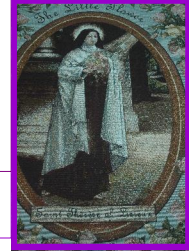




LPF ACADEMY

Newsletter—First Term 2010/2011



Meeting Father Van ~ friend to Mother Teresa

Our little school has had its share of significant and interesting visitors, not the least of whom was the Reverend Father Van who was a personal friend and co-worker in India of none other than Mother Teresa herself!

Father Van (aka Fr. Harry, but he likes to be known as Fr. Van because “that’s how Mother knew me”) was a special visitor who was welcomed at the Mother Teresa class (obviously!) and spent part of the morning thrilling staff and students alike as he shared stories of 40 years in India, and his work with Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity, showed us photos of her as a young nun and more recent ones, and let us read and touch notes in beautiful cursive written by Mother Teresa herself!

For us, and especially for Aunty Fazrin and her students, this was as close as you could get to her, to have first-hand news and reminiscences of this revered peace-maker, and as you can well imagine, Aunty Bernie was on cloud nine!

You can also imagine the sighs and goose bumps when Fr. Van shared the story of how Mother had sent an urgent message asking him to meet her. Due to late evening services, he had not been able to oblige and had resolved to

see her in the morning. Alas! He was told the next day that she’d passed on to her heavenly journey that very night. For the students too young to have really heard of her much his visit made Mother Teresa a flesh and blood individual. It made her incredible work real, it showed the power of the individual and underlined the choice of class role model.

After praying with us and for us and patiently signing many of the children’s journals, the eighty-something-year-old Catholic priest who promised he would see us again bade farewell to the gathered staff and students.

A very special thank you to Mrs. Shiromi Silva, Nashali’s mum, who introduced Father Van to our school. It was another of those “Expect a miracle ...” moments!



Montessori Moments to Remember

The Montessori experienced a busy start to the final term, full of fun and exciting events. The month of September focused on settling in after the holidays, meeting new friends in the environment and celebrating various cultural and religious festivals including Eid and International Peace Day in perfect Montessori style. The First Years had their moment of fun and excitement on their trip to the Air Force Museum.

The month of October passed with more experiential learning opportunities for children who had a lot of fun taking part in the Sports Activity Day, showing off their true colours in Friendship and Sportsmanship. I must say the support and co-operation of both parents and grand parents were outstanding for this event.

The students’ visit to the Early Learners’ Center at the British Council was done in keeping with the Objective of the month which was to focus on the joy of reading through a read-a-thon!!! The Parents as well as Children showed great interest in attaining this objective and achieved it in grand style.

Adding to our wonderful memories, the launching of the Sand Pit took place with active participation from all children. They have now taken complete ownership of it. A **Big Thank You** to everyone who was considerate enough to make it a joyful moment for the child. (contd. overleaf)

EDITORIAL

We are coming to the end of the calendar year and the YCC and Montessori Academic Year. Behind us is a term that absolutely flew past, and was crammed with myriad happenings.

Some of these you will read details of in this issue, but mention must be made of some of the special delights we've enjoyed.

Welcoming the new students was, as always, a wonderful experience. The Main entrants were to the elementary classes, but we also had others. The Recognition Ceremony, created to welcome and focus the spotlight on our new students, was a very touching affair—not the least when a new mother spontaneously got on stage and spoke sincerely in appreciation of our school.

Our Elementary Class is a joy to behold! The promise of taking Montessori to the next levels was realized when Mrs. Roshini Nagahawatte came on board to help us make it all happen. Extremely active little lads and lasses, in groups of 6 or 3 or 2, work in their own little spheres of language, mathe-

matics, culture and so on, while 4 to 5 adults move among them. It is a poke in the eye to the skeptics to see the apparent free-flow resolve itself into a very organized pattern of work, play, eat; learn, consolidate and practice; to watch the intellectual, social, spiritual and emotional come into play and the inherent order of Montessori makes itself felt. It was also a thrill to put up a notice shortly into the term that our Elementary Classes were full!

It is also to be noted, while on the subject of new entrants, that the Dr. Maria Montessori Class, where we welcome our Exceptional Learners, full time or part-time, is now also full to capacity. As an inclusive school offering individualized programmes for our students including integration as and where possible, we record that there is now more demand for these specialized educational services than we can cope with at this time. Capable qualified staff is the crux of it!

