



Alumni Newsletter

October 2023

◆ **ISSUE 29**

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KASTURI



Welcome Note from our Principal, Ms. Deborah Gordon



Greetings from St. John's International School, where the echoes of your memories thump rhythmically within our community. It is with immense pleasure and pride that we welcome you back to the St John's International School family through this newsletter.

Over the years, our alumni have achieved remarkable success and carved their own unique paths in various fields, showcasing the true essence of the La Sallian spirit. Your achievements serve as a testament to the values and education you received here, and we are eager to continue celebrating your accomplishments.

"In the journey of life, the lessons we learn and the values we hold dear are our guiding stars."

In today's rapidly evolving world, where technology and innovation are at the forefront, the importance of purposeful, human-based education has never been more apparent. St. John's International School remains committed to fostering a learning environment that goes beyond the mere accumulation of knowledge. We are dedicated to equipping our students with the skills and values necessary to navigate the challenges of a fast-paced, technological, and globalised economy.

As alumni, you are an integral part of this journey. Your experiences, insights, and wisdom are invaluable resources that can inspire and guide our current students. We encourage you to continue sharing your success stories, lessons learned, and the impact of your education on your present journey. Your involvement in our community helps bridge the gap between the past and the present, strengthening the bonds that make us a close-knit family.

In a world where change is constant, we must also hold firm to our age-old values and ethos. These principles have stood the test of time and continue to be the foundation upon which our community thrives. We urge you to be torchbearers of these values, to motivate and inspire others to uphold the traditions and principles that define us as St John's.

In closing, let us remember that our alma mater is not just a school but a lifelong connection, a shared journey, and a source of inspiration. Together, we can continue to make a meaningful impact on our ever-changing world, staying true to the values that have guided us.

Thank you for being a vital part of this legacy. We look forward to hearing from you, sharing your stories, and working together to create a brighter future for our community and the world.



Alumni of The Month

 *Jyreh Ashwyn Jiwa*

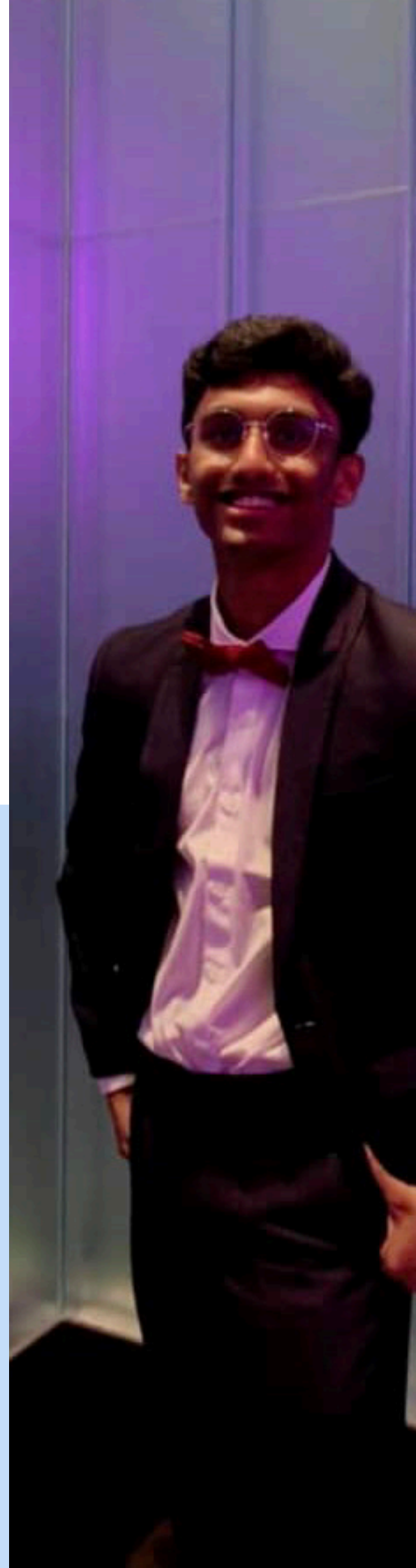
My name is Jyreh Ashwyn Jiwa. I graduated with the class of 2021 as the Head Prefect for the year and proceeded with my A-Levels at St. John's International School. I have to admit that I was not the best student when I first entered SJIS, as I would get in trouble for making too much noise, and would get scolded almost every day for disrupting the class. However, as I progressed through my secondary school journey, I became much more mature with just glimpses of the younger me making a cheeky appearance every so often.

