



The President's Note - July 2022

Dear Fairfield Family,

'How marvelous! How wonderful is my Saviour's love for me...' so sings the chorus from the hymn 'I Stand Amazed in the Presence' written by Charles H Gabriel in 1905

It is indeed marvelous and wonderful to be able to almost resume our normal way of life like how it used to be before the Covid 19 pandemic. We give thanks to God for His love, protection and guidance during the past 2 years of many challenges and aren't we glad we are nearly at the end of this meandering 'tunnel'?

I trust we are all keeping well. This year, we are celebrating the 134th Anniversary of the founding of Fairfield by Ms Sophia Blackmore. After 2 years of not being able to host our Founder's Day Dinner, we are finally able to do so as our Alumni Association plans and hosts the annual Founder's Day Dinner this 4th of August over at Sheraton Hotel.

This year's theme for our dinner is Talent Time so whether you enjoy singing or simply love to watch a good performance, you must

get our dinner ticket through our Alumni Secretariat. Better still, take part in our Talent Time singing competition and win attractive prizes.

Take this opportunity at the dinner to catch up with our classmates, teachers and friends over a nice banquet meal. Do check our Founder's Day Dinner page in this issue for details. What's more, Singapore's very own Joanna Dong will be making a special appearance at the dinner as well as being a judge at the Talent Time on 4th of August. So hesitate no more and book your dinner ticket right away.

Once again, our Alumni Association is blessing \$100 to our canteen vendors and cleaners both from the Primary and Secondary School respectively. Even though we are slowly resuming back to our normal way of lives, we hope the little token will further serve as an encouragement for our school partners that we value their partnerships and services to our Fairfield family.

We are happy to announce we have also increased the Merit Award value given to Primary 6 Students who are continuing their education at Fairfield Methodist School

(Secondary) and are working on the details to launch a tertiary Award program for outstanding Fairians and Alumni Members with excellent grades to pursue University education. Watch this space!

Both the Fairfield Methodist Schools (Primary and Secondary) are also blessed to be receiving a sum of \$500,000 from the generous donation of the Nga family (many of us would be familiar with Rev T.C Nga and Rev Paul Nga). Do read more about their contributions in this issue.

So once again, come and join us on 4th August at 7pm for our 134th Founder's Day Dinner over at Sheraton Hotel with good food, fellowship, singing, and precious time to catch up with our classmates, friends and teachers.

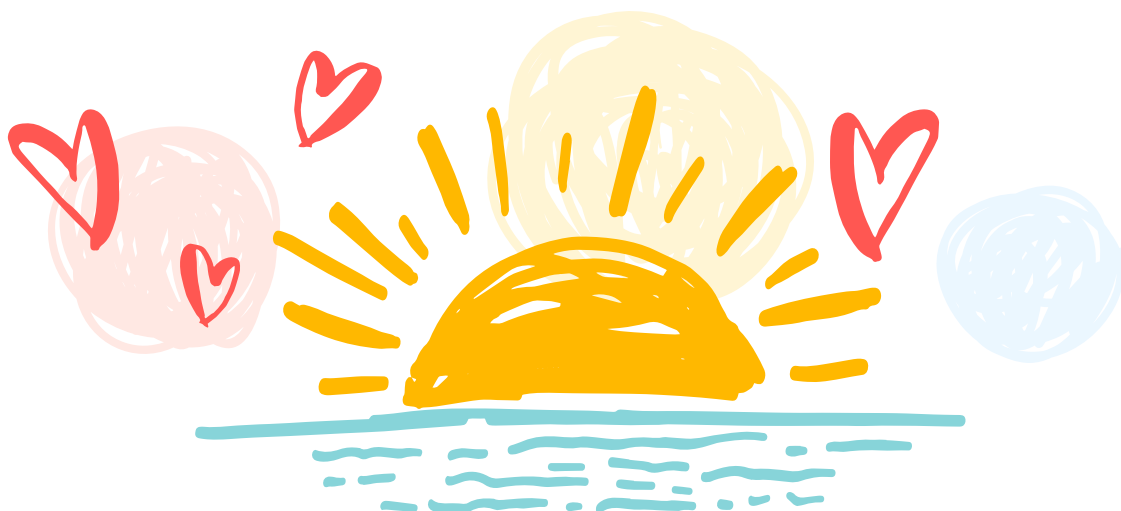
My Committee and I look forward to seeing you there as we sing in harmony once again after 2 years:

