

# Y Connect



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We welcome articles and ideas for our newsletter. Please email your articles to: [abrahamho@ymca.edu.sg](mailto:abrahamho@ymca.edu.sg)

## 100 years of Education



What better way of ending the event – with a birthday cake and candles

To mark our hundredth year of education, we celebrated in style at the Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel on 31 July 2013.

Coinciding with this event was also the graduation dinner for our students from the Preparatory Course for Singapore-Cambridge GCE 'O' Level Examination (Intensive) course. It was a night to remember for them all.

We take this opportunity to wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

Gracing our centennial celebrations, Mr Heng Swee Keat, Minister for Education, arrived in style with an entourage of bagpipes leading the way.



Our Graduating students with Mdm Xiao Wen Xin (front row-right) Senior Teacher (Chinese)

In his opening address, Mr Heng commented on YMCA's commitment to holistic education and the initiatives to support a holistic well-rounded education.

*"I am encouraged that the YMCA School has been seeking to put students' well-being at the heart of your operations. All our privately-funded institutions need to abide by this principle."*

**Mr Heng Swee Keat  
Minister for Education**

You may view his entire speech at our website ([www.ymca.edu.sg](http://www.ymca.edu.sg))

As our guests were enjoying their meal, we were all treated to a Chinese cultural treat: Chinese finger painting by Mr Alan Lim, accompanied on the Guzheng by our student, Lin Yuxun.

It was a union of culture, talent and celebration, proper and fitting for 100 years of education, moving forward to many more years.



Minister Heng Swee Keat



Chinese Cultural Combo : Painting to Music



Our 2011 alumnus, Sophia (left) and a friend entertaining the guests



Coming Together To Celebrate 100 Years of Education

## Principal's Message

This was an exciting year as we celebrated the school's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The highlight of our celebrations was the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Dinner where we were privileged to have Mr Heng Swee Keat, Minister for Education, as our guest-of-honour. This was also the Graduation Dinner for our 'O' level students.

To commemorate this special year, we had the inaugural Teachers' Day Award where teachers from the School, YMCA Student Care Centres and the Child Development Centres were recognised for their good work and contributions. A great deal of effort was also put in to produce a video tracing the school's history, a specially designed Centennial T-shirt, our very own school calendar, coasters and "Yummilicious" – a collection of recipes from the staff and friends of the school.

As this year draws to a close, we say farewell to our 'O' Level students. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours and we hope that they have found their stay in YMCA School an enriching experience.

We look forward to 2014, to another exciting year, as we welcome new teachers and students to the school.

As you read this edition of "Y Connect", I wish to place on record my appreciation to my teachers and colleagues who have put their best foot forward to realise our mission of "providing a holistic education based on Christian values to nurture active, socially responsible individuals of distinction".

On behalf of the teachers and staff of the school, I wish to thank our parents, guardians, volunteers, past students and friends for their support, without which we would not have achieved so much in 2013.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

Mrs Helen Tan  
Principal

## A Toast to our Educators!

FOR ALL THEIR EFFORT AND HARD WORK



Staff dressed to the theme of "Heritage"

It was a night dedicated to all teachers and staff in YMCA. A total of 160 guests dressed their best at the YWCA Fort Canning Lodge on 5 September 2013 for a sumptuous meal to celebrate Teachers' Day.

The theme of the night was "Heritage". Teachers donned ethnic costumes from the past and cuddled candidly behind a photo booth snapping shots to take away as memories.

Teachers were entertained with evergreen soundtracks, courtesy of the band as they played melodies ushering in nostalgic memories. Our teachers even took the stage and performed hits by Andy Lau, A-mei, Bill Withers and even The Carpenters.

That night Mr. Joseph Tan and Madam Xiao bagged the Teachers' Day Award.



Mr Joseph Tan (left) and Madam Xiao Wen Xin (right) received their Teachers' Day award from Mrs Magdalene Seet, YMCA Board Director

## Character in Action!



Students in groups for their first activity

As part of the school's mission to inculcate values in the students, *Character in Action* was held on 4 September 2013 at Tan Chin Tuan Room, YMCA of Singapore. This event was inspired by the teachers who attended a conference by Dr Gary Smit.

Fourteen supervisors from the YMCA Student Care Centres were invited to observe the activities to learn how values can be imparted through fun and games.

Armed with a barrage of activities, the teachers led more than 70 students in games that brought out key values like empathy and resilience as well as our school's core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.

At the climax of the event, students were grouped randomly and tasked to build a tower taller than Mr Abraham Ho, the teacher running the activities.

Students and teachers were stunned. There were barely enough materials to build a tower of that height.

Despite the initial shock from students and teachers, many of the students rose to the challenge and built towers taller than Mr Ho.

The students felt that the event was fun and enjoyable and many remembered the values that they experienced.



Moral Courage: Students tasked to find if their peers have been morally upright



Who says learning values is boring?



Students with their tower!

## Christmas Celebrations!

On 21 November 2013, the YMCA School and YMCA Christian Development Department, with the help of some volunteers, organised a Christmas Party at the Pool Terrace for the students of YMCA School.

The event started with mass games that had everyone running, squatting and bending backwards.

This was followed by a musical performance by the band from The Fellowship of Evangelical Students Singapore. The band introduced musical twists to old favourites and they got the students to participate in the singing of Christmas carols as well.

There was also the gift exchange where students who did not bring a gift had a chance to pick a gift, courtesy of the teachers and staff of YMCA School who brought extra presents.

