

IN TANDEM

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In Tandem is jointly published by The Fairfield Methodist Schools Alumni Association and the Fairfield Methodist Schools (Primary & Secondary)

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The Alumni Association Committee (Class of)

Diana Chee (1972)
Kelvin Ong (1989)
Cho Pei Lin (1994)
Low Guat Tin (1962)
Felicia Foo (1976)
Wong Soo Chih (1980)
Lo Wei Pin (1980)
Joseph Guo (1997)
Low Wee Teck (1998)
Raymond Lim (1998)
Eunice Yao (1999)
Goh Sheow En (1999)
Tan Lay Kwan (2002)
Joel Tan (2005)

For many families, Fairfield Methodist School has formed the common core of their lives. "Ah Boys to Men" actor Joshua Tan graduated from Fairfield about seven years ago. His mother and two sisters are also alumni.

The 1999 head prefect, Mr Goh Sheow En is now back in the school as a teacher with 19 other Fairfield alumni.

Mrs Tang Poh Kim's grandmother was Principal, before she joined the school as a student, teacher and eventually became the Principal for 18 years from 1983 to 2001.

And so it was with great joy and thanksgiving to God that Fairfield Methodist School celebrated its 125th anniversary last month under the banner of our three-year theme, "One Fairfield" which culminated in our theme for the year, "One Legacy".

From our humble beginnings in 1888, with an enrolment of just eight Chinese girls in a school started by Ms Sophia Blackmore, a missionary from Australia, the school now has a combined enrolment of 3,000 students. As we turn back the pages of our history, we marvel at the faithfulness of this one woman (one life) who was called by God (one love) to leave this legacy which today has grown and blossomed beyond her imagination.



One Love · One Life · One Legacy

Opening of the Time Capsule with Mrs Tang PK, Mr Wee TC, Mr Goh SE & Ms Eunice Yao

We remember many of our distinguished former principals as well who "built" Fairfield to what it is today – in particular, Ms Mary Olsen, Mrs Lim Bock Kee and Miss Lim Geok Kheng. They placed their faith in a faithful God, which enabled them to be faithful in their calling. The book *A Brave New World* published in 2005 profiles many of these stories.

Many pupils have testified that "in Fairfield there is always God." Many have shared that they "found God in Chapel". Even parents speak of the Christian culture they witness in the school as teachers see value in every pupil.

Alumni President Mrs Diana Chee aptly sums it up: "The rich legacy of Faith, Hope and Love has been left by principals, teachers and staff. Fairfield has also provided so many with the legacy of Friendship."

Mabel, class of 1995, shared: "Through Fairfield, God has blessed me with a lifetime of kingdom mentality. It was the primary and secondary teachers who taught me how."

Eric, teacher and parent of three boys currently attending the school, said: "Through Fairfield, God has blessed me with a renewed purpose and passion in what I am as a teacher."

As music and singing have long been an integral part of school life at Fairfield, a new performing arts studio will be built. This will build on a music legacy that goes back to as early as 1918 when a music teacher joined as staff. This led to many concerts and pageants, with one of these events reported in *The Straits Times* in 1931!

Since then, Fairfield choirs have gone on to win many awards at the Singapore Youth Festival. We are now planning to build on this legacy with a Performing Arts Studio which will seat 300 and will provide a custom-built venue to inspire future generations of musical talents.

Will you help us continue this legacy by buying a brick for \$1,000 or giving a star for \$10,000? Please call 677 8-8431 for more information.

A highlight of our Founder's Day celebrations on August 2 was the opening of the Millennium Time Capsule by our special guest, former principal Mrs Tang Poh Kim. The Capsule was sealed 14 years ago, and contained many noteworthy items of interest including a school badge from the days when the school admitted only girls, a copy of the school's 110th anniversary magazine and souvenir bears, as well as a photo of the 60-strong teaching staff from 1999. Mrs Tang is flanked by Ms Eunice Yao, Mr Goh Sheow En (second from left), then Head Prefect and now Subject Head for Character and Citizenship Education at Fairfield Primary, and Mr Wee Tat Chuen (right), then teacher at Fairfield and Principal of Assumption Pathway School.