LOVE AND BLESSINGS,
Kelvin Ong

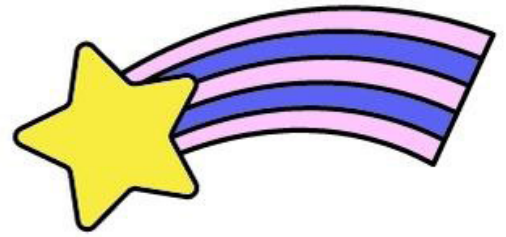


“

'Oh! it's Fairfield, at Fairfield, Where all our hearts are light, Where love is in the sunshine, And all the world is bright...' ”



You are invited!



Fairfield's



Talentine 2022

Fairfield's 134th Founder's Day Dinner
4th August 2022
Sheraton Towers
6pm - 10pm

Rates at \$130 per seat.
Email info@fairfieldalumni.org.sg to book
your seat/table!



<https://tinyurl.com/FMFDD2022>.

WITH “JOY”-FULL MEMORY OF REV & MRS TC NGA

Reverend Nga Tieng Chieng @ Nga Choon Goong (1926 – 2019) was born in Kampong China, Sitiawan, Perak. He was the first from Kampong China to come to Singapore, to enrol in Trinity Theological College (TTC), Singapore. He was from the earliest cohort of TTC students (1948-1951) and was inspired by the ministry of Rev Dr John Sung to enter the Christian Ministry. It was in TTC that Rev TC Nga met Madam Tham Boon Fah, whom he later married. God blessed them both with four children (Jeanette, Paul, Julia, and Joy).

Upon graduation from TTC in 1951, Rev TC Nga joined Singapore Malaya Annual Conference (SMAC) as member-on-trial (MOT), and was eventually ordained to the office of Elder in 1953. He served as Assistant Pastor at several churches, before returning to Singapore to take up appointment as Pastor of Fairfield Methodist Church (1956-1964).

Rev TC Nga was also appointed the Chaplain of Fairfield Methodist Girls' School and he held this post from 1953 till 1964. During his time as Chaplain at FMGS, he would arrive early to pray for students on the first paper of PSLE and O-Level exams. He would teach Bible classes to the Secondary 2 and 3 students. Rev TC Nga created the school hymn in 1964 by adapting the lyrics of “Bless This House”, a song written in 1927, thus creating “Bless This School.” Rev Nga left the post of Chaplain in 1964 to build a new church in Queenstown, Faith Methodist Church.

Later Rev TC Nga served in the Fairfield Schools Dover School Building Project 1 committee in the early 1980s and one of his big contributions was to negotiate with MOE for the school premises at Dover. He also secured a tax exemption status for donations to the School Building Project 1 fund.

Their three daughters were enrolled in Fairfield Methodist Girls' School. The youngest child, Joy, was later a teacher in Fairfield Methodist School (Secondary) from 1981 to 1984, where she taught Geography. She was the ECA teacher for Christian Fellowship (CF). When Joy was diagnosed with cancer of the cerebellum

(which affected her balance) in 1982, she underwent an 8-hour surgery followed by bouts of chemotherapy. Though in great pain and discomfort, Joy chose to return to teaching whenever she could. After 2 years, Joy's physical body and system could no longer fight the cancer which had slowly but surely spread even to her bones. She was also known to give treats in the staff room. Joy was much loved, thus greatly missed by family, friends, colleagues, and students. Indeed, Joy exuded much Joy – almost always cheery and bubbly, even and especially when battling with cancer and the effects of the aggressive treatments. Her courage in life facing her pain would always be an inspiration to us all.

