



The Aga Khan Academy Mombasa, Newsletter

March 2013

Dates to remember

- DP2 Celebration of Achievement Portfolio 4pm 21 March, Tamu Balcony
- Term prize-giving 11am 22 March, Commons
- Term ends 22 March at noon
- DP2 parent and student meetings 1-4pm 22 March
- Health Expo 8-12 April
- MAD Night 19 April

Inside this issue:

Staff News	2
Notices & Coming Events	2
Junior School News	3
MAD Night	3
Kenyan Swimming Champs	3
EAMUN	4
SRC News	4
Senior School Inter-house Events	4
Kenyan Elections	5

Exploiting the Teachable Moments

Dear Parents, Students and Friends

The month of February was rife with expectation as we approached the most historic elections in our country. Much was happening in the political field that was attracting the attention both of the whole country and our school community. For some of our students this is their first experience with any election; for others it was a stark reminder of the now infamous post-election violence of 2008; and yet for others, the elections served as a reminder that they will be called to exercise their civic responsibility, come the next elections.

One of the characteristics of the International Baccalaureate education is contextual learning. The belief is that the closer learning is to everyday life, the greater the depth of learning. In this case the elections presented the school with a teachable moment, applicable across

the whole school. In particular, aspects of the Governance strand was explored through study units.

Amongst other activities, the televised presidential debates were an important opportunity for students to gain an understanding of issues pertinent to each candidate's campaign. This is perhaps the most powerful way to prepare the next generation of voters for issue-based politics. We thank all parents for allowing students to stay up late on the nights of the Presidential debates. At the end of it all, the 337 Senior School students participated in a mock election ahead of the election holiday.

As shown elsewhere in the Newsletter, clearly our students' sentiments were not shared by the Kenyan voter as seen by the final election tally. The question we keep asking is what swayed their vote so far from the real voters' choices?



Simon Otieno

Contextual learning begins in Junior school. The staging of *Simba's Pride*, a sequel to *The Lion King* was a most fitting choice. The musical brought together the whole of the Junior School providing a chance for each student to perform.

Congratulations to all the students for great performances and to parents for their support throughout the rehearsal and performance period. Congratulations also to the teachers for their input with a special mention of Mr Lowe and Mr Makinga, for putting the show together.

Simon Otieno
Acting Head of Academy



Ms Meritaton
Khiriga



Ms Maureen
Makachia

Staff News

This term we welcomed Meritaton Khiriga who has joined the staff as a teacher of French and Swahili at MYP level. Meritaton is a graduate of Kenyatta University with a B.Ed (Arts) French degree and joins The Academy as a teaching fellow after having taught at the Alliance Française de Mombasa for the past year.

We also welcome Maureen Makachia who joins the Finance department in the Accounts payable team. Maureen's last job was with the Chemelil Sugar Company in Kisumu.

Congratulations to the following staff who have been nominated for our *Catch Them Doing It Right* award: Patience Njenga (for her role supporting the IB Science workshop), Simon Kaluku (working long hours with a good attitude), George Mutuku and Fanuel Ongoyo (Catering staff who have given exemplary service). Also receiving awards this month are Jane Okello from Admissions and Elizabeth Bwana (Bookstore). Each receives a Nakumatt voucher in appreciation of a good job well done.



Recipients of our *Catch Them Doing It Right* Award: from left: Fanuel, George, Jane, Elizabeth, Simon and Patience.

Notices and Coming Events

Celebration of Achievement Portfolio 21 March, 4 pm, Tamu Balcony. A chance to see work by DP2 students. All welcome.

Term prize giving 22 March at 11 am in the Commons. All welcome.

Parent and DP2 Student Meeting 22 March 1-4pm, Lecture Theatre.

Term holidays 22 March (noon dismissal). School reopens 7 April.

Health Expo 8-12 April The theme of the first ever Academy Health Expo will be hypertension (high blood pressure) in line with the World Health Organisation's theme for World Health Day 2013. Parents are encouraged to join in activities, 3-5pm daily, and are also welcome to come to the lunch-time sessions.

