



# St. Mary's Past Students' Association

## NEWSLETTER ♦ October 2012

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### Message from our Patron Ms. Catherine Wong, Principal of SMCC

Dear Alumnae,

Time flies and the much dreaded double cohort year is over with the school seeing off our very last group of F7 HK Advanced Level (HKAL) and our very first group of F6 HK Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) students. From 2012-13 onwards, F6 students become the most senior. The implication is that we now count on mainly F5 students in the running of the Student Council and Clubs. 'Would that do?!' you may wonder. Well, to our delight and relief, these student leaders of the past year, though one year younger, shone just as their predecessors. Our teachers, whose additional efforts, patience and insistence on high standards, have brought out the potential in these leaders, and the credit certainly must be attributed to them. The younger student leaders might have been less diplomatic but more adventurous, less organized but more creative, less mature but more lively, as could be observed from the differences in style and format of the activities run. Nonetheless, the St. Marians of the junior Forms in various clubs were active and eager participants throughout the year.

Both cohorts in SMCC have done well in their respective exams. I am proud to inform you that one of our students got 5\*\* in all subjects sat and became the first top female student in HKDSE (*see interview on page 3 of this newsletter*).

Teachers and students, having worked so hard, deserved the sweet fruits - look at the photo!! We count our blessings and hope that this good beginning will be a track record for junior St Marians to match and to break, taking after their seniors as the Quality St Marian trademark.



We give thanks to all the stakeholders and you, our alumnae, in particular, for your unremitting support and positive encouragement! Unquestionably, teachers and girls will continue to uphold the Canossian spirit and with One Heart and One Way, remaining to grow from strength to strength!

God bless!

Ms Catherine Wong

## Message from our Patron Ms. Maria Cheung, Principal of SMCS

Dear St. Marians,

We have started a new school year, and as usual, we implore the blessings of our Heavenly Father for a fruitful one.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all the Executive Committee members of the PSA for their enthusiasm and dedication in various aspects in promoting the development of St. Mary's. During these months, they have put in a lot of effort in revising the PSA Constitution to align with the setting up of the Incorporated Management Committee of the school. Some of them have sacrificed a lot of their precious time during these months to help with the preparatory work for the Election of the Alumna Manager to be held next school year [Note : learn more about the IMC and the Alumna Manager in the special section in this newsletter]. Thank you all for taking over the workload from our staff.

This year, the small class policy is being implemented at the Primary One level, with 25 pupils in each class. As you can imagine, the decrease in the number of pupils admitted into Primary One had inevitably caused disappointment to a huge number of failed applicants. With smaller classes, we are also faced with a new challenge: we have to be more aware of individual differences. Teachers are alerted of the results of the pre-tests in three core subjects designed for all Primary One pupils, and they have to pay more attention in the implementation of strategies catering to learning diversities.

As this is the second year of the "Through Train" pupils promoting directly to SMCC, the grades they achieve is always our major concern. Pupils are constantly encouraged to make improvement and to aim higher. We reward pupils who show persistence in diligence, responsibility and resourcefulness. Pupils are requested to make their own learning portfolio so as to assess and reflect regularly on the goal they have set for themselves. Compared to the past, the environment under the "Through Train Policy" is much more relaxed and we hope that pupils will keep up their enthusiasm in learning.

Every year, we give awards to pupils with good conduct and outstanding academic achievements. Our new teaching aim is to put more emphasis in their learning attitude. This is the key to self-learning, leading to further studies and life long learning. A successful education comes from pupils' initiative and active participation.



*Some of the prefects of the new school year*

St. Marians are educated with positive attitudes in learning and this is the key to success.

I wish you all success and happiness.

Ms Maria Cheung

## First Female Scholar of the new HKDSE - Teresa Kwok

A new era of the secondary school system in Hong Kong commenced a few years ago, and the first Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) examinations took place in 2012. Five students scored 5\*\* (highest grade) in all seven subjects. Among them there is only one young lady, Teresa Kwok, a St Marian. The "quality trademark" could have been partially inherited from her mom, Bridget Yu, who is also a St Marian. Teresa just started her Bachelor of Business Administration (Law) degree at the University of Hong Kong.