When the Lord called Joy back to Himself on 11th July 1984, Rev TC Nga decided that Joy's share of his estate will be channelled to charity. This would be ministries close to the heart and mind of Rev TC Nga, and to Joy as well. With that in mind, the Nga family made generous donations of \$400,000 and \$100,000 to FMS(S) and FMS(P) respectively, **WITH “JOY”-FULL MEMORY OF REV & MRS T C NGA.**



The school is grateful to the Nga family for this timely donation “With JOY-full Memory of Rev & Mrs TC Nga” as we embark on a new chapter envisioning the next 5 – 7 years for FMS(S) to be a flourishing community of self-directed learners, influential leaders and caring citizens. The amount donated will go towards a few key identified areas. The main focus will be on developing the current courtyard which houses the community garden to be a learning space that focuses on the application of Science concepts.

We are planning for the setting up of Greenhouses with self-sustaining technology to grow produce and to integrate these facilities into the Science Curriculum in Fairfield, giving students the opportunity to experience urban farming. Beyond greenhouses, the plan will also consider various possible setups that will allow students to learn about the integration of technology and application of science as part of the Nation's Green Plan. We hope to design the experience at the courtyard to include elements of Learning, Research, Innovation and Enterprise, to be implemented during the four years that students will spend in Fairfield. The donation will also go towards setting up a Christian Ministry room and renovating the school's Lecture Theatre and staff common working area. The school will also establish the Joy Nga book prize to affirm students with a passion for the Humanities.

Mr Wee Tat Chuen on behalf of Fairfield Methodist School (Secondary)

In FMS(P), the donation will be used for the design, construction and development of the MakerSpace that would enrich students' learning experiences by honing their critical and creative thinking. Building on the Maker's Education, the MakerSpace will foster collaboration among students, as well as providing opportunities for outreach to the community. This will thus reinforce students' sense of empathy and care for others. Indeed, we are very thankful to the Nga family for making all these possible. We thank God for the generosity that the family has shown us and may the spaces that have been transformed be a loving and living legacy of joy-filled memories that our students can create and enjoy in.

Mdm Law Li Mei on behalf of Fairfield Methodist School (Primary)

The Legacy of Fairfield Talent Time

Written by: Zhan Yanxin

Background

The theme for this year's Founders Day Dinner is "Talent Time"

Talent Time was started on local radio in 1956. The term Talent Time was coined by radio personality Kingsley Morando in the late 50s, when he organised such radio shows to promote singing talents. Talent Time later went over to the television medium in 1964 under RTS (Radio Television Singapore).

After 1964, Talent Time began to gain much popularity as it showcased normal people trying out for their shot at fame on television. Television audiences between the late 60s to 1980s looked forward to watching Talent Time and it was usually broadcast on television in February. During the hey days, talents like Quest, Blue Diamonds and the Thunderbirds were discovered/had performances on the Talent Time shows.

Talent Time begins in Fairfield

It didn't take long for Talent Time to be brought into Singapore schools to give students their shot at fame within the school confines. The very first recorded Talent Time at Fairfield Methodist Girls School was held by the English Literary Drama and Debating Society or the ELDDS in 1967. From then on, the ELDDS held annual Talent Times, often on dates in February or March to coincide with the television broadcast of the show to ride on the popularity wave.

The double Talent Time years

From 1977, as Chinese music and folk music/dancing gained popularity, the CLDDS, the Chinese equivalent of the Literary Drama and Debating Society, also joined in organising Talent Time. This meant that Fairfield held two annual Talent Time contests every year from 1977. This lasted between 1977 and 1982 which was the heydays of Talent Time at Fairfield. 1982 was a special year for Fairfield as Talent Time was held for the last time at the Neil Road Campus, and the swan song event was organised by the Music Society, which also disbanded that very year.

The 1980's and 1990s and Gani Karim's Talent Time

1983 onwards, the school moved to Dover Road and went co-educational, and this sparked a new era of Talent Time. It was headed by a very talented alumni named

Gani Karim. He single-handedly created the format of Talent Time in Fairfield for the 1980s and Talent Time was once again held by the ELDDS. Today, Gani is a performer, as well as a highly sought-after choreographer and instructor.

