



Keeping in Touch

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On behalf of the Principal and CEO, Srivalsan Murugan

07 March 2023

“We will embrace 2023 with a relentless spirit to achieve no less than the best.”
– His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister, and Minister of Defence of the United Arab Emirates and the ruler of Dubai.

2023 commenced for Team OOB with many reasons to celebrate and these celebrations will go down in the pages of History, etched in the minds of one and all, for years to come. We continue to celebrate every achievement of each pupil, and this communiqué may tend to spill over to a few extra pages – yet every student on campus is special to each one of us and it is but right that his achievement is recorded and applauded.

Of the several memorable celebrations, one of the biggest has been the Middle School Choir winning the much-coveted Millennium Melodies Trophy. Millennium Melodies is an inter-school Music Festival hosted by The Millennium School, Dubai. The 8th edition of the event witnessed seven schools with more than two hundred students performing different songs under the theme ‘Times of Day’. Kudos to the boys and their mentors Ms. Shereen Joji and Mr. Michael Mordi who put up a sterling performance which can be viewed here – <https://youtu.be/gSijKhWi1BM>

At the Emirates Literature Fest, our choir enthralled the audience with their mellifluous renditions and received a standing ovation.

Yet another remarkable win was at the 2nd edition of the Madam Mariamma Varkey Commemorative Debate for Teachers, where our ace debaters belted out their arguments, impressing the jury as well as the audience and returned home with the handsome trophy. The debate's motion was, “The only indicator of a teacher's performance is the student's test scores.” Ms. Juanita was adjudged the best speaker for the motion while Ms. Hajira's speech in general and her rebuttal in particular will not be forgotten in a hurry. The debate was hosted by OIS, who were the winners last year. We will be hosting the debate next year.

Connecting to and exploring world culture has always been an intrinsic part of the fabric of our curriculum. Enhancing this, Team OOB, comprising of fifteen students, accompanied by Mr. Joepaul and myself, attended the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention held in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. The event themed, ‘Diaspora: Reliable Partners for India's Progress in Amrit Kaal’, was an international gathering of both residential and non-residential Indians. Apart from attending various sessions and participating in a tree plantation drive, hosted by the Chief Minister of the state, we attended mesmerizing cultural programmes and enjoyed the gold class hospitality and cuisine. Team OOB was also featured in India's largest Hindi-language daily ‘Dainak Bhaskar’. We are grateful to the Consulate General of India, Dubai for inviting us to attend the conference.

As a team of contemporary educators who move forward with the times, we have always championed professional development. Apart from the in-house professional learning development sessions we have had our faculty members attending international workshops and seminars. The Vice-Principal, Ms. Sindhu P Nair and a few other staff

members attended the iC3 Regional Summit in Dubai. This conference of educators and counselors was aimed at building counseling ethos in schools to help pupils define their purpose in life. Ms. Radhika Misra, attended the ELTAI International Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation, held in Sharjah, as a panelist. She was awarded a memento in recognition of her contribution to education.

We have awesome news from the world of cricket. Our boys, Deepak Gajraj of 12F and Harsh Parth Desai, of 12C, from the senior cricket team have been selected for the UAE Under 19 World Cup Qualifier team. At the GEMS Legacy Cup our young cricketers Devam Parth Desai of 5F, Ronsher Raju of 5A, Eyad Sadiq of 5E, Mohamed Riffan of 5C, Mohamed Mustafa of 5E, Aryan Ramachandran of 5E, Saad Baif of 6B, Syed Suhaib of 6B, Ishaan Roshan of 6B, Charon Guha of 6C, Kabeer Prakash Gidwani of 6A and Darren Jimmy of 6C were the runners-up defeating Delhi Private School, Dubai. Devam won the 'Man of the Series', whilst Saad won the 'Best Batsman' of the Tournament.

The Kindergarten Sports Day themed, 'Let's Go Scuba Diving', was a mega hit, even as the little champs put up an extraordinary gymnastic performance with the most colourful and imaginative races and drills. At the Primary School Sports Day, our boys celebrated their 'Meraki' attitude displaying their passion and creativity in every competition. The event also showcased various drills representing the sub-themes: happiness, passion and creativity. Students also exhibited their football skills in a tribute to the legend Pele. It is certainly worth mentioning that at both these events we had 100% participation of students.

