

ST. MARGARET'S CONNECT



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IN THIS ISSUE

Announcements

School Name Change

New Members

Membership

SMSS Work Attachment & Job-Shadowing (WAJS) Programme
(Reflections by Sec 3 Students / Feedback from Parents & Mentors)

From Daughter to Mother - A reflection by an Ex-Student

SMESA CNY Vist to St. Andrew's Cathedral Home (Outreach Programme) on 04 February 2022, Friday at 3.30pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

SMESA Annual General Meeting 2022 on 23 April 2022, Saturday via ZOOM

SMESA visit to St. Andrew's Cathedral Home (Outreach/Chaplaincy Programme)

(Visits subject to further advice from the relevant authorities)

Notes :

1) Amendments to SMESA constitution have been approved by members during AGM held on 17th April 2021 and approved by ROS on 25th August 2021. Please refer to our website for the amended constitution.

2) Due to COVID-19, all other events are either in virtual mode or postponed until further notice.

A green-themed graphic with a bokeh effect. It features the text 'Important Announcement' in a cursive font, followed by 'SMESA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022' in bold, uppercase letters. Below this, the date 'Date : 23rd April 2022', time 'Time : 2.30pm', and 'Virtual Meeting via Zoom' are listed. At the bottom left is the SMESA logo, and at the bottom right is the text 'St. Margaret's Ex-Students' Association'.

Please look out for an email coming your way regarding this AGM. If you do not receive by 8th April 2022, please reach out to us at the contact below. We need your attendance and support and hope to receive your RSVP by 15th April 2022.

For enquiries to the above events, Please e-mail us at smesa.sg@gmail.com or Whatsapp at +65 8852-4621

All SMESA Newsletters will be distributed in soft copies. Hard copies available upon request only.



School Name Change effective 1st January 2023

We began as St. Margaret's School, founded by Mrs Maria Dyer in 1842. Over the years, we evolved to become St. Margaret's Primary School and St. Margaret's Secondary School. As the oldest girls' school in the Far East, we have developed a rich heritage throughout the 180 years, nurturing a community of learners with the school motto of Charity, Patience and Devotion and school values as our guiding principles.

To honour the legacy of Mrs Dyer and better reflect our shared historical identity and heritage, the schools will be renamed to "St. Margaret's School (Primary)" and "St. Margaret's School (Secondary)" respectively next year, from 1 January 2023. The effective date of the name change has been formally approved by the Ministry of Education and Diocese of Singapore.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome aboard the following new members :-

	SMPS	SMSS
1. Myra Chia Wei Ying	2000	2005
2. Samantha Chua	1999	2003
3. Poonam Pathak	1997	2001
4. Mak Heon	None	2004

SMESA MEMBERSHIP

We have both life membership and Youth membership available. Please consider joining SMESA by going to our website at <http://www.smesa.org.sg/membership>.

SMSS Work Attachment / Job Shadowing Programme

(Continued on Page 4)

The Work Attachment/Job Shadowing (WAJS) Programme provides the opportunity for our students to learn more about different occupations and discover their own aptitude and talents. The programme also allows our students to cultivate better work habits such as discipline, commitment and perseverance.

In alignment with the national posture, the WAJS Programme was carried out remotely in 2021. Attachments ranged from a duration of one to three weeks and students worked on projects relevant to the functions of the organization. Communicating via Zoom and email, students were guided closely by mentors from various organisations and teachers from our Education and Career Guidance team to complete their projects.

We are grateful to our partners for supporting our students in trying this new mode of WAJS:

- Confucius Institute, NTU
- National Library Board
- Little Oaks Montessori Kindergarten

Overall, students, parents and mentors were very satisfied with the engagement during the programme. The following are snippets from the reflections of students and feedback from parents and mentors.

Reflections by Students

What challenges did you face in building working relationship?

I think one obstacle would be the fact that we were not able to physically meet and discuss the work project, so most of our communication was done via emails, text messages or Zoom calls. However, both my teammate and mentors were equally enthusiastic to check in with one another, whether it was to clear any doubts or give feedback. I feel that this shared sense of excellence and determination that everyone possessed greatly helped us overcome this obstacle of not being able to meet face-to-face.

