



The Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa Newsletter December 2011

Dear Parents, Students and Friends,

This month we celebrate two significant birthdays. On 13 December, Ismailis around the world will celebrate the 75th birthday of the Academy's founder and patron, His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan. Hazir Imam, the 49th hereditary Imam of Ismaili Muslims was born in Geneva, Switzerland. His vision to provide students with an education of the highest standard in order to prepare them for lives characterised by leadership and service led to the establishment of this Academy in 2003. The second of 18 planned Academies – all with a similar ethos - was opened in Hyderabad this year with Maputo, Mozambique planned to open in 2013. We thank His Highness for his expansive vision to influence society through education, and we congratulate him on this significant birth milestone.

The second significant birthday this month is of course Christmas, celebrated by Christians to remember the birth of Jesus Christ. Last Friday evening a Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony was held on the front steps of the Commons and featured singing by our choirs and the Ambassadors Acapella group. The Christmas tree is a well-known symbol of Christmas – attributed to Martin Luther who cut and decorated the first Christmas tree in 1535. Prince Albert (husband of Queen Victoria) took the tradition to the UK in 1841; and it reached the US 10 years later.

What are the origins of the Christmas tree? The winter solstice to celebrate the end of winter and the prospect of spring and new life was celebrated on the shortest day 21 / 22 December. Pre-Christian people would bring evergreen trees into the house to promote fertility, life and reproduction. They decorated their trees with fruit and placed other foods underneath as an offering to the tree.

For Christians, the Christmas tree symbolizes new life – and new beginnings – in Christ. The branches stretching toward heaven symbolise that Christ is the Son of God; the candles

or lights on the tree symbolise that Jesus is the light of the world; and the gifts to others remind us of the gift of God to us – his son Jesus Christ.

For many, Christmas is a time of celebration with family, and an opportunity to share gifts. We wish everyone an enjoyable and relaxing holiday, and we look forward to meeting again in the New Year.

Best wishes.

Rob Burrough
Head of Academy

Highlights of the last month

Features of the last month included the arrival of the new Head of Catering, Mrs Habiba Teja, and the opening of the Commons dining services to great satisfaction by all; the arrival of the new Head of Administration, Mr Abdullah Kurwa; the Aga Khan Strands conference on Global Economics; the hosting of the two week DALF Alliance Francaise course for local French teachers; DP1 examinations; the Christmas lighting ceremony with carol singing by the school choirs; and the very successful Zawadi Bazaar community fundraiser run by the Senior School (see attachment). This week is the last week for students before their three week Christmas vacation.

Other highlights of the last month include:

Teaching and Learning

- Students from Years 3 – 10 sat the ISA tests in October instead of the usual February sitting. Results are expected in late January.
- Work Scrutiny on DP1 and DP2 work books was undertaken by Senior Management to check on student progress
- MYP Question and Answer Parents Evening was held.
- The second annual Personal Project Mock Exhibition was held to help prepare the Grade 10 students meet the requirements of the Personal Project. Each of the 47 students displayed the product they have made and were available to explain the thinking behind the product and process so far. They have now embarked on the process of writing the report for the final MYP certification.
- DP Extended Essay – all students but one met the final November deadline.
- DP1 End of Term Examinations were held at the end of November.
- Dr Sultana, a Pharmacist at the Aga Khan Hospital spoke to the DP2 students on anti-bacterials, antivirals, and HIV and AIDS.
- Language Planning Day by all Junior School classroom teachers who spent a day last month on language activities including sessions on spelling issues, strategies,

- on full integration of LA and programme of inquiry; and on ensuring there is an understanding of and planning for the different genres of reading.
- Year 6 Watamu field trip focusing on their Unit of Inquiry on Awesome Civilizations took place last week.
 - The Global Economics Forum reviewed the Global Economics Strand with some exciting new ideas to be presented for further discussion. Strand Advisor Dr Robert Biddeleaux was utilised taking extra student workshops.
 - The Junior School “Diwali Assembly” was a colourful celebration performed by our Hindu students and coordinated by Mrs. Dave and the volunteer RE teachers from the parent body.
 - The Junior School 3-Way Conferences between the teacher, parent and student went well and there was a good turnout of parents – 78% of students represented.
 - The Junior School Crazy Hair Day was celebrated “in style” with both staff and students participating. On the same day the class and language teachers had a full day working on the Language scope and sequence document and related policies such as reading and spelling. The single subject teachers were organized to provide an academic programme for the students. A most successful day’s work linked to one of the Junior School’s objectives for the year.
 - The Junior School Language and Mathematics testing was trialled to better monitor and track student attainment
 - All staff completed Action Research projects directed towards meeting the individual needs of our students

Student Life

- South African Model United Nations event in Cape Town was attended by 4 of our students. The students took 3rd place in this international competition.
- The annual DP1 drama production *Baklavia* was staged at the Amphitheatre. An entertaining and high quality production.
- A Friday night time trial mini-gala for all Academy Swim Team members was a first for the school. Bi-monthly events are planned.
- The Senior School Lip Sync competition was held in November. Eagles, Kestrels, Falcons and Hawks took the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th places respectively.
- Students sat the BMAT examinations which determine entry into medical courses in top universities in the United Kingdom.
- 55 students sat the DALF examinations under the aegis of French Ministry of Education through Alliance Francaise de Mombasa.
- Visual Art Exhibition - Senior School students Visual Arts exhibition runs from Friday, November 25.
- The SRC Retreat was held in October. 45 members of the new version SRC attended the event to enhance shared leadership, giving more meaning to student leadership. The course involved speech giving and team building activities like cooking together.
- Under 16 Basketball League – the team has won 2 out of 4 games.
- An U/11 and U/13 Rounders’ Tournament was hosted at AKA, Mombasa. Seven schools attended and the U/11 team ended as champions