Our swimming champ Geon Jibi of 8D won four gold medals in the swimming competition of the CBSE UAE Cluster, held at GEMS New Millennium School, Al Khail and qualified for the CBSE National Levels. In addition, he won the 4th position in the 100 mts backstroke at the CBSE National Swimming Championship, held at Rajkot, Gujarat, completing the race in a span of 1 minute 15 seconds and 07 milliseconds.

Award coordinator Mr. Joepaul and his team led seventeen students to undertake the qualifying journey for The Duke of Edinburgh International Bronze Award. The DoE team was at Fossil Rocks, Sharjah, for two days and one night. Kudos to the boys who now qualify to move onto the next level aiming for Silver. The Award is a global framework for non-formal education and learning, which challenges young people to dream big, celebrate their achievements and make a difference in their world.

The first Kindergarten choral recitation events: 'Rhyme Rhapsody' of KG1 and 'A Walk in the Wild' of KG2 were an absolute marvel, and a runaway hit! Advay Sumit of 2B was chosen as Wordsmith Awardee; an initiative by Me Kids magazine for creative writing. He was also selected as a finalist for the Little Picasso Award. Rayan Syed Ali of 3C attended the Emirates Literature Festival along with Roshin Rajesh of the same grade. Both were shortlisted for the Arcadia Book in a Box competition. Amarnath Sreevalsan of 7E secured the 1st place in the English Poem Recitation, organized by Talent Mela held at Woodlem Park School, Dubai. At the GEMS World Academy Mock UN Conference, Tarun Rawat of 11E and Gokul Krishna of 10A won the 1st prize, in the Best Delegate category, whilst Timothy Chummar of 8G bagged the 2nd prize and Smaran Nair of 11G bagged the 3rd prize in the same category.

One of the values we promote at OOB is to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This for us is the heart of sustainability. I am proud to inform you of the feats of our eco-warriors Anish Jena, Cherian Binoy, Lohitakshan and Chitesh, all of 7C, who won the 2nd prize at the Sharjah Chamber Award for Innovators. Their project named 'Green Clean' is a game-based project on waste management. They bagged a cash prize of AED 8000. Aaron Vinay of 9I and Vibhor Choudhary of 8F won the 2nd prize at the Terrarium Building Competition of the Climate Climax Conference organised by GEMS Modern

Academy, Dubai. Bhavdeep and Anto of 11B participated in the architectural competition held by De Montfort University to generate ideas on designing a model of a container house for students which would be sustainable, space conserving and cheap. The duo bagged the 1st prize winning a cash prize AED 1000.

Aditya Rajesh of 8D participated in the Dubai Clean-Up Campaign organized by the Emirates Environmental Group at Al Qudra and also participated in the 'Relay for Life'; a walk organized by Friends of Cancer patients at Kshisha Park, Al Rahmaniyah. Adithya Anush of 8G participated in, the 'For Our Emirates We Plant' campaign by Emirates Environmental Group in Special Bee Reserve, Al Manai and planted a tree in his name. Anish Jena of 7C participated in the 'Clean Up UAE' campaign organized by the Emirates Environment Group under the patronage of the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment.

Our champs have also been doing us proud in the world of technology, innovation and at the international Olympiads. Anirudh Ganesh of 4G won 3rd place in the 2nd Madam Varkey Memorial Pitch Perfect Competition, hosted by Our Own, Dubai. Rayan Syed Ali of 3C earned a bronze medal and successfully qualified for the school round of Kenken International Championship, whilst David Shaun D'silva of 5H received a certificate and trophy for his distinguished performance and achievement of an international rank at the same championship. At the English Olympiad qualifier, round 1, Philip Chummar of 6D won the gold medal whilst Mohammed Ayaan of 6D secured the 4th rank in the Science Olympiad qualifier, round 1, and also scored 81 percentile rank in the Math Olympiad qualifier, round 1. Aditya Rajesh of 8D received a certificate of excellence in the Genius Cerebrum Science Olympiad. He also participated in the International Science Olympiad, qualifier, round 2, securing the 12th rank in the UAE. Aditya received a Certificate of Distinction in the Green Olympiad exam too. Adithya Anush of 8G received a Certificate of Excellence in the Mathematics Genius Cerebrum Olympiad while Shaan Pinto of grade 8F received a Certificate of Achievement and the honour of being a silver medalist at the English Olympiad Foundation. Gaurav Jayaprakash of 8F participated in the Cyber Olympiad, and secured the 4th rank in the UAE.