Talent Time in these days were hugely popular and discovered talents like Selena Tan and Kit Chan's sister. The 1984 Talent Time saw a sell out crowd with each person paying 5 dollars to watch the performances and was held over 2 days (which is rare). The 1985 Talent Time was held in conjunction with the first ever Dover campus Food and Fun Fair. Gani graduated in 1986 and Talent Time was held for a few years more by the ELDDS.

it back to Fairfield. In 2003, a Talent Time was recorded to had been held on National Day. Once again Talent Time followed television and spun-off into Fairfield just like the 1960s. There seemed to be no record of annual Talent Times held after 2003

Another revival because of Britain's Got Talent

Fast forward to 2010 and there was... Simon Cowell's Britain Got Talent. After over 50 years, once again a talent variety show on television caused a spin off effect at Fairfield. This time round Talent Time was recorded to have been held in 2010 and 2011



From 1991, Talent Time would be held in conjunction with the National Day Celebrations. With the waning popularity of Talent Time in the 1990s, the last Talent Time was held in 1994.

A revival because of American idol

Fast forward to 2002 and there was... Simon Fuller's American Idol (famously judged by Simon Cowell). While most contestants did not "make it to Hollywood", Talent Time made

Conclusion

For over 55 years, there has been much talent budding at Fairfield. And Talent Time's purpose has always been - to discover them and bring them out into the open. Without Talent Time to grow the budding talents, we wouldn't have artistes like Selena Tan.

Up Close and Personal with the Principal of Fairfield Methodist School (Secondary) Mr Wee Tat Chuen

Q1. How did you feel when you received your appointment to become the Principal of FMS(S)? Why did you feel this way?

There was this deep sense of it being a privilege and an amazing opportunity. Many principals aspire to go back to their alma mater to serve but that's not always possible. Thus, when I received the appointment to become the Principal of FMS(S), I was very glad and joyful as I had a lot of wonderful memories here and was looking to being part of the community again. I also know a number of existing staff and some former students who had become teachers and was keen to re-connect with them.



Q2. What inspired you to become a teacher?

I think my inspiration to become a teacher first started when I spent one and a half months relief-teaching in Fairfield while I was waiting to be enlisted for National Service after my A-Level examinations. While I was relief-teaching a particular class, I had a few at-risk students who were going through some difficult times. The fact that my conversations with them made a difference and encouraged them inspired me to become a teacher. Of course, my involvement and experiences as a Boys' Brigade officer mentoring the youth also played an important part in the process. When I went to NUS, I would attend the MOE career talk held every year. During these sessions, I felt my calling to be a teacher being confirmed.



Q3. What is one memorable moment you have experienced thus far as Principal of FMS(S)?

The strong sense of care we have in Fairfield made my experience here very memorable. When I entered Fairfield, there was concern about mental wellness issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic. What was very heartening was that every time there was a case, I could see the entire village consisting of the counsellors, teachers

and even parents coming together to support the student concerned. The other memorable aspect is our school's student leadership programme. Our students have many platforms to be up on stage, speaking and advocating a particular topic that they are passionate about. The sense of confidence that I see in our Fairsians is indeed very heart-warming.



Q4. You mentioned that you are a Fairfield alumnus (i.e. Fairsian). What was one interesting experience that you had as a student in Fairfield?

When we were planning the Secondary One Orientation as a student leader, we could actually engage in a flying fox activity from the top of the building down to the field with all safety measures in place. We were very involved in championing our CCAs and hence we would put in a lot of effort to see how we could really make our CCAs shine. Another interesting experience from my school days took place during camps. We would play soccer at the basketball court until 4am in the morning and would build a 8 – 10 men tent using huge and heavy poles; and a large waterproof canvas. We also had opportunities to learn survival cooking skills (so yes, we had to learn how to kill a live chicken and all that is required to have it ready for cooking) and we had to prepare all the meals for ourselves for the camp! These experiences formed precious memories for me as a student in Fairfield.



