

IN TANDEM

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

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JOEL TAN

WINS MOE 2019 OUTSTANDING YOUTH IN EDUCATION AWARD

FAIRFIELD
ESTABLISHED 1888

The Alumni Association Committee (Class of)

Kelvin Ong	1989
Cho Pei Lin	1994
Eunice Yao	1999
Lo Wei Pin	1980
Sharon Liat	1977
Felicia Foo	1976
Hannah Tan	2002
Low Guat Tin	1962
Zhan Yanxin	1997
Raymond Lim	1998
Stephanie Ang	1999
Joel Tan	2005
Chua Wei Wei	1990
Joseph Guo	1997

131st FOUNDER'S DAY DINNER



PRESENTED BY
FOUNDED 1888

The Fairfield Methodist Schools'
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

A Bright New Technicolour World!

Join us somewhere over the rainbow
for reunion, laughter, songs and dinner
Fairfield's 131st Founder's Day Dinner

Special guest appearance

Irene Ang

(Founder and CEO of FLY Entertainment)

4th August from 6pm until 10pm
SHERATON TOWERS SINGAPORE

39 Scotts Road Singapore 228230

Wear something bright and colourful!

EARLY BIRD BEFORE 1 JULY 2019

\$110
per pax

FROM 1 JULY 2019

\$130
per pax

STUDENTS

\$90
per pax

CLASS OF 2018

\$70
(after \$20 subsidy from FMS(S))

Secure your seats at info@fairfieldalumni.org.sg now!

Hello from our President

Hi there,

I hope you have been enjoying the articles from In Tandem all these years. 2018 was a special year for the Fairfield community as we celebrated our 130th anniversary in style.

The Alumni Association has been equally busy in 2019 with the Alumni Staff lunch where we had some 60 staff from past and present (those who have been in Fairfield for 10 years and longer) who joined us on April 13th over at Swissotel Stamford for a good catch up and fellowship over a sumptuous buffet lunch.

On May 25th, we organised the Homecoming event with a football tournament, Primary School tour for alumni who are keen to send their children to Fairfield to continue the legacy of our beloved school as well as our Meet the Teachers session. The Primary 1 enrolment will be starting soon, so do keep a lookout for more details on our Alumni website or Facebook page.

Come Sunday, 4th Aug 2019, Fairfield will celebrate her 131st birthday, so come and join in the celebration at Sheraton Towers and take advantage of the Early Bird pricing (See details on this newsletter). We will also be having a Christmas get-together at the end of 2019, do watch out for our news.



Kelvin with Mr Lim Sin Heng, VP of FMS(S)

We'd love to hear from you especially if you have any suggestions for us or would like to contribute to the Alumni Association. Do feel free to drop us a line at info@fairfieldalumni.org.sg. Until the next issue, stay Pure & Honest always!

With love and God's blessings,

Kelvin Ong, Class of 1989

President, Fairfield Methodist Schools Alumni Association

Bonding and fellowship at the Alumni Staff Lunch

by Enne Er (Secondary 2E)

The warm, cosy space was filled with retired and long-serving teachers and staff of the Fairfield family. They were gathered together on 13 April 2019 at the Asian Market Café at Swissôtel The Stamford - laughing, conversing, and recounting the good old days. Organised by the Fairfield Methodist Schools Alumni Association, this event certainly brought back many fond memories for our teachers, as they took a trip down memory lane while chatting over delectable cuisine.

For teachers such as Mrs Lily Yap who had taught at Fairfield Girls' School for over 40 years since 1956, as well as Ms Sharon Liat, an ex-Fairsian and former Vice Principal of Fairfield Methodist School (Primary), this event served as a platform for them to nostalgically reminisce the great times they had together while they were in Fairfield.

A few teachers who were present at the event, like Mr Keith Liew, Mr Wilson Ho and Mr Ezal were part of the Archives committee. They had helped to research



for and collate valuable information about Fairfield's history and were involved in the opening of Fairfield Archives 2.0.

Mr Keith Liew recounted, "It was fascinating to search for the old photos, because it was through these photos that we got to see the same teachers from the time when they were young until they retired."