*Two confident and beautiful happy faces, Teresa Kwok (left) and Bridget Yu (right)*

### How is university life?

**Teresa:** It's very different from secondary school. In the past we used to have a fixed time table, starting everyday at 8am. In the university, the schedule varies by the day. Time management is essential. Everybody has a different schedule, and we need to literally manage our own lives! University life has been quite busy and I am already missing my trombone!

### As one of the top scorers in the first HKDSE exam hitting the headlines, do you get treated differently by school mates?

**Teresa:** Not much...they do recognise me, but it isn't a big deal. This is particularly true for the BBA Law course. Our Dean has been telling us that as this is a new field for all, everyone is therefore at the same starting line again. Our scoring well or not in the HKDSE examination becomes insignificant.

### Post-90s

Bridget and Teresa hold slightly different perspectives regarding the "Post 90s" - the young ones could feel frustrated given the keen competition for opportunities on a global scale; the more senior generations are amazed that young people nowadays can enjoy an unprecedented level of exposure, eg exchange activities all over the world, from a young age. Yet both of them shared the same view that labelling is not helpful in bridging the gaps among generations. Afterall, it is a positive attitude that would help us get through challenges in life.

### Power of a loving family

Teresa was nervous about the HKDSE because it's a public exam, and a new one too. With the loving care of the family as the refuge, Teresa sailed through with flying colours - Dad helped with physics and mathematics revision, Mom ensured that she got enough rest and the meals would not disturb her sensitive stomach. Of course, Dad and Mom also helped to keep her calm and cheerful when she was tearing her hair out!

### St Mary's

Bridget remains fond of St. Mary's as a big warm family - Friends were genuine, and teachers were caring. School life was happy as efforts were usually paid-off. However, many, after having had a first taste of real life, are likely to be less happy than before, at college times. That's exactly why Bridget has been preparing Teresa for - possible adversities that she may

face. "Life has its ups and downs and Teresa would not be immune from that, whatever grades she gets."

### Words of wisdom on HKDSE

#### Daughter

Do your own homework. Don't copy. I believe all homework has its value so I always do my homework attentively. No one can take away what you have learned from you. Ask questions when there is something you don't understand. Also, don't forget that the whole exam lasts for more than a month. So it is important to set a good pace and get enough rest. Oh, do not compare answers right after each exam. This is crucial. Otherwise you won't be able to focus well on the upcoming exams!

#### Mom

Be persistent. Plan your studies. That's Teresa's way. She would read more and do more exercises for subjects which she couldn't grasp so well. Be prepared. Past papers also help, as always - even the non-HKDSE past papers would help. Effort brings result. St. Marians are known to be hard-working. I encourage them to keep this fire in their heart!

Mom and dad's love would definitely be essential as Teresa moves on to a new stage of life. We congratulate here again on her achievement and wish her all the best in her future studies!

## School News - School Drama 2013 "Persephone"



SMCC students will present another play based on Greek mythology in 2013, under the direction of Mr. Geoff Oliver. Audition of casts and recruitment of production teams commenced shortly after the new school year started. Watch this space for more information of the annual excitement.

## Class Reunion News - looking for your classmates?

The Class of **1973** (English Section) is planning a reunion dinner on **11 November 2012 (Sun)** in Hong Kong to celebrate 39 years after graduation. Those who would like to reconnect please contact Mercedes Aromin at ✉ [MFAMBA@comcast.net](mailto:MFAMBA@comcast.net).

The Class of **1962** will be celebrating their 50th anniversary with a series of programs from **2-6 November 2012 (Fri to Tue)**, including visits and tours. Those who would like to reconnect please contact Agnes Leung (Mrs.) at ✉ [agnesleung22@yahoo.com](mailto:agnesleung22@yahoo.com).