Q5. How has Fairfield changed since your previous stint in Fairfield?

I think the programmes that Fairfield offers now have evolved with the times because the world has changed so much. However, what struck me more are the aspects that have not changed, such as the strong school culture and the Christian ethos of the school.



Q6. I bet being a principal can be quite demanding. What are some things that you do in your free time to destress?

I like reading and shopping for books; and I do like quiet time. I like to watch inspirational movies like *Shawshank Redemption* and *The Greatest Showman*. I also play tennis with my son, shop occasionally with my girl and go jogging with my friends. Of course, I must mention my wife too. Every Saturday morning, we would have breakfast together and just spend time talking and connecting with each other.

Q7. What is your aspiration for Fairfield?

My aspiration is for Fairfield to be a flourishing community of self-directed learners, influential leaders and caring citizens.

We have been discussing about nurturing the school as a flourishing community. We use the word 'flourishing' because we want

our students to identify their passions and strengths, and thrive beyond their studies so that they can appreciate a broader definition of success. More specifically, we want our Fairsians to become self-directed learners. We do not want our Fairsians to study just because they have to clear their examinations. We hope that by the end of their secondary school education, they can identify their passions and really go on to flourish after graduation. We are really happy that we have Fairfield alumni who have thrived in various fields, like Selena Tan who is a Singaporean executive producer, director, writer and actress, and Carina Tan who is an international award-winning pastry chef at Swissotel The Stamford Singapore.

We also want our Fairsians to become influential leaders. Specifically, we want our students to be strong advocates for causes and passions that they believe in. They are leading not because they want to make a name for themselves or enjoy the attention they get for being a leader. They are leading because they want to make a difference in other people's lives.

Finally, we want our Fairsians to become caring citizens. As we grow as a nation, we are going to need citizens who care for one another and who take actions to make a difference wherever they are.

The Sprint Towards a New Normal

by Kerin Chua (Sec 2C), Evangeline Lee (Sec 2C) and Sarah Chan (Sec 3B)



As the students did their final stretches, their faces glowed with excitement. They readily jogged to their starting positions. Student leaders and teachers stood along the running track and watched in anticipation. With clear azure skies and a light breeze, the weather was perfect for a run. The students crouched down and were ready to race.

The main highlight of this year's Fairfield Annual Run was a physical race between representatives of each class. This was a highly anticipated event since physical runs were the norm before the onset of the pandemic. Cheers and words of encouragement could be heard from the teachers and sports leaders rooting for their classes. This enabled the students to find renewed strength as they sprinted their last lap, taking deep and even quicker breaths with every step. Cheers erupted as the first competitor crossed the finishing line.

"My classmates and friends were also encouraging and supporting me throughout the race. They were clapping and cheering right till the end of the run," said Eythan Kow, who clinched First Place amongst the Secondary 2 boys competing in the event. Indeed, both runners and their supporters forged amazing memories that day.

Students were individually tasked with the goal of clocking 20km

between 28 March and 14 April 2022 using the 'Strava' app. It was indeed different seeing students with phones in their hands during their Physical Education lessons. Hanika from Secondary 1D exclaimed, "The whole class was encouraging one another to run with them to obtain First Place." They spent days and nights competing against other classes of their own levels, some even walking long distances in groups of 5 people!

Another student, Jayden Chin from Secondary 2C, added, "It was astounding to see so many of my classmates gathering for walks, jogging long distances and even trying to squeeze in a few extra kilometres whenever they could."

Additionally, students were given a task card to complete along with various tasks such as hikes at Southern Ridges, double skips and cycling. Those who completed the tasks earned limited-edition T-shirts that were designed by the Sports Leaders.

As One Fairfield, students and staff put in countless hours to run around the school field and go on outings simply to contribute to the class mileage and to complete the task card. Indeed, the Fairfield Annual Run enabled everyone to Move as One Fairfield, while learning the values of endurance and resilience.

