



11th September 2015

Dear Parents,

Welcome to our second Junior School newsletter of this academic year. These letters serve the purpose to keep you informed and remind you about up-coming events, to celebrate our community and student achievements as well as to provide a glimpse into school-life through some of our stories.

PYP Information Coffee Morning for Parents

We very much enjoyed our session with parents who joined us last week to find out more about the IB PYP Programme. This was run by our PYP Coordinator, Ms Khona Bhattacharjee. The same session, *An Introduction to the PYP*, will be presented next **Thursday evening 17th September, at 5.15pm – 6.15pm** in the Junior School library. We especially encourage parents new to the school to attend. Please email the school office at rebecca.davis@agakhanacademies.org to confirm your attendance.

Our Teaching Faculty

It is also my pleasure to introduce you to our Junior School faculty through the attached document, *Staff Profiles*. This provides you with information about the teachers, their qualifications and experience. Also included in the document are the Junior School's administrative and support staff and details of their roles.

TPP Programme

You will note in the *Staff Profiles*, that this year we have four staff members who are part of the Academy's Teacher Preparation Programme (TPP); Michael Muchilwa, Fridah Gatwiri, Titus Makunyi and Kepha Obiri. Michael and Fridah are teaching in the Sports Department with Mr. Anthony Ndungu as their mentor, Titus is teaching in Year 1 with Ms Leonida Sangale, with Ms. Kristine Leabres as his mentor and Kepha is teaching in Year 3 alongside Ms Ruth Msae and Ms Hope Baraka, with Ms. Evelyn Awino as his mentor. In January, we look forward to welcoming two additional TPP teachers who will join the Junior School for the next eighteen months. The TPP is a programme we offer to newly qualified teachers with a degree in Education from Kenyan universities. Their eighteen month programme with us provides them with practical experience in teaching, International Baccalaureate experience and professional development.

Other news regarding staffing this year is that Tungwa Nyiro, our Office Assistant, has been trained to provide services to check books in and out of the library for the students. Students can do this during their class library time with their teachers. We are in the process of appointing a Teacher Librarian with the help of Mr. Apollo Abungu, the Academy's Head Librarian and will keep you informed about the successful candidate. Eunice Indulachi, our Refreshments Coordinator, has been appointed to take to and from, as well as supervise the changing rooms for swimming classes. This should help



reduce students' items being left in the rooms after classes, though we do encourage our students to take responsibility for their belongings without needing adults to remind them of this! Having personal items labelled will also help in reducing lost property.

Enrichment Programme

School life for our students is in full swing, which includes the Enrichment Programme which started last week. Attached with this newsletter you will find information on additional clubs and activities provided by professionals from outside the school. The attachment provides details on how to enrol your child for these. For security reasons, professionals working with the students using our school facilities now have contracts directly with the school and payments for students enrolled in the clubs and activities need to be made directly to the school.

Assemblies

Every Monday morning a staff member of the Junior School reads a story to the students that has been chosen with a theme or a moral message. It is a moment getting together as a Junior School community, which is much appreciated by the children and the staff, and sets us up for a good start to the week.



Ms Khona reading on a Monday morning

The first Friday assembly at the start of the school year was the *Principal's Assembly*, where a presentation was given to the students about the meetings I had with classes back in in May. Many of the classes had voted to talk about a particular issue of concern such as the crows at school during break-time. During the assembly, students enjoyed seeing what each class had voted to talk about and the purpose for this part of the assembly was to emphasis how students have a say and voice in their school.



Class meeting with the Principal (May 2015)

On Friday 4th September our Vice-Principal Ms Rukiya Cochu, led an assembly connected to International Literacy Day which was observed on 8th September. For today's assembly, Ms Khona Bhattacharjee along with Ms Amita Dave and Ms Harsha Khataw, worked with the students, who gave a beautiful presentation around events connected to *Shravan*, an auspicious holy month in the Indian Calendar. Two weeks ago, we also enjoyed a Kiswahili assembly where the whole event was written and led by our students. This was very much a product of student work which was coordinated by Ms Esther Kariuki and Ms Lillian Agolla.

Building a caring community of learners in our classrooms

It is important for us to regularly share with you some stories about your children's experiences at school. The Year 2 excerpt below gives you an example of a lesson which was connected to the students learning through their Unit of Inquiry, with a strong PSHE element to it.

The Year 2's Unit of Inquiry is about how 'personal choices affect how we work to achieve team goals'. For PSPE (Personal, Social and Physical Education) and unit lessons, we have been focusing on the big idea of TEAMWORK. This week, we had a parent as a guest speaker – Mrs. Nuala Alibhai. She organised an activity with the children wherein they talked about their priorities or what is important for them. Most of the students said that they can't live without 'family and friends'. Some even said 'reading and Math'. They also played a game wherein they got to know each other and themselves better by asking each other questions like "What scares you?" or "What would you like to be when you grow up?" The session ended with an activity wherein they had to put a marble inside their socks while walking around the room but they were also given a candy to chew on. This allowed to them to think deeply about how we sometimes tend to focus on the bad things or challenges (marble) and not the good or positive things (candy). The activities with Mrs. Alibhai made the children realise how important it is for individual members of a team to be happy and positive in order to contribute to the overall success and happiness of the team or group. We hope that more parents and visitors share their expertise and time with the students. Parents are teachers too!



Year 2 students

Music results

We recently received the results of the prestigious and globally recognised ABRSM (Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music) exams in which many of our students participated. We are delighted that every AKA, M student passed their grade. Many congratulations to them, such an achievement requires hard work and discipline, as well as regular classes and practice.

Car Stickers

Finally, as this is a new academic year, just a reminder for those of you who drive into the Academy to drop off or collect your children, that you will need a 2015-16 AKA, M sticker for your car. This is available from the reception in the main administration building.

As always, it is a real pleasure to have your children with us at school every week. We look forward to seeing them again on Monday and in the meantime, wish you a restful and enjoyable week-end.

Kind regards,

Isla Gordon
Principal, Junior School

Attachments:

- Staff Profiles
- Enrichment Programmes (External Service providers)