Ahead of us is a host of events and activities (see last parent communication). Our LPF Schools Montessori Graduation, a combined cere-

mony for both Ratmalana and Dehiwela graduates, is one highlight. It is always a tearful-smiles moment for all—students, parents *and* teachers!

The production *Christmas isn't Christmas* on 8th December by the students of LPFM Ratmalana at which the Academy Choir will be “supporting vocalists” so to speak, is also something we are looking forward to—working hard towards, too! Next year it will be the Academy's turn to tread the boards at a public performance.

Next term, on the 6th of January 2011, LPF Schools will celebrate our anniversaries: 18 years at La Petite Fleur, and 4 years for the Academy. From 5 students, we have grown to 175. We are truly grateful for the countless blessings we have received from above, in human form and otherwise.

To you all out there who made this journey with us — thank you.

In a society full of “wanna-be”s and copy-cats, we are proud to stand out as unique and original. We simply promise to continue.Z

Montessori Moments (contd.)

Luckily for all of us Aunty Bernie was back at home, backing us up and being our strength in all that we did for the benefit of the Child. She not forget to meet all Montessori parents and share her Experiences in what might be effective and useful information for all parents. The meetings held on *Raising Resilient Children*, *Effective Parent Communication* and *Parent Orientation* received a lot of positive feedback from parents.

The month of November started by giving importance to the Deepavali celebrations which was another successful event carried out in favour of the child in order to give them a cross-cultural exposure. November also focussed on "Christmas around the World" as a theme of study. The year is coming to an end with a line-up of a lot more activities for Christmas and GRADUATION which are known to be Signature events for La Petite Fleur Schools.

Adios from Montessori, until next time .



The Peace Gang, Sri Lanka

The Peace Gang has had a very eventful 3 months this term.

The first meeting which was held in September was a unique one. A presentation by Imalka De Silva, who is the first Sri Lankan to set foot on the Antarctic, was very informative and the children were held in awe. Climate change which is an important factor in today's context was highlighted.

A fund raiser for Bridge2Peace, *Prelude 2010* was held on the 18th of September at Ladies' College Hall. It was an evening much looked forward to by the Peace Gang who gave generously of their time & talents.

The children of Bridge2Peace Montessori Lunugamvehera too took part in this con-

cert. It was a memorable 3 days for these children who visited a church, Bellanwila Temple and a Hindu kovil. Dinner at Galle Face & a visit to the zoo were much appreciated events of their stay.

The October meeting gave us the opportunity of having our own Omar Sabera from South Africa give us a presentation on organic farming.

The highlight of the term was the residential camp, on the 29th and 30th of October. 40 students spent 3 days together. A Hallowe'en party, movie and popcorn enlivened the first night.

On the 30th the Organic Garden Project at Subodhi on $\frac{3}{4}$ acre of land presented by Rev. Fr. Mervyn Fernando. Students got their caps and gloves on for some

dirty work. Mr. Nalin de Silva spoke with fervour on their responsibility to care for the environment. After lunch and a creative workshop, students returned to school for the grand finale—Camp Fire! Parents were present for this fun final item.

On the 13th of November was the Jumble Sale—a big success! We thank all those who patronized our stalls and helped our cause.

May Peace be with you & yours this season,

Ms. Ruweni Weerasuriya



Y SIMPLY PICTURE PERFECT



News from Elementary

Both the children and I are settling in well into the program and are getting to know each other well. I had much trouble the first week, learning the names of the children and the children in turn had great fun in tricking me. Their pleasure was short-lived as it took only a day or so to figure out their names.

Now that we have settled, we have truly embraced the main characteristic of the elementary program, cosmic education. The children have begun to realize that each individual is a participant of the big picture and this realization and the acceptance of the interdependency formula came through the introduction and participation of our *job schedule for the week*.

Just as much as becoming aware of our cosmic participation, the children have embraced the English, Sinhala, Tamil and mathematics program with the help of the respective support staff. It is always a *delight* to hear children using all three languages in their day to day work.