Our School is the proud recipient of the rolling trophy at the Innotech Digifest, an inter-school competition held at GEMS Our Own English High School, Sharjah - Girls. This is our second consecutive win at this competition. The focus of the event was to encourage aspiring student entrepreneurs to use technology and disruptive ideas to achieve the Sustainable Developmental Goals and enhance UAE'S SDG index.

Balatharun Kiruba Sarkar of 2D won the 1st prize at the Poster Designing Junior Category, while Om Arun Thombre of 12A and Sachin Sucheendran of 10C won 1st prize in the Programming and Photo Magic categories, respectively. Arjun Bomma of 11C won 3rd prize in Website Designing and the team consisting of Mohammad Farhan of 11C, Amin Salim Khot and Muhammad Haaziq both of 11E received 3rd prize in the Innovation Challenge.

On the occasion of World Science Day, the primary school announced an open challenge – the Genius Hour, to introduce the students to the world of scientific research and discovery and engage them in real-life problem-solving.

In the arena of quizzing our boys are a force to reckon with. The ebullient team comprising of Iraj Nair of 11E and Manthan Rane of 11A emerged champions at the 19th Gulf Asian Interschool Quiz Competition. Mohammed Ayaan Ashraf of 6D bagged the 1st prize and Ashwin Aneesh Babu of 5C secured the 1st runner-up position in the quiz conducted by the MSS Model Service Society, Dubai. Muhammed Yaseen Ashfaq of 8I and Aaron John Mathew of 9G, the winners of the 'Proud to be An Indian' event, organized by Asianet News, along with their accompanying teacher Mr. Joy George

travelled to India to witness the majestic grandeur of the Republic Day celebrations and the commemoration of the Martyrs Day at New Delhi. They also visited Shimla and other tourist spots and were privileged to meet prominent personalities.

We drew curtains at the year-long, much celebrated in-house quiz programme, Look Who's Answering. The winners in the various categories are –

- Group 1- Advay Sumith (2B)
- Group 2- Madhav Jobi Nair (4B)
- Group 3- Gokul Prasath (6B)
- Group 4- Aditya Rajesh (8D)
- Group 5- Ashwin Krishna (9C)
- Group 6- Rafan Afsar (11A)

Several students from the middle school participated in the inaugural 'Pink Caravan Ride', organized by Friends of Cancer Patients, which aimed to raise awareness of the importance of early detection of breast cancer. Amarnath Sreevalsan of 7E participated in the 'Relay for Life'; a walk organized by Friends of Cancer patients at Kshisha Park, Al Rahmanyah. Prasandhip Jawahar of 8D participated in the 'Walkathon' at Safa Park Dubai. Amarnath Sreevalsan of 7E and Aditya Rajesh of 8D volunteered for the Emirates Red Crescent Authority and Sharjah Charity International. They prepared urgent relief packages for the earthquake victims.

Aditya Rajesh of 8D won the TalentX 2023 Kids Achievers Award under the category of 'Education'. At the same event Adithya Anush of 8G won the award in the 'Intelligence Quotient' category. The event was organized by Kids R US, Dubai. Aditya Rajesh also participated in the Mathlathon online Global Math Challenge and secured a Global Rank of 5. Suhruth Kakarla Srinidhi of 1B won the runner-up prize for group dance at Santhwanam Youth Fest organized at Gulf Model School, Dubai. Prasandhip Jawaha of 8D attained a 'Noble World Record' for solving three Rubik's cubes in under one minute. Wateeqe Ahmed of 11G participated in the NextGen Majlis organised under the aegis of the Expo School Programme at the Sustainability Pavilion in the Terra Auditorium wherein he articulated his profound views on future-proofing education.

