

THE DOMINICAN TORCH



Newsletter from the School Administration Dominican International School, Taipei

Happy New Year

Message from the Editor

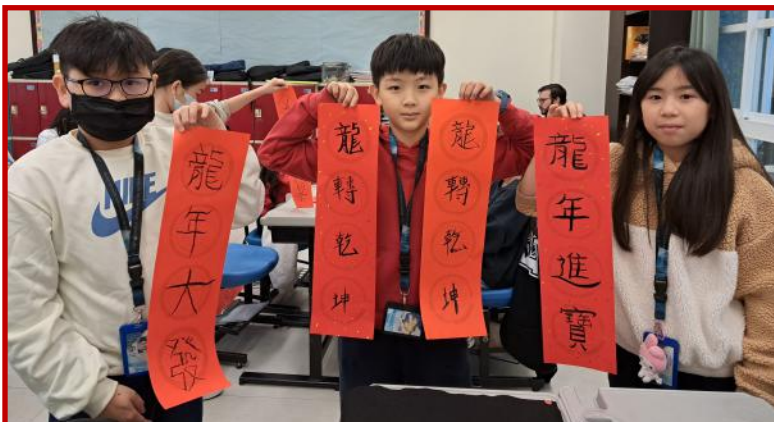
Happy Lunar New Year, DIS Family! As we usher in the Year of the Dragon, we extend heartfelt wishes of joy, prosperity, and good fortune to our faculty, staff, students, and parents.

The dragon, a symbol of strength, wisdom, and good luck, will hopefully inspire us to reach new heights and embrace the opportunities that lie ahead. Just as the dragon soars through the skies with resilience and determination, may this year bring you the strength to overcome challenges and the wisdom to navigate the path to success.

Also see p. 2



Students in the AP Chinese Language and Culture class had fun doing calligraphy.



Grade 5 calligraphy



Grade 10 joined by Ms Robeth Collado (far left) as she became a calligraphy student

Good-bye Rabbit! Hello, Dragon!

by Carolyn Hsu

Students, teachers and a traditional dance group prepared a fun and meaningful Chinese New Year performance to celebrate this unique festival with the DIS family on February 7, 2024. You are welcome to join the fun that will be live-streamed from 2:20 p.m. The DIS family follows the traditions of Chinese New Year at school. The students and teachers make all different kinds of decorations welcoming the Year of the Dragon. This year we say, “Good-bye” to the Year of the Rabbit and “Hello” to the Year of the Dragon.

In Chinese culture, the Dragon represents luck, strength, health, humility and dedication. The Dragon is the 5th of the 12-cycle of animals that appear in the Chinese Zodiac. It is the only mythical creature of all the animals in the entire zodiac. The Dragon is one of the luckiest animals in the Chinese Zodiac and was the symbol of the Emperor in Ancient China. If you were born in the Year of the Dragon, it is considered a great honor.

Preparing for Chinese New Year, people clean their houses sweeping away bad luck. They decorate their houses around doors and windows with red couplets to ward off evil. According to the legend of Nian, red lanterns are hung outside to scare the monster away.

In Ancient times, the red drums were a symbol of power and depended on the thundering beats to scare bad luck away. The traditional Lion Dance is a part of each Chinese New Year Celebration. People believe that while the lion dances around energetically, drums and cymbals play loudly to chase away any bad luck. The Chinese Dragons are believed to have power over dangerous natural elements like typhoons and flooding. When the Dragon dances at festivals and celebrations it will bless communities and protect them from harm.

This year the teachers have trained to perform the dragon dance, and with the help of Sacred Heart School’s very competent traditional dance instructor, the DIS students will be able to show off their traditional dancing skills.

Happy Chinese New Year and may wealth come generously to you in the Year of the Dragon and always!



AI Generated Images

Teachers at DIS are learning more about using Artificial Intelligence during training sessions with Mr Tim Sampson and Mr Seb Langley.

They get instruction to use the new technology as a tool, but also to recognize it when students use this tool. Students are not forbidden to use it, on condition that they give full recognition to the AI and include their prompts with the documents and images created in this way when submitting their work.

The Editor-in Chief generated the image on the left with the use of Artificial Intelligence. The IA has the following to say about its images, “AI-generated images like these represent an exciting new chapter in the world of art and visual expression. As the technology continues to develop, its potential to inspire, amaze, and challenge our perspectives will only grow. Images like these showcase the incredible potential of AI-powered image generation!”

Dr Mercia de Souza, Dr Jenny Pan and Ms Mafalda Wu attended AI workshops at the recent EARCOS leadership Conference. And are excited about this powerful, new tool.

Image generated with Bard by Dr Mercia de Souza

Brother Master Gerard Visits DIS

by Patrick Bugarin



Fr Tomasz, Sr Jackie, Sr Rosa, and DYM Members with Br Master Gerhard and Br Jamshed Gill

Brother Master Gerard Francisco Timoner, III, OP, the 88th successor of St. Dominic visited DISTA Taipei (DIST) during his canonical visit to the “Vice-Province of ‘Regina Sinae’” and the Province of “Our Lady of the Rosary”. The Master (General Superior in Canon Law) is the “teacher” of his brethren who serves the Dominican Family in charity. He is granted broad and direct authority over every brother, convent and province, and over every nun and monastery. He is required to visit the whole Order twice during his nine-year term.

Br. Gerard was with Br. Jamshed Albert Gill, OP, Socius for the Asia-Pacific, Br. Angelik Kitsula, OP, Prior Vice-Provincial of the Vice-Province of the Queen of China, and Br. Tomasz Zalewski, OP, the Vice-Provincial Secretary and the Chaplain of DIST. They attended the morning assembly and joined the DIS Family in celebrating the achievements of the students in the recently held Young Shakespeare Playwriting Competition, and in the House Merit Contributions for the months of November and December. This was followed by their formal introduction and a few words from the Master.

Br. Gerard began by thanking everyone and expressing how happy he is to be with the DIS Family amidst the harsh realities prevailing over the world. He shared with the community about his recent canonical visit to Iraq where our sisters and brothers had been through a lot. The essence of peace according to Br. Gerard was reflected by the very sight of our brethren, where compassion for each other reigns.

The Master was curious to know what word best describes a DIS student and so requested representatives from each grade level. This request was received over-

whelmