

Northland Pulse

Principal's Message



Every generation lives through an event that changes the world and defines an epoch. For my grandparents, it was World War II; for my parents, it was the struggle of nation-building when Singapore separated from Malaysia in 1965.

For us, it is the pandemic.

COVID-19 has devastated countries all over the world. Millions have fallen ill and died, leaving behind grieving families and shattered lives. The pandemic has created a grim trail of stalled economies, unrest and

conflict as well as widespread hardship, especially among the poorest and most vulnerable.

In Northland, COVID has disrupted all our programmes and created many constraints arising from the Safe Management Measures (SMM). Nonetheless, we have continued to learn, work and play, in very altered ways but with the same Northland spirit of 'Share Care, Dare' as espoused in our school vision. In this special issue of the Northland Pulse, we show how as a school, we have sought to Reset, Reflect & Revitalise as we ride the upheavals of COVID.

RESET.

To reset is to stop and start again.

When SMM imposed restrictions on all our activities, we were able to pivot and reset with new approaches and plans. For instance, our MTL Fortnight offered a range of activities within school including Batik Painting and preparation of traditional foods such as Ulam, dumplings and prata. Our Uplift Committee continued to organise engagement programmes for our students. We were able to restart SPARCLE 1 with new activities to enable Northstars to develop strength of character.

To reset is to pause, take stock and begin again.

When things become too overwhelming, it is important for us to pause, to create some time and space to collect ourselves so that we may start again with renewed resolve and hope.

In my earlier Youtube broadcasts to the school, I have spoken the importance of self-care and mental wellness. I would like to

reiterate this: we need to be aware when the strain is getting too much and we need help. As we reset, let us embrace the care and support of our families, friends and teachers.

Reset – Stop. Start again. Tomorrow is another day.

REFLECT.

How do we make the best out of a difficult situation?

One way is to take the right lessons from it. In other words, reflect on our experiences in a constructive manner so that they shape us to become better, not bitter.

We are often beset with worries, anxiety and negative thoughts that are detrimental to our mental well-being. As you reset, make a deliberate decision to reflect with positivity, hope and optimism.

Begin each day with a grateful heart. Remember the blessings we still have in our lives – however small they may seem to be – and learn to appreciate them. Do not take them for granted. Think about the lessons that the pandemic has taught us and the ways that it is building and toughening us. Reframe things in a positive and constructive way, and be open to new possibilities and learning.

If you practise all the above on a daily basis, you will not only feel happier, you will become better and stronger.

REVITALISE!

In April this year, we held our Speech Day with the theme REVITALISE! It is a reminder for us to seek renewal for ourselves as we reset and reflect. We have been waging our battle against COVID and its variants for more than a year. We struggle to cope with the impacts of the pandemic; the uncertainty and the rapid, wide-ranging changes that have taken a heavy toll on our sense of well-being, especially mental health. To Revitalise! is a call for us to invigorate ourselves and refocus on what is positive and good, so that our Northland spirit can burn more brightly as we continue our journey.

As you turn the pages of this issue of the newsletter, may you be filled with happy memories and positive thoughts of the special moments you shared with your friends and teachers at Northland. Continue to Reset, Reflect and Revitalise! so we can safeguard our well-being, take care of one another and strengthen our Northland spirit.

With Gratitude,

Tan Siew Woon
Principal
23 July 2021

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STAY CONNECTED WITH US!



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MT Fortnight Programme Feature

02

Our MTL Fortnight Programme was held from 16-25 th February 2021. The theme of the programme focused on **'Love our Language, Appreciate our Culture'**. The 2-week long event aimed at creating an immersive environment for the learning of mother tongue languages and cultures so as to experience MTL as ''living languages'. The opening of the programme saw a brief introduction of the MTL Fortnight by HOD MTL followed by the traditional martial arts which have played a part in defining Singapore's multi-cultural identity. We featured our talented Northstars in wushu, silat and silambam. To add on, despite not being able to go for any learning journeys due to SMM, our Northstars had the opportunity to experience a wide-range of hands-on activities namely handicrafts-making and understanding the significance of traditional food and games that represent the different races. These include batik painting, clay modelling as well as *prata* and *roti jala* making. In short, our Northstars had an enriching and fulfilling experience throughout the event.



Indian Handicraft



Malay Coaster Weaving



Chinese Traditional Painting



Preparing Ulam and Roti Jala



Wau Batik Painting



Wau Batik Painting



Chinese Clay Modeling



Malay Coaster Weaving



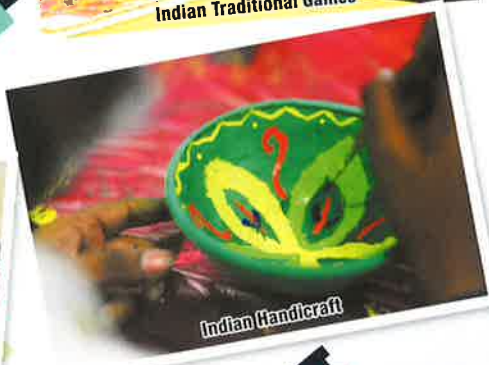
Indian Traditional Games



Chinese Dumpling Making



Chinese Traditional Painting



Indian Handicraft

Levelling the Playing Field for Everyone

03

My name is Abdul Razak. I am a PE teacher and a member of the Uplift Committee. The Uplift Committee's role is to promote an inclusive education with opportunities for all, supporting and uplifting students with diverse needs. Our objective is for all North Stars to feel valued and motivated to grow so that they can be the best version of themselves.

This year, the committee aims to promote student's intrinsic motivation through its wide variety of programmes and activities. Borrowing ideas from the Self-Determination Theory, the committee designs its programmes and activities to develop student's sense of competence, strengthen peer relationships and provide opportunities for student voice.

Below are some articles on programmes that were conducted in Semester 1.

BREAKFAST AND BEFRIENDERS. SHAPING A SENSE OF BELONGING AND CARE.

By Joanne Yap

We have all heard "*Breakfast is the most important meal of the day*". Right here in Northland Secondary, Peer Support Leaders serve breakfast to their peers every morning. While it appears that the sole purpose was for students to start their day right with breakfast, there is more to it than meets the eye.

The PSLs are part of the school culture of care in school. They are part of the Support-A-Peer Programme where they are paired with a peer in class to support. PSLs also play an important role where they serve as the ears and eyes of teachers; to look out for their peers in distress and to direct them to the help needed.



BANGING ON BATUCADA. BUILDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH INTEREST-BASED ACTIVITIES

By Abdul Razak



It's Speech Day Day and the pandemic has not dampened the celebratory mood at Northland Secondary. In fact, the celebrations this year grew livelier and louder with the sounds of Batucada from the ACE participants.

ACE is an interest-based after-school engagement programme that aims to engage students meaningfully. The response for this year's recruitment drive was overwhelming with over 70 lower secondary students applying to join the programme. ACE participants can select to attend either the Baking, Sepak Takraw or Running Elective.

Amidst the global pandemic and the stresses, pressures and disruptions that it has caused, Northland Secondary remains a safe and inviting place for students to grow. Members of the Uplift Committee are committed to ensuring that programmes and activities designed to engage and support students continue as safely as possible.

One big challenge is ensuring that planned activities adhere to the SMM. Some of the activities like sepak-takraw and running are strenuous physical activities and the wearing of masks may not be suitable for these type of activities. However, the coaches and teachers creatively adapted some of the training plans to include less strenuous activities such as teambuilding games. In addition, students also spend time journaling their reflections after every training using Padlet.

Despite the pandemic and the many restrictions, our North Stars have shown that they are adaptable and resilient. I hope that they will remember the strength that they have shown during this challenging period and develop the confidence and belief that they can achieve whatever they want in life.



1. Introduce yourself/ your committee
2. With the resumption of the various activities, what were some programmes/activities that the Uplift committee carried out in the first half of the year?
3. How do you/ your committee feel about the resumption of activities? Were there any challenges along the way?
4. What is one takeaway you wish the students can gain after participating in the activities?



Speech Day Feature

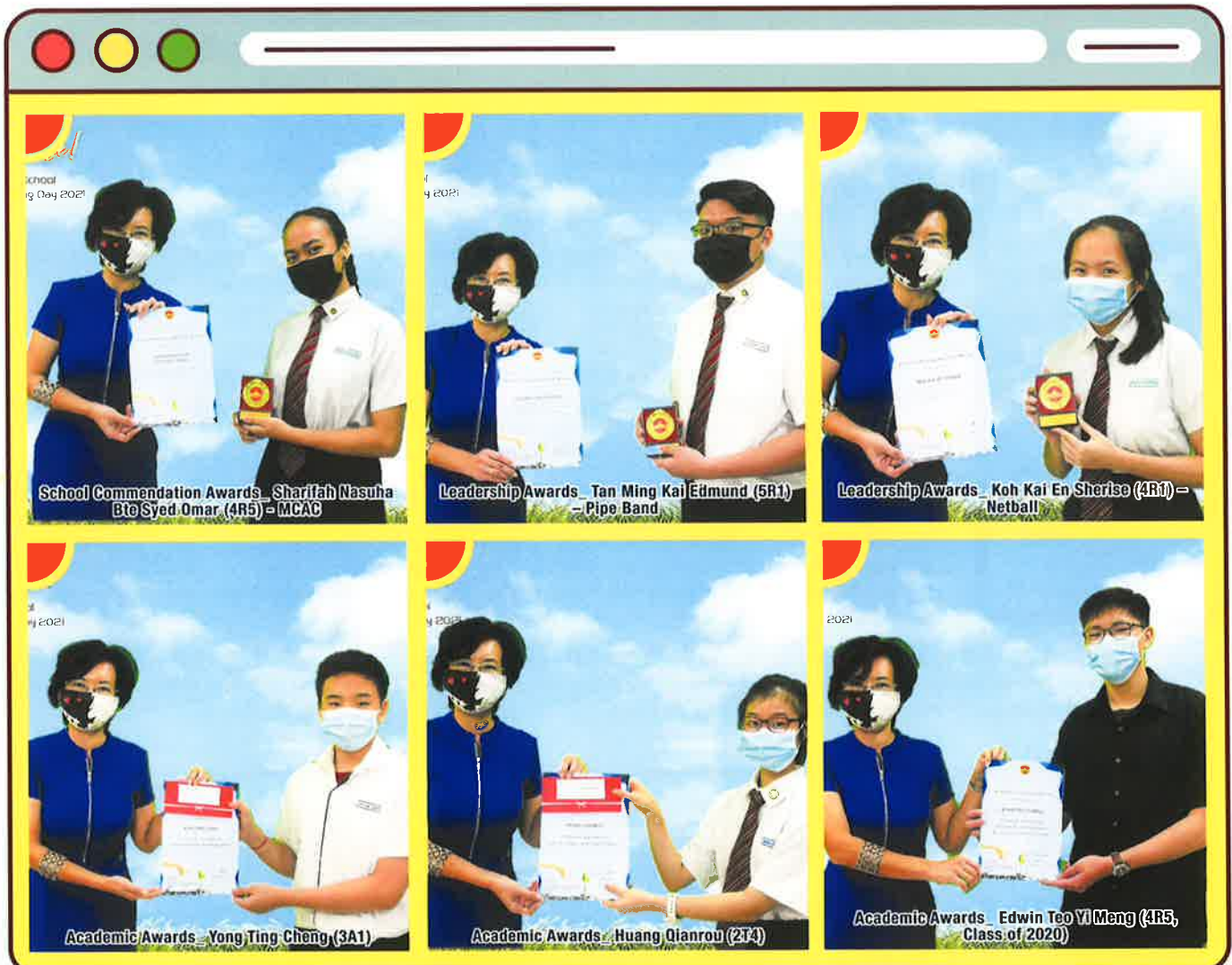


04

SPEECH & PRIZE- GIVING DAY 2021

Since our merger in 2017, we have embarked on a journey of building a community imbued with strong values, bonded by quality relationships, in pursuit of learning and growth. It has been a journey full of struggles, but also filled with triumphs. Last year, our journey was disrupted unceremoniously by COVID-19. Indeed the whole world is still reeling from the effects of the pandemic.

