

# Stephenian Times



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**T**erm 2 2020 will be remembered as a time when Singapore came together as a nation in our fight against COVID-19. At St. Stephen's School, the safety and well-being of the boys was our top priority, and steps were undertaken to ensure this. As such, activities in the first two weeks of school were carried out in the classrooms with social distancing observed, before the nationwide Circuit Breaker measures were implemented.

During the Circuit Breaker, various departments in St. Stephen's School and our stakeholders worked tirelessly and rallied together to prepare and roll out a slew of Home-Based Learning (HBL) activities and lessons to ensure that the learning amongst students did not cease. Teachers and students embraced new forms of learning, leveraging on online platforms like Zoom and Google Meet. This helped to maximise learning and maintain normalcy as much as possible.

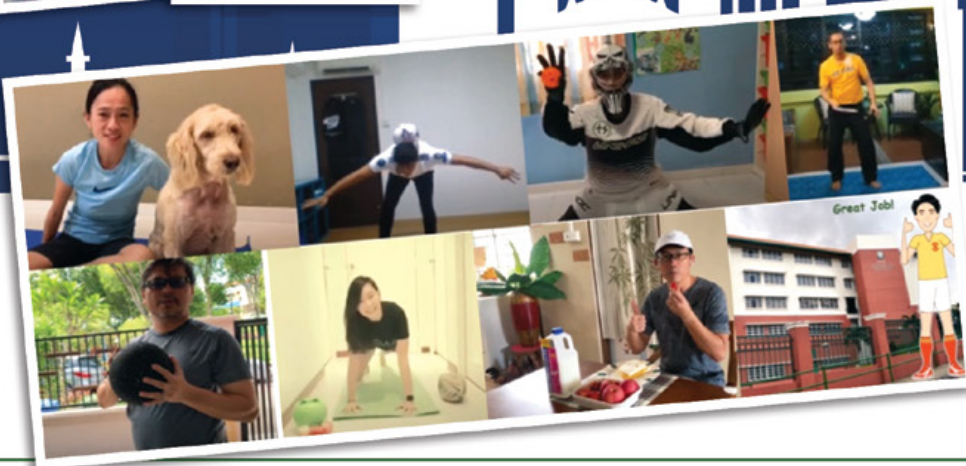
Mr Mark Chin, Chairman of the Christian Brothers' Schools (CBS) Board of Management, wrote two letters to Lasallians, urging all to "be good, be strong, be courageous and continue to pray and work well" during these unprecedented times. Mr Chin's letters were first posted on the school website and they have been appended to this newsletter, for your reading pleasure.



Zoom sessions with students



SPARK parent volunteers organised an origami-heart folding activity for Stephenians during HBL, to show their love and appreciation towards their beloved mother and mother figures on Mother's Day.



PE teachers created a video to remind Stephenians to keep fit, eat well and stay healthy.



# HIGHLIGHTS OF LITERARY WEEK 2020

English

## Celebrating Singapore's Heritage through Stories Good Stories are Everywhere!

The English Literary Week was held from 23rd to 27th March 2020. It aimed to promote the love for reading and writing among our students. Writers Fest, another initiative by the English Department, was also held in conjunction with English Literary Week, to promote the love for writing.

Our theme for this year was "Celebrate Sing Lit" where we celebrated Singapore's heritage through stories. Students got to know our local authors better, grew to appreciate the wide canon of local writers and their stories through various activities, as well as explored the world around us through the voices of our local authors. They took delight in participating in school-wide and level-wide activities ranging from reading for charity, designing book jackets and posters, to writing biographies of our local authors.

English Literary Week 2020 opened with an engaging and humorous talk by local author, Mr Neil Humphreys. The talk was streamed and watched by students in their classrooms due to COVID-19. Mr Humphreys is one of the best-selling authors in Asia, and is an author to numerous books across many genres, from crime thrillers, to illustrated children's titles. In his talk, Mr Humphreys shared that good stories are everywhere, and encouraged students to pen down their stories whenever they come across a funny or memorable incident in their everyday lives, no matter big or small.