Many of these teachers had continued to serve faithfully in Fairfield for numerous years because of the strong bonds forged within the Fairfield family. Mr Wilson Ho best exemplified this when he cheerfully said, "Fairfield is like a family to me, with many warm colleagues who will take the initiative to help one other."

Our long-serving teachers were also grateful to the Alumni for organising this treat to recognise their hard work.

Mr Ezal, the founder of Fairfield's Guitar Ensemble remarked, "I'm really thankful for this opportunity to take a short break and be treated to such a delicious meal, especially after working so hard in school."

Mr Kelvin Ong, the President of the Fairfield Methodist Schools Alumni Association reflected that he was proud to be able to organise this lunch, as this created the perfect platform for retired teachers to catch up with old friends and for the new generations of teachers to learn from their predecessors.

Indeed, the generations of Fairfield staff deserve much praise and recognition, after everything they have done for our school and students. To all our Fairfield staff, thank you for your effort and dedication in helping each cohort to walk in wisdom's ways!

HOMECOMING 2019

We skipped our Homecoming event last year because of the Carnival @ Fairfield and we started the year not sure about the response if we were to organize Homecoming again. We decided to do a poll on Facebook and to our surprise, there was an overwhelming response by our Alumni online!

Here are some photographs capturing moments of Homecoming 2019. Special mention goes to Eunice Yao (Class of 1999) for spearheading the event, Nicholas Tan (Class of 1997) for organizing the soccer tournament, and Silas Wong (Class of 2004) and Mr Benny Chng for assisting us at the event.



REMEMBERING FAIRSIAN TIMES

Contributed by Zhan Yanxin (Class of 1997)

Journalism in Fairfield started out as a school newspaper called The Fairsian Times on 13 May 1969. Originally the brainchild of then Head Prefect and school magazine editor, Esther Lim Kwee Tin, she and her class Sec 3A (1969) took the initiative to launch the school newspaper. Since the newspaper aimed to report news and happenings for the students of Fairfield, the word Fairsian was coined. Eventually the coined word "Fairsian" was included in the school song in 1983 when the school became co-ed and has since become a term of endearment meaning the 'people of Fairfield'.

The Fairsian Times was published twice a term and sold to students by the enterprising Sec 3 girls of the 1969 cohort. Proceeds from sales went to the needy. The printing method then was primitive and the girls all got their hands dirty using a Gestetner cyclostyling machine located in the school office – with stencils, black ink and all.

Crossword puzzles were included in the newspaper, often designed intentionally with one ambiguous clue; so that no one could get the all the answers right! Other early activities of the Fairsian Times included organizing quizzes like the General Knowledge Quiz in Feb 1971.

Mrs Seet Sook Ching had oversight of the Fairsian Times from 1979 till 1987, before Mrs Laura Leong took over as the Teacher-in-charge. By 1989, the newspaper was published every term.

On 17 May 1989, which coincided with its 20th anniversary, the Fairsian Times won the Young Times School Newsletter contest organised by The Straits Times, winning a Schneider Euro Personal computer worth \$2,090 for the school. The team won because the newsletter was neat, tidy and good fun to read. Student voice was prevalent and reflected a lot of drive and innovation. The newsletter won overall because of the initiative and dedication the students put into Fairsian Times. As reported by The Straits Times, it was a surprise that they won as Mrs Leong had forgotten about sending in an entry even.

Mrs Leong remembers Fairsian Times fondly. She shared, "Mrs Leong remembers Fairsian Times fondly. She shared, "Fairsian Times is a very memorable part of my teaching career in Fairfield. I will never forget the many hours I spent with my editorial teams of editors, writers and illustrators through the years. I thank God for their energy, talent and creativity as we brainstormed and prepared for the publication of a FT issue. We tried our best to make FT a breezy and lively read which gave our readers a glimpse into life in Fairfield."

In Dec 31, 1999, a photo of contributors to the school annual magazine from 1994 was placed in the school's time capsule. The photo included several Fairsian Times members from 1994. On Aug 2013, some of these members were invited to return to the school for the unveiling of the time capsule. The Journalism Club was later formed in 2004.

For 50 years, budding student journalists have taken the initiative by going for the scoop and covering key school events like Founder's Day or big wins by our sports teams. To the founding members of Fairsian Times, writers and contributors through the decades and the various teachers-in-charge, we would like to record a big Thank You! Happy 50th Birthday, Fairsian Times!