"Run when you can, walk if you have to, crawl if you must; just never give up." - Dean Karnazes

The Fairfield Red Cross Turns 70, Serving One Another

Written by: Zhan Yanxin

The Fairfield Red Cross Unit marks its 70th anniversary this year.

The International Red Cross Movement started in 1863, inspired by Swiss businessman Henry Dunant. Seeing the suffering arising from the battle of Solferino during the Second War of Italian Independence, he proposed creating national relief societies, made up of volunteers, trained in peacetime to provide neutral and impartial help to relieve suffering in times of war.

The Singapore branch of the British Red Cross was founded on 30 September 1949. In 1952, the Red Cross Link was established at Fairfield with the help of music teacher Mrs Elsie Lee Swee Cheng, who had helped the Chief Representative of the British Red Cross for Far East Miss Teresa Spens to start Red Cross Links. Like the Girls Brigade, the Red Cross was set up with Junior and Senior Units.

The first meeting of the Fairfield Red Cross was held on 21 March 1952. The motto was "Serve one another". Meetings were held monthly afterwards, with the Principal as the patron. In May 1952, the first committee was formed. The Red Cross members learned marching and drills, other than first aid skills.

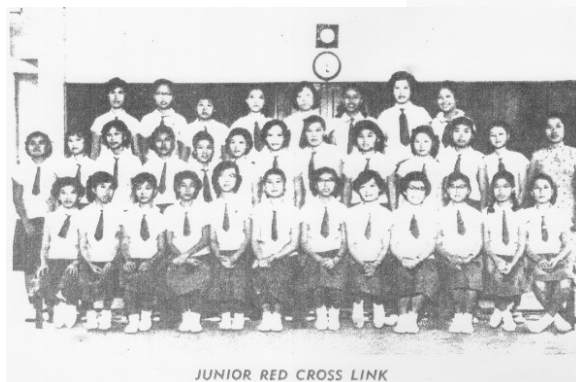
In the 1950s, to serve the community, the girls made stuffed toys, scrap books and frocks for the under privileged children, while the senior girls prepared articles for the international album to send overseas. Other activities to serve the community included visits to the old people club at Wesley Hall and helping out with crippled children outings at Katong Park. There would be activities like quizzes, talent times and hikes.

In 1962, the Red Cross members started the Red Cross Hospital and Library Service in SGH. This was stopped during 1969. In the 1970s, the teachers who made a mark were Mrs Eileen Chua, Mrs Neo Kah Lee and Mrs Iris Kee who helmed the red cross for more than a decade.

In 1971, The Red Cross took part in the inter-school Red Cross Debate for the first time. The Red Cross debate team took down big names like Raffles Institute and TKGS (Tanjong Katong Girl's School) and came in second overall in the inter-school Red



Foot-drill.



Cross Debate. In 1972, it was first recorded that the Red Cross took part in Singapore Youth Festival (SYF).

Also, in 1972, monthly assessments were started for private cadets to ensure that they had learnt all that had been taught. Today, the programme has been further developed and used to spot future leaders of the Unit. The Unit also uses this to prepare for the annual First Aid Competitions where they have excelled, obtaining Gold in the 2021 Junior Category of the competition.

In 1983, with the schools separating into primary and secondary, the Fairfield Primary Red Cross unit was formed replacing the Junior Unit. In 1984, the chairman of the Secondary Red Cross was student Miss Yeo Li Li. She later returned as a teacher-in-charge for the Red Cross.

Today, the Fairfield Red Cross Youth Unit specialises in first aid and evacuation knowledge. Besides learning first aid, foot drill and evacuation, the unit members learn outdoor survival skills in cooking, campcraft, etc. As with the earliest Fairfield Red Cross traditions, they also extend service to the public through events like the Project Red Cross Love and home visits to the homes of the elderly such as St Andrew's Nursing Home. The unit's effort of maintaining the highest standard has allowed it to obtain the Gold Award in 2021 Excellent Unit Awards.

Red Cross members who graduated from school come back to serve the unit long after they graduate. This is in the form of the Volunteer Instructor Programme.

