

Assembly 9 February 2009

Global Classroom Tours 2009

It is that time of year when we start planning the Global Classroom tours to be held over the Easter and summer vacation periods. The Heads of Department have given me a list of the tours they propose to organise and have already published details about each of the trips.

As you are aware, we aim to run eight to ten tours each year under the umbrella of the Global Classroom. We believe very strongly that a student at St. Paul's needs to look beyond their own borders and see themselves as part of the global citizenship. In 2009, eight or nine educational overseas tours will be organised by the College. These tours fall under a number of categories including subject, sporting and community service trips. Some are targeted at particular Forms while others are restricted to specific groups of boys and girls.

The first tour has already taken place. To commence the 2009 Global Classroom season, four of our senior students, accompanied by Mr. Ryan, attended the *Leadership Edge Conference* in Perth, Western Australia, just before the Chinese New Year holiday. The conference, held at Christ Church Grammar School, brought together member schools from the International Boys' Schools Coalition to focus on leadership skills through a series of challenging activities and inspirational talks by leaders from a range of disciplines. Most of these speakers are recognised as global leaders in their area of skill or expertise.

Mr. Ryan said that Jethro Pak, Nathaniel Lau, Billy Pang and James Chan equipped themselves well, and gained a host of different leadership techniques through their participation in this conference, which featured student leadership groups from many different schools. The activities included sailing on the tall ship, *the Leeuwin*, where our student leaders had to battle the elements to climb the mast. Our students were able to face and overcome any challenge, and earned the respect and friendship of the leaders from the other schools.

Mr. Ryan said that the boys are now part of an international network of student leaders, and can call on their new leadership group friends overseas, as well as here in Hong Kong, when facing any problems in their leadership positions. We hope that other groups can also take up the challenge which Jethro, Nathaniel, Billy and James faced, and also come through them with flying colours, and bring the lessons that they have learned back to St. Paul's.

The other tours on offer this year are:

April (during the Easter holiday)

- Economics and Social Studies Tour, Dubai (Forms 3, 4 & 6)
- Educational Tour, Kobe, Japan (Forms 1, 2 & 3)

- Educational Tour, Dongbei, China – 3 NE Provinces (Forms 3, 4 & 6)

May (during school time)

- Community Service Programme, Harbin, China (Forms 5, 6 and alumni)

July (during the summer holiday)

- English Language Study Tour, London, England (Forms 1, 2, 3 & 4)
- Chinese Orchestra Music Exchange, Beijing, China (Orchestra members)
- Swimming Training Tour, Korea (team members)
- Football Training Tour, Korea, (team members)

The reason I said that there will be eight or nine tours is that we are also looking at sending a team to work alongside doctors and eye specialists from Hong Kong who will be providing eye check-ups for over 1000 young children in Louyang, in Henan Province, located between Beijing and Shanghai. Eye problems are a major health issue in China and it is important that eye sight problems are corrected before a child reaches eight years of age. I am sure you would agree that this is an important issue and I hope that many of you will want to participate in this project that is being coordinated by the Lions Club of Central.

This year we have introduced another new initiative, with some of our teachers visiting leading boys' schools overseas. Next week, Mr. Bobby Poon and Mr. Alan Yuen will travel to St. Mark's School in Dallas, Texas, to learn more about the teaching of Computing and Information Technology in an American school.

In March, Mr. Michael Mak, Mrs. Chung and four senior students will travel to Mayo College in northern India. Mayo College is one of India's top boarding schools for boys. We are hoping to establish a twin-school relationship with Mayo College, rather like the relationship we already enjoy with Jiao Tong High School in Shanghai.

I think you can see that we believe that the Global Classroom programme is important for all students and teachers at St. Paul's. It is through the observation, investigation and conversation that come from international links that we can be more understanding of global issues and events. Such experience is essential to becoming an active global citizen.

J.R. Kennard