Our theme this year, "REVITALISE!" marks a deliberate pause in our journey and prompts us to seek renewal for ourselves and our school. To Revitalise! is a call for us to invigorate ourselves and refocus on what is positive and good, so that our Northland spirit can burn more strongly and brightly as we continue our journey.



Performances



05

Polaris Award



Speech Day Fringe activities



SPARCLE 1 reflection from students

06

After a year long hiatus since the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, the highly anticipated SPARCLE 1 was finally allowed to resume, while observing the SMM restrictions in place. Students share with us their learning experiences during the one-week programme.

SECONDARY 2

I realised that after complimenting our group leaders, they became more confident of themselves and were able to lead us better in the subsequent activities.

~Fang Jia jun 2T2

I discovered that I can be very resilient when I put my mind to it. I completed the 8 km hike and at the same time, I told my group mates stories to entertain them and to keep their minds off the exhaustion they felt.

~ Sooria 2T4

Before the camp, I didn't like to communicate with others, preferring to do work on my own. However, by the end of the camp, I was able to communicate better with my group members and became a better team player.

~Ooi Ching Wen 2T6

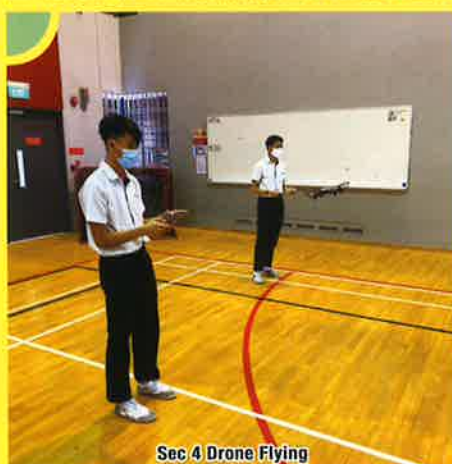
SECONDARY 4

After experiencing all the activities, I have actually grown as now I think of challenges as a way of learning. I never thought I would actually feel this way as I was the kind to stay away from any challenges and hardships. Now I feel that without challenges and hardships, I will not be able to feel the pride and satisfaction of finally achieving success, after the many failures in the process.

~Arati 4R4

In the short span of 3 days, I have learnt and grown so much. One of the major takeaways is to always trust myself. I should always have confidence in myself and to believe in myself no matter how hard the challenge is.

~ Adrianna 4R2a



4R1 VIA (Engaging the Migrant Community)

07

Amidst the increasing cases of abuse and prejudice faced by the foreign workers in Singapore, 4R1 embarked on their Values-in-Action(VIA) journey to learn more about this group of people, marginalised by the very society they helped to build. Along the way, their initial perception of the foreign workers were challenged and this strengthened 4R1's resolve to bring light, no matter how small, to express their gratitude to the foreign workers in the Yishun Dormitory.

For a period of time, the COVID -19 cases in the workers' dormitories and their plight hogged the headlines. From the news and various posts on social media platforms, for the very first time, we realised that the problems the migrant workers had to endure went beyond long working hours and stigma from Singaporeans. This was when we knew we wanted to do something for them, no matter how small, to cheer them on in this crisis. With a common goal in mind, we set about forming groups to take charge of the various aspects of our VIA project.

The outreach group set about to interview a few migrant workers to gain an insight into what they are truly facing. With Mdm Atassha's facilitation, we managed to conduct the interview via Zoom. This interview was an eye-opener as we gained a deeper insight to the lives of the migrant workers. After the interview, we decided to prepare care packs for the migrant workers in a dormitory near the school. Our publicity

team designed some posters to help raise awareness to the plight of migrant workers and also to advertise for our fundraising event. Eventually we managed to raise over \$900 along with some other donations like packet drinks.

Next, the group in charge of the care packs went shopping to procure some daily essentials which will be useful to the migrant workers. The next stage was a big challenge. We had to pack 150 care packs in less than a week, amidst our busy schedule. In the end, everyone in the class chipped in to help whenever they could. Even our teachers chipped in too! The care packs were finally ready to be distributed. When we went down to the dormitory, we were humbled by their sincerity and gratitude, as they welcomed us. They also gave us a short tour around their living quarters, which was crowded and stuffy. Through our interaction with them, we realise they are just like you and I. The only difference is, we are more fortunate to have what we need, they have to leave their homes to work in a foreign land, just to feed their families. It was with heavy hearts as we left.