## *In Loving Remembrance...*

**Mother Laura Piazzesi**, principal of St. Mary's Canossian College in the 1960s, returned to God on 10 August 2012 in Manila, the Philippines, at the age of 86.

*~ Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her.  
May she rest in peace. Amen ~.*

## Interview with Alumna – Ms Sophia Kao

*“I am forever thankful and proud that I am a St. Marian!”*

You might have heard about Ms Sophia Kao as the former Chairperson of the Women's Commission, among many of her public duties. How about getting a glimpse of how she enjoyed life as a St Marian in her own words?

Joining SMCC from Holy Family in the early 1960s, Ms Kao's student life sounds pretty much different from what it's like today :

The annual bazaar on campus was one of the great fun events then with booths for games and goods. Students helped to sell raffle tickets for the lucky draw - each cost \$0.5(!). Ms Kao was proud to be the most successful seller most of the time.



It was the musical pursuit that Ms Kao enjoyed most. “Five of us formed a band before HKCEE with guitars and drums, one of the first female rock bands in Hong Kong. In the year of our HKCEE, we organised a pop concert on campus, the first ever in a girls' school. The then principal, Mother Virginia, was seated in the middle of the first row. Well, I'm not sure if she enjoyed the band music entirely! ... Don't you worry, we band girls got better grades than average! Work hard, play hard ☺”

It was one of the first female rock bands in Hong Kong, with a relatively gentle image at the time - “a ladies' band”. Sam Hui, Joe Junior and Teddy Robin had all come to St. Mary's to perform then, thus making lasting memories of Ms Kao's school days.

“House of the Rising Sun” was one of the first songs Ms Kao learned to play for competition on the guitar. In the same year when Ms Kao's band organised a pop concert on campus, they took part in the 星島晚報全港業餘歌唱大賽 (a pretty prominent event at the time) and were approached by record companies immediately afterwards. The girls turned down the offer as they were committed to continuing their studies and, after all, it was not their plan to go into the entertainment business.

“The pop concert catalysed Sam Hui's joining Lotus. He was still a student but was already very popular being the lead singer of the Harmonics, one of our favourite local pop groups.

We were good friends with the Harmonics then, as a member of the group was the brother of a St Marian. We even became the group's image and style consultants!!” Ms Kao recalled. The local music scene could look very different had the girls made a different decision back then!

Teachers were also part of Ms Kao's fond memories. “We were quite close with our teachers and we visited them at their homes. I also remember Sr Amelia Ip. She was very strict with students. But I thank her a lot for her teachings. She also reminded us that we have to be a



*What a privilege to have a photo with Sir Paul McCartney!*

responsible and accountable person. This has been a guiding principle I hold throughout the years."

"I appreciate the fact that St. Mary's did not convert into a direct subsidy school, such that it could continue to serve girls of all backgrounds."

As most of us do, Ms Kao always recognises a fellow St. Marian in the workplace - smart, diligent and dependable are the characteristics highlighted by Ms Kao. She does have high hopes for St Marians. Her word of advice is : "Be more assertive and grow to become great leaders to contribute to the society. "

## School News - School-based Management Policy and Incorporated Management Committee

How does this relate to us? The Incorporated Management Committee (IMC) of every school governed by the Education (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 have to include an Alumni Manager to be elected from among alumni. The IMC of SMCC is expected to be established in the 2013-14 school year, by which time an Alumni Manager has to be elected to sit on the IMC. But, again, what exactly does it mean to us?

### Background

The Education (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 came into operation on 1 January 2005, under which sponsoring bodies of all aided schools are required to set up an incorporated management committee (IMC) to manage the school. The IMC shall include: sponsoring body managers, elected parent and teacher manager(s), the principal (an ex-officio member), the alumni manager(s) and independent manager(s). SMCC has to set up its IMC in the 2013-14 school year the latest.