Fairsian Times Committee 1969.

Performing Arts CCAs Excel at SYF

by Melody Tham (Secondary 3E)

Students were gathered backstage, nervously mouthing lyrics and sending each other whispers of encouragement. As they lined up on the stage, they took a deep breath to calm themselves. Harmonious voices filled the room as the Fairfield Choir began their performance.

From 3 to 25 April 2019, Fairfield's Performing Arts students took part in the Singapore Youth Festival Arts Presentation and produced astounding performances after putting in much time and effort preparing for their respective performances.

While most were enjoying themselves during the end-of-year school holidays in 2018, members of the various Performing Arts CCAs travelled back to school to train rigorously for the Singapore Youth Festival Arts Presentation. Starting as early as last year, these students put in countless hours of hard work, sweat, and tears to produce practically flawless pieces. Despite the fatigue experienced, the students displayed incredible initiative and perseverance during each training session. After spending countless hours to continually refine their skills, they finally got the chance to perform their respective masterpieces to attain glory for Fairfield.

Indeed, their efforts paid off immensely! Fairfield Guitar Ensemble obtained the Certificate of Distinction for their show-stopping pieces Rondo and Streets of London. Fairfield Dance and Fairfield Symphonic Band also clinched Certificates of Distinction after showcasing their brilliant dance moves and playing a beautiful rendition of Costa del Sol respectively. Fairfield Choir and Fairfield Drama attained the Certificates of Achievement after singing their hearts out for the pieces What Is That I Hear, Daemon Irrepit Callidus and The Long Day Closes, and performing an emotional piece titled Breaking the Silence respectively. Every single student and teacher in each Performing Arts CCA certainly gave their absolute best.

But the awards weren't the only thing Fairsians took away from the respective Singapore Youth Festival Arts Presentations. More than that, they learnt lifelong values of perseverance, teamwork, and diligence. Indeed, Fairsians have certainly grown in wisdom, after being exposed to the wide variety of new experiences through their participation in the Singapore Youth Festival Arts Presentation.



BUILDING A VILLAGE; FIGHTING TOGETHER

By Mr Tan Han Rong, Joel

Mr Joel Tan's mission is to create a safe space for students, to get them to feel that they belong, and to know that they are not alone.



MY INSPIRATIONS

I was a teacher, even before I knew I wanted to be one.

As a volunteer officer with the Boys' Brigade at my alma mater, Fairfield Methodist School (Primary), I came across many students from challenging backgrounds. Some of them were difficult to manage. One had issues with authority. I wanted to understand him, and help him become more disciplined and responsible.

Even after he graduated from the school, I met him every week. I listened to his struggles and aspirations, and gave him moral support. I taught him balloon sculpturing, and roped him in as a helper for the Boys' Brigade.

One day he said, 'Mr Tan, I want to impact young lives someday.' I knew then, that he had turned a corner. Today, he is pursuing a diploma in Early Childhood Education.

That was a life-changing moment for me. I already knew I was interested in helping people. Then I heard Mr Jason Wong, founder of the 'Dads for Life' movement, say: 'In teaching, you go upstream to influence school-family partnerships and mentor young people with missing adult figures.' That galvanised my decision to be a teacher.



Students writing postcards to show appreciation to their parents

As a teacher, I feel strongly about my students' mental health and general well-being. Tackling mental health issues can be daunting, and requires a team effort. My colleagues and I worked with MOE to roll out the Peer Support programme in my school, teaching Class Chairpersons how to cope with their classmates who needed help, and to befriend them.

We also formed a group of student leaders to run mental, social, and cyber-wellness campaigns. During the examination season,

I guided the Peer Support Leaders in organising "Happiness Week" during recess to help students relieve stress. Students challenged one another in cup stacking, and played with nerf guns. I also often reminded them that whoever they met with might be fighting a battle they knew nothing about, and that they should always be kind.



TAN HAN RONG, JOEL
Fairfield Methodist School (Secondary)
OYEA 2019

BUILDING THE VILLAGE

This team effort—this village we need to build—also involves parents. So I reach out and engage parents whenever their children overcome challenges at, say, the school's adventure camp, or when they fall short of expectations in a Values-in-Action volunteering activity.

