

School Leaders' Updates April 2021

Fairfield Learning EXperience (FLEX) Week

At Fairfield, we believe that learning should be experiential so we set aside one week for students to learn important life lessons outside the classroom. COVID-19 had disrupted our plans in 2020, and we were determined this year to organise activities that our students could still enjoy in spite of the restrictions.



The Sec 1 students went to the MOE Dairy Farm Outdoor Adventure Learning Centre and learned to appreciate the rustic greenery that Singapore has to offer even as they tried their hands at “long kang” fishing and outdoor cooking. The students also built stronger bonds with their classmates through helping one another navigate and solve problems together. Back in school, they explored the issues of identity, bullying and inclusion through the Among Us programme. The activities were led by the class chairpersons themselves – with the key message that we can enable others to act by helping people feel included instead of excluded, and saying and doing things to make people feel powerful instead of powerless. They learnt how to be an “upstander” instead of a “bystander”, as well as

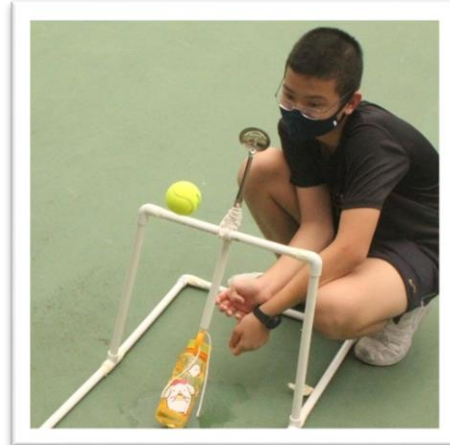
appreciate and support those who are different, applying what they learnt by writing notes of affirmation to encourage their classmates.

For the Sec 2 students, FLEX 2021 – also known as #missionempathy – was designed to help students develop empathy through experiential learning, as well as establish a culture of inclusivity among the level. During the two Diff-Ability Days, students visited stations set up with tasks for them to better understand each special need – for example, deciphering Braille, simulating the experiences of people with dyslexia, ADHD, autism and so on. They also went through a workshop on mental health. Finally, they applied what they had learnt by advocating for empathy and inclusivity through creating social media posts and making pledges on post-its to create a visual display of the level's efforts to create an inclusive community. Students then worked together to plan a Class Fun Day for



their class, with the objective of engaging all members of the class and building an inclusive class environment. This was definitely the highlight of the week as students were not only able to have fun as a class, but they could also step up to lead and organise activities for their peers.

The Sec 3 students went out to the community to embark on their self-initiated Values-In-Action (VIA), with the liberty to plan and execute an activity with a beneficiary of their choice. This gave the students a chance to lead their peers and show their commitment to the community. They also had to be innovative in their approach due to the COVID-19 restrictions – trying out advocacy work and engagement with senior citizens over Zoom for the very first time.



As this cohort had missed out on their outdoor adventure camp in Sec 2 because of COVID-19, we wanted to give them an opportunity this year. The resilience of the students was tested as they had to undergo a kayaking programme in the hot weather, build a catapult that can shoot tennis balls and do cooking in an outdoor setting. The students also had to challenge the process through the activities – coming up with innovative ways to cook the given ingredients and trying numerous ways to ensure that the catapult worked.

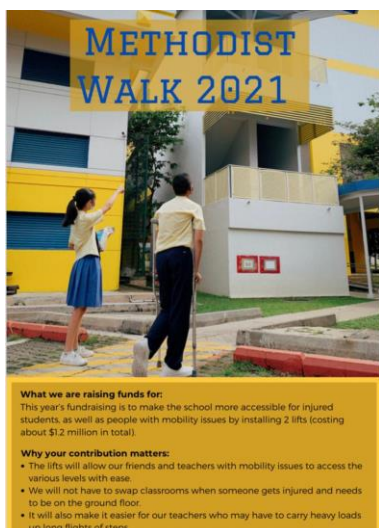
This year, as we still cannot hold mass assemblies, the Educational and Career Guidance programme for the Sec 4 students was conducted online. From the comfort of their own homes, students could virtually “meet” professionals from different industries and learn more about the occupations they are interested in exploring as a career. They also heard from their seniors who shared about life in the JCs, polytechnics and ITE and how to prepare for life after secondary school.