### The Alumni Manager

The PSA Executive Committee formed a task force to prepare for the election of the Alumni Manager to sit on the IMC. Election regulations of the Alumni Manager would be submitted to the PSA for approval at the AGM to be held on 16 March 2013, so that nomination of the Alumni Manager could be made in time to tie in with the establishment of the IMC.

Further reference about the IMC is available on the website of the Education Bureau :

<<http://www.edb.gov.hk/index.aspx?nodeID=180&langno=1>>

## Fund-raising Appeal from Honeyville Canossian Retreat House

Sr Anna Maria Kwan, Administrator of the Honeyville Canossian Retreat House, invited our past students and friends to join a mini bazaar on **11 November 2012 (Sun) from 10:00am to 5:00pm** at the Retreat House. The objective is to raise fund for a "Mobile Stair Climber" to facilitate wheelchair access, as well as for the modification of an existing toilet to a disabled toilet. Please mark your diary and be there to show our support to the Canossian sisters! (Address: 57 Mount Davis Road, Hong Kong. Tel: 2817 8660)



## Upcoming Events -

Y | O | Y ≡ **SMPSA Annual General Meeting & Dinner 2013** ≡ Y | O | Y



Regulations for the Election of the Alumni Manager would be submitted for approval by the SMPSA at the 2013 AGM, which will be held at **5:30pm on 16 March 2013 (Sat) at the World Trade Centre Club**. The new Exco will also be formed during the AGM. **Dinner will follow at 7pm** for additional fun and catch up. Needless to say, lucky draw, games, gifts and souvenirs will be included! We look forward to seeing you then!

**Date** : 16 March 2013 (Sat)  
**Time** : 5:30pm Annual General Meeting  
7 pm Dinner  
**Venue** : World Trade Centre Club  
38/F, World Trade Centre, 280 Gloucester Road,  
Causeway Bay, Hong Kong  
**Menu** : Chinese style set dinner  
**Price** : HK\$450 per person  
**Booking** : **Book now!** Tables are limited and available on first-come-first-served basis.



## REPLY FORM

(You can also download this form from [www.stmaryspsa.org](http://www.stmaryspsa.org))

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
PSA No. (if any): \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Form 5: \_\_\_\_\_

Kindly return this reply form together with your cheque(s) to  
**St. Mary's Past Students' Association, 162 Austin Road, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon**

For enquiries -

Email: [activities@stmaryspsa.org](mailto:activities@stmaryspsa.org) Tel : (852) 2724 2771 Fax : (852) 2724 2719

**(A) Reservation** Please  where appropriate.

I would like to attend the Dinner and reserve the following seats:

Ticket Price

Number of Seats

Total Amount

@HK\$450

HK\$

1. *Group booking is encouraged. Each table sits 12 persons.*
2. *Tables and seats are available on a first-come-first-served basis.*
3. *Reservation confirmation will be sent via email or telephone.*
4. *Please make the cheque crossed and payable to "St. Mary's Past Students' Association".*

I would like to collect my ticket(s):

from the School Office (recommended)  on site at the World Trade Centre

**(B) Gift Sponsorship** Please  where appropriate.

I would also like to donate a gift/some gifts for lucky draw and/or table prizes.

Item: \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_ pieces

1. *Please reply **before 5 February 2013** to allow time for the necessary arrangements (Note : first day of Chinese New Year falls on 10 February 2013).*
2. *Kindly contact Ms. Queenie Cheng of the School Office at (852) 2724 2771 to arrange for collection. Use separate sheets for details of sponsorship if necessary.*

**(C) General Donation** Please  where appropriate.

I would like to make a separate donation in support of the St. Mary's Canossian College Development Fund. Enclosed is a crossed cheque of \$ \_\_\_\_\_, payable to "St. Mary's Canossian College".

Please tick here if a receipt for tax deduction purpose is required (for donations of \$100 or above).

Name to be put on the receipt: \_\_\_\_\_

Address for sending receipt : \_\_\_\_\_

1. *Please specify "SMCC Development Fund" at the back of the cheque.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_