The Fairfield Red Cross Unit continues to impact Fairfield students. Members who joined and left would have many fond memories of working as a team, learning self-discipline, and sharpening their first aids skills - skills which would prove useful later in life.

Up Close and Personal with the Vice-Principal of FMS(P)!

Meet Mr Ho Kok Soon



2022 | SPECIAL FEATURE

Q1. What was your first impression of Fairians when you first started serving as a Vice-Principal in Fms(P) ?

My first impression of Fairians was that they were inclusive, they serve, **they are not self-centered**. Fairians are also sacrificial, polite and respectful to their teachers.

Q2. What were some of your fondest memories as a Primary School student?

I remember the food I loved was Nasi Lemak, syrup drinks which cost only ten cents, and Vitagen. **My favourite games included 'Catching', 'Zero Point', and 'Five Stones'**. I also liked to catch spiders and learn about things at school.

Q3. What is one important value that you believe is vital for a Primary School student to have today?

For kids in Primary School, the **love of learning** is important. That means that learning is not just getting a 100% correct for tests. Results are important but they do not last. The future requires you to be someone who can work with people, **learn to include people, and accept one another for their differences**. We should also be interdependent and collaborative, because people look beyond our grades. They look at whether we contribute back to society and whether we serve others. Now, people look for others who are risk-takers, and it is not always about grades or awards. For example, Anthony Tan, Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg, and many more, they were not the best at school but they are successful people now. **So, it is not about your grades but what you strive for.**

Q4. What is one piece of advice you would like to share with all Fairians, especially during this challenging period?

I feel that Covid-19 has taught us resilience. It has revealed both the good and bad sides of people. Fairians demonstrated resilience. They were not afraid of Covid-19 and they still came to school despite the spike in Covid-19 cases. Fairians also helped Covid-19 victims. I think that being **inclusive**, as I mentioned earlier, is very important. I hope Fairians can keep up the good work and continue to think of the needs of others.



INTERVIEWED AND WRITTEN BY
Janis Chan En Shin
Heeraa Sivakumar
Primary 6A

Q5. What was the most valuable insight you have gained in the last two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic?

When Covid-19 accelerated, we all had to move into digital learning. We were all uncertain, panicked, and we all rushed to buy supplies for school and home. Things were sold out everywhere, but kind people stepped up and offered second hand devices for the Home-Based Learning (HBL) period. I feel that Singapore is definitely a role model to other countries. **We were united, proud, and with resilience we persevered through the pandemic.**

Welcome to the Fairfield Family

2022

Inclusivity



Q6. If your job gave you a surprise three-day paid break to rest and recuperate, what would you do with those three days?

I really like to travel. My last trip was to Thailand. On my first day, I would probably go to a mission field, maybe in Thailand, Cambodia or Nepal, and stay there to help the locals. **I believe that we have to give back to them and help them**, which is why I would do that if I had a three day break.



Q7. If you were an avenger, which Avenger would you be?



I would be Iron Man. This is because he is an ordinary man, an avenger who does not possess any special power, but he is intelligent and **comes up with cool scientific ideas for himself**.

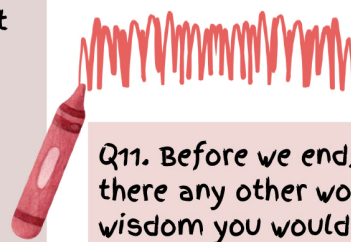
Q8. What is the best piece of advice you have received?

An ordinary person can do extraordinary things. No one is less able to contribute back. Ordinary people can contribute to society. You don't need to be rich, you can be simple and still make an impact.



Q9. If you were a box of crayons, what colour would you be?

I used to like blue but I changed my favourite colour to red. I used to associate blue with many things. However, I began to like **red**. I was a stereotypical person and thought that red was meant mostly for girls. However, I started to enjoy the colour red because of its vibrancy.



Q11. Before we end, are there any other words of wisdom you would like to share with the Fairfield family?

I encourage Fairsians to serve God and the community.



The Bible provides examples of people who have had difficulties in life, and they include people like orphans and widows.

