



Keeping in Touch- FROM A DISTANCE

On behalf of the Principal and CEO, Srivalsan Murugan

13 June 2021

Dear Parent,

“The path we walked on was tough, the road ahead is too. Waiting for a silver lining or perhaps even two. In the face of the pandemic, we’ve found ourselves growing strong. As we live our life with resilience, there is very little scope left to go wrong.” Shaza Akhtar – English language teacher, Primary department

The start of the academic year 2021-22 marks the start of the second year of virtual learning. Yet another year with boys on campus and some at home, we prepare ourselves towards finding a new normal. A normal, where the campus ricochets with the sound of learning and laughter, where collaboration is now possible face to face too and where the best of the virtual world still remains a large part of teaching. As we work towards establishing such a future for tomorrow, let’s have a quick insight on what we’ve managed to achieve until yesterday.

Firstly, I welcome our new parents into the OOB family, where we are committed to developing each of our students into outstanding scholars and successful graduates – good human beings who act as role models for the wider community. To that end, our focus is on instilling in our students’ values and life skills that will equip and empower them to be the leaders of tomorrow. Welcome aboard to this journey of a lifetime. Parent participation, feedback and involvement is vital for the smooth sailing of this ship. This academic year, we welcomed our parent body with a virtual orientation across all sections in the month of April and have stayed in touch with them constantly through wellbeing calls and online meetings. Last week, the Middle school also had an open mic session with the parents to bring in further collaboration.

Before I dive into the long list of student accolades, allow me to announce the joyous achievement of our staff, **Ms. Annamma Lucy**, who was declared as the global winner of the Cambridge University Press Dedicated Teacher Awards 2021. She won from amongst 13,000 nominations. In April, she had won the awards in Middle East and North Africa category. In addition to this, we congratulate Ms. Bindu Sunil Kumar for being shortlisted among the top 60 for the 2021 Dedicated Teacher Awards.

Starting with our youngest at school, the tiny-tots of the Kindergarten have spent many eventful days this term through assemblies. Harboring the spirit of goodness and kindness towards humankind is a vital part of growing up which was ushered in by the ‘Eid- al- Fitr’ celebration. We marvelled at the wonders of the world not only through ‘World Book Day’, ‘World Laughter Day’, ‘Kindergarten Day’ but also through ‘Earth Day’, ‘World Bee Day’, ‘World Turtle Day’, ‘World Otter Day’, ‘World Environment Day’, ‘World Oceans Day’ and ‘International Astronomy Day’; encouraging our kindergarteners to reflect on the significance and need to preserve the biodiversity on Earth. ‘Mom, you are a queen, you are my ‘Shero’!’ said our young gentlemen genuinely on ‘Mother’s Day’. Even the parents joined in on the learning through the ‘Jolly Phonics’ orientation to assist their wards with literacy. Like the proof lies in the pudding, the growing strength of the onsite students is a testimony to how happening the year has been thus far.

Speaking of fun, the Primary section has been bursting with excitement for more than one reason. From taking teaching and learning to a new high this year with the aid of many more online apps and sites, we’ve taken onboard the Bravo, Bravo app to make learning Arabic even more fun. We’ve explored ideas of conservation, rejuvenation and preservation of our planet by celebrating international events like the Earth day and the World environment day through hands-on projects and virtual discussion boards. We’ve had experts talk to our students about the virtues of fasting during the month of Ramadan and on the importance of oral hygiene in June. We’ve brought stories to life through the fortnightly bedtime stories and rather animate and exuberant Mystery- Reader sessions with Ms. Valanka and Ms. Shereen. Our boys in the Primary section even spoke of pressing matters like Autism and inclusion during the world Autism awareness month. Leadership starts young at OOB. The Prefectorial board was sworn in by the Principal through a virtual investiture ceremony just like their seniors from high school. **Nabhya Sharma** was declared the Headboy and **Glen Charli** the Sports Captain. We ended the term on a high note by **winning the GEMS International Choir Fest 2021** with our team of 29 melodious munchkins from across grades KG2 to Gr. 2.