- At the AKA, Mombasa U /11 Cricket Tournament our school team was victorious for the third year running.
- Two Junior School cricket matches have been played against MIS Braeburn and Sandpiper (from Malindi) – AKA, Mombasa won both these matches.
- In the Assistant High Commission of India /Oshwal Literacy Competition, Eman Salim was awarded 1st place in the Elocution section for 9 to 12 year olds. She delivered a 3 minute speech on “Save the Environment”. The Group Song category for 9 to 12 year olds saw the 6 student choir gain 2nd place.
- An U/11 and U/13 Rounders’ Tournament hosted at the Academy attracted seven schools and the Junior School U/11 team ended as champions.
- **Leadership** The SRC has had an active month holding its first General Meeting, to discuss issues such as the school dance and calendar for the year. A SRC Finance Committee which will oversee grants and loans to student groups and individual students for participation in sporting events, academic tests/fees, and club related projects is planned. In November, the SRC organised a football tournament on a Saturday night with the primary objective to bring residential and day scholars together in an evening event. Monthly lunch time meetings are held with the Head of Academy.
- The Year 9 Leadership course continues to build on previous strengths. This month, students learnt about constructive criticism, public speaking, conflict resolution and professional relationships. In addition, students prepared and presented their final presentation: organizing a 60 minute session with all the Year 2 and 3 students in Junior School on team building and House spirit.
- *Music is Life Concert* - held last month at the Commons. The Red Cross were in attendance as the beneficiaries.

Community

- Senior School Parent-Teacher Conference and the Parents Association meeting was held just before Half Term to enable residential parents to attend both events. 244 parents attended. A parents cocktail and bites function followed by a question and answer session with senior staff proved popular.
- The annual de-worming exercise by DP1 students in Bombolulu saw 68 students administering the medicine to more than 400 students. This exercise is used as an initiation of our DP students into CAS, data collection and writing of the first Extended Essay project.
- Skype Link with Jeremy Gilley. The students spoke to Jeremy who is the originator of Peace One Day movement to celebrate the day as a day of peace worldwide.
- *Because I am a Girl* - first girls forum for 50 girls from underprivileged backgrounds who came to the Academy last month. The idea is to provide friendship, outreach & support to raise awareness of gender disparities and raise aspirations of local girls.
- Outreach activities included community seminars; needs assessment session for teachers of English in Mombasa municipality for Muslim Education & Welfare Society; class observation for Shanzu and Teacher Advisory Centre Tutors; DALF French course for local French teachers; and input sessions and school observations for the English and leadership programmes.

Notices

End of Term: School finishes for students at 12 noon on Friday 9th December. A whole Academy assembly starts at 8.00am with separate Senior School and Junior School final assemblies to follow later in the morning. Parents are welcome at these assemblies. Reports for Senior School will be issued that day and buses will leave soon after 12 noon. Lunch and dinner will be available for residential students that day.

Start of Classes in the New Year: School resumes for students on Wednesday 4 January at the usual time. Residential students may return to school the previous day. As the kitchen facilities will be closed until 3 January, and many Dorm parents are on holiday, residential students are **not** to return before the 3rd, unless given specific permission by both Mr. Kariuki, the Residential Manager, and their Dorm Parent.

School Fees: A reminder that school fees are due in August, November and February. The Term 2 November fees are now overdue. Our thanks to those families who have paid their fees by the due date. As advised in separate emails by the Junior and Senior School principals, families who have not paid the school fees will not be able to collect the Term 1 Report, and will be asked to keep their child/ren home from school after the holidays, unless arrangements have been made with the Finance Department.

AKA, Mombasa Car Stickers: Parents are able to collect this year's blue car stickers from the main Reception.

Parent Email Addresses: A number of parents are still to advise the Admissions Department of their new or changed email addresses. Please contact Jane Okello at the school or email jane.okello@akam.ac.ke

Zawadi Bazaar Raffle Still Open: The raffle will be drawn this Friday. First prize is a matching *silver earring and necklace* from Sonara Budha Jeweller (across the street), valued at Kshs. 10,000, second prize is a one night stay for two at the Sun and Sand Resort; and third prize is 2 sliders passes and bags from Wild Waters. Tickets are available from the bursar's office for Kshs. 400 each until Friday 10am. Be in to win!

Staff Farewell This Friday is Coach Mohamed's last day with us before he leaves for Tanzania. Coach Mohamed has been the Head Swim Coach and organiser of the school Triathlon team. Under his expert coaching, our students have gained national and international titles and broken national swimming records, helping the Academy to a national and international reputation in swimming. Our thanks for all his work at the Academy and we wish him well in his future endeavours. A replacement is currently being sourced.

Classical Christmas A Festive Concert of Classical Music performed by the students and staff of the Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa, this Wednesday evening starting at 7.30pm,

plus a matinee performance on Thursday afternoon at 3.15pm. Tickets are Kshs. 600 and Kshs. 300. See attached poster for details.

Coming Events

December	7	Classical Christmas Concert 7.30pm
	8	Classical Concert matinee 3.15pm
	9	Senior School Reports to Parents
		Whole Academy Assembly 8.00am
		Junior School Christmas Assembly 11.00am
		School finishes at 12 noon
		End of Term
	19 – 23	Office hours 9.00am – 12 noon week days
	24 Dec – 2 Jan	School Closed
January	3	Residential students return
	4	Classes as usual
	20	No classes – 3 day IB Workshops begin for staff
February	8	Personal Project Exhibition
	15 – 17	Half Term break
	20	Mock Examinations begin