Aaron Vinay's (9G) artwork was on display at the Sharjah Light Festival along with that of Ashwin Krishna Unni Krishnan of 11E. These creative pieces were selected from amongst hundreds of entries of a competition held by SPEA in collaboration with Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority. 'Celebrating our Cultural Diversity' was the competition's theme.

Well-being has and will always be a priority for us at OOB. In view of this, various well-being activities have been held pan-school. Ms. Sandhya Nair, the School Counsellor conducted a stress buster session for the students of grades 10 & 12. Strategies to enhance attention and academic focus along with tips to alleviate stress were shared. Our SEND team conducted anti-bullying sessions in sections of grades 4, 7 & 8 to highlight the value of being buddies.

Mr. Arpit Duggar, an Indian Novelist, Storyteller, Entrepreneur and Educationist addressed the class of 2023, at their evening camp, sharing his insights on life and much more! We also bid farewell to this cohort, both formally and informally. 'Arcanum', the grade XII informal celebrations was a joyous evening that rounded off with a splendid dinner. Au Revoir gentlemen – you have now become men who matter and will in your own way transform the world! Our prayers, blessings and best wishes are always with you. Keep these gentlemen of grades 10 and 12 in your prayers, as they write their board examinations, which have commenced.

Under the guidance and mentorship of Ms. Samira, our Arabic and Islamic Studies Supervisor and her dedicated team, the department has gathered quite a few accolades. Abdullah Nasir of 7G won the 3rd prize at the 6th interschool Qur'an & Adhaan Competition held at Al Amana Private School, Sharjah. At the 8th interschool Poem Competition, organized by JSS Private School, Dubai, Hamim Hijas of 8G won the 2nd prize. At the 9th interschool Quran & Hadith competition organized by GEMS Westminster School, Sharjah, Muhib Ur Rehman of 11D won the 1st prize.

During the Arabic Week celebrations, we had a plethora of activities which included puppet shows, story-telling sessions, a special assembly, a language parade, poetry recitation and calligraphy. At the Numeracy and Arabic weeks, held in the KG department, the events showcased fantastic activities by the students.

Our boys made several memories to re-live through their myriad experiences of their splendid educational trips. Students of the primary school visited the Sharjah Classic Cars Museum, whilst middle school students visited the Sharjah Desert Park and the Sharjah Arabian Wildlife Centre. The pupils of the secondary and senior school went off to Motiongate, Dubai.


Team OOB was also proud to host the final session of the Bright Sparks Leadership Training Programme 2023, for our cluster. Mr. Michael Guzder, Senior Vice-President, GEMS Education and Mr. Jonathan Bramley, Vice-President of Communications, GEMS Education along with the 'bright sparks' of the cluster were enthralled, not only by our gold class hospitality but also by the stories and anecdotes of our own home-grown leaders. I am sure these powerfully incredible insights will go a long way to enhance the developing skills of all the emerging bright sparks.

If our boys have been performing so extraordinarily well, it is because of parents like you, who take the time, effort and interest to collaborate with us, to metamorphose them into men who matter. We place on record with appreciation all our parents who took time off their busy schedules to be part of the parental engagement activities, pan-school. Each session was an amazing experience for the boys – yet again championing our core values – Always Learning, as One Team, with Care for and towards one another coupled with respect and ever striving for Excellence!

Before I conclude this edition of Keeping in Touch, I am sure, each one of us is looking forward to the upcoming Kindergarten Graduation. On another note, our little ones will be full of stories to narrate at home, of their celebrations, this morning in school, of Hag Al Laila or Hag Leila, an integral custom of the Emirati traditions.

Here's a quick reminder of our Social Media presence: we are active on Twitter @OOB_GEMS, Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GEMSOurOwnBoys> and Instagram, with the account gems_oob. Do follow us for the latest photos and regular updates.

We look forward to the new academic year, just around the corner, another year full of promise and opportunities that will propel us forward, fueling our passion to channel that genius in every child!



Shane J Alliew

Middle School Supervisor – Grades 7 & 8