



THE RAFFLES WAVE

Wishing all happy holidays and a happy new year!



**RAFFLES
GIRLS' SCHOOL**

*Nurturing Daughters of a
Better Age*

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A new chapter awaits the class of 2016 as we bade them a fond farewell during the Farewell & Graduation Assembly. All the best and continue to shine as daughters of a better age!

DENIM GOOD FUN



The highly-anticipated RGS Staff Night was held on 4 November 2016 at Shangri-La Hotel, which saw the gathering of all staff and partners of the school for a night of good food and fun. Embracing the 'Denim Night' theme, some came sporting their good ol' trusty jeans, while others were decked out in hand-crafted denim accessories. Staff were also kept entertained with games and some lucky ones also got to walk away with big prizes for the night, including travel vouchers and electronic gadgets.

YOU'RE THE INSPIRATION



RGS teacher Mr Joseph Toh was one of seven winners chosen from a pool of 106 nominees for the Inspiring Teacher of English Award 2016.

Assistant Head, Student Leadership Development, Mr Joseph Toh, has won the prestigious Inspiring Teacher of English - Teaching Award 2016. In an interview prior to the award presentation ceremony on 13 October 2016, Joseph said that it is a great honour to win an award on a national level. He also shared on his journey of being an English teacher and his hopes for his students. "When I first applied to be a teacher, I never thought that I would be an English teacher. It was really a challenge as I didn't have that kind of experience nor the training from NIE, so I've developed and grown over the years through the Professional Development in my school... To all my students, I hope you've had fun and really learnt quite a bit from my English classes... English is important, (so) although you may take on different professions in your lives that have little to do with the English subject, it is ultimately for communication and it represents who you are as a person. So keep on learning and improving your competency in English." To watch the full interview, please click [here](#). Conferred by the National Heritage Board - Speak Good English Movement, the Inspiring Teacher of English Award is a national award for English teachers in Singapore schools.

VIVA TEAM EQUINOX!



Team equiNOX (from left) Julene, Vicky, Isabel and Ying Xuan presenting their donation cheque to Mr Lim Khoon Min, General Manager, VIVA Foundation. Year 4 students Chua Ying Xuan, Isabel Toh, Vicky Ng and Julene Ngew who make up Team equiNOX (the team represented Singapore at the F1 in Schools World Finals in 2015 and clinched the FIA Women in Motorsport Award) have donated more than \$1,600 to the VIVA Foundation in unused sponsorship funds. With a passion for giving back and in hopes of creating a legacy beyond the F1 competition, the team decided to support the VIVA Foundation, a charity organisation that carries out cancer research for children as they "strongly believe that children should have the opportunity to pursue their passion and reach for the stars in spite of any illnesses that they may have." Besides the donation, the team has also raised awareness of the foundation through a radio interview and by giving out exclusive team merchandise with a note on VIVA Foundation's cause during the World Finals.

IT'S A GOLD



Kathy (extreme left) and Melissa receive their award from Mr Ng Chee Meng, Minister for Education (Schools) & Second Minister for Transport, during the PAYM Service-Learning Festival 2016.

A team of students from RGS and RI have obtained the Gold award for the People's Association Youth Movement (PAYM) Service-Learning Champion (SLC) Project Accolade 2016 for their project 'My Reading Room'. RGS Year 4 student Zhou Xinzhuo Kathy and RI Year 5 students and RGS alumnae Cassandra Jane Ang Ann Ki and Melissa Amanda's 'My Reading Room' is a programme organised in collaboration with Toa Payoh East Community Club to help primary school children who come from low income families as well as migrant families with non-English speaking backgrounds learn English in a fun and engaging way through activities like skits and arts and crafts.

PORTRAIT OF A RAFFLESIAN

SETTING THE BAR

Before the official establishment of the RGS Alumnae (RGSA) on 31 January 2015, Ms Leong Choi Fun, President of RGSA and her council members had worked tirelessly on making their case for an alumnae association for their alma mater. A lawyer by profession, Choi Fun has helped numerous clients and friends through difficult periods of their lives in her practice of family law. Amidst her busy schedule (a typical day at work for her can involve attending to cases in the Family Justice Court for hearings or mediations, meeting with clients and attending corporate meetings, drafting of agreements and doing legal research), Choi Fun still devotes a portion of her time to give back to her alma mater in her capacity as RGSA's first President, which she says has been an "honour and privilege". Under her leadership, the RGSA has ticked off milestone after milestone, and the evidence of her success is clear - in a span of less than two years, the association has already managed to raise more than \$70,000 for the school's New Campus Development Fund, reconnect cohorts of RGS girls across decades through numerous RGSA-organised programmes and activities, and establish an RGS Alumnae Award for RGS girls. To date, there are over 200 members registered in the RGSA.

With the year coming to a close, Choi Fun and her team are not resting on their laurels with plans for upcoming fundraisers, and more networking and catching-up opportunities that RGSA members can look forward to in 2017. In time to come, Choi Fun also hopes to see RGSA members being involved in social causes and giving back to society - something that she herself is passionate about. With Choi Fun at the helm, the bar has been set for what the RGSA can achieve, and there is no argument that the association will continue to be a valued part of the big Rafflesian family.

Success of the RGS Alumnae

"A huge component of that success definitely lies in the 'dream team' of Executive Council members of the RGSA. Our members have a strong sense of service, are creative and productive, and true to the RGS spirit, results-oriented. The best part is the culture of members stepping up to take over or complete any project or task from another, with no questions asked and no blame assigned. But without the support of the Principal and staff in the Alumnae Relations Office of RGS, the RGSA would not have been able to achieve what it has thus far. The warm and constructive relationship between the Executive Council and RGS staff has no doubt helped us achieve our mutual and joint goals seamlessly. The RGSA looks forward to fostering even closer ties with the school."

