

Principal's Newsletter

February 2016

Dear Parents,

I know it has been a while since you last heard from me. Here is a summary of major happenings here at Indus over the last few weeks (including a few from January).

1) Academic issues:

- a) A Skype conversation was organized between PYP students and Ms Nirmala Devi, the Regional Head (South) of Oxfam India, as part of their learning in the Unit of Inquiry on Government systems. Students learned about how NGOs, with help from the government, charitable organizations and generous individuals, ensure that underprivileged people get equal opportunities and social justice.
- b) **Use of Design Thinking:** Students of Grade 5 shared their learning with parents on Design thinking. The students had had as their Summative assessment for the Unit of inquiry "Natural disasters". Using the Design Thinking process, the students built different prototypes that were designed to minimize risks and damage to lives, the environment and the economy in the event of a natural disaster. Everyone present was greatly impressed by the quality of the thought processes and the articulate presentations.
- c) **Art matters:** A collection of selected works from MSP and PYP students on the theme of the Core values of *Love, discipline, empathy* and *respect* was up on display. Ms Anuradha, Art Teacher for PYP and MSP, organized this. Some rare pieces of Gonda Art that MSP students explored as an introduction to the history of art, were also displayed.
- d) **IGCSE Fast Track Subject Results:** The IGCSE Results for November 2015 Series were declared. Our students had appeared for the following Fast Track subjects: Mathematics, English Literature, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, and Business Studies.
 - i. Ria Thimmaiahgari got five A* grades.
 - ii. Ria Sardesai got four A* and three A grades
 - iii. Abhishek Bathina and Paavan Anish Alluri were both awarded four A* and one A grade

- iv. Ishita Chawla got three A* and two A grades
- v. Arjun Krishna Andra was awarded three A* and one A grade

Well done, students! May you do well in the remainder of your examinations, too. Congratulations to the teachers as well for their contribution.

e) Status of Grade 12 Extended Essays and IAs: Grade 12 students are in the final stages of the completion of Extended Essay and IAs. Revision in all the subjects began in the second week of February.

2) Whole education

a) We celebrated Indus Day for Grades 6 – 12 on the 13th of February. Lt Gen Arjun Ray was our Chief Guest. He spoke on the need for parents to let children live their own dreams rather than wish to live out their dreams through their children.

Our students put up a wonderful show. We had the students play excerpts from two of Beethoven's symphonies, perform a Kuchipudi dance, the instrumental *Rumba Tech* by the Gipsy Kings; the Choir sang two inspirational songs. The finalé of the evening was Joseph Stein's play *Fiddler on the Roof*. All present thoroughly enjoyed the evening's performances and were impressed with the skill and stage presence of the students. Congratulations to all the students, and to the teachers who trained them well.

b) Sports:

- i. At the PYP Network Swimming Meet organized by Aga Khan Academy, eight Schools took part. Our students won 4 gold, 4 silver and 2 bronze. Kelvin Patrick, Aditya Itha, and Rishvin Jasti won gold; Aashiana Reddy, Zayan Ali and Yash Vedant Reddy won silver; Urvi Jain, Aditi Yarlagaadda and Panipak Kitjumroen won bronze.
- ii. In Inter school Tennis and Soccer Tournaments conducted by Open Mind School, Paavani Pathak of Grade 7 stood Runners-up in the Under-14 category in tennis. In Soccer, our team stood Runners Up.
- iii. Ajay Malhotra of Grade 11 has been awarded a scholarship to the YoungstarZ Summer Camp. The camp will be held in Eindhoven - The Netherlands from July 25 to July 29 2016. Congratulations, Ajay!

Well done, students!

c) PYP Leadership Camp:

The PYP Leadership Camps were conducted in the last week of February for all students under the watchful eyes of experienced Trainers from the Indus School of Leadership. Grades 1 and 2 did their activities on the school campus while Grades 3, 4 and 5 did some of their learning activities off campus at a Retreat. Later, they returned to School to and stayed in tents for two nights on the campus.