MAD (Music Art Dance) Night 7.30pm 19 April.



MAD Night is coming—are you ready?

Junior School News

There is never a dull moment in Junior School with many exciting activities going on. *Simba's pride* has definitely been the highlight of the month and what a show it was, with two very successful performances on 14-15 March that were well supported by parents. There were impressive talents on display and some real star performances. The support from the teachers, support staff and especially the drama coordinator, Mr Lowe was amazing.

On 15 March the Junior School also held its Inter-house Athletics with a great display of house colours and sporting talent; students and teachers braving scorching heat to participate in a full programme of events. Congratulations to the Hawks House who carried the day with an overall lead.

On 26 January Azmat, Year 2 and Karam Amarshi, Year 1, had the honour to sing a prayer song on the occasion of the 64th Indian Republic Day at the Assistant Indian High Commission in Mombasa.

We are now looking forward to term holidays before a busy and exciting Term 3.



Karam and Azmat Amarshi singing at Indian Republic Day

MAD Night

The final round of this year's *Mad Night* Performing and Visual Arts competition was held last weekend. In the first round there were nearly 60 acts entered from schools in Mombasa. The 25 acts from the second round have now been reduced to 20 with performers from Mombasa Academy, Light Academy, Khamisi

High School, Aga Khan High School, Braeburn Mombasa, Star of the Sea School and our own Academy.

This will be the third Aga Khan Academy *Mad Night* and it will feature Music, Art, and Dance (MAD) as well as Drama and one or two surprises. As part of the event, a display of visual art will be held in the Commons

during the week leading up to the performance night. The theme for this year's *Mad Night* is "Peace is MAD".

Mark your diaries now so you don't miss the artistic highlight of the year: *MAD Night* will be held at 7.30pm, Friday 19 April at the Amphitheatre and entry is 500KShs for adults and 300KShs for children and students.

Simba's pride has definitely been the highlight of the month ...

Kenyan National Long Course Swimming Championships

On 23-24 February 11 members of the swim team took part in the Kenyan National Long Course Swimming Championships in Nairobi. A total of 32 teams entered this competition with The Aga Khan Academy coming

third overall for the combined team scores. Shivraj Vaghela was ranked Best Swimmer in his age group (14-15 Boys) while Karan Khagram broken a national record for the 100m backstroke and was third in his age group (10-

11 Boys). A total of 14 gold, 8 silver and 11 bronze medals were won. The Girls' team was ranked 7th and the Boys' 3rd. Congratulations to all who took part and to the coaches for their tireless efforts in preparing the team for the competition.



Justice Kahindi performing in *Simba's Pride*



Kristy McGovern receives the Best Resolution award; Amsal Lakhani is the chairperson

EAMUN Conference in Nairobi

This year's conference was well-attended despite the ongoing worry about violence during the elections. Acknowledging this, the theme of the conference was Youth for Peaceful Elections, even though most of us are not yet able to vote. *(see more on this theme elsewhere in this Newsletter).*

As a member of the Press Corps most of my time was spent editing and writing articles and talking to delegates and advisors. This year 70 schools from at least 6 countries were in attendance and with them they brought differences in opinions and cultures along with new ideas and skills.

While most of our time during the conference week was spent preparing for the next day and keeping up to date with homework and projects, our advisors Mr Bardai and Mrs Gogulescu made sure that we also had opportunities to be active and relax with each other so that we could deal with the stress and make the most of this life-changing experience.

The Academy delegation won Best Resolution in the Political Committee, provided four Junior Chairs, and Amsal Lakhani is to be particularly congratulated for his brilliant contribution as a Senior Chair, organising the debate for over 300 delegates. – Reporter: Erica Byenkya



Valentine's Day

SRC News

On 14 February the SRC decided to forgo the traditional romantic sentiments of Valentine's Day and instead focus on appreciation. The SRC purchased multi-coloured roses and handed out cards to each mentor group in the Senior School, which they then signed. During break time, the SRC Executive Team brought all of the Academy Support Staff together and presented them each with a rose and a card from the student body as tokens of appreciation for all the support and opportunity they provide for Academy students, while Co-Presidents Danish and Farhana delivered a short speech of appreciation to the gathered staff. The SRC wants to reiterate their appreciation to each member of staff – thank you for all you do!



