



the school

FEBRUARY - 2023

NEWSLETTER

The Middle School Parents' Day occurred after weeks of practice, where teachers and Class 9 students were involved with Middle School students. A Middle School teacher reflects.

This year for their Parents' Day Middle School students got to stage plays, songs, dances, and movement performances. The children had been practising for a few days in the Middle School area, which was full of energy! The teachers were everywhere: singing, dancing, practising lines for the plays, acting, discussing costumes and props, etc. This meant that the children and their teachers spent much time together in practice sessions, which was enjoyable. Gradually, as the script and the dialogues evolved, the songs were set to tune, the steps were practised, and the movement was coordinated.

The preparation for the event involved an assortment of activities. The clothes were borrowed from friends, and we looked for simple combinations. Makeup items were sourced from the drama cupboard. The invitations were printed outside of school. The art teachers designed the backdrop to the stage. Volunteers from Class 9 enthusiastically partook in helping Middle School teachers during practice sessions and during the final performance. The scripts for the plays were adapted from books in the Library, some of them written from scratch, and some chosen from fables by teachers and students. The Parents' Day, simply put, was an array of expressions!

The presentation included

1. English play - Wordapet
2. Tamil play - Thanga mambazhamum soottu koalum
3. Hindi play - Phed ghoomne chala
4. Singing - A collection of songs of different languages
5. Dance - An array of folk dances

Cover page - The picture in the cover page is an arrangement of various props that was used for the middle school presentations

the trials are actual historical happenings

Class XI worked in four groups to create plays with trial as the theme. They chose scenes from:

1. Inherit the Wind
2. St. Joan of Arc
3. The Life of Galileo
4. The Merchant of Venice

Of these, three of the trials are actual historical happenings. Inherit the Wind by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee was based on a case in America over a biology teacher teaching the banned theories of Charles Darwin on the Origin of Species. St. Joan by Bernard Shaw showcased Joan of Arc and her trial. The Life of Galileo by Bertolt Brecht saw Galileo being questioned about his theory of a heliocentric rather than a geocentric world as was the Church's belief. The trial scene in The Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare thrashed the themes of justice and mercy. Each of these plays, complex in themselves, offered a rich scope for students to understand, bring out and play the rounded characters. Trial as a theme is deeply invigorating as it provokes a response in the audience. As one watches, one realises that trial brings out many debates in the world of faith and science, faith and institutional worship, justice and vengeance, a constitutional right versus beliefs.



Festival of drama and dialogue



Each play allowed for an exploration into these ideas. The four groups worked with the scripts and mildly adapted them to suit the audience. In each group, the students found the characters they wished to take on and explore within themselves. They struggled with self-consciousness, enunciation, memorising, suiting words to expression, and finding the characters within them. As the rehearsals went on, the plays found shape, the ideas fell into place, and the characters resonated. Many questions that came up became part of the exploration. After a fortnight of 'practice', the plays came alive on stage in the assembly hall.

A kingdom called Andher Nagri

The Hindi students of Class Eight enacted a play titled 'Ander Nagri Chaupat Raja'. The play revolved around a gullible king who was fooled by a trick. There were six students who presented the play and they practised it for two months. Traditional Indian clothing was worn as costumes. The setting was in a kingdom called Ander Nagri (Doomed City).

Humour was a characteristic feature in the play. The actors got into their characters and the audience burst into laughter when the characters brought forth some incidents in a hilarious manner.

Overall, the play proved to be entertaining and engaging.

The Scoop

The Newspaper Project is an experience for the Class 8 students to work with the nuances of reporting. In preparation towards it, the students covered topics in grammar, reading comprehension exercises and article analysis of a newspaper daily. They did a passage-by-passage analysis of articles in the newspaper.

A session was conducted by Anand Vasu Anna- an alumnus of the school who is also a sports journalist, wherein he talked to the students about Sports journalism and report writing. Questions were raised on bias in reporting and whether a reporter ever wondered if the public did or did not like the articles.

Jayashree Akka conducted a session where she briefed the group about working towards the newspaper. She explained the processes of reporting and editing as part of the project that would happen over three days.