Elaborate on the skills/knowledge gained

When I first started this work attachment, I was not entirely sure of how I should present myself around children. After a few Zoom sessions, I learnt how to be myself and not be so afraid of what the children might think of me. I learnt that teaching children is not easy at all, as it takes a lot of work and patience to understand them.

I would like to make the following suggestion(s) for the programme:

I feel that the programme could have given us more work and I hope that we can go down the library in person as things would be more interesting and fun that way.



Meeting with my teammate online.
Teamwork is key to success.



SMSS Work Attachment / Job Shadowing Programme

(Continued from Page 3)

Feedback from Parents

In your opinion, how has the programme benefited your child/ ward?

It has allowed her to express her creativity in design and explore possible job opportunities in the design/illustration industry. I think this Work Attachment allowed her to gain valuable experience that will help her make more informed choices in her future career path.

What difficulties did your child / ward encounter with the programme?

She was skeptical about doing her presentation in front of everyone. However, after a few rounds of practice with her peers, she became more comfortable and confident.

Other comments.

Overall, I am pleased with the engagement of the library and the students in this programme. Well done NLB!

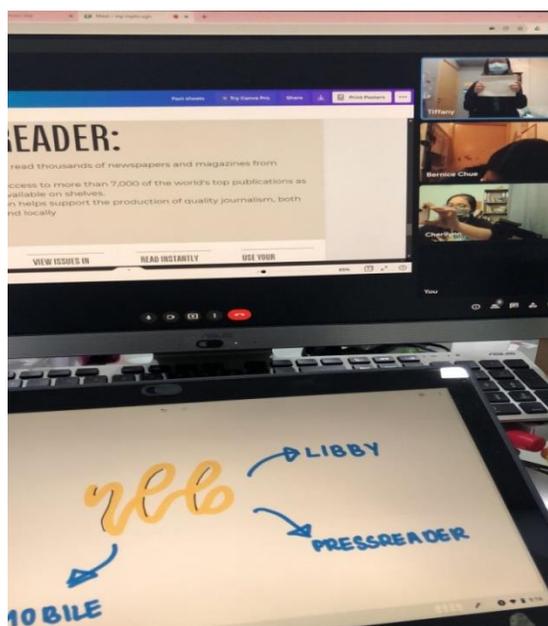
Feedback from Mentors

All mentors were pleased with the support provided to them before the start and during the attachment. All partners indicated interest to continue offering remote work attachment to our students. Having observed our students working in person at their organisations in previous attachments, mentors were impressed by our students' ability to cope with working remotely during the attachment.

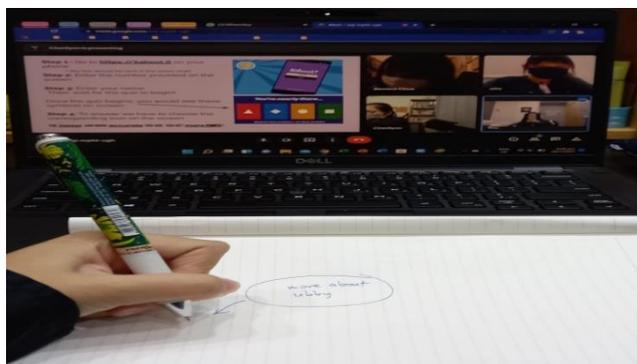
Moving forward, the school will continue to explore how to maximize students' engagement during WAJS while protecting their well-being
 . WAJS 2022 will take place between 7 November to 25 November.



A typical WFH day.



Using more than 1 device for efficiency.



Taking notes during meeting.

From Daughter to Mother

By Mrs Cheong-Dio Denise

Mother of Quintessa, Quentin and Quiana Cheong

(Continued on page 6)

Six years ago, my firstborn entered Primary One. As a teacher at St Margaret's Primary, and an alumni of both St Margaret's Primary and Secondary, my roots in the St Margaret's family tree run very deep. It was no question that she would don the polka-dotted uniform and learn all the secrets of St Margaret's that only her students will know. She would meet some of my old teachers who are still teaching in the school, and experience the nurturing, character-building environment that is the St Margaret's culture.

On a practical note, it was also a logistically sensible move as when she is in Primary 5, my youngest child will join her in SMPS. This would simplify our morning school drop-off routine that most parents have to suffer through while their children are in primary school. The girls will come with me, and my son will go Up and On with my husband, to experience how rascals can also become gentlemen.