I believe I did well enough for both my IGCSEs and A-Levels and since leaving SJIS, I have successfully enrolled in the University of Nottingham to pursue my studies in Mechanical Engineering. I decided to take up a degree in Mechanical Engineering because I like Maths and Physics, but the course actually goes so much more in depth than I would imagine. The idea of knowing how fluids work or aerodynamics and so much more is very remarkable to me!

It may be a clichéd answer, but truly my favourite part of my experience at SJIS would be the times I spent studying with my friends or participating in physical activities, which sadly has to be reduced due to Covid-19 in the past three years. Thankfully, I am able to build lasting, meaningful relationships with some of the people whom I still talk to and spend time with till this day. These are the people who made me who I am, allowing me to have fun both at school and home. Nothing can really beat the fun times you spent with your high school friends during class, especially those small breaks in between.

Our teachers also made it an enjoyable experience. Being able to cheer a serious teacher up because of something the class has achieved is such a proud feeling, and we were able to have conversations with our teachers about any topic outside of class too. I am glad to say I still talk to my teachers and they will greet me with open arms when I visit the school from time to time. Even with both principals I had, I knew them and they knew me (infamously) and we would converse whenever we would pass each other in the school halls.

Probably because of that, I have mastered the skill of striking a conversation with people of different ages



and backgrounds, be it my peers or teachers. I am proud to have overcome that initial fear of approaching someone to start a conversation or make an inquiry, and this has continued to benefit me as a person who sometimes talks more than he should. I hope I was decent enough to make a lasting impression on the staff members of the school and hope that impression will last so long as I live in their memory.

If I were asked “Who do you think has been a mentor for you at SJIS?” Mr Kanna comes to my mind right away. He single-handedly made me fall in love with Accounting despite hating it just a few months prior. He conducted each class with such enthusiasm and charisma, it just drew us in and made it impossible for us to hate the subject. He made me realise that if I really want something, there needs to be constant effort and determination in order to achieve my goals, no matter how far-fetched it may be. Another mentor for me would be Ms. Anita, who was my English teacher in Year 10. In her own way, she would humble me when I was being too over the top, and she also taught me how to deal with certain conflicts in the simplest yet most effective manner. I owe a massive thank you to both of them for being my mentor and guiding me for the two years they taught me.



Many people have asked me how I managed to achieve 4As for A-levels, and I think the ability to withstand the temptation of going out with friends or playing video games really helped me a lot. Don't get me wrong, I still played video games every weekend for 3 hours/day and my screen time was 12 hours/day on my phone, but I was still able to keep my head focused on completing what I had to in order to achieve good results for my exams. I believe my ability to create deadlines for my tasks and plan my day in advance also helped me to achieve my results as it created a mental urgency to complete all my tasks on time so I could rest and spend time for myself. Finally, it also comes without saying that consistency is very much the key in obtaining the results that you want.

For my fellow students who are currently going through A-levels, my advice to you is to keep your head down and put in the effort needed to get those results. Distractions will always be around you and your only choice is to remain disciplined enough to make sure all that needs to be done is done. Keep yourself motivated by having fun when the time is right, and spending time socialising with people you love to avoid burning out!



Alumni of The Month

 *Casimir Chiong
Ming Yuan*



My favourite part of my SJIS experience is the close-knit community. The small class sizes and supportive environment allowed for meaningful connections with both peers and teachers. It fostered a sense of belonging that made learning a truly enriching experience for me.