Inter-house hockey

Senior School Inter-house Events

Senior school has been engaged in both mental and physical exercise recently with Inter-house competitions in both sport and debate. Many sports were played, including water polo, athletics, badminton and hockey, and each house was dominant in a different sport with Eagles being placed first in athletics, Hawks in water polo and Ravens in both badminton and hockey. This gave them the first position overall with Falcons and Eagles tying for second and Hawks fourth. However the closeness of the competition meant that only one point separated each house.

In the debates the questions posed on standardised testing and the 2-child policy were excellent and the planning and research that teams put in over the weeks beforehand paid dividends with speeches that were eloquent and kept the audience's attention. Students spoke with energy and passion, supported by facts and evidence; the debate was won by Eagles.

Kenyan Elections

During the run-up to the elections, Senior school students participated in a variety of activities designed to raise awareness of issues connected to good governance, democracy and Kenyan politics. All students watched the first Presidential Debate and discussed it in their Humanities or ToK lessons, leading to lively and passionate discussion about the merits of the different Presidential candidates.

On 21 February, students attended a forum on what might be expected after the elections. The guest speaker Mr Kachra (UNICEF) gave an informative speech explaining the roles we all play during this historical process and the challenges faced by common 'mwananchi' given a lack of understanding of the constitution among many; it is key for every citizen to understand it to help us make progress.

He talked also about current systems that are blighted by corruption, for example the issue of land title deeds. The issue of IDPs was also raised where although it has been more than five years, reimbursement has not yet been forthcoming. While candidates are proposing strategies to deal with this problem the fact remains that land has to be found somewhere to accommodate displaced people. With a majority of them unable to go back to the place they once called home, as it has been taken by others who have proof of legal entitlements to occupy the land, it is then up to the government to find ways to reimburse or relocate people.

His main message to students was that though they are unable to vote, they still have a voice that can be heard. Through the power of social media students can send messages of peace and calm to our fellow brothers and sisters.

—Reporter: Ellen Savude

In partnership with the Humanities Department, the SRC held a Mock Election on 27 February to get a sense of the political climate in the school. With a voter turnout of 80% , the students took a far different approach from the greater Kenyan nation, as the results had Peter Kenneth as President, with Martha Karua coming a close second and Raila Odinga and Uhuru Kenyatta in 3rd and 4th place, though, as no-one won over 50% of the vote, a run-off would have been necessary.

On 1 March Olivia Rutazibwa, a researcher at Ghent University and writer for MO* magazine, spoke to Year 10 students about issues connected to human rights, diversity and the upcoming elections. She spoke about the need to 'decolonise the mind' and see many different aspects of a person's identity when engaging with them. Students asked her questions about her ideas, and her trip from Lamu to Malindi investigating attitudes to the upcoming elections. The discussion was lively and thought-provoking for all and allowed Year 10 students to try out the style of learning they will experience at many universities.

Finally, Year 10 students Elsie Chemeli, Lillian Odera, Mary Favour and Amisa Mwathethe, gave students an opportunity to reflect on the issues that matter to them, through "Wish for Kenya" boards. Students posted notes describing what they want Kenya to be like in 2030.

Editor's note: the appended pages are reports by individual students (and see also others in the body of this Newsletter) on other events that have taken place since the last edition.

The quality of writing is impressive and it is stimulating to read the reflections directly from the students who have participated in various activities. We look forward to more student contributions.

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Moulding the Future Through Service



The Team from the Academy with inspirational Keynote speaker Spencer West at the Global Issues Service Summit 2013. Back (from left to right): Samara Visram, Caitlin Thompson, Mr Habel Amolo, Aika Patel, Karishma Bhagani and Mahnoor Mistry. Front (from left to right): Srishti Gupta, Spencer West and Ms Sehr Tejpar.