As a primary school teacher who teaches all levels, I know full well how P1s will struggle with information overload from both teachers and parents, sensory overload from all the sights and sounds throughout the whole school day, emotional regulation as they learn to interpret the actions and words of those around them, and also, performance anxiety when they have to speak up for themselves to order food or ask their teacher a question.

With all this in mind, I sought to establish a reliable routine which my daughter would become familiar with more quickly. Knowing her, I actively avoided extending her day in school by adjusting my workload so she did not attend after school care, otherwise I believe that meltdowns would become a nightly affair, and understandably so. After all, being in school before dawn and leaving only before dinnertime is downright exhausting for me as an adult, so what more a 7-year old child? The routine of school, lunch, homework, free time, dinner, and an early bedtime started when my children were very little, and continue even up till today.

Six years later, my firstborn is now in Secondary 1, and her sister is in P3. There had never been any doubt that she would attend SMSS – it had always been her goal to continue her journey there. Perhaps it is the sense of familiarity? The desire to grow along the branches of the St Margaret's family tree? Or how St Margaret's has become part of her identity?

I had thought that the transition from kindergarten to primary school was huge, but I realise now that the transition from primary to secondary school is immense! It is an accumulation of all the little steps that she had been taking to gain independence over the past six years, as she went from a tiny P1 girl to a responsible P6 Prefect and CCA Chairperson.



Quiana's 1st day of primary school, and SMPS' 1st day @ 2 Mattar Road

From Daughter to Mother

By Mrs Cheong-Dio Denise
Mother of Quintessa, Quentin and Quiana Cheong
 (continued from page 5)

To all parents whose child/ren will be entering Secondary 1, do not wait until they have completed their PSLE to start training them on how to be independent. Start when they are in P5, when the stakes are lower, where there is more time to develop their independence, when parents are still the go-to source of information and advice, where your input and influence are still welcome. You will not regret using this slow-cooker approach which fosters openness, when your withdrawn teenage child shares their troubles with you knowing that you are in their corner.

At the end of P4, we started to allow my daughter to take the public bus home after CCA. This included letting her have the privilege of bringing a mobile phone on those days. We established clear rules of usage, and a simple routine where she would have to text us to inform us about her whereabouts when she left school, when she boarded the bus, when she changed buses, if there were any delays (e.g. traffic jams) and also whom she was with. She learnt that communicating with us is the key to maintaining the trust that we have given her, and that we trust her because of all the positive behaviour that she has consistently been displaying. We play up her positive traits when sharing them with her and this not only affirms her efforts, but also boosts her confidence booster and shows her that her efforts do not go unnoticed.

After 4 weeks of secondary school life, her daily whereabouts are the least of our concerns because we created a shared calendar on our phones which she is responsible for updating, so that her father and I can see her schedule. Her well-established travelling routine makes it easy for us to gauge what time she will be home. This frees up her mind to focus on understanding each of her new teachers and figuring out what the demands of the lessons are.

However, the journey ahead is still long, with many unseen obstacles. As parents, we are learning to step back and let her advocate for herself, forge her own path and find her own answers. She knows that after she has exhausted all options, she can always still come to us, where we will be waiting with open arms to work through things with her together.



*How quickly they grow!
 Quintessa at Pri 1 and Sec 1*

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SMSS CNY Visit to St. Andrew's Cathedral Home
 By Susan Wijaya

We were hoping very much to be able to visit SACH and greet the residents personally for Chinese New Year this year. Unfortunately due to the recent spike in Covid-19 cases in Singapore, the home did not allow any visitors. However, SMESA assembled a Chinese New Year goodies hamper to cheer the residents. The hamper consisted of a basket full of CNY traditional kueh, cookies and tangerines. One of our creative SMESA Board member also handmade cute little tiger cut outs for everyone since this is the year of the Tiger for the lunar calendar. A few of us including SMESA Board members and an alumna visited and presented the hamper to the centre manager Ms. Margaret. She and her assistant Judy were delighted to see us outside the home. We also managed to peep through the windows to greet the residents from afar. It was very heartwarming to see the residents smiling back at us and we could see their longing to interact in persons. We certainly hope to be able to meet them up in person very soon to continue our quarterly visits to SACH to sing songs and do crafts together.