One of the most useful skills I learned at SJIS is how to communicate effectively with faculty, teachers and peers. It taught me about the values of respect and open-mindedness. This will be invaluable in my future career, as I will be able to work with people with different backgrounds. I believe that the contributing factor for my achievement as a top scorer was a combination of consistent hard work, effective time management, and seeking help when needed. I made sure to stay organised with my study schedule, focused on understanding the material deeply, and sought clarification from teachers when I faced challenges. Additionally, practising past papers and participating in study groups played a significant role in honing my knowledge and exam skills.

The next step in my studies is to pursue a degree in Computer Science to further enhance my skill set. It also further improves my critical thinking and problem-solving skills developed at SJIS. I believe this will open up new opportunities and allow me to stay at the forefront of the industry. One aspect of Computer Science that I really enjoy is the creativity involved in solving a computational problem. Finding innovative and efficient ways to ensure correct outputs to a problem is both challenging and immensely rewarding. It allows me to combine analytical thinking with creative expression.

On the other hand, I think one of the biggest challenges I am facing is adapting to rapid technological changes in my industry. Staying updated and continuously learning has been crucial in overcoming this challenge. I believe the experience with demanding academic studies at SJIS has helped me immensely.

My advice for students currently going through A-levels is to strike a balance between studying and self-care. It's crucial to have a structured study routine, but also important to take breaks and engage in activities you enjoy to prevent burnout. Additionally, don't hesitate to seek help from teachers or peers when you're struggling with a concept. Collaborative learning can make a significant difference. Finally, believe in your abilities and stay focused on your long-term goals; perseverance pays off in the end.



Alumni of The Month

Amabel Tham

Xiang Ying

Ever since I started school, I have always enjoyed being a part of the performances organised by the school. From year 7, I have always actively participated in such events. It gave me an opportunity to showcase my talent on stage with my friends and share it with other students of the school. Moreover, it helped me build my self-confidence.

My favourite experience in SJIS was becoming the secretary of the Senior Student Council (SSC). Through this role, I learned valuable skills such as writing meeting agendas, taking meeting minutes, and proposing ideas. Additionally, I developed skills in teamwork, time management, and responsibility which allowed me to become a more well-rounded student.

At SJIS, all the teachers have been consistently friendly and helpful. They are always willing to lend a hand whenever we encounter any difficulties, encouraging us to ask questions both in class and after. They have been incredibly supportive, going above and beyond by

making themselves available to us even after school hours through WhatsApp, and answering our questions thoroughly until we have a firm grasp of the concepts, sometimes even late at night. Overall, their dedication to our education has been invaluable.

One of the most difficult challenges I faced was having to juggle SPM and A-levels at the same time. I had to take SPM as it was a requirement for applying to public universities. At one point, I became extremely stressed when my A2 mock exams clashed with the SPM exam. Due to limited preparation time, I got an E grade in mathematics during my A2 mocks. However, I didn't give up. After completing SPM, I focused all my attention on preparing for my A-levels.

After completing the SJIS A-levels program, I had to take additional exams such as MUET and apply to various universities like MSU and UKM. The applications also required me to attend interviews, which were necessary for my admission to a medicine degree program. Now, I am excited

to start my degree at UKM next week. I will be furthering my studies in medicine to become a doctor at UKM which I am tremendously excited about. I wouldn't be able to do this without SJIS.