Vaishnavi Akka helped us in editing the articles. Padmaja Akka helped with the digital inputs. Finally, Sundaramurthy Anna, an ex-parent of the school helped put together the newspaper.



Students from Class 5 to 12 had two long assembly days allotted for popular music. A Class 11 student shares her experience of participation

Ever since I heard such a thing existed, I had been eagerly awaiting for the Popular Music Assembly. When the announcement happened first, I remember making excited eye contact with so many of my friends across the assembly hall. We got back to Class and immediately started discussing songs, lyrics and stage fright.

I was a little nervous at the idea of performing in front of such a large group of people, it didn't faze me too much because I knew I'd be doing my absolute favorite thing in the world anyway, so what difference did a few extra pairs of eyes make? The next part, however, did faze me. Picking one song out of all my favorites to share with everyone wasn't easy. I asked for suggestions, tried out a couple things with some friends, and made a playlist just for elimination. When it came down to choosing though, someone asked me why I didn't just sing "Someone You Loved", a song I had sang with friends multiple times at school for fun. And after only a minute of deliberation, that's what I ended up going with. One of my friends knew how to play the piano accompaniment, and so after a couple practice rounds, I was feeling pretty confident.

I was racked with a whole plethora of emotions on the day of the assembly. And I remember quivering when I walked up to the mike to introduce the song. But as soon as the piano started playing, the familiar chords were all I could hear. And all I could see were smiling faces, so when I got nervous I just made eye contact with my friends, and I could feel their eyes cheering me on. And before the song was over, I was smiling confidently, and making a memory I won't forget in a long time. The Assembly taught me a lot, but mostly it taught me that no matter what I'm doing, I have people I can count on to support me.

**Racked
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Classical music assembly

World of work assembly

The students of Classes 11 and 12 had five sessions with parents of the school over various aspects of the life of work. Usually spanning through the year and for the four senior classes, this year the sessions were held over one week. This was also an attempt to make up for the two years of the pandemic when these sessions did not take place. Parents spoke to the students about their own education, their reasons for joining their area of work, and about changes they had made in their careers. They spoke about what they enjoyed about their work, what they did not and about changes in their work areas over time. These areas included - work in environment related fields, banking and finance, engineering, entertainment and design. The interest and engagement with which the students received the sessions made the endeavour significant. What emerged, interestingly, regardless of one's chosen area of work; were the need for honesty and courage, for openness and the ability to enjoy one's work.

Book Review

This year Middle School did an activity with the help of Preeti Akka, the Librarian. A student reflects on the process and what she saw and felt.

In the month of January the whole of Middle School did an activity. It was a book review, but this was no ordinary review about the Harry Potter or Percy Jackson series. Instead, they had to pick an unfamiliar book — a book that they had never touched! A book they had never known existed in the Library! And the process was pretty simple; choose a book, read it, and then write a report on it. Not all the students were receptive to the idea. Some were apprehensive of reading a book that they never knew of. And some thought it would be boring to read a book they hadn't ever heard of. But there were some of us who thought that reading an unfamiliar book was an interesting thing to do. But there was a problem! After making their book reviews, they had to present it in their Library Period to the class. They could also present it in the Assembly, but that was optional; though most of them did not want to present it in front of a crowd. There were a few students who wanted to do it in front of a crowd too! I really enjoyed doing the report and it was a lot of surprises and fun!



Every child had an opportunity to learn something new

In February the Junior school put together a Parents Day program. Class 12 students were special invitees to the event. A Junior School teacher writes about the program.

The Junior School parents day preparations started with much excitement amongst children, and a lot of discussion amongst the teachers. The Kindergarten children learnt many new songs in English, Hindi and Tamil. They were divided into four groups to sing these songs with appropriate actions. Meanwhile, the children of the 'Mango' group (Class 1) were listening to the story, titled 'Why is Stella Standing So Still?' and were trying to enact it as a skit.

The children of classes 2,3 and 4 were divided into 4 groups such that they worked with different teachers and students. One of the groups worked on presenting a play based on the Dr Seuss story, 'The Sneetches'. Another group recited and enacted poems in English, Hindi and Tamil. Yet another group worked to produce a rhythmic presentation based on body percussion. And one other group learnt a Hindi song sung in the style of a Qawali. The attempt was to ensure that every child had an opportunity to learn something new through the performance.