Please click on the link to watch the performance-

https://gmsedu-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/p/shereen_j_oob/Eix9ZTntiANMk5MkV80FGrkBCqkROa5acR_mWLVbmGfPcQ?e=6v3dzV

Speaking of achievements, our Middle school students have been sweeping in laurels upon laurels since the start of term. Starting with grade 7, **Abhiram Sunitha Binu** of grade 7G won a certificate of appreciation for having participated in the 'Only One Planet' competition organized by GEMS Legacy School, while **Rudrakumar Sathiskumar** of grade 7D has won the first place in Byju's Online Quiz Competition. **Timothy Chummar** of 7G has been shortlisted among the top 10 at Poetica, the Annual Poetry Festival organized by GEMS Modern Academy and, **Samford Sebin** of class 8 A has clinched the Winner's title for the Junior category in the Elocution competition held by the Crescent English School. When the orators shine this bright, can the creators be far behind? Of course not! And that's why, from among 700 participants, **Kailashnath Manojkumar and Swasaanth Sudhanthira Selvan** of grade 8 clinched the Bronze Axe and a cash prize of USD 300 in the 2021 GEMS Minecraft: Education Edition Sustainable Home Challenge. Our budding scientists at the NextGen10 competition, were shortlisted among the top 50 from 800 entries in UAE – featuring the Climate Change project of **Sreehari** from 8A, the AI-technology project of **Mohammed Ashaz Sami** of (7G) and **Arjun Bomma's** (10A) project on Art. To top it all, we had the Quiz team comprising of **Amil Abdulmanaf (10E), Juan Mathew(9B), Adithya Anush (7G) and Sreerag Sreejith(8E)** emerge as the first runners up in the Freedom @ 75 Quiz hosted by Indian High School Dubai under the aegis of the Indian Consulate.

The accolades don't stop there! While celebrating the inauguration of the Senior Prefectorial board in itself is an achievement with **Harshal Bini** sworn in as the Headboy and **Abel Makil** as the Sports Captain, the pride is stronger to know that **Amogh Arun** of 11B secured the first place in the Arabic short story writing competition at The Westminster Dubai. On the other hand, Heriot Watt University conducted the #WattChamps,2021! Business simulation challenge, with teams participating from all over the UAE and Qatar. Our Team, 'Clouds', was the champion. Congratulations to **Joy Das (12C), Mehul Antony (12E), Omkar Ganesh (12E), Shaun Ninan (12B) and Taha Shabbir Hussain (12F)**. In the Youth Earth Summit 2021 organized by University of Wollongong Dubai, our OOB team comprising of **Abel Makil (12), Omkar Ganesh (12), Mehul Antony (12E), Taha Shabbir (12F) and Abhiram S. Smitha (12B)** have won the Audience Choice Award. **Anuj Manjarekar (12A)** bagged the first runner up position in the Creative Art festival organized by The Westminster School, Dubai. Our students also participated in the inter-school youth leadership summit, hosted by The Winchester School, Jebel Ali, which was a student-led conference to engage and inspire the student leaders.

At this point, I'm reminded that no pandemic can dampen the spirit of achievement in our students. No challenge is too tough for those who try and no mystery too hard to solve for those who push the limits to achieve their goals. I would like to conclude with a quote by Matthew Jacobson - "Behind every young child who believes in himself is a parent who believed first". From my son, I learn to be resilient. I learn to be open to all the changes that we face and to stay positive through it all. This affirms my belief in children being great teachers.

Sending good vibes your way and a promise to 'Keep in touch'.

We are active on twitter @OOB GEMS and Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GEMSOurOwnBoys/>. Do follow us there for regular updates. Please note that we are also on Instagram now (gems_oob). By following us on social media and sharing our news, you become a brand ambassador for us.

We thank you for your unstinted support and collaboration.

Warm wishes



Sapna Menghani

Supervisor - Primary