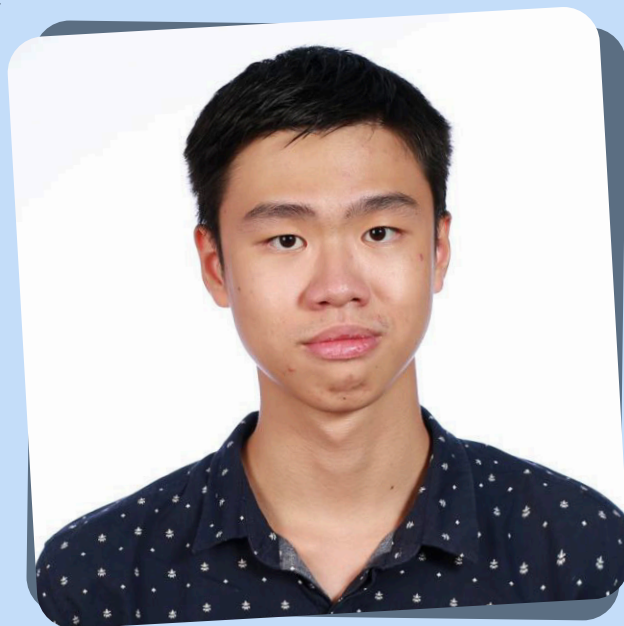
In my opinion, the contributing factor to my achievement was being consistent. As A-level students, we learn new topics for all subjects almost every single day, hence being consistent in revising and completing years of past years' papers have been very crucial and effective.

It's important to remember that one success or failure does not define you. A-levels can be challenging, with a lot to learn, and it's possible that you may not achieve the results you hoped for. However, it's important to recognize that the learning process never truly ends, even after you've aced your exams or experienced failure. So keep pushing forward and maintain an optimistic mindset!

Alumni of The Month

 *Tan Yew Thay*

My favourite part about SJIS was definitely the moments I spent with my friends. Although we spent most of our higher secondary times in lockdown, we still managed to reach out to one another via social media. We created so much happiness together in a difficult time during the pandemic. I am most proud of teachers as they have shaped who I am today. I will remember their blood, sweat and tears into educating me.



I loved being part of the Senior Student Council as it hosts various fun events to unite our students. It was a great channel to engage with one another. I had a mentor, who was my senior from the debate club. His advice managed to uplift my self-esteem and to be a more confident speaker. I have learnt that pressure transforms us into our better selves. Since then, I started to perceive pressure as a force to propel me towards a higher level. I stopped panicking like before.

I would say my biggest challenge was maintaining academic excellence and performing duties assigned as a prefect or as the treasurer of the Senior Student Council. It is not about how intelligent a person is, it is always about how much effort you put into something. I am definitely a hardworking person. Sometimes, when I play video games to calm myself down whenever I feel pressured. I resume my work when I am chilled out and that was the contributing factor for your achievement as a top scorer. I will be pursuing my undergraduate programme in Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery soon.

Lastly my only advice for the current A-level students is, ***enjoy the ride, do not just solely focus on your studies, join a club, make lots of friends and have fun.***



Alumni Events: Year 10 Personal Development Talk



"You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backward. So, you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future." - Steve Jobs

On August 17, 2023, we hosted a personal development talk session with our alumna, Zoe Wong, for Year 10 students. Zoe, who was a top student and head prefect during her days at SJIS, shared her insights on planning for the future after graduating from SJIS.

One of the key points of her talk was to focus on "who" you want to be instead of "what" you want to become. She explained that having a career aspiration is important, but having the right mindset and attitude will bring you further in your life. Zoe ended her inspirational talk with the advice to "be kind, be strong, and be flexible" and opened the floor for a brief Q&A session. We can see that our Year 10 students responded positively to this talk, as they enthusiastically asked many thoughtful questions during the Q&A session and even stayed back after the talk to chat with Zoe.

We hope that our Year 10 students were able to gain some useful information in this talk, and always remember that they are not alone in their life journey.

To all SJIS alumni, we are here to help you maintain a lifelong connection with us and with each other, share experiences and expertise, and enjoy exclusive offers, events, networking, and volunteering opportunities. We strongly encourage you to reach out to us for opportunities to contribute to your alma mater. We hope to see you at the next event soon!

SJIS Events: Year 6 Parents Meet & Greet Session



On the 14th of September 2023, SJIS organized a Meet and Greet session for Year 6 parents to get to know more about the educational experience at SJIS. The parents were given an introduction to the secondary school programme to ensure a seamless transition from Year 6 (SJIP) to Year 7 (SJIS) for year 2024.

