



The Aga Khan Academy Mombasa, Newsletter

May 2013

Dates to remember

- Parent Workshop: Preparing for puberty, 23 May 3-4.30, New PDC
- DP2 Graduation, 10am 25 May, Commons
- Graduation Ball, 7pm 25 May, Commons
- PYP Exhibition opening 11 June
- Student led conferences 19-20 June
- Term ends 21 June at noon

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Drama at the Academy!

Last Saturday evening I was surprised and delighted by the student presentation of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Staging Shakespeare is an ambitious challenge for any group of students, but the fact that these were mainly Year 8s with a few Year 9s and a couple of Year 7s is truly impressive.

The focus of Mrs Grafe's and Ms Dhanani's production was on bringing this fantastical comedy to life and they succeeded to a very notable extent. If the complexities of the plot were not always ideally clear, the humanity and expressive variety of the piece were always evident. The audience comprised parents, teachers, students and young children all of whom laughed and applauded throughout – proof enough of the performers' ability to communicate the essence of the play.

The best of these student performers demonstrated a remarkable understanding of Shakespeare's richly

poetic language, and the natural sense of comedy and comic timing from some of the Year 8 girls made their every entrance a witty and engaging delight (even if they occasionally upstaged the main action). The central role of Viola was played by Year 8 student Eman Salim with a truly heart-felt understanding of the character's emotional dilemma, not to mention a seemingly natural affinity with the language, and every minor part was played with commitment and team spirit. The student stage hands were also impressively efficient and focused – not qualities always evident in those supporting parts.

The final scenes may have been a little rushed, but the ploy of planting pages of the script in hidden (and not-so-hidden) locations sometimes added a bit of extra comedy – even if not quite what Shakespeare had in mind! And the creative use of the Commons' table racks as Malvolio's prison cell was brilliant, as was the theatrical effectiveness of

the occasional use of the balcony above the stage.

Congratulations to Mrs Grafe and Ms Dhanani and all the students involved in *Twelfth Night*, not only for daring to face the challenge of a complex Shakespearian comedy, but for the vitality, humanity and effectiveness of the result. It shows us all what is possible if we are determined enough; I'm already getting some ideas.

Tony Ryan
Head of Expressive Arts

Editor's note:

We begin a series of occasional guest writers on this page with a review of the recent production of Twelfth Night.

ACADEMY YEARBOOK

The 10th Anniversary Yearbook is now on sale. The cost is 1000 KShs and pre-payment for the book, which will be available in early June, is essential to secure a copy. Students and staff have put in a huge amount of time and effort to capture all the events of the year—don't miss out on memories that will last a lifetime. Pay at the Bursar's Office.



Mrs Stella Wangu



Mr Karim Alidina



Ms Rukhshona Sinavbarova

Staff News

At the beginning of the term we welcomed some new staff members: Mrs Stella Wangu has joined the SS Music Department. She comes to us from Premier Academy in Nairobi where she taught for more than 9 years. She plays flute, saxophone and recorder and will be teaching individual as well as classroom lessons.

More recently Mr Karim Alidina, Manager HR Operations for the Academies Unit has arrived at The Academy. Mr Alidina was previously Area HR Director for Middle East and Africa for Glaxo Smith Kline for whom he has worked for the past 15 years. He has also done much voluntary work in

the HR field for AKDN in Europe and the Middle East.

Other recent arrivals have been three teachers in the Junior School as interns or relieving for those on parental leave: Ms Harsha Khataw, Ms Leonida Sangale and Ms Evelyne Otieno.

We also welcome a new driver Jimmy Kibungi and Teaching fellow, Ms Rukhshona Sinavbarova. Ms Sinavbarova is teaching Russian and is a mentor for the students from Tajikistan.

A successful 3-week Teacher Preparation Programme for 18 graduates has recently finished—using the newly commissioned PDC rooms.

Global Virtual Classroom

Academy entries received four merit awards in the recent [Global Virtual Classroom](#) website design contest. Entries were placed in the categories: Global Kids Online Journal, GlobeTech, Communications, and World Energy. In each category students joined in collaboration with those from other schools around the world – in the Academy’s case, linking up with schools in the Russian Federation, USA, Malaysia and Thailand.

The Global Kids Online Journal included Junior School students in collaboration with students from the Russian Federation and the USA. They created a lively website covering culture, careers, story-telling and much else. The GlobeTech site focused on the advantages (and disadvantages) of our technology-filled world and also presented an overview of the history of technology from pre-historic times to the present, while the Communications site also, unsurprisingly, focused on technology. The busy World Energy site, created by a team of 7 students from the Academy along with a group from the USA provided information on the global energy crisis, global warming and alternative energy sources. Congratulations to all involved in using technology to remove all the barriers that time and distance otherwise place on us – truly global collaboration.