Students got to do different adventure activities like Zip lining, River Crossing, Burma Bridge, and Commando net, etc. At school various other activities were conducted to develop / enhance leadership qualities in the students. The students enjoyed themselves very much and were richer for the experiences.

d) Eleven students from Grades 9 – 12 participated in a Model United Nations Conference at the University of Pennsylvania. Two students, Ujjwal and Srinid won the award for the Best Position Paper.

e) Twelve students of the Art and Design department attended a workshop under the guidance of an artist, Ms Prajakta Pallav, at the Kalakriti Art gallery. The students worked on their own art pieces under direct supervision of the artist at the gallery.

Grade 11 and 12 Visual Art students also took part in an art festival held at CCRT Madhapur, Hyderabad.

f) A PD session on Approaches to Teaching and Learning was conducted Ms Usha Kasana and attended by the teachers from MSP upwards.

g) A workshop on Communication skills was conducted for the teachers.

3) Other Matters:

a) Design Thinking and Data Analytics: Two initiatives that we have taken up this year are Design Thinking and Data Analytics.

Design Thinking is a five-stage creative process that enables people to find useful and feasible solutions to problems. PYP students and Senior students have already demonstrated their sound understanding of the process.

Data Analytics is being used by our teachers to analyse students' and their own performance over the year so that effective decisions can be made to improve students' scores in Academic work and Whole education.

b) PSAT: 43 students from Grades 8 to 11 gave the PSAT examination. We did better than in the previous year.

Seven students scored 1200 points and above: Ria Sardesai topscored with 1410 points. The other students were Ria Thimmaiahgari, Abhishek Bathina, Ishita Chawla, Ujwal K Mantha, Preeti Joginapalli, and Srinid Lakkimsetti

c) PAC: The 3rd meeting of the PAC was held on 25th February. I thank all parents who work along with PAC members for the benefit of the students and the school.

Dr Gayani Kamma, who is the Grade 6 PAC representative, has agreed to be the Representative for Boarder parents from Grades 4 – 8. Boarder parents from Grades 9 – 12 are requested to volunteer to be the representative for all hostel matters for the said Grades. The nominated Representative would be invited to attend all PAC meetings for matters related to Boarding Houses.

d) New e-mail addresses:

In order to simplify addresses for those writing in to certain people in Administration (including Academic administration), we have changed some e-mail addresses. Messages sent to the old mail addresses will be forwarded to the new ones for a while but we request you to update your Address list.

NAME	DESIGNATION	NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS
Mr Carol Joseph	Principal	principal@indusschoolhyd.com
Mr Mohamed Rizwan	Vice-Principal	vp@indusschoolhyd.com
Lt Col Ganesh Naidu	Director, Admin	da@indusschoolhyd.com

Mr Ajay Baskar	Admin Manager	admin@indusschoolhyd.com
Ms Usha Kasana	IBDP Coordinator	ibdp@indusschoolhyd.com
Mr Mohammad Aslam	IGCSE Coordinator	igcse@indusschoolhyd.com
Ms Riya Loyola	MSP Coordinator	msp@indusschoolhyd.com
Ms Sweta Jolly	IBPYP Coordinator	ibpyp@indusschoolhyd.com
Capt. Abhinav Nayyar	Head of Boarding	hob@indusschoolhyd.com

4) Staff Matters:

- a) Dr (Ms) Sophie Peralba resigned from the services of the school due to personal reasons. Her dedication and diligence will be missed. Ms Riya Loyola was appointed as the new MSP Coordinator. Ms Riya has since got in touch with MSP parents and presented her plans for the MSP.
- b) Ms Mamata K joined us the new Girls' House Parent.
- c) Mrs Seemaah Paathak - HOD Hindi - Ms Seemah has over 13 years of experience in teaching Hindi at various levels and in different curricula. She may be reached at seemaah.paathak@indusschoolhyd.com
- d) Mrs Susan Robertson took over as HOD English. Mrs Robertson has a lot of experience in the teaching of English, including IBDP. She has a Post Graduate Diploma in Psychological Counselling and a TESOL Certification as well. She can be contacted at susan.robertson@indusschoolhyd.com
- e) Mr Asu Singh re-joined us as the Horse riding Instructor. For those who don't know him yet, Mr Singh is a very experienced trainer and students enjoy learning from him.
- f) Mr Satvinder Singh joined us as a senior Mathematics teacher (in place of Mr Sharad Dehta who left for an overseas posting). Mr Singh has quite a few years of teaching experience in India and abroad which includes teaching at the IBDP level. He can be contacted at satvinder.singh@indusschoolhyd.com

5) Upcoming Events in March:

- i. Grade 11 students will be leaving for Yelagiri on 05 March 2016 to take part in the leadership camp.
- ii. The PYP have their Indus Day celebrations on Wednesday the 23rd of March.
- iii. PTM for Gr 1 - 5 students will be held on the 12th of March.
- iv. Grade 9 have their Leadership Camp from the 20th to the 24th of March. Grade 10 students have their Leadership Camp from the 24th to the 28th of March.
- v. Grades 6 - 12 have their Aquatic Meet on the 29th & 30th of March.
- vi. Mid-Term 2 for Grades 6 - 8 & 11 begins on the 28th of March.
- vii. Mid-Term 2 for Grade 9 begins on 31st March.

Before I end, I thought I'd share some thoughts on a topic that I hope is neither esoteric nor other-worldly.

What is the purpose of our / our children's lives? Is it to achieve position, wealth or fame? Is it to achieve happiness (the means being thought about later)? Perhaps if we understood the meaning of our lives, we'd find our purpose – or vice versa.

What then is the meaning of our lives? In a world that is volatile, uncertain, chaotic and ambiguous, is it easy to understand the meaning of our lives? Who gives us the meaning of our lives? Who decides what it is? Once done, will we find our purpose **and** be happy? Viktor Frankl, the famous Viennese psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, said that WE must give meaning to our lives. Even in the most miserable state, we have the last of the human freedoms: the freedom to choose our attitude to the circumstances. Life, in itself, has no meaning. We *give* it a meaning by the way we live it.

As for happiness, thousands of years ago, Aristotle said that happiness is a final end or goal that encompasses the totality of one's life. But happiness was not to be confused with pleasure. Happiness was derived from virtuous activity. Thus, it was only in the exercise of virtue, in helping others, in reaching for something higher and purer that happiness was attained.

Or if we say that our purpose in life would give meaning to our lives, then our lives should have a purpose that is beyond ourselves and higher – or else it is an existence devoid of purity and nobility. Studies have shown that those who have not

discovered a sense of purpose feel their lives are not meaningful. Research has shown that having a purpose and meaning in life increases improves mental and physical health, enhances resilience and self-esteem, decreases the chances of depression, and improves the quality of life.

What lessons does all of this hold for our children?

- i. Let us give to our children a variety of experiences that would help in the development of good character.
- ii. Do not aim to give them a life of ease and comfort. Make them respect all the benefits they have and, indeed, work to be worthy of them. *Noblesse oblige*.
- iii. Teach them at an early age to think beyond themselves and work for others. Simple tasks like cleaning their own room and doing other household chores, helping to look after a sibling or an unwell family member, buying a gift for the servants on birthdays and festivals, celebrating a birthday or a festival with the less privileged, etc. will help to make them servant leaders one day.
- iv. Give them opportunities to grow not just intellectually and physically but also emotionally and spiritually and they will be great in stature.

Warm wishes for the festivals ahead in March: Shivatri, Holi and Easter. May these festivals bring you, your family and your community of friends and neighbours happiness, love and peace.

Warm wishes,

C P Joseph

PRINCIPAL