Contributed by

*Ms Hee Piang Chin / Class of 1962
Ms Hee is also member of the Fairfield Methodist School Board of Management.*

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ALUMNI MEMBERSHIP FEES TO INCREASE

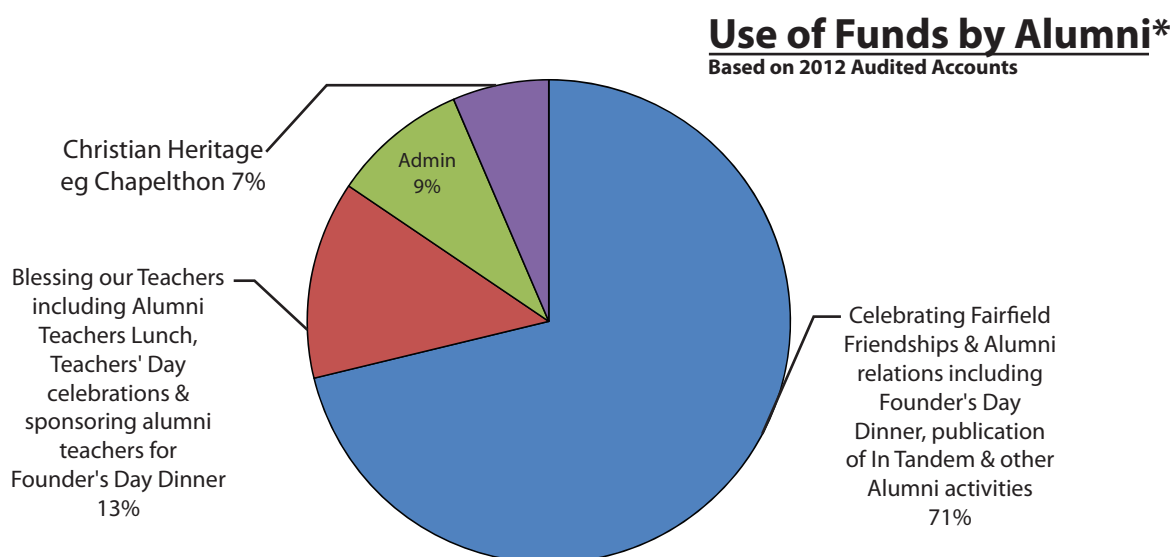
In conjunction with the 125th Anniversary celebrations, the Fairfield Alumni Association sought the views of Fairsians, past and present, to share what God has blessed them with during their years in Fairfield. After months of gathering, the 3 main blessings that Fairsians are thankful for are: (1) Friends, (2) Teachers and (3) the opportunity to learn more about and be loved by God.

These legacies continue beyond our time spent at our beloved Alma Mater.

To facilitate the strengthening of friendships forged, events such as the annual Founders' Day dinner and this In Tandem which you are reading, are but some of the many connect points the Alumni Association seeks to provide Fairsians with. In addition, to allow Fairsians to keep in touch with teachers who have impacted their lives, the Alumni Association organizes the annual Alumni Teachers' Lunch to honour staff members who have served more than 10 years in Fairfield and ex-Fairsians are invited to join their teachers for this special luncheon to reconnect and reminisce.

Also, to carry on the rich Christian heritage in Fairfield, the Alumni Association sponsors the organizing of the annual Chapelthon where Fairsians, past and present, can come together to worship and praise God on the school grounds once more.

Through the one-time payment of life-long membership fees from each member, the Alumni Association channels the funds to ensure the continuation of these 3 Fairfield Legacies for members. Funds are generally applied in this manner:



The Alumni Association wants to continue to provide opportunities that will help to extend the Fairfield Experience for Fairsians even long after they have left the school. Just as Mrs Tang Poh Khim, our former Principal always likes to say, "Once a Fairsian, Always a Fairsian." Our Fairfield heritage and experiences are priceless and timeless. The Fairfield spirit must continue in the lives of Fairsians of all eras.

As a self-funded and non-profit organization, the only source of financial resources for the Association is through the membership fees. Your membership in the Alumni Association gives the Alumni Association the basic financial support required to sustain initiatives that will bless the Fairfield community.

Life-time membership is available to members above 16 years old, with a one-time membership fee. With effect from 4th August 2014, the life-time membership fees for members aged 26 years old and above will be adjusted to \$500. For younger Fairsians, a special early-

bird discount is available at \$200 for those who join before turning 26 years old. Fairsians below the age of 16 can register their email addresses with the Alumni Association. Members below the age of 16 will be able to receive the In-Tandem newsletter electronically, without charges, until they reach the age of 26.

The Alumni Association invites you to continue your support for Fairfield by signing up as a member of the Alumni Association. With your support and your participation in the Alumni Association's affairs as a member, the Alumni Association can continue the unique Fairfield Legacy and Experience and pass it to the generations of Fairsians to come.

Remember, Once a Fairsian, Always a Fairsian.

Let us do our part to contribute to the Fairfield family today!



P6 Grad Nite!