The Sec 4 students also spent two days contributing back to society through the VIA programme by executing the plans which they had prepared last year but were unable to carry out due to COVID-19. Like the Sec 3 students, they also needed to creatively explore different ways to contribute to the community given the restrictions on some face-to-face activities.

While FLEX Week stretched the teachers and students in planning for and organising the various programmes, it was good to know that the students enjoyed the experiential learning and had grown to be more aware of their community and the role they play to make it better.

MethodistWalk 2021

This edition of the MethodistWalk was conducted virtually in accordance to the prevailing safe management measures. Students were given time during their PE lessons in Term 3 Week 1 to complete a 2.4km walk or run. Even the fundraising was done online via the Giving.sg website as well as through a QR code. It was indeed heartening to see student councillors creating e-flyers (see below) and calling on the student body to pay it forward and contribute towards this cause. By God’s grace, the school has met its targeted amount of \$60,000 and we are thankful for the support of all our partners, well-wishers and parents. The funds for the construction of two lifts in the school will help our staff and students with mobility challenges to easily access all levels of the school.

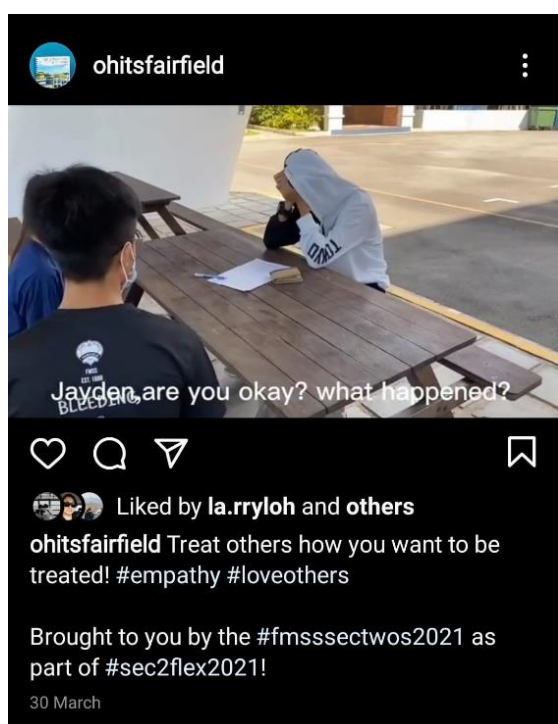


Fairfield Virtual Run

In tandem with the MethodistWalk 2021, we also organised the Fairfield Virtual Run (FVR) in place of our Fairfield Annual Run due to the ongoing ban on mass gatherings. Our PE teachers wanted to challenge all staff and students to keep fit by walking or running the distance from Goulburn, New South Wales (birthplace of our founder Ms Sophia Blackmore) to Singapore. The target of 6231km for the whole school was to be reached in three weeks but it was surpassed within a few days. We were pleasantly surprised by the excitement the inter-class and inter-CCA competition generated. Some organised the class to achieve their targets and enjoyed class bonding in the process. Some came early on Wednesday morning to run/walk round the track. Some even planned walking adventures along the Park Connectors to chalk up the distance. The FVR was a resounding success as staff and students surprised themselves with a grand total of 28,167.94km covered during the period. We hope that everyone will maintain the active lifestyle and continue to keep fit together.

Growing “100% Pure & Honest Fairsians”

On 7 April, we remembered the start of Circuit Breaker in Singapore last year and looked back on how life has changed in the year since. While there have been many disruptions to school life, the new normal has also brought new opportunities. While there are downsides to having morning assembly live-streamed to the classrooms and not being able to see one another face to face, it has also enabled us to be show things we never used to be able to do like powerpoints and videos. Our students have really stepped up to share their personal voice through the Voice of a Fairsian and iShare platforms. The Peer Support Board has also set up a new branch to advocate for digital literacy and cyber wellness through the digibyte series. Groups of students have volunteered to produce videos to share the key messages in creative and humorous ways to connect with their peers. We have also been actively using our ohitsfairfield Instagram to share messages and video clips to build the Fairfield culture #whereloveisinthesunshine.



While we are using morning assembly and various school experiences to teach values, we know that students cannot just accumulate head knowledge. They cannot even just pledge to be empathetic and inclusive – they need to internalise these values and practise them daily. I hope that you will also have conversations with your children about what they are learning and encourage them to live out what it means to be a “100% Pure & Honest Fairsian”.