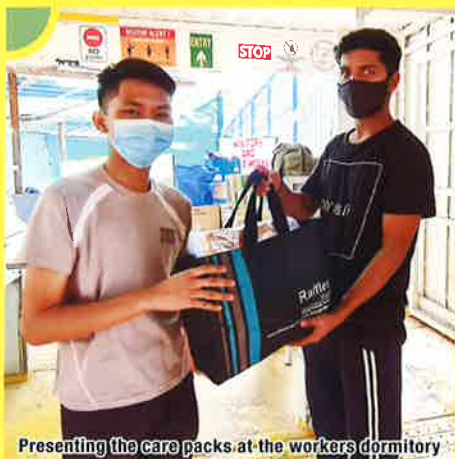
This will be one of the more memorable and meaningful experiences for all of us. We learnt to count our blessings and be grateful for things we have. We learnt to refrain from being judgemental and to empathize with others. Finally, we should always be kind, to spread love, not hate.



Fundraising booth in canteen



Packing the care packs



Presenting the care packs at the workers dormitory



Sample of the care pack



Preparation for fundraising



Zoom Session with the workers

Managing Stress –

A student's perspective by Li Ao (4R1)

08

In 2019, Li Ao joined the Northland family as a Secondary 2 student. Despite the unfamiliar environment and the new subjects he had to take up, Li Ao never once bowed in face of challenges. Since joining the school, Li Ao has managed to remain the top of his cohort, 3 years in a row. In this edition, Li Ao, now an O level student, shares with us how to manage stress.



1. DESCRIBE A TYPICAL DAY AT SCHOOL FOR YOU.

I spend most of my time on scheduled lessons in school everyday. Besides having theoretical lessons, I also get to exercise during PE lessons, which I found very important as I lack exercising. When I have not stepped down from my CCA, the Symphonic Band, it also occupied a large portion of my school days.



2. WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE STRESSFUL FOR YOU THESE DAYS?

The National exam is definitely the major cause of stress for students at my age. This is an exam to decide where we will go in our future. However, peer pressure is another source of stress which should not be ignored. We are always competing with our classmates. This kind of stress actually pushes us to work harder, but excessive stress will impact our mental state negatively.



3. HOW DO YOU MANAGE/COPE WITH ALL THE DIFFERENT DEMANDS/ EXPECTATIONS?

Our expectations usually come from our parents and teachers. Usually, our teachers set reasonable goals for us which are achievable. Personally, I feel that if I follow the instructions our teachers have given, I will easily meet their demands. However, our parents do not know a lot about our standards, so sometimes they may give us some expectations that are challenging to achieve. When I am in this situation, I will usually have a talk with my parents and clarify their doubts about our studies. Thus the expectations can be manageable and within our ability. If some expectations are challenging but achievable, I will not give up. I will push myself to put in some extra effort to achieve the targets. After all, expectations can be a source of motivation to challenge our limits too.



4. WHAT ARE SOME ADVICE YOU WOULD GIVE TO YOUR PEERS ON MANAGING THEIR STRESS LEVELS?

Firstly, have sufficient sleep everyday. I know that many of my classmates like to burn midnight oil, either to study or using their electronic devices. As a result, they sleep during lessons. This will become a vicious cycle and thus they cannot catch up with the lessons, which contributes further to the increasing stress levels. We should sleep at least 7 hours a day to ensure enough energy to study. Do your homework early and go to bed without your hand phone.

Secondly, spend less time using electronic devices, such as smartphones. I also find using these devices to be addictive, and it is difficult to completely move away from these devices. Therefore, we can start with some small steps. When we are doing our homework, we can just put away our hand phones and focus for 2 hours. When we are going to bed, we can put our phones in the living room so we can sleep well. With these little steps, we can have more focused time on our studies and thus we will not be so stressed about our learning.