I also keep parents updated on their children's character development, so that we can work together to help students become good citizens who can discern right from wrong. In return, I gathered a group of students to organise a school-wide appreciation campaign, where everyone wrote postcards to show appreciation to their parents. We mailed out all the cards, even to overseas addresses. Teachers got in on the act, too, and were grateful they could do the same for their overseas family members.

I love mentoring, and regard it as a privilege. I am heartened when I see students take up this mantle too. I have known John* for eight years, and have seen him grow through Boys' Brigade in Fairfield Primary, and to head the Peer Support Board in Fairfield Secondary. One day, John sacrificed his recess listening to a schoolmate in distress and said, 'He felt much better after pouring out everything to me. He is now managing well and that makes me happy.' I am proud of John.

In my mission to create a safe zone for my students to learn and grow, I try to open my students' eyes to inequality in our society. In one Social Studies lesson, I carried out the 'Privilege Line' social experiment, where students take steps forward and back in response to statements that relate to race, privilege, and gender. Through the activity, they learned to better empathise with others.



Students learn about empathy through walking the Privilege Line

A SENSE OF BELONGING

I want all my students to feel that they belong in the school community. I worked with the archives committee to make the school's history more relatable to students.

One way was to feature some of our long-serving staff in our Archives Room. One of the canteen stall operators, Mdm Ngi, has been with us for 45 years. When I realised this, I organised a surprise party for her during our school carnival. Our alumni brought their school-going children to meet her and show gratitude for her love and sacrifice. Stories like hers help my students find their place in their school's history, and learn to be thankful for the pioneers' contributions. School is family, and family means no one is left behind or forgotten.



Stories like Mdm Ngi's help students find their place in the school's history

'I WANT ALL MY STUDENTS TO FEEL THAT THEY BELONG IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY... SCHOOL IS FAMILY, AND FAMILY MEANS NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND OR FORGOTTEN.'

As I continue to interact with students, I find that many may struggle with low self-esteem, or addictions. My heart goes out to them. I do not want them to feel alone. I want them to know that there is a safe space and that they have a kampung (village) of people to help fight alongside them.

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*Name has been changed to protect the identity of the student.

The entire Fairfield family celebrates with and congratulates Joel, our energetic alumni committee member and current FMS(S) teacher for being conferred the MOE 2019 Outstanding Youth in Education Award!

**Article and photographs printed with permission from Academy of Singapore Teachers.

P6 GRAD TEA 2018

I REALLY LOVED GRAD TEA BECAUSE OF THE PRECIOUS BONDING TIME I HAD WITH MY FELLOW CLASSMATES!
Meriel Tan (Primary 6E 2018)



P6 grad **TEA** tude 2018

grad **TEA** tude 2018

I felt a mix of emotions as my class walked onto the stage together. As I looked around at my classmates' faces, sadness filled my heart. I did not want to part from my ever supportive friends and amazing classmates. They had always been there for me whenever I was down, encouraging me and one another every time we got stressed while preparing for PSLE. Memories of the fun and laughter we had came flooding back. This was to be one of the last few times we performed together and I decided to enjoy it as much as I could. I felt so thankful for the chance to be part of my wonderful class, 6G, and definitely wanted to make this performance memorable.

As the music started playing, we all gave our best, knowing that we would miss one another. However, we knew we would reunite again.

Megan Lee (Primary 6G 2018)

16 NOV '18 **HOMework**

ENGLISH -
MATH
華文
SCIENCE



P6 gradTEAtude
Date: 16 November 2018
Time: 1400h - 1800h
Dress Code: Smart Casual

I really enjoyed Grad Tea! Apart from my P6 friends, I also got to get together with my Primary 1 - 4 friends as I did not really get a chance to reunite with them after we were split into different classes. I was truly grateful to the teachers for planning the Grad Tea for us! That afternoon was the very last time all of us would be spending together. Many of the conversations I had that day would be the final ones I would have with some of my teachers and friends. I will forever cherish the memories I made that special afternoon. Thank you, Fairfield! I will cherish every memory!