The annual P6 Grad Nite was held on 15th November 2013 at FMSP School Hall. Organized by the Primary 6 teachers and supported by the Alumni Association, the event was a simple yet meaningful farewell for our P6 pupils.

The night started off with an opening speech by principal, Mrs Chaillan, and then the school song was sung with gusto. Dinner followed and when everyone had their fill, the emcees for the night, Jefa (Pri 6F) and Jayme (Pri 6E) got everyone to settle down. It was time for each class to showcase their talents by putting up an item!



Some classes sang while others danced. It was a great time of appreciating each other's talents.

Finally, when the party was about to end, a video showcasing the cohort's growing up years from Primary 1 to 6 was screened. Tears flowed as the entire cohort sang 10,000 Reasons and the school hymn to close the night. It was definitely a night to remember. Even when good-byes were being said, all Fairsians knew that "Once a Fairsian, Always a Fairsian" will hold true for them. Hence, the friendships forged will continue to grow and deepen in the days ahead and Fairfield will always have a special place in the hearts of all Fairsians.

*Contributed by
Primary School Class of 2013*





125th Founder's Day Dinner

4th August 2013. 8pm. My eyes scanned the entire ballroom. I saw Fairians of all ages raising their hands singing the songs led by the worship team. Great is Thy Faithfulness, Jesus, Beautiful Saviour and Find us Faithful were the three songs that united the entire ballroom; united in singing praises to God for all that He has done for Fairfield for the past 125 years.

As I took in the sight that was unfolding before my eyes, I was humbled by the grace and mercy that God has shown to us in Fairfield.

From a class of 8 Nyonya girls, we have become two schools with over 3000 pupils.

From a school with only girls, we have boys in our midst too today. From a school with few staff members in its early days, we have around 200 staff members who serve the school daily now; including many Fairians who have returned to teach at their alma mater.

From a school that had to beg parents to allow their girls to study in the school, we are blessed to have parents who help out as Partners-in-Education regularly in both schools.

From a school with no permanent place in its early days, now we reside at a prominent corner of Dover Road.

From a school led by principals from overseas, we have Fairians who took the baton to lead the schools as principals and others who are now leading other schools with the same Fairfield spirit.

The list of change and transformation continues...





The Founder's Day dinner was held on the 4th August at the Orchard Hotel. It was a finale to the trilogy themes of One Love, One Life, One Legacy that began 3 years ago. Former President of the Republic of Singapore, Mr S R Nathan, himself a distinguished Singaporean who has given off his entire life serving the nation, was present as a special guest.

This year, as we commemorate Founder's Day with the theme of One Legacy, the Fairfield community took time to reflect on the legacies that Fairfield has given us. Two videos, produced and directed by Jesse Chan (Class of 2004), showcased past and present Fairsians sharing their memories and thoughts about chapel services and the teachers whom they have come into contact with. Many would agree that these two aspects of the Fairfield experience have impacted us and left us reminiscing our days in Fairfield.

The highlight of the dinner came when both schools honoured staff members who have served more than 10 years in Fairfield. As each staff member went up to receive their awards, cheers and claps erupted from all over the ballroom. Topping the honours list

was Mdm Ong Tian Wah, or Aunty Ah Hwa as she is affectionately known. She received her Long Service Award from Mr Nathan for her 48 years of faithful service to the school. As she received her award, the entire ballroom stood up to give her a standing ovation for her dedicated service to Fairfield.

As the dinner came to a close, it was evident that many were challenged in their hearts to carry this legacy to the next generation of Fairsians. As the song goes, "may all who come behind us find us faithful", let us all unite together as One Fairfield to pass the Fairfield legacy to the many generations of young Singaporeans who will come after us.

The Alumni Association is organizing a very special Founder's Day Dinner in 2014 – a Fund Raising dinner featuring special Peranakan Food! 4th August 2014. Book your tables now with info@fairfieldalumni.org.sg



Contributed by
Goh Sheow En / Class of 1999





178 Neil Road - We're Home Again!



On 1 Nov 13, as Fairfield alumni gathered for the thanksgiving service held in celebration of the 101st anniversary of the school building, our hearts warmed with memories of the time we had spent there. We excitedly climbed the steps of the staircase leading up to our Primary 5 classrooms, and waited to hear the creaking on the wooden boards as we ascended. But the building had been refurbished – new planks had replaced the old, and they could support our weight without so much as a squeak.