## Doing Our Part for Charity

Students also did their part for charity by reading. For every 10 students who read for 15 minutes, 1 book was donated to EduGrow for Brighter Tomorrows. Pupils took part as a class, during lessons, and during recess when a booth was set up with some local titles for students to enjoy.



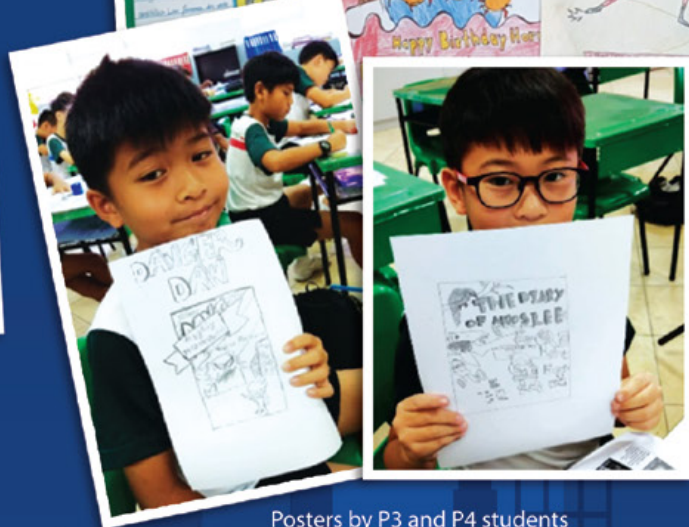


## Our Budding Artists

The lower and middle primary students showcased their creativity with their colourful and impressive book jackets and poster designs of books written by our local authors.



Book jackets by P1 and P2 students



Posters by P3 and P4 students

## Writers Fest

In conjunction with English Literary Week, the school organised Writers Fest to foster a greater interest in writing by making it a fun and purposeful activity. Activities included getting the boys to write different text types, such as letters and postcards, to show their appreciation to local writer Neil Humphreys for sharing writing tips with them and entertaining them through his books.

In addition, writing activities were held during recess to engage the boys in an enjoyable and purposeful way. The lower primary boys completed crossword puzzles on vocabulary related to parts of a book. The middle primary boys had a merry time looking for words related to key elements of a good story through a word search activity. The upper primary boys worked in groups to complete story chains and produced stories that were original and amusing. Overall, Writers Fest, held during the English Literary Week, strengthened the reading-writing connection in text appreciation, making it a more enriching experience for all.

**BEFORE WRITING:**  
Decide on the **PAC** (Purpose, Audience, Context)

**Context (formal)** You have attended the talk by **Mr Neil Humphreys**. You are writing a **letter** to thank him for sharing writing tips during the sharing session.

**Audience**

**Purpose**

## THANK-YOU CARD WRITING



You have heard the talk by Mr Neil Humphreys. You are writing a card to thank him for sharing writing tips and ONE thing that you have learnt from him during the sharing session.



# FOUNDERS' DAY 2020

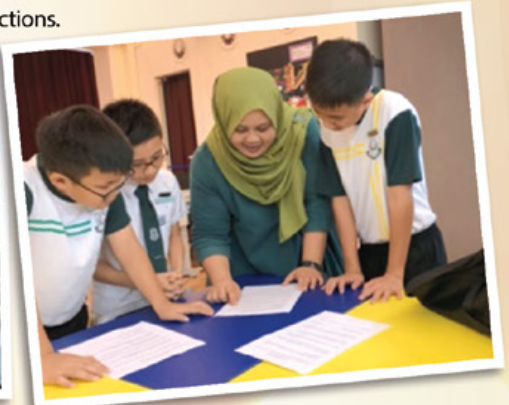
## Living out Our Call to be "Men of Integrity" and "Men for Others"

In April this year, Lasallians around the world commemorated the 301st anniversary of the death of our Founder, St John Baptist De La Salle.