Keryn Chua (Primary 6C 2018)

No. of days to PSLE

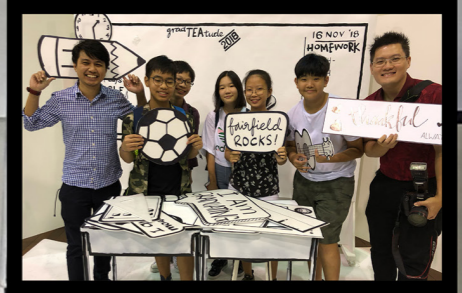
1



I enjoyed Grad Tea very much because it helped me to forge better friendships with my classmates. It was a wonderful break from all the workload and stress felt during the PSLE preparations. It was also nice to see all my friends and teachers performing and having fun. I also felt sad that it was finally the last day of school.
MEREDITH LEE (PRIMARY 6D 2018)

ONCE A FAIRSIAN ALWAYS A FAIRSIAN

fairfield ROCKS!



I Am GRADUATING

ALL THE VERY BEST TO THE CLASS OF 2018! YOU HAVE PERSEVERED AND RUN THE RACE WELL!
P6 TEACHERS 2018



thankful

8 QUESTIONS WITH MAGDALENE TAN

Magdalene Tan is an Alumni of Fairfield who is now a Business Manager at Nestle Singapore in charge of the brand Kit Kat. In Tandem sent her eight questions in between her breaks so that we can better understand what it means to work with the world's biggest food company!



Magdalene at the opening of Kit Kat's pop up stall



Magdalene is 4th from right at the first row

01 Your full name, year of graduation and class.

Magdalene Tan Huay Bing, Class of 1993, Secondary 4F

02 What was your CCA in school?

Choir

03 Best memories of Fairfield?

Definitely with my Secondary 3 and 4 classmates. The times we spent cheering each other on at netball and football games where some of the more exuberant ones were sent off because of their overpassionate cheering. One unforgettable moment was when our discipline master instructed the cohort to sing the national anthem at assembly and some classmates decided to do so with so much gusto that the discipline master could tell it was from my class (from a cohort of over 800 students). He then instructed the perpetrators to come back and stand in the assembly area after school. Upon dismissal that day, he found the whole class, including the prefect and monitors standing in the assembly area, not wanting to disclose the names of the offenders. We were all punished and made to stand under the sun for an hour that day but it sealed friendships that spanned over 20 years.

04 Most memorable teacher?

I won't name her but this teacher told me that I should find a job after O levels as I will not be progressing very far in my studies. Her words spurred me to study very hard and attain an MBA. I hope that she was using reverse psychology on purpose to encourage me to do better in my studies.

05 What did you do after you graduated from Fairfield? (in terms of further education etc)

I went to Temasek Polytechnic for a Diploma in Business and then to the UK for my Bachelor and Masters degrees.

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

I love my job and I cannot believe I get to do it every day. Simply put, I get to decide and work with stakeholders on how to ensure that KIT KAT and MAGGI remain the top brands that come to mind when someone wants a chocolate break or something delicious to quell their hunger pangs. My proudest moment in this role was being part of the team responsible for elevating MAGGI from No. 3 to the No. 1 instant noodles brand in Singapore (according to Nielsen retail audit). Oh, and I get unlimited supplies of MILO, MAGGI and KIT KAT all day, every day! (Of course, please eat everything in moderation!)

07 What advice do you have for our students who are keen to pursue a career like yours?

Secure good internship positions and work hard at it. Most MNCs will give preference to successful interns when looking for management trainees. When you get into management trainee programmes, work very hard to rise up the ranks. Do not be in a hurry to switch companies, but try and find opportunities to change your job function within the same company if you wish to gain more experience. Be prepared to work long hours and exceed expectations by being extremely resourceful in providing solutions.

08 Any words of wisdom for your junior Fairsians?

Academic success in your early years does not seal your lifelong success, but a good degree is definitely needed to put your foot through the door of a good company. That is the basic requirement these days so do aim for that. If you decide a corporate job is not your cup of tea, train vocationally in an area you are interested in. If you dislike school, remember that you only have to do it for 10 years (up to O levels). If you dislike your job, you have to tolerate it for three times as long a time of at least 30 years! So even if you are not doing what you love, you need to try to love what you do. God bless everyone and Fairfield!