The Fairfield school building (1912 to 1982) has been conserved for posterity. The structural and interior designs have been preserved in detail; even the ceiling boards bore strong semblance to what they were way back then. Fairfield Methodist School (Primary and Secondary) now functions at 100 Dover Road, continuing the Fairfield brand of education and raising ever brighter generations of Fairsians. For the younger Fairsians, the 1912 building is a historical site that laid the foundations for Fairfield education, one that encourages cross-generational bonding, bridges social classes, accepts pupils as they are, and promotes development of each student's talents,

whatever they may be. As Bishop Dr Wee Boon Hup mentioned in his homily, Fairfield was founded and built upon wisdom. This wisdom endowed Fairsians not only with an education, but family and social life, as well as faith in the one true God, whom many of us still worship and serve today.

For those of us who spent our school days at Neil Road, the building is an icon that evokes fond memories of days gone by; of principals, teachers, school staff, canteen stallholders and fellow pupils who have made our lives so special, and of the bond we all share as Fairsians.

Several generations of Fairsians walked through the portals of 178 Neil Road as little girls, where a whole new world began. We spent 10 years within the walls of this compact building. Each nook and corner of the school premises was put to efficient use, and our paths literally crossed every day. The corridors outside our classrooms were busy walkways in which we greeted teachers, school staff and fellow students; the "air-well" courtyard served as assembly area, parade ground, sports complex (for primary school inter-house matches, rounders, basketball, volleyball, badminton, jogging track), outdoor camp site and almost everything else that could not be appropriately carried out in the classrooms. One could stand along the corridor outside any classroom and have a view of the goings-on at the courtyard.

Sometimes the aroma of freshly baked pastries and food produced in the cookery room wafted past our classrooms; and it was all our teachers could do to stop our brains from wandering to our stomachs. On days when we were more focused, we laboured in the science labs. On one occasion, we triggered a stink bomb to confuse our science teacher as to the gases released from a chemical experiment, then meticulously checked to see if the gas taps were leaking. This gave us cause to evacuate from the lab, calling time-out from lessons.

In our younger days, the naughtier ones would squat outside the teachers' room, thumbs and forefingers on ears as punishment for



their misdeeds. The older girls would repent of their mischief and misdoings in the chapel hall, where we would also sing hymns and choruses with distinctive Fairsian gusto. Singing with Fairsians is an experience one cannot replicate anywhere else!

Yes, we skinned our hearts and skinned our knees during those good old days at 178 Neil Road. How those memories came alive on 1 Nov 13, when we greeted and chatted with one another as though the years gone by had been but yesterday! Each of us in our

time had ventured out of our safe and cozy second home to take on the bigger world, but we have never really left Fairfield; for deep in the recesses of our hearts is a soft spot for the bricks n mortar that was dear old Fairfield.

We are grateful to the Ministry of Home Affairs (Home Team Career Centre) for opening 178 Neil Road to the enthusiastic group of Fairfield alumni that congregated to commemorate the 101st anniversary of the school building. The noisy chit chat among

comrades was an echo of our childhood days, when only the most resourceful of teachers and prefects could keep our incessant chatter at acceptable levels. The camaraderie lives on across generations of Fairsians, just as the Fairfield spirit continues to dwell in our hearts and souls.

Here's to Fairfield - long live our alma mater!

*Contributed by
Ms Lim Peck Hoon / Class of 1980*





From The Principal's Desk : Updates on Upgrading Project

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens."
 - Ecclesiastes 3:1

This is the season of building and expanding Fairfield. Just as seasons come and go, these 2 challenging years ahead (2014- 2015) will also be here and be gone. This season will require an extra dose of understanding and patience, especially from the current staff, parents and students of both the Primary and Secondary schools. This season will also see the ONE FAIRFIELD community rally together in a milestone event that will go down in Fairfield's history. Most of all, I believe this season will see us trusting in the Lord to provide all our needs from His glorious riches.

The expansion of the Primary school is a significant development that will take place at the front of the current building and spans an area almost similar to the Primary school's current built-up area. With additional facilities of 3 new blocks of special classrooms, a competitive indoor sports hall and a 320-seater Performing Arts Studio, Fairfield is poised to provide a high-quality holistic education for our next generation of Fairsians.

Let us hear from the Class of 1962, who came together for a precious reunion and gathered close to \$40,000 in donations towards the school's fund raising project!

The year was 2012 and we have left Fairfield 50 years ago!! A couple of us wanted to celebrate this milestone--a golden anniversary! We had celebrated 30 years of leaving Fairfield at the S'pore Island Club in 1992. Since then, we celebrated every 5 years, i.e., 35, 40, 45! The organisers were very keen to make a big splash for our 50th year of leaving school!!! Most of us have retired, many were involved in doing voluntary work but there were still some die-hards working hard, contributing to the economy!

A couple of us (the self-appointed organising committee) met to discuss the event. The chair was Ms Mock Wong Leng. Wong Leng and her neighbour Ms Chew Geok Eng did an incredible job of calling all those from the batch of 1962! She also contacted all the teachers who taught us and did all the transport arrangements. Indeed kudos to the two of them, as they were able to contact girls we have not seen since we parted in 1962.

Then along came a very generous classmate who said she would pick up the tab for the night! The dinner was held at Marriot Hotel and so many came. There were shrieks of delight as old classmates caught up with each other!

Guan Ho Construction has started the upgrading works for the school in October 2013 and to date, key works which have been completed include erection of safety hoardings, construction of a new covered linkway and a new sheltered drop-off area. The current field will be replaced with synthetic turf in the course of 2014 and this will provide more weather-friendly outdoor physical spaces for both the Primary and Secondary schools. We expect to usher in the new facilities at the beginning of 2016.

I would like to thank the ONE FAIRFIELD community for your contribution to the fundraising initiatives to support our upgrading project. From the Carnival@Fairfield 2013 which saw the whole community come together to volunteer their time and effort, to the individual fundraising projects by the Church, Alumni and parents from PiE, we have seen the Fairsian legacy of service and generosity passed down from one generation to another.

Fairfield will need to raise \$5 million for this upgrading project and with the fund-raising activities in the past one and a half years, we have managed to raise \$2.6 million to date. We will need to raise the remaining sum before the end of 2014. Like those who have come before us to build the Fairfield we have today, let us give generously to those who will come after us to continue the legacy. Indeed, this is the season to be joyful and grateful! I wish you a blessed 2014 and may your cup overflow.

Mrs Chaillan Mui Tuan
 Principal, FMS(P)

Adopt a brick and leave a legacy either in your name, your class or in memory of someone!

Cheques are to be made payable to "Fairfield Methodist School (Primary)". Please include your full name as in NRIC, NRIC number, address and contact number on the reverse side of your cheque.

For enquiries, please contact the Primary School at 67788431 or fmsp@moe.edu.sg

Adopt-a-Brick (\$1,000) Adopt-a-Star (\$10,000) Adopt-a-Room (\$50,000)



What a joy to see each other again--after all these years! And the teachers came too, some we have not seen since we left in 1962. It was indeed a night to remember. The function room was decorated with balloons of blue and yellow and the cake? The Fairfield badge of course!

The organisers even brought in traditional games which we played when we were in primary school in Fairfield such as 5 stones.

It was great singing the school song and the school hymn at the close of the event.

Since the whole event including transport, door gifts and the birthday cake were sponsored, the chair then suggested that the old girls be challenged to contribute something to the Fairfield school building fund. After all it was Fairfield that brought us together and it was Fairfield that gave us such a good education.



We have all benefitted from the school, we were taught by excellent, caring teachers and throughout the 10 years in Fairfield most of us had a great time.

An appeal was made that evening and the old girls responded. That evening we collected about \$15,000 to buy 15 'Bricks' and later others donated \$20,000 for two 'Stars'. Why do we want to give to Fairfield? It is only right that we return a little of what we have to a school that nurtured us, a school that gave us a good Christian foundation and excellent teachers who went beyond their call of duty.

A classmate told us about a couple of teachers who did so much for her and she is where she is today because of them. When her mother wanted to take her out of school, a teacher even went to her home to convince her mother to allow her to stay on in school to complete her education. One even paid her miscellaneous fees. In those days, the school also provided milk for those of us who were malnourished! Fairfield took such good care of us, allowing us to expand our horizons in many ways. Though we only had a bare field, the netball team was



pretty good and was district champion and many of us were in the school team! We were given so many opportunities, so many clubs and associations and we could join all of them.

In terms of facilities we had very little, but the camaraderie, the caring teachers and school leaders more than made up for it. This bonding is still alive today and many of us meet regularly for meals and for fellowship. Indeed we have much to thank our alma mater!

*Contributed by
Class of 1962*

Members of L family (who requested to be anonymous), with 3 generations of their family from Fairfield, donated more than \$50,000 to the school building project & shared their fond memories of Fairfield

The 84 year-old grandfather of the L family, and still head of the family, shared with Alumni that he wished to express his gratitude to the school through his donation. "My younger sister was the first in the family who studied in Fairfield and I know a lot about Fairfield students through my sister because she used to invite her friends home and share with me lots of things about her school life and her Fairfield friends. I think Fairsians are very considerate, helpful and nice to talk to. My three daughters were also educated at the old Fairfield at Neil Road. I had fond memories of the school and remember how I used to fetch them to & from school everyday." When he knew about the fund raising project in Fairfield, he had no hesitation to give. "I counted how many of my grandchildren had studied in Fairfield and realised there were 5 of them. So I came up with a donation sum of \$50,000 - \$10,000 for each grandchild who studied in Fairfield. I'm grateful to the school for educating my grandchildren well. I hope that my grandchildren will also be grateful to their school and continue to support it as a member of the alumni when they grow up."

The sister of the grandfather who studied in Fairfield said, "As I've benefitted from my

education in Fairfield, I feel that I should do my part by paying back to the school for what it has done for me." She is an ex-Fairsian and a member of Aldersgate Methodist Church, which has also committed to raise funds for the school's building project. "During my school days, the facilities were scanty, but even then the time I spent in Fairfield was memorable and blessed, and up till this day, Fairfield has played a big part in enriching my life and career, and I'm very grateful for that. Now that the school needs help, I want to bless the school back so that future generations may enjoy even better facilities and have an even more unforgettable school life."

One of the grandfather's daughters also shared the same thoughts and feelings about donating to the school. "Fairfield will always have a special place in my heart. It's amazing - my aunt who studied in Fairfield has always been my role model since I was young and I used to wonder at her attachment and loyalty to Fairfield. Then I found myself having that wonderful Fairfield experience - where I received lots of nurturing and inspiration in my life story. As a mum now, it's a joy to see the same brand of education in my children's lives and I'm thankful that God's blessings continue to flow to the school from generation to generation. One common blessing that my aunt, my sisters, myself and my children share - our Fairfield friends ROCK!!"

Join the L family and Class of 1962 by gathering your friends, classmates and family to donate to the school's fund raising project! Contact us at +65-67788431 or fmsp@moe.edu.sg





T-Zone Opening

A Refreshingly Revamped T-Zone for All

Our beloved T-Zone is open once again! After a year-long hiatus, the T-Zone will provide students with an even more comfortable and conducive place to hang out after school.

The teachers, students and parents got together on 5 September 2013 to participate in the T-Zone Re-opening Ceremony. The gloomy skies threatened to pour more rain down on us but the Lord blessed us with a slight drizzle that eventually subsided. As the school and other leaders held each end of the orange and yellow strings holding together the bunch of colourful balloons, our Vice-Principal Ms Audrey Chen expressed her gratitude to the people who helped make this project possible, while the Reverend said a prayer, blessing the T-Zone for many years to come. The school leaders as well as the Board of Management Chairman Ms Joni Ong even did

the Polka with the balloons before releasing the large bunch of colours into the sky! Students and teachers alike then streamed into the newly-refurbished T-Zone while the school leaders and other distinguished guests wrote well wishes on a large jigsaw puzzle bearing the words "One Fairfield", which was to be displayed in the T-Zone.

With the T-Zone open again and complete with new furniture and freshly painted walls, students can now expect a delicious meal of fresh home-cooked food prepared by our very own Parents In Education (PIE) and a comfortable new environment after school where they can play exciting games or just relax with their friends. There is no doubt that the T-Zone will continue to be a favourite hangout for Fairsians for many years to come!

*Contributed by
Charmaine Teo, Secondary 2E*





Joshua Jesudason – An Ex-Fairsian who Received the President’s Scholarship 2013

Joshua Ebenezer Jesudason was one of only five people to receive the prestigious President’s Scholarship at the Istana, which recognises his outstanding academic and co-curricular records, character, and leadership potential. Now a Singapore Police Force Overseas Scholarship holder, he will study history and politics at Oxford University. In FMS(S), he was the Company Sergeant Major of the 33rd Singapore Boys’ Brigade Company, and was presented the S P Chua Medallion in recognition of his outstanding service in the Boys’ Brigade. He was also the Vice-President of FMS(S)’s Oratorical and Debate Society, and emerged as one of the top five best speakers when he represented the school at the Singapore Secondary School Debate Championships. In addition, he was a Department Head in the Student Council.



How have FMS(S)’s culture, environment and programmes helped to make a difference to who you are now?

FMS(S) provided me with an incredibly holistic education that built me up not only in terms of my intellect and thought processes, but also in terms of my physical robustness and values, which I think have been of paramount importance in my journey up to this point.

The Boys’ Brigade in Singapore, and more specifically, the 33rd Company in Fairfield, has imbued in me mental toughness, leadership competencies and situational awareness. These qualities have helped me in all facets of my life, from studying for my GCE A- Level examinations, to leading ACJC as the debate team captain, qualifying for Officer Cadet School in the Singapore Armed Forces, and choosing to apply for a uniformed scholarship. It was in Boys’ Brigade that I learnt what it meant to have a band of brothers, to wear a uniform with pride and honour, and to lead and serve with integrity. These are lessons and memories that I have taken with me thus far, which I will bring with me into the uncertain future.