Notices and Coming Events

Parent Workshop: Preparing for Puberty—23 May 3-4.30pm, New PDC

DP2 Graduation—25 May 10am, Commons

PYP Exhibition—11 June, 5.30pm, Opening evening, Commons

Junior School student led conferences—19-20 June

School closes at 12 noon on 21 June; reopens on 12 August

Swimming Successes

Recently our swimmers have successfully competed in two important events: the CASA combined championships held here at the Academy and the CANA Championships held in Lusaka, Zambia. From the Academy and swimming for Kenya were Mumbi Kiragu, Shaan Vora, Karan Khagram and Urvi Dayal, while Sabrina Kassam represented Tanzania. The CANA championships attracted over 300 swimmers from 11 East, Central and Southern African nations who showcased their considerable talents. Kenya emerged as the overall winners with a tally of 80 medals. Taking top honours from the Academy was Mumbi Kiragu who won 2 silver medals, while Karan Khagram won a bronze and broke the Kenyan national record for the 200m backstroke, and Shaan Vora also won a bronze. Back on home ground, in the recent CASA combined championships, both girls' and boys' teams came in first place, giving a first placing overall. Congratulations to all swimmers and coaches involved.



CASA winners with their trophies

Health Expo

The first-ever Health Expo held at the Academy was a great success. In all 13 events were held over 4 days, (8-12 April) making it an exceptionally busy time for the Health and Wellness Centre staff. Add to that the disruption caused by the late announcement of a public holiday for the swearing-in of the new President,

and there were certainly plenty of opportunities for blood pressure to be significantly raised – among the Health and Wellness Centre Staff. However through classroom lessons, excellent displays, exercise sessions, external speakers and facilitators, everyone on campus (and many families off-campus) knows a great

deal more than previously about the dangers of and ways of avoiding or dealing with hypertension through an understanding of risk factors and the importance of healthy eating and exercise.

Congratulations to all the staff involved, and also to all those who participated in the activities on offer.



Healthy food at the Health Expo

Runway to Relief

On 13 April, a large audience in the Academy Commons was treated to a superb fashion show, with all garments being modelled by Academy students, and all in the good cause of raising funds for the Cerebral Palsy Foundation.

Showcasing fashion by Shenila Hooda, the audience saw a dazzling display of flowing gowns embellished with beading and stones and also a collection of shorter, equally elegant pieces. The men's fashion, stylishly modelled by

DP2 students, featured an eclectic collection of trousers by designer Mohamed Bana.

Many thanks to all the sponsors who generously supported this colourful and enjoyable evening's entertainment.



Designer Shenila Hooda and Aliyana Darwesh



Maureen Mulinge receives the supreme winner's award from Mr Otieno



MAD Night art exhibition



Our very own buses!

MAD Night

Undoubtedly a highlight of the year, MAD Night brought together music, art, dance, drama, and more than a little magic, from within the Academy as well as from other Mombasa schools. It was a full house at the amphitheatre on 19 April for the 4th annual MAD Night that, along with a large number of Visual Art submissions, saw 20 performances from seven Mombasa schools that had been selected from more than 50 entries in the two preliminary rounds. The adjudicators comprised three well-known performing arts professionals from Mombasa, and their decisions brought considerable success to The Aga Khan Academy students. In the Visual Arts, 1st and 2nd places went to Jayni Modasia and Imaan Cochu. Danish Dhamani took third place in Theatrical Performance with his highly entertaining magic illusions. Free Spirits (Nancy Mayenge, Amisa Mwathethe, Kantarama Senze) and Karishma Bhagani gained third and first places respectively in the Dance Category. In the music sections, 1st and 2nd in the solos were Maureen Mulinge and Mary Musyoka, and in the group category, 2nd place went to Cindy Makau and Lynn Shiyayo, with The Tribe, a group of twelve DP boys and two female singers, taking first place in a spectacular, high-impact performance. The supreme winner of MAD Night 2013 was Maureen Mulinge. Congratulations to all performers for providing the audience with a wonderful evening of entertainment.

Have Instruments, Will Make Music

A generous donation by departing Head of Academy, Mr Rob Burrough, has enabled the purchase of some new percussion instruments including a bass drum, cymbals and snare drum. An earlier donation enabled the purchase of a trombone, and several other generous patrons have donated a trumpet, a saxophone, flutes, clarinets and violins since the start of the school year. Students have begun learning many of these instruments, but many more instruments are needed, so further donations will be very much appreciated.