Amidst the challenges brought about by the global pandemic of Covid-19, we were reminded that we are all called to do God's work "little by little". Our theme of "Lasalle Alive among Us" was a rallying call to recognise the people in our school community and all of us to continue the Founder's mission of reaching the last, the lost and the least.

A video was specially prepared to help the boys see that everyone has a role to play in doing God's work, from the school leaders to the teachers, the parents to the support staff and students. We could not have a mass assembly celebration this year but as the school sang the "Glorious Founder" from the classrooms, the sense of duty and mission was palpable as we were reminded of the clarion call to be Men of Integrity and Men for Others, demonstrating "Lasalle Alive among Us" through our daily actions.

In addition, this year is also special because on 15 May 2020, the Lasallian family celebrated the 70th Anniversary of the Catholic Church's declaration of St John Baptist De La Salle as the Patron Saint of Teachers.



Prefects and class leaders taking time during recess to ensure wipe down exercises are carried out properly



School support staff who keep the school clean



Teachers helping students to understand tough concepts

## MAUNDY THURSDAY

Maundy Thursday was commemorated differently this year. While we could not have our annual Washing of the Feet, the pupils nonetheless had a meaningful time with their Catechism teachers. Through a video presentation, the boys and teachers were reminded that as disciples of Christ, we are to imitate Jesus' extraordinary display of humility and love and serve one another. In doing so, we share the love of God with others and are a sign of faith to all around us. Indeed as Lasallians, we are called to be a people of Faith, living in Service to our Community.



Our Principal, Ms Loh, during the Washing of the feet, last year, Maundy Thursday 2019



# MOTHER TONGUE READING CAMPAIGN

## Cultivating the Love of Reading

In Term 2, the Mother Tongue Department started the Reading Campaign 2020. This year, the department had a fresh take on promoting reading. Guided reading was introduced at every level using carefully curated books. To entice our Stephenians to fall in love with reading in their Mother Tongue, the department incorporated storytelling sessions during Mother Tongue lessons, and included them in online lessons during the period of Home-Based Learning (HBL).

To further immerse our students in the exciting world of reading, there were storytelling sessions in the library conducted by our very own teachers. It is with hope that our very own teachers' passion for reading will inspire our Stephenians to pick up a story book themselves and be transported to the world of reading.



Library storytelling by Ms Zhang Xinchu

## MAY HOLIDAYS RECOMMENDED READS



There was no better time than the May school holidays for our Stephenians to remain engaged and entertained by good literature. The English and Mother Tongue Departments put together a list of recommended reads, including teachers' recommendations and links to e-books, to help Stephenians select enthralling and engaging books for themselves. The book lists were part of the May Holidays Pursuits Package, made available to all parents and students through Parent Gateway. You may also find out more about the reading packages on [The Stephanian Readers](#).

### BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

By our very own SSS Tamil Teachers



## **1<sup>st</sup> Letter From Mr Mark Chin, Chairman, Christian Brothers' Schools Board**

TO THE LASALLIAN STUDENTS IN ST. PATRICK'S SCHOOL, ST. ANTHONY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, DE LA SALLE SCHOOL, SJI JUNIOR AND ST. STEPHEN'S SCHOOL, SINGAPORE

**Dear Students, Parents, Teachers and Staff of St. Patrick's School, St. Anthony's Primary School, De La Salle School, SJI Junior and St. Stephen's School,**

On behalf of the School Councils of your respective schools, please allow me to wish all of you a very blessed and meaningful Easter which was celebrated on 12 April 2020. This year is unique and unprecedented in the history of our Lasallian Schools in Singapore, and indeed, the world over. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed our frailty and vulnerability as individual persons at all levels and in all walks of life. It has equalized all of us, young and old, rich or poor. Fortunately, the leaders of our country has had the foresight to prepare us for the gradual transition to a "Circuit- breaker", a period of social-distancing discipline nation-wide beginning from 7 April 2020.