This session creates an opportunity for our Year 6 parents to meet with the secondary school academic team to understand and attain information pertaining to the academic and non-academic aspects of SJIS, and how to best support their children in the transitional experience from primary to secondary school. Three of our esteemed alumni also attended this session, namely Ethan Ng (Batch 2021), Peyshwara (Batch 2017) and Casimir Chong (Batch 2022). Ethan was invited as the alumni representative to share his experience at SJIS. His heartfelt and inspiring speech about how his parents and teachers have supported him throughout his journey as a student really resonated with everyone who attended.

Ethan started off his speech by sharing his memories of how he was schooling during the pandemic.

"We had to go through every day in and out of school with our phones to register and scan this little QR code at the entrance to show our proof of vaccination and our details for attendance. Digital forms and assignments replaced paper handouts. Submitting homework was mostly through scanning and sending on our phones or laptops. It was an era where living without our phones was impossible." he said.

Another memorable experience that Ethan had in SJIS was being a student-athlete. He was part of the national ice hockey team representing Malaysia. He had been playing ice hockey since the age of 8 and joined the national team soon after. Due to his increased attention to his academic life and its assignment loads, he has taken a break since his previous competition in 2022.

“Throughout high school, he had to balance his life between school and training. Being a student-athlete taught me so many skills and values that I still use today.” he said.

Ethan ended his speech with a message to all the Year 6 parents who attended the session, ***no matter what happens, never give up. Because trust me when I say this, your journey in SJIS is only a small step in your journey to find yourself, and you have so much more to experience and learn. So with that, my final message to you all is to go forth, experience, learn, make mistakes, and grow.***

We were so grateful that everyone came to the session and contributed to making the day engaging. Overall, it was a wonderful experience.





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ST. JOHN'S
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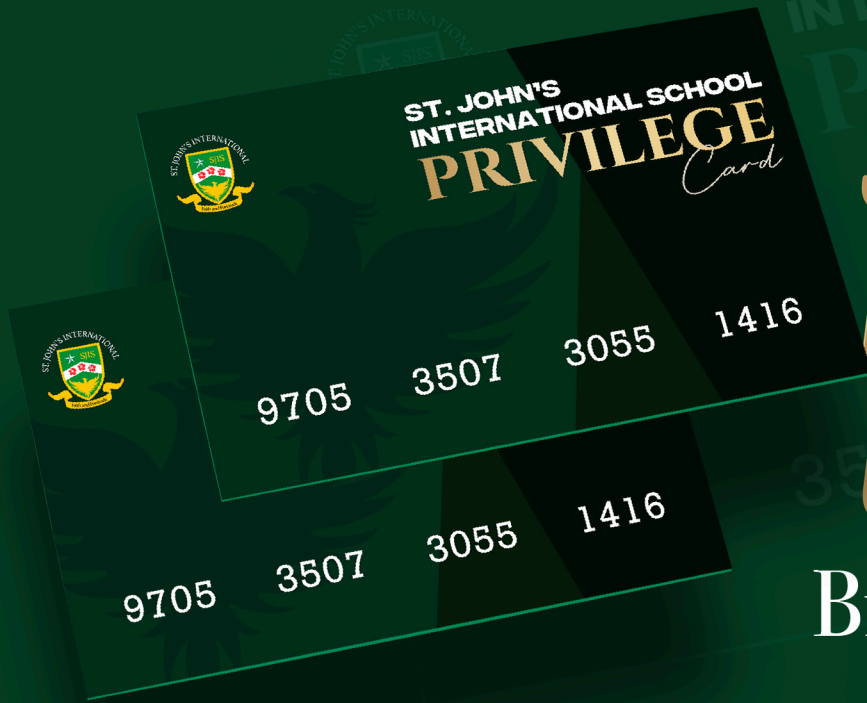
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- > Applicable to all outlets under **The Olive Tree Group** except for *Luca*



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Employees and Alumni for our partners will be able to enjoy the benefits as stated below.

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- > **Special Promos** designed specifically for staffs