Recalling Her Days at RGS

"I had to wake up at 5.30am for school because I had to take three buses just to get there! During recess, I would also share food with classmates who either forgot to bring their food or who did not have pocket money that day. Every Saturday, I would be marching under the hot sun from 8am to 12pm for National Police Cadet Corps, then I would run off for badminton training after a quick lunch. The physical training was demanding, but the fact that RGS was always the champion in the Bukit Timah district and sometimes in the inter-district games during my time made it worthwhile. Vacations were the best! We had sleepovers at friends' homes, played badminton with my teammate's elder brother to improve our skills, and we also walked the whole of Orchard Road to find the outlet selling the t-shirt that we wanted at the cheapest price."



Choi Fun as Athena, the Goddess of War and Wisdom, during a party.



Choi Fun with her Secondary 3 classmates in RGS. Can you tell which is her?

PORTRAIT OF A RAFFLESIAN SETTING THE BAR

Impact of Her RGS Experience

"...Badminton training was tough, especially after marching under the sun for the preceding four hours. On one occasion, our coach called three of us together, took out \$10 from her wallet and told us to go have a good lunch before reporting for training later that day. What I felt and learnt then has defined my values today, and that is, it is important to be kind. Most of my classmates and I did not come from privileged homes and our wardrobe was limited. I remember my classmate coming to my home to try on what I had when she was invited to a party, while another classmate would stay back after school to teach and explain difficult equations and their applications to us. It is this philosophy of caring and sharing that has made me lifelong friends. Fast forward today, we would also be at the hospital to pick up our single friends from surgery and do grocery shopping for them during their recovery."

Career Highs & Lows

"The career lows are easy to remember. There was a lot of pressure to resign when I got pregnant and was due to go on my confinement. It was also difficult to take leave for my children's events. When I told my male firm partner that I wanted to take time off to watch my three-year-old son perform in a concert, his response was, "Surely you have more important things to do here?" Well, that actually helped me to decide that I should start my own legal practice as I anticipated that things would only get worse. On the flip side, legal practice provided a good revenue stream, which in turn gave investment opportunities. I am fortunate that my career has made me financially independent. More importantly, my practice of family law allows me to help clients and friends through difficult periods of their lives. It is extremely rewarding to see them walk out of my office or the family court looking more positive and happier at the end of their divorce or custody proceedings."

Life Lessons She Has Learnt

"It is difficult to change the mindsets of employers towards women and pregnancy. I tell myself that when my staff has to take time off, whether for their children or elderly parents, I should be supportive and understanding. After all, if I was an employee, I would want the same treatment. The proverbial glass ceiling does exist and it is for us to find ways to break it or to seek alternatives. There are many solutions to a problem and what we have to do is to explore the options and choose the one that works best for us. There are also sacrifices that one has to make at different stages of our life. What is important is that the sacrifice is for a worthy and deserving cause. It is important to remain strong, take any setbacks in your stride and focus on the ultimate goal."

Advice to Aspiring Lawyers

"Apart from knowing the law and how to apply it, it is important to read continually and keep updated on recent and landmark developments. Every lawyer wants to win, but one should never cross the line just for the sake of victory. Never compromise your integrity nor underestimate the importance of trust. While your clients and members of the profession can accept errors of legal judgement, your professional life will never be the same if your reputation is tainted with dishonesty. It is also important to wake up in the morning and look forward to going to work. In choosing the law or any profession, RGS girls should ask themselves if this is the profession they want to be in and why."

To find out more about the RGSA, visit <http://rgsalumnae.com/>

Know an inspiring Rafflesian who has a story to share? Write to us at adeline.chow@rgs.edu.sg to tell us more, and who knows, you may get to see yourself or your long-lost classmate in subsequent issues of the Raffles Wave!



Choi Fun with her beautiful family.

Striking a Balance

"I must admit that it is difficult striking a balance amongst the many roles I've taken on over the years. When I became a mother, my children were my priority and focus, and like most other parents, I postponed my own wants when my three sons were young. Of course, when a break was warranted, I would leave them with the helper and return home more relaxed and energised after a holiday. As they grew older, I recovered the opportunity for time for myself. My husband likes to tell his friends that he lives by three rules:

1. Do not argue with your wife.
2. Do not argue with your wife particularly when she is a lawyer.
3. Obey rule number 1 and 2 and you can retire early, play golf and have lunch with your friends and basically, be free to do as you please anytime you want.

He is joking of course, but really, he appreciates what I need to do at this point of my life and is supportive of my career and RGS Alumnae work."

Hopes for RGS

"When RGS moves to her new campus in a few years' time, we must not forget that the change in location and building is only a physical and external thing. What is important is that the RGS spirit must remain. For the girls, I hope that like me, they too will make life-long friends from school and learn the values of kindness, sharing and respect. I also hope that the school can continue to instil in the students the ability to acknowledge and accept that sometimes failure is a reality of life and that lessons can be learnt from adversity. Having the strength and tenacity to pick yourself up and soldier on is a valuable life skill that all students need to have. When the current generation has achieved success in their chosen field 20 years down the road, I hope that they will have it in them to want to give back and to serve, whether it is to the school, the community or the country. Only then would RGS have succeeded in truly educating our students and producing daughters of a better age."