Significantly, this date 7 April 2020 also happens to be the Feast Day of our Patron Saint of Teachers, St. John Baptist de La Salle (SJBDS). It also marked the last formal day of operation for all the schools in Singapore when the Circuit-breaker was announced by the Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Hsien Loong, on 3 April 2020. From 8 April 2020, all our students made the move to use e-learning from home by way of computers with the guidance of their teachers. Has this pandemic taught us anything in this short space of just about 10 weeks since DORSCON Orange was declared on 7 February 2020 in Singapore? It has indeed.

Our education system and methods in Singapore have also pushed us to adopt new methods and tools of teaching. If our national infrastructure were not in place for the internet, social media, mobile smart phones, and our own personal literacy, we would have been that much poorer for it in the trying period of this pandemic. For this national infrastructure, we must be truly grateful and remain positive and adaptive to this work-from-home method of e-learning for our students, the very children whom you care for now during this pandemic.

Nevertheless, as Parents and Teachers leading our Lasallian children of your respective schools (which also include SJI (Independent) and SJI International schools), we need to strengthen your personal responsibilities of parenthood and care-giving to our students. They are children no doubt, but they are fully equipped in this age of smart technology to absorb skills and technological abilities beyond what we can imagine. As parents, we must not underestimate what each student, and therefore your child, is capable of achieving during e-learning.

On this new but rather sudden frontier of learning from home, our very own Teachers also need to be congratulated for spear-heading this remote-learning discipline. I am sure that it has yet to become a habit in the seven working days since 8 April 2020 for everyone, parents, students and teachers alike, but your perseverance and discipline will win the day for our Lasallian family. There will always be teething problems when it comes to the use of technology, but courage and patience will overcome any fears or distractions.

As Lasallians, we will also need to recognize several areas where we will need to help each other as a family of schools. There are among us students or families who will need extra assistance and support during this difficult period of having to stay at home. There is no need

to be shy or ashamed for any of us to be in this position. What we do need is to look out for one another as friends and classmates, and also as Teachers and leaders of our schools. We need to be always aware of who

is in need of help, e.g. need for computers, food delivery and perhaps even financial assistance. With the help of our government-schemes, students who need help should always approach your respective schools and teachers.

We would also like to reach out to our Catholic students, parents and teachers. This coming Sunday 19 April 2020 will be the 2nd Sunday of Easter when we will celebrate the Solemnity of Divine Mercy Sunday. We urge all of you to develop a new habit of prayer and reading of the Scriptures in your own family with your own children. Challenge your children, our Lasallian students, to lead your family prayers. You will be very surprised with what they can do as your very own family prayer-leaders.

The same can be said for all families, regardless of your religious persuasions. In this time of the world-wide pandemic, all families are called to deep prayer both as a supplication and as a form of unity within each of your families. If you do not profess any religious persuasion, the simple act of helping each other in the family to do what is right would be a good and effective means of being a family.

For those of you who pray, our request to you as parents is to pray for your children. The students in turn should pray for your class-mates, parents and teachers. As for our Lasallian Teachers, the CBS Board of Management members will pray for you as a family of St. John Baptist de La Salle, our Founder and Patron Saint of Teachers. Your work is noble and engraved in the Importance of Education.

Ours is the Sign of Faith in God, or *Signum Fidei* in Latin. Yours is the work and fruit of that Faith. Thank you, Teachers and Students of the Lasallian Family, and to all Parents too. Yours in the service of St. John Baptist de La Salle,

**MARK CHIN**

**Chairman,**

**CBS Board of Management 17 April 2020**



## **2<sup>nd</sup> Letter From Mr Mark Chin, Chairman, Christian Brothers' Schools Board**

TO THE LASALLIAN STUDENTS IN ST. PATRICK'S SCHOOL, ST. ANTHONY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, DE LA SALLE SCHOOL, SJI JUNIOR AND ST. STEPHEN'S SCHOOL, SINGAPORE