The FMS(S) Student Council has also moulded and sharpened my leadership competencies. As a CCA leader and student councillor, I was exposed to numerous leadership workshops and training modules that gave

me a useful conceptual framework to draw upon when understanding leadership. This helped me to apply myself more effectively whenever I have to work within and lead a team.

Finally, I think the most powerful thing that Fairfield has given me cannot be defined in terms of official activities, policies or programmes. It is the intangible and unofficial sense of camaraderie with fellow Fairsians, informal conversations about life with classmates, talks beyond the classroom with teachers about knowledge beyond the syllabus, as well as about my own personal problems, struggles and aspirations, that have made me who I am today. Fairfield did not make me who I am by developing me as a student. Fairfield defines me today because it took me, groomed me and developed me as a person. That is its culture, and I think that is its legacy which lives on in all of us who have graduated.

How was Fairfield instrumental in helping you attain the 2013 Singapore Police Force Overseas Scholarship?

Fairfield made me into a better person. It spurred me on to be a better Christian, to love God more fiercely and to serve the community around me, both in the form of helping the less fortunate, and doing small things to serve those in the immediate vicinity like classmates and the student body. I remember that as a councillor in the Service Department in Secondary 2, and then later as the Head of this department in Secondary 3 and 4, I came early to school every Tuesday to lay out the chairs for chapel. Because of the number of chairs we had to lay out and the desire to let my fellow councillors sleep in a little more and come to school later, we had to work quickly. I ended up carrying large stacks of chairs from the back of the hall to the front every week to the point of getting blisters and sometimes even bleeding palms. I sometimes questioned why as a leader, I needed to put in so much effort to do a task seemingly laborious with limited help and limited time. But as time went by, I learnt to actually appreciate the task I had been given. It wasn’t about completing a job anymore, but by the time I stepped down from my post in Council, the banal task of laying out chairs had become my own act of love for my schoolmates. The early mornings and blistered hands stopped bothering me when, just before assembly began, I could look at all the chairs arranged in neat rows and, with my other Service Department councillors, watch the student body stream in and take their seats. It was those moments of quiet satisfaction without any element of recognition or publicity that gave me the most immense satisfaction. Thus such leadership “skills” or rather values gave me the desire to serve others as well as taught me to motivate others to gain their commitment, even at their personal expense, towards that goal of helping the community. I think it’s that clarity of vision, passion to serve, and ability to spur others on with me that really set me apart from

all the other highly intelligent candidates vying for the PSC scholarships and helped give my application moral weight.



How has FMS(S)’s education better prepared you for life and for further studies?

The holistic Fairfield education not only gave me the paper qualifications as well as the intellectual and academic skills to move on to junior college education and subsequently now to my undergraduate studies, but helped me to become a more independent and self-directed learner, a servant leader and a true friend. These qualities have indeed helped prepare me for life and make my life well-lived.

Is there anybody in FMS(S) whom you would like to thank for helping you get this far?

My Boys’ Brigade Captains and mentors, Mr Glen Tan and Mr Joel Li, have made me who I am today. It is these mentoring sessions that happened long after official lessons ended, the meals, Bible Studies and deep talks that remain with me till today which still shape my decisions and character as a person.

Teachers like Cikgu Samsiah, Mr Alvin Chua, Mr Brian Tan, Mr Gideon Ren and Ms Terri Tan have also left an indelible mark on me. They saw me at my best and worst, but they never gave up on me. They not only taught me language and science, argumentation and analysis, but educated me to make the right decisions as well as to develop my maturity and life.

The school leaders, namely Ms Elaine Lim, Mr Owyong and Mr Lim Sin Heng, have also always supported me, rewarded me and given me opportunities for development. I would not be where I am today without their support.

I am also very thankful to many other teachers, seniors, friends and coaches who have helped me along the way.

What advice would you like to give to our present batch of Fairsians who may aspire to be like you one day?

Never let anyone look down on you. Always try. You may experience failure on many occasions, just like how I have failed many times. But never let this stop you. Always pick yourself up and soldier on. Life isn’t always fair, but we can make the best of all situations and trust in God. Do not despair but always hope for the best. Stay humble and never be proud because people who think they’ve arrived usually have the furthest to go. Finally, live your life with a little faith and a little love. There will be tough decisions and tough choices, but as you go through them, have faith to do what you’re passionate and convicted about because when you look back, these will be the decisions that you never regret, no matter how they have turned out. Love the people who are going through these same situations with you because at the end of the day, it’s always the people who matter the most.