Over a period of a week, things got busier and children memorised their lines or song lyrics. It was interesting to see a few children in every group take the initiative to help others remember their lines or parts accurately.

In the group that was learning the Qawali, children gave many suggestions to the teachers while writing the lyrics of the song. In the Mango group, there was conversation around the topic of 'stillness'. The poems and the Dr Seuss story provided much fun and laughter amongst the children.

The other preparations were done with the help of parent volunteers and middle school and the Class 8 children. We could see costumes being fitted and tested for size and other details. The backdrop and the wings for the stage were being painted and were come alive, with the trees, the river and the birds.

It was clearly the culmination of the efforts of a number of people which helped us prepare and present the various programmes for Parents Day. During the practice sessions, we got an opportunity to see children in a different light, away from their usual group of friends, trying out challenging roles and sequences. The students of Class 8 actively helped the students and teachers in preparing for the event, backstage. It was a delight to watch each group perform during the dress rehearsal. We could see friends discussing and appreciating each other's performances too. In the span of a period of ten days, there was a celebration of music, movement and drama. On February 3rd, 2023, the pleasant weather combined helped us enjoy the wonderful performances given by the children.



Agastya - The Science Foundation

Class 8 students went on an overnight trip to the Agastya Science Foundation. Here is the sharing of a student of their experience of being there.

Arriving at Agastya's grand 172-acre campus, completely filled with nature, I was reminded how similar it was to the old campus.

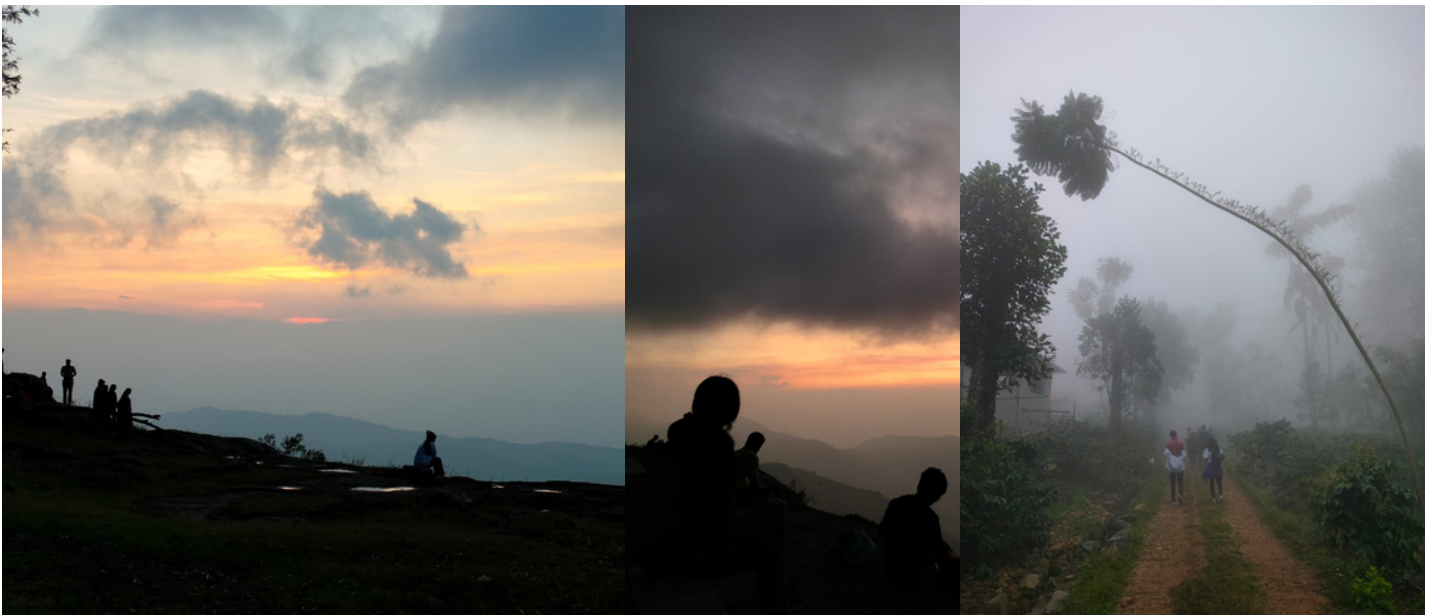
Each building was so far away from the other that you had to take a bus to get there. The walls were filled with artwork made from recycled materials. The air was fresh and chilly, and at night, the sky was lit by hundreds of stars.