We should reach out to people who need help. I hope we can exercise the love of serving others constantly.

Q10. What is the 'craziest' thing one of your students has or have done?

I remember in 2016, I had this one student. She had self-proclaimed that she was not good during presentations. She even said that she could not present well because she had special needs. She also said that she lacked the confidence to stand in front of a crowd. However, during a carnival, I saw her presenting a robot which she had designed and made. She was standing in front of parents and students, speaking confidently and eloquently! I was so shocked! It was unbelievable. **I learnt then that one must never look down on oneself. One should always believe in oneself.**

CONFIDENCE

9 QUESTIONS WITH PORSCHE POH

Ms Porsche Poh is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Silver Ribbon (Singapore), founded in 2006 to raise awareness for mental health in Singapore. Since its inception, Silver Ribbon (Singapore) organises mental health events regularly and commemorates World Mental Health Day annually. Porsche and Silver Ribbon was one of the finalists for the Straits Times Singaporean of the Year 2021.

Question 1 : Your full name, year of graduation and class

Porsche Poh, 1987, Sec 4I (last class for Express Stream). I am the only child and used to struggle alone with studies as my dad passed away when I was at the age of 7 and my late mum worked really hard to support me before she passed away when I was 18. I studied in Fairfield Methodist Girls School and shifted over to FMPS at Dover Road while studying in Primary 6.

Question 2 : What were your CCAs in school?

I was in gardening and volleyball, and was also the librarian.

Question 3 : What were your best memories of Fairfield?

Whenever I did badly for tests or exams, my late mum would remind me on the time and effort she spent in enrolling me into FMGS at Neil Road.

Question 4 : Who were some of your most memorable teachers?

My form teacher for Pri 2B Mdm Song (宋老师) used to get us to sit around and tell us interesting stories. My form teacher for Sec 1-4I Ms Chew Yat Khoon taught us English and History with great patience. My Bible Knowledge teacher was Ms Leong Wai Ling and I think she adopted her hubby's surname now. My discipline master was Mr Benny Chng.

Question 5 : What inspired you to advocate for mental health?

With God's grace and blessings, I am thankful that I did not break down and stayed disciplined and mentally strong when I was left all alone after my mum passed away. Additionally, during my employment at Institute of Mental Health, I observed the extent of stigma where many people were:

- hesitant to share their struggles and seek help
- worried as they had to declare that they have a mental health condition while applying for a job
- worried that their loved ones would be persecuted in court when they have depression and attempt suicides
- worried that their loved ones will have a record and can't get a job when they seek treatment at government hospital

I then spent much time speaking to local and overseas stakeholders on the community needs and decided to set up Silver Ribbon (Singapore), along with co-founders Helen Lee & Sally Choo, after getting support from my ex-bosses Prof Chong Siow Ann and Prof Swapna Verma.

Question 6 : What keeps you going?

God, my loved ones, my board members, colleagues and volunteers, and representatives from partnering organisations and funding bodies. In addition, I do receive encouraging messages from general public and our clients who emailed me to thank me for helping them and reminded me to take good care.

Question 7 : What was the most interesting thing that happened to you when you were nominated to be ST Singaporean of the Year 2021?

During the award ceremony, I went around inviting the finalists and winner, Sakthi, to share their views on building resilience and pursuing dreams at our mental wellness talks. I also thanked President Halimah Yacob for supporting mental health and the work of Silver Ribbon (Singapore) these years. She has been gracing our events since 2007 as a MP, Minister of State for MSF, Speaker of Parliament, and President of Republic of Singapore respectively.

Question 8 : Any words of wisdom for your junior Fairsians?

Don't let your weakness define you! I used to be timid, hiding behind the class and have low self-esteem because I was often being laughed at for not having a father.

Question 9 : How can we have a healthy mental state?"

- Stay connected. E.g. participate in activities, meet up with friends
- Challenge negative thoughts
- Adjust our expectations
- Look out for warning signs of stress e.g. disturbed sleep, poor appetite, low mood, poor concentration