Have Transport, Will Travel

The Academy is the proud owner of four new buses, smartly branded with our logo and name. Two buses have a capacity of 37, one of 33 and one of 51. As the Academy continues to grow these will be invaluable for transporting day students to and from school, and also for field and sports trips and residential outings.

SRC News

On 29 April, the SRC met in its entirety to draft a new SRC Constitution. Since its inception in 2007, the SRC has evolved into a more representative, more active, and more influential organisation and the Council decided it was time the Constitution reflected these changes. The two Presidents, Farhana and Danish, opened the meeting with remarks about the importance of this task as part of the legacy of the SRC of 2012-13. All the Committees worked individually to craft certain parts of the document and then met together to debate and streamline the articles. The students worked with impressive diligence and cohesion, producing a nearly finished document, laying the foundation for an even stronger SRC in future years.

DP1 Geography and ESS students Trip to Watamu

This trip gave us an opportunity to experience a real-life case study of sustainable development that helped us with our Geography Internal Assessment. The first day itself was quite productive as we visited Wild Living, a natural produce shop outside Kilifi where we all got the opportunity to understand the benefits of natural products and their values and how fair trade can give dignity and better living standards to producers. Our second stop was at Mida Creek boardwalk where we were explained the importance of the mangroves and how they benefit the surrounding area and got to witness the biodiversity around that area which was incredible. Also, we were able to interview the locals and witness the sustainable methods of development used at the Mida Creek and the Eco camp.



The second day was surely the most amazing experience for most of us as it included swimming with fish! Snorkelling at the Marine National Park was definitely something we will cherish. We got to see the beauty inside the sea including the corals which was not only fun but was also relevant to our syllabus. After that, despite being exhausted, we still carried on with our data collection including a litter survey at Watamu and Mida Creek.

The third day was the day to visit the Arubuko Sokoke, which is the largest coastal forest in East Africa with a huge biodiversity. It was definitely worth it as it enabled us to learn more about various kinds of species in the forest. We got to carry out our fieldwork measuring the different species of plants in a small area. Also, visiting the sand dunes that we had previously only seen in pictures, was amazing!

Then came the last day when we all visited the Watamu Turtle Watch which made us realise that there are species in danger by human activities! This applies not only to the turtles but also the mangroves, which were cut down in order to dig the land for worms, which some of us would prefer to leave underground! We managed to plant 3800 mangroves towards the end and ended on a great note with a bonfire and awards!



For Aileen Waitaaga an ESS student, one of the highlights of the course is the field trip to Watamu which allows students to appreciate the diverse range of ecosystems present in this region. The ESS students were looking at the correlation between soil characteristics (pH, rate of infiltration, and texture) and vegetation growth (percent coverage and diversity) in various ecosystems in order to compile a comparative lab report. The ESS students worked diligently in the field. ESS students also worked with A Rocha Kenya conducting a mangrove whelk study. Students were able to tag, capture, release and recapture, mangrove whelks to estimate the population of whelks dwelling in Mida Creek.

Both Geographers and ESS students were able to see conservation in action. Kenya's variety of coastal ecosystems are of great significance for the protection of Mombasa's shores, and understanding and appreciating their purpose by actually seeing them encourages students to become environmental stewards.

But the final word goes to Aileen who summarises her experiences: "During the activities we had 'photo-shoots', random moments and moments of true class bonding which made the trip even more special. The outcome of such experiences is not only a closer class, and field work experience, but a chance to witness Kenya's progressive development in the tourism sector from an eco-tourism perspective. However enough with formalities, I have to say that the only thing that would've made the trip better was the prospect of drinking coffee every morning but, other than that, the trip was excellent." – Reporter: *Naziya Nasser*



Career Day

For the first time in AKA's year 10 history, we had a Career Day! On 17 April, various companies, enterprises and workplaces agreed to host a group of Year 10 students who were interested in particular fields. Thanks to Miss Thompson's and Miss Holland's hard work and effort, the students had the opportunity to be hosted by the Serena Hotel, Base Titanium, Imperial Bank, The Aga Khan Hospital, Braeburn Primary School, Haller Park Animal Conservation, and FIDA, for an entire day.

It was a great opportunity for us to learn about the workplace by spending a day in the field working beside professionals. I went to Base Titanium, along with 10 other students who were either interested in Environmental Science or Physical Engineering. We got to tour the mine and the processes that take place at the refining plant were explained. We also looked at what the conservationists are doing to try and preserve the natural environment and leave it even better than they had found it, if not the same. We had great fun! The hosts were interactive, eager to answer our questions and happy to show us around and explain the jobs and how they interconnect at the company.