**Dearest Students of our Lasallian Schools (Government-Aided - St. Patrick's School, St. Anthony's Primary School, De La Salle School, SJI Junior and St. Stephen's School),**

The Circuit-breaker (CB) period, which we are now well into since 7 April 2020, is now into its third week. The Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Hsien Loong, announced earlier this week on 20 April that it would need to be extended by another four weeks from 4 May to 1 June 2020. As a result, your school holidays will be from 4 May till 1 June. This will mean that your current learning from home period will go on for only another week or so. We hope that you will keep up your efforts in following your lessons and helping your respective teachers to carry out their work of teaching you and helping you in your learning while at home.

What can you do to help your teachers? You will need to do what is right and what you know will be good, not only for yourself, but also for your teachers and your family members at home. There may be many things that you might find difficult to do, or that you are unwillingly to do, even though you know that it is your responsibility to do them correctly and fully. If you do come across such feelings, you will know that such work are meant to be for your benefit and profit.

As the June school holidays are brought forward into the month of May instead, you will, in all likelihood, be spending the whole day at home from 4 May till 1 June 2020. During this period, there are some other alternative things that you could do instead to help you learn new skills. I have the following suggestions that you may wish to consider:

- 1. Help with laundry** (do you know how to operate a washing machine or wash clothes with your hands?) - You will learn about weight, chemistry and nature;
- 2. If you are allowed to, you can learn to cook safely and wash up thereafter** - you will learn about safety, temperature, chemistry, biology, and mathematics;
- 3. Clean up and re-organize your own sleeping area and make your bed each morning** - you will learn about hygiene, cleanliness, self-management and being organized for yourself;
- 4. Look into your refrigerator at home and see how you can clean it out and help to ensure that the food you keep in it is fresh and edible** - you will learn about checking, observing, and packing food for hygiene and avoidance of fungus, salmonella and mould which can be detrimental to your family's health.
- 5. Sweeping and cleaning the floor of your home everyday**- you will learn to keep your living environment clean, dust-free and avoid allergens.
- 6. Read widely - in between all these chores mentioned above, you should still take time to sit down, rest and read for about 20 minutes or more each day.** It could be the newspapers, good magazines, good books if you have some, or even the food packages that



may be around the house - you will learn to read, understand and focus on how information is organised for different purposes. If you haven't learned to read yet, get someone to help you.

**7. Learn to pray** - There are many religious books from which you can learn to pray from. You can also get your family to come together to pray. The Catholics and other Christians have the Bible. The other religions also have their own written works. Learning to pray well will help you in many things later on in life.

Each of you has a special talent. It could be speaking, singing, dancing, drawing, writing, computing, praying, craft-work, speed-reading, fitness-training (even while in the house), indoor and outdoor gardening, house-work, cooking, cleaning, and anything else that you may be really good at. Use your talents for your family and even for your friends and teachers when you return to school in June. At home, your family would be your audience and assessors and trainers. don't be shy to express yourselves, because you will surprise not only them, but yourself as well.

Friday 24 April 2020 also marks the start of Ramadan for our Muslim brothers and sisters. It is the month of fasting until Hari Raya Puasa on 24 May 2020. We wish all our Muslim teachers and classmates a very meaningful month of fasting during this period.

Most of all in this period up till 1 June 2020, all of you have to take care of yourselves in body, mind and spirit and to be patient, kind and thoughtful. Your teachers will be there to assist and support you in the best ways that they can. Ask them when you are in need, seek their advice when you are unsure, and knock at their computer addresses if you need them to be at yours.

Be good, be strong, be courageous, and continue to pray and work well.

Thank you for being our Lasallians - Patricians, Anthonians, De La Sallians, Josephians and Stephanians all of you. Be happy!

From the Brothers of the Christian Schools,

***Signum Fidei.***

*Yours in the service of St. John Baptist de La Salle,*

**MARK CHIN**  
*Chairman,*  
*CBS Board of Management*  
23 April 2020