*Article contributed by Ms Boo Hui Ling  
Christian Development Department*



Live band ushering in the Christmas mood early



Our students having fun during the mass games

## Our Students Take the Stage



Our students with the graduating children



Wenkai and Song Chen hosting with confidence

On 30 November, three of our students, Song Chen, Huang Wenkai and Wang Ziwei went back to the swinging 60's for the Child Development Centre's Graduation Ceremony.

On that day, more than 200 excited parents and supporters filled the auditorium hoping to snap photos of their children's graduation. The guest of honour for that day was Mr David Ong, MP for Jurong GRC. The event was hosted by Mr Stephen Loh, President of YMCA of Singapore.

With no more than 6 months in Singapore, our brave students went through more than 10 hours of vocal training before the actual event. Wenkai even noted how all the preparation beforehand made all three students really excited and pumped up for the emcee's task.

"Many teachers helped us to correct our pronunciation. We also took this chance seriously," commented Ziwei. "I am very satisfied with the event and proud of our achievement."

During the event, Ms Lynette Yeo, Assistant General Secretary of Social Enterprises, congratulated the students for the improvement they had made.

Upon reflection, Wenkai felt it was a good experience to be on stage and said that his reading skills had improved through all the practice and guidance. He said, "I feel very happy!"

"A huge thank you to Mrs Helen Tan, Ms Lynette Yeo and our teachers for believing in us," said Wenkai. "If given another chance, I will do better!"

## Student's Essay: "The day I wanted to change my life"



Li Xin Yi,  
Preparatory  
Course for  
Singapore-  
Cambridge GCE  
'O' Level  
Examination  
(Intensive) course,  
Graduated 2012

"Ladies and gentlemen, the plane will arrive in Singapore in 30 minutes."

Hearing the announcement, I felt as if a stone was pressing hard against my chest as scenes of that fateful day confronted me.

A few weeks ago, I was told that I could not enter Guangya Senior High School which I had dreamt to enter since I was in Secondary One. While I was in Secondary school, I burnt the midnight oil day and night in an attempt to enter this school. To my great surprise,

I did not make it in and was now left without a school to go to. I was stunned by the unexpected turn of events and my mind was a total blank.

I skipped the afternoon classes and went back home. As I arrived home, I lay on the bed and

burst into tears. I had put all my effort and time into study to pursue my dream.

However, there was nothing left except for the sting of failure. Tears started to flow freely down my cheeks.

In the evening, I decided to take a walk. Walking along the crowded streets, I felt that I was a failure. Stopping in front of a university, I began to suspect. "Is this the life I desire? Are there any other places besides where I am now, that can offer me a combination of life and school experience?" I kept questioning myself.

After a week of intense reflection, I decided that I should go abroad to further my education. On that day, I decided to change my life.

And that's how I decided to leave my family and go abroad to Singapore to study at YMCA School. That was one of the best decisions I have ever made.

## Student Testimonial

I have only been in YMCA School for a year and I have really enjoyed my stay in this wonderful school. Even though the school is small, it holds many great events such as the camping trip in March.

One particular event which I enjoyed the most is 'Sports Day', where the students and teachers play dodge ball and interact with one another.

The students in YMCA come from different countries and are very friendly. Before I entered YMCA School, I was a timid person and it was very difficult for me to befriend someone. During these past few months in YMCA School, I learnt to express myself better and made many friends, including the teachers.

The teachers in YMCA School are very caring and counsellors will counsel the students if they have problems. When the teachers teach, it is very easy to understand them as they will also explain the solutions clearly.

YMCA School is a good school. It is like my second home and I would recommend it to anyone who is applying for a school.



James Lin,  
Preparatory Course for  
Singapore-Cambridge  
GCE 'O' Level  
Examination  
(Intensive) course,  
Graduated 2012

## New Staff!

Let us welcome the following staff to YMCA School!

### Adrael Sarah Lim

ASSISTANT ADMIN  
MANAGER

### Niki Shen

ADMIN EXECUTIVE

### Dawn Lin

ART TEACHER

### Amos Lee

MATH/ENGLISH  
TEACHER

### Bernard Chiew

SCIENCE TEACHER

## 2014 School Calendar

### Academic Classes

Term	Semester 1		Semester 2	
	1	2	3	4
Term Starts	2 January	24 March	30 June	15 September
Term Ends	14 March	30 May	5 September	14 November
Break Starts	15 March	1 June	6 September	15 November
Break Ends	23 March	29 June	14 September	31 December

### Preparatory Classes

Term	Start	End
1	6 January	14 March
2	17 March	23 May
3	26 May	1 August
4	4 August	10 October
5	13 October	19 December

### Scheduled School Holidays

Holiday	Date
<b>New Year's Day</b>	Wednesday, 1 January 2014
<b>Chinese New Year</b>	Friday, 31 January 2014 Monday, 3 February 2014 *
<b>Good Friday</b>	Friday, 18 April
<b>Labour Day</b>	Thursday 1 May
<b>Vesak Day</b>	Tuesday, 13 May
<b>Youth Day</b>	Monday, 7 July *
<b>Hari Raya Puasa</b>	Monday 26 July
<b>National Day</b>	Monday, 11 Aug *
<b>Teachers Day</b>	Friday, 5 September
<b>Hari Raya Haji</b>	Monday, 6 October *
<b>Deepavali</b>	Thursday, 23 October **
<b>Christmas Day</b>	Thursday, 25 December

\* holiday in lieu

\*\* date subject to change according to Ministry of Manpower

\* holiday in lieu of Youth Day on Sunday 6 July

\*\* date to be confirmed



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**YMCA Education Centre**

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