Many of us were encouraged to talk about what we aspired to be in the future and to share our views on the workplace and jobs by the hosts. Things we had only wondered about were put into action as we saw what a day in the job would be like, were we to choose a similar field of expertise. The experience was very real; eye-opening and thought-provoking. Many of us were simply delighted to learn more about our field and were even more eager to join it, however a few of us ended up asking ourselves whether or not we would like to be involved in that field at all.

Despite the fact that a few of us did not get to do exactly what we expected, the day was a success, the experience was enlightening and it made us realise that some jobs that we don't think much about getting involved in are important in any organisation in order for its day to day operations to be successful.

You can't achieve your dream by lying on your pillow, constructing it with your thoughts. To achieve your dream, you must roll out of bed, take risks, contend with the bumps and bruises and always have hope. Miss Thompson and the other amazing Year 10 mentors showed us what life is really like. I believe a big thank-you is in order for letting us glimpse a future possibility. We have been encouraged and motivated to achieve our goals and to succeed in our own ways, be it in finance, health care, education, law, ICT, architecture, engineering, environmental science or in any field we may find ourselves in.—*Reporter: Saqifa Walli, 10G*

The Academy also received an email from Mr Sam Robertson the Deputy Head (Primary) of Braeburn Mombasa, which read: "Last week Lindsey Thompson organised for four of your students— Dhruv, Aika, Mehdi and Saima—to visit us as part of their Year 10 Career Day and spend some time assisting in our Primary School. I wanted to send you a short note to thank you for sending us such excellent students! They participated in every



The Aga Khan Academy meets Braeburn Primary

activity in exemplary fashion and were an absolute credit to yourself and your school. If they should like to return to us to gain further experience, we would be delighted to have them."

We thank all those who hosted our students—we know they learnt a lot and enjoyed a variety of experiences, and we hope you enjoyed hosting them as much as Braeburn obviously did.

Peace Summit

Over 20-21 March, 150 delegates from the Academy as well as other Mombasa schools, attended the Peace Summit. The format was planned to ensure that students marked the two days as a very different learning experience, with conference registration, badges, a keynote speaker flown in from Egypt, and a workshop format and prizes for the most engaged delegates. Students attended five 90-minute workshops on topics selected by the DP1 history group: Independence movements in present-day Africa, Gender violence, International law, conflict and human rights, Jar and Kay (a classroom role-play on the interactions between a 'developed' and 'non-developed' country), conflict over resources in Kenya (cattle rustling and disputes over the Mau forest) and Identity & Tolerance in Politics. Students also took part in other activities, including discussion groups, invitations to 'Graffiti for Peace' and voting for their favourite peacemaker (the iconic Tank Man of Beijing won by a landslide).

What is most important is that the Peace Summit is for students and led by students. Our DP1 history students were key in the planning, preparation and delivery of workshops for the summit; Humanities staff playing the role of mentor and advisor to the groups. The planning process and experience for the DP students can best be described in their own words:

The Peace Summit was an event that the DP1 class had eagerly anticipated and prepared for. From the lunch meetings to the scheduled group meetings, we were hoping the event would yield many positive results. Indeed the DP1's gained knowledge on their chosen topics, as well as the experience of leading a workshop. The Peace Summit was unique because unlike the regular academic curriculum, the ideas are

student initiated and led, with the support of our teachers. Often as students we are unacquainted with the pre-planning involved to lead an interactive and educational session with teenage students. Personally, as one of the DP1 leaders for the Jar and Kay session, we saw how a simple simulation activity can relate different concepts such as colonialism and community and service. We were also fortunate to gain knowledge on pressing local and international subjects from the guest speakers during the forums. The success is credited to the positive, academic and inspiring atmosphere that was created by all the teachers, DP1 workshop leaders and participants. – *Reporter: Flora Waiganjo, Workshop Leader DP1*

Jar and Kay. Wow! What a name. At first I had no idea what it was and what it was all about. To be honest, this was one of the best sessions that we had, not just in terms of having fun but also in terms of the message you carry away with you. To begin, we were divided into two groups, Jar and Kay. The Jars, with only scraps of newspaper and a bit of string, had to forge a national identity and come up with a monument to celebrate their newfound freedom from colonialism. The Kays, on the other hand, were given innumerable resources and instructed that Jar was a country that desperately needed their help. After a while the Kays 'landed' in the Jars' room and conflict of ideas quickly ensued! One of the big lessons I learnt from this session was communication and collaboration. When the countries came together, because of lack of collaboration it was very difficult (and I am insisting, *very* difficult) for them to communicate, leading to arguments and nonsensical conversations between them which meant that no one achieved what they needed to. An interesting lesson in life! – *Reporter: James Ngumbao, Y9*

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