Contributed by
FMS(S) Journalism Team



8 Questions With...Jean Koh

1. Your full name, year of graduation and class.

Koh Yan Fang (Jean), Class of 1998, Sec 4B

2. What were your CCA in school?

The Girls' Brigade

3. Best memories of Fairfield?

Looking back, there were a couple of significant things that I cherished about Fairfield:

a. The spiritual emphasis and environment. I was a non-believer when I entered Fairfield. Yet, the verses on the walls (in particular, John 3:16) spoke to me on the first couple of days when I stepped into the school. My sec 1 female classmates started a prayer group to pray for the class. We had weekly chapel and the classes had to participate in leading them. I also joined The Girls' Brigade where I was further exposed to Christianity and eventually accepted Christ in Secondary 2.

The values and atmosphere of the school just felt distinctly differently and I put in down to the fact that it was a Christian mission school and the whole culture really influenced me during my growing up years.

b. The opportunities and platforms for leadership. I felt that Fairfield gave a lot of opportunities for the students to be exposed to leading in different capacities. I always thought I was a mousy person but through my years in Fairfield, I learnt and grew as a leader and I always am thankful for the opportunities, both big and small to learn and grow during my years in Fairfield.

c. The friendships made. During our Secondary 4 graduation, we all sang the song 'And friends are friends forever, if the Lord's the Lord of them'. These lyrics cannot be truer. Some of the closest friends whom I still keep in touch today are still the ones

from my secondary school years. I think the experiences which we had together during our formative years in secondary school as well as the common values which we have come to share have kept us together through the years in spite of the changing experiences in the later years of our lives.

4. Most memorable teacher?

One of the teachers who left quite an impact on me was my form teacher for my Secondary 3 and 4 years – Ms Joni Siah. She was both my form teacher as well as the E Maths teacher. Maths was not particularly my strongest subject but Ms Siah was very patient in her teaching and positive but firm in her expectations towards her students and class. As the class monitor, I had the opportunity to interact with Ms Siah more and I saw how deeply she cared for the students, beyond just their grades to their persons.

5. When did you first become interested in Social Work?

After my A levels, I had the opportunity to go for a mission trip to Philippines with my church. There, we visited a huge rubbish dump where families resided. Our hosts told us that the young children there have no concept on the value of life because as they played amongst the rubbish, they sometimes find foetuses in the midst of it. So life to them is cheap because it can be just thrown away just like that. I was very struck by that because God values every single life that He has created and that He wants everyone to know the value, dignity and purpose of the lives which He has created them for. From then, I felt God leading me to work with people and to help them to discover that.

Shortly after that, I went back to Fairfield to help out with an orientation camp for the Secondary Ones. I was attached to a Normal Technical class and I realised that they were not so confident of themselves

as they participated in the activities. However, through the encouragement of their form teacher, they began believing in themselves and participated in the activities enthusiastically and confidently. That continued to affirm me down the path of exploring a profession that gives me an opportunity to work with people.

6. Tell us more about your work now. What does it involve?

My work involves working with individuals and families in the community, in particular those who may be disadvantaged or marginalised because of their family circumstances or the systems and structures present, such as the low income, the working poor, single-parent households, members of families who experience abuse etc. We seek to empower them to build capacities and assets and problem solve and be equipped with skills and knowledge to break out of the situation which they might be in. Another area of my work involves working with the stakeholders, both in the community such as schools, religious and community groups as well as corporate and governmental bodies to broker for resources for the above groups as well as advocate to meet gaps that might be present.

7. How do you feel about being awarded Most Promising Social Worker of the Year (2012)?

It is a humbling experience in part because I know that the award does not belong to me alone but to the many groups of people who have led me to pursue this path of work and also the specialisation of community social work. The award truly belongs to the lecturers who have taught and inspired me to the work that I now do, the colleagues who believed in the vision of this work as well as the many clients and stakeholders who have shared their assets and showed the potential of a community coming toward, one for another.

8. Any words of wisdom for your junior Fairsians?

Enjoy your secondary school years! I really miss mine. Secondary school years come mixed with a lot of stuff because it is the most angsty period of our lives as we grow up. But the closest friends that I have to date are still the ones that I have made during my secondary school years. And the experiences that I had during those years formed a foundation in me by which I made choices as I grew up. Seriously, I would encourage you all as you consider which profession or vocation to pursue, to choose something that you can ascribe meaning to, beyond just it providing an income for you. I believe you can find a profession that has great meaning, which you enjoy and which provides a decent income as well.