In February, I had the opportunity of being part of a team of six enthusiastic and committed girls who travelled to Nairobi during the week of 18th February for a Global Issues Service Summit hosted at the International School of Kenya (ISK). This one of a kind summit, held for the fifth time, is a place for young leaders from around the world, mainly Africa, to connect, share and discuss service learning ideas in a bid to make the world a better place. Each of the students stayed at a host family's residence where there was a child who was an ISK student summit leader.

The three day summit was officially opened with a range of different performances, including singing and dance. Some of the activities held throughout two of the three days consisted of interactive workshop sessions which were led by students from different schools, sustainability team sessions, inspirational speakers such as Spencer West and 14 year old CNN Hero Cassandra Lin, and expert panellist sessions discussing particular issues around the world, such as pollution, and the digital divide. The final day enabled students to reach out to the community and pursue a service activity of their choosing. The options varied from gardening, to working with performing arts with children from slum areas.

The closing ceremony involved performances created by each of the sustainability teams, focusing on global issues, and it was a great way to end the summit. Throughout the summit, not only did we have the opportunity to learn about new issues around the world, and devise potential solutions, but we also met different people with whom we could share our ideas. The social gatherings and the conversations made the experience more enriching, as different opinions were shared, and many new thoughts were born. The AISA Service Summit was a great eye opener on world issues, and enabled us to create pledges for the future of the globe, which we will act upon through the new networks created, to make the world a better place. — Reporter: Karishma Bhagani, 10K

Editor's note:

One direct result of the group's pledge to share their rich experiences with the entire Academy community was the opportunity to attend a workshop by the Jump! Foundation which offers leadership training programmes to inspire, empower and engage youth. Impressed after meeting our students, Justin Bedard from Jump! offered to fly to Mombasa to give a free workshop on the theme of *What Does it Take to Be a Changemaker*. The workshop was excellent with over 200 participants actively engaging in fun and interesting activities while being asked some very personal, poignant and challenging questions.

The President's Award Bronze Expedition:

Experience of a Lifetime

The President's Award Bronze Expedition group from the Academy went for their adventurous trip to Mount Kasigau in Taita in February. We spent two days and one night camping and doing many activities.

We left school around 9am on 15 February and got to our walking trail starting point at around noon. Using the skills we learned from the pre-expedition training held in December after the Zawadi Bazaar we used maps and compasses to calculate the distance we had to walk and the coordinates of the hill we would be climbing.

It was an amazing experience using compasses and maps in a real life situation. Many of us had never done this before and with the help of the facilitators and our teacher Mr Benard Dudi we were able to learn a skill not too many young people have or want now. We were split into three groups, each group having a leader, quartermaster, navigator and first aid person. I was one of the group leaders.

The first day was very challenging as we had to climb steep land, manoeuvre through large maize plantations, and work our way up rock faces to get to the top of the first hill.

After getting to camp we debriefed and spoke about what we would be doing the next day—conquering the peak of Mount Kasigau standing tall at 1800 metres.

We woke up early the next morning greeted by the cool breeze outside our tents. So, to warm up we ran around the perimeter of Kasigau Base Camp where we were staying.

We began climbing at around 7am and on our way up we learned many new things about the mountain such as how it was used by British colonialists in the pursuit of keeping the land peaceful and safe from an invasion by the Germans. We also learned about how the former inhabitants of the mountain used rocks and other tools to sustain their lives on the mountain.

The climb up the mountain was physically and mentally challenging; muscles were pulled, exhaustion came and went, but in the end the whole climb was worth it.

At the top the view was spectacular. It was surprising to many of us that we were so close to Tanzania. Next we plan on climbing Kilimanjaro at the beginning of the summer holidays. All of us felt a feeling of pride and happiness after walking 24 kilometres over the two days and pushing our limits to climb the mountain and at the same time learn and have fun.

Every day is a journey up the mountain that is our life and once we reach the top we will fully understand that all our hard work has paid off with the sight that lies in front of us. — Reporter: Samir Janmohamed, DP1

