread as the halls sparkled with the warmth of camaraderie.

As Miss Kankanika aptly put it, 'Sometimes, the smallest gestures—like wearing vibrant colours and sharing smiles—are enough to ignite the spirit of a festival.'



Diwali, rooted in Hindu mythology, commemorates the victory of good over evil and light over darkness. It is said to mark Lord Rama's return to Ayodhya after his 14-year exile and victory over the demon king Ravana. Yet, the festival transcends its mythological origins; it's a time to gather with loved ones, reflect on our blessings, and renew our spirits. In today's fast-paced world, holding on to such traditions is more crucial than ever.

Acts as simple as lighting a diya or dressing up for the occasion serve as powerful reminders to cherish and preserve our cultural heritage. The celebration at Saintz also reflected the importance of diversity and tolerance, values that are deeply ingrained in the UAE's ethos



In a nation renowned for its multicultural fabric, festivals like Diwali aren't just Indian celebrations—they become opportunities for people from all walks of life to come together. By donning colourful clothes and participating in the day's joy, Saintz embraced this spirit of unity, reminding us all of the UAE's vision: that diversity is not a barrier but a bridge.

At Saintz, our community is truly a melting pot of cultures. True to form, we were all very enthusiastic about being able to be a part of traditions new to us, embracing the spirit of the festival and above all joining in with our friends and teachers who do celebrate this "Festival of Lights". In all honesty, we didn't just celebrate a festival; we celebrated a universal truth: that unity, tolerance, and tradition are the brightest lights of all.



behind these pages

Student Reporters



Ali, Shourya, Gerleeza, Yafet, Alrick, Jaden, Umer, Mariya Shen, Filza, Faseeha, Karis, Jillian, Chloe, Jane Brianna, Jillian, Maria, Jane, Natalie, Nishika, Olivia & Abiha
(Not in picture: Mehek, Victor & Jewindu)

Faculty Team



Renthi, Bindhu, Jillian, Priya, Carol, Kankanika, Jessie, Seena, Rose, Anitha, Juliet Lise Ann, Ashfaq, Sunitha & Sreeparna



Thank You