We had a visit from a special friend in October, Nurandhi's pet Belgian Shephard. The children learned a thing or two about being respectful towards animals, their needs and feelings. We thank Mrs. Handunetti for bringing in the dog in spite of her advanced pregnancy.

I look forward for further support from the parent community throughout the school year for Dr. Montessori herself said *"Acquisition of knowledge indoor and outdoor exploration must come at one and the same time."* Ms. Roshi Nagahawatte

Our Religious Festivals

EID MUBARAK

The contribution of Islam and Islamic culture to the world over the centuries was the special focus during the day when we celebrated this major festival. Using audio-visual presentations, several parents made the informative sessions more interesting.

We learned first the significance of this festival and how Muslims the world over celebrated it. We also found out just how much science, mathematics, astronomy, geography, medicine, literature and many other subjects benefited from the inventions, discoveries, thoughts and creations of men and women of Islam. In fact, the so-called "Dark Ages" in Europe were actually a Golden Era for this culture.

From the chanting of the passages from the Qu'ran to the special outfits worn by the students, staff and parents; from the minarets, crescent moons and stars glittering around us and the Arabic rap songs interspersed with more traditional music; from the sharing of the specially-made *biryani* in the *sawan* and the *mehendi* on our palms to the artistically-draped veils on the ladies, the school's atmosphere was transformed for that day. Just about the only thing missing was a camel padding through the garden!



Diwali or Deepavali

On the 4th of November, La Petite Fleur Academy enjoyed celebrating the Hindu Festival of Lights, Deepawali. It was really a celebration of light and colour! And, true to form, we dressed for it, decorated for it, prayed for it, played for it, cooked for it, ate for it, and learned all about it.

The Hindu parents were so generous in their assistance for the morning's programme which was carried out with Ms Chelvy at the helm but with staff and parents giving of their mite in helping, whether it was to provide the colourful décor, the super spread of traditional foods and sweet-meats, to teach the students the traditional dance, *kolatam* or help design the traditional motifs on the floor, the *kolam*. The meal served that day was *iddli* with some wonderful chutney to accompany it. We even had a Happy Diwali cake, courtesy of a parent!

A very special thank you to all you wonderful parents. A'salaam aleikum! Nandri!



A Smile from Nelson Mandela News from the Mahatma Gandhi Room



We would first and foremost like to thank you for being present at Back to School night, a vital event in the school calendar that strengthens the understanding in how much we all need to care for your child. The thoughts you shared with us and the interest you showed in the child's work is a great strength for us.

As Nelson Mandela puts it 'Education is the Weapon to Change Life'. So it is he who welcomes your child with a sincere smile. The Nelson Mandela Room will make your mature child the leaders in the school and inspire them to be creative. They will engage in a broader horizon of **DIVERSITY** to create a peaceful environment for everyone.

Amazingly your child has thrilled us with his/her creativity. Poems of diverse techniques and themes are being explored, which we consider a great achievement. *Poem Hunter* has thus become a creative space which has invited your child to be an innovative thinker. Please do encourage your child in your fullest capacity for this creative space.

We appreciate your support in motivating your child towards this target of Peaceful Co-existence through Spiritual and Intellectual enhancement.

We wish you all the very best in all that you may want to achieve.

Ms. Feroze Lanthra

Mr. Ravindra Ranasinha

Below: Mandela students at various activities

The students of Mahatma Gandhi class start their day with daily tasks in their new environment and with new furniture. They work happily during the course of the day with their regular syllabus and also use the time more efficiently by doing many other activities to consolidate their theoretical work.

They visited a woodwork site to see those hands behind the making of their furniture and appreciated the effort put into making a table.

To try their skill in basic Mathematics, they helped their parents by doing a part of their shopping for them. They learnt to prepare a shopping list, to read the price and weight on the packaging, to shop and, of course, to budget to the availability of their finances in their purse. We are greatly delighted to have this group, representing the sacrificial and simple nature of Mahatma Gandhi, a part of the LPF Academy because the entire class offered to take a simple lollipop as a treat when they were offered an ice cream because one of their friends could not have a cool snack. Students of Mahatma Gandhi class, we are proud of you!

Ms. Dilanthi Manuel

Below: Gandhi students—learning in the class and out of it!