Each lab was unique. The Marine Lab was built like the inside of a ship, and the Planetarium was made to resemble the sun. The Math Lab was filled with puzzles and riddles and the Art Lab with innovative posters and creative made-from-waste-materials décor.

The classes – or rather, sessions – were quite unusual. It was still studying, in a way, but done through activities and puzzles and games. The beauty of mathematics and physics was portrayed by models like The Anti-Gravity Mirror and The Vortex.

The whole experience felt otherworldly, and it might just be my favourite overnight trip, even though there are many more to come.

Yercaud Trip



The students of Class 12 went on a trip to Yercaud between November 30th and December 4th, 2022. This trip was in the nature of providing leisure and opportunities for quiet reflection and meaningful conversations as a group. Long walks, hikes, rock-climbing, watching the sunset from Heaven's Ledge, sketching, journalling, playing games, strumming the ukulele and singing along, playful banter and intense conversations formed an integral part of the trip.

A Good Class

Class 9 students were asked to write about a class that they enjoyed. Below are few responses from the students

"I enjoy art classes. The activity that I particularly enjoyed in art was creative drawing because this allowed the students to explore mediums and thoughts. I personally feel that we should give creative drawing the same amount of importance that we give to still-life drawings. Art is an avenue that has no end. It allows us to interpret and also constructs the base of our imagination or interpretation. The art we do in school gives us a safe space to explore the subject and ourselves. Some activities in art classes may seem random but will help us learn patience and consistency unconsciously. It is a language of its own but unlike common languages, it differs from person to person. As students, we are barely scratching the surface to a whole other world of colours, shapes and landscapes. Art facilitates a small window and enables us to be keen observers. "

"We come to school for education and we learn the basics of many subjects. I cannot understand or grasp the concepts very easily. Nevertheless, I was able to learn Biology seamlessly. The terms, spellings, wording and definitions were overwhelming but the way Akka taught us made it feel simple. She used very simple everyday things that we all use or experience to teach us about the biosphere. One of the classes that I enjoyed this subject was when I learnt about the digestive system. Akka did not teach us the chapter. She divided us into groups and gave us topics from the chapter. We had fifteen minutes to make notes and explain our topic to our class. My group had four people. We divided tasks such as writing notes, writing the terms on the blackboard and explaining our topics and carried them out. The activity was innovative and racked our brains. It was a great way to start up my brain as it was the first period. "

"Class 9's geography teacher announced that the forthcoming chapters in their textbook would be taught to them by their classmates. It started out as an experiment for their internal assessment and overall turned out to be an experience to teach. Some of the students found it a challenging task. The students started out by experimenting by including games. Soon enough, they also adopted the conventional methods of teaching as well. The chapters Class 9 dealt with were types of pollution, sources of pollution, its effects on the environment and its preventive measures. Since the topics given had to be explored beyond the textbook, the class not only got to know the general study-oriented facts, but also explored the topics that are not in the spectrum of the Class 9's syllabus. The questions that arose led to engaging responses from the presenter, teacher and the class sometimes consisted of debates. This helped them deepen their general knowledge about the topic, as well as prepare for the upcoming tests/exams."

Staff Outing - Mudaliarkuppam

Staff outing is an occasion where the school staff visit someplace and spend time together leisurely. A small group of teachers had reconnoitred Mudaliarkuppam, a place managed by the Tamil Nadu Tourism Department, and prepared the itinerary. While the bus journey to the venue offered the space and time to have many conversations, the boat ride let everyone appreciate the backwaters. The day was filled with plenty of games on the sands of the beach, singing, a good supply of tender coconuts, and a simple lunch. A sudden and brief drizzle in between brought a spontaneous smile to many faces.



From the editors - We bring to you this edition of Newsletter containing information about some of the events that we had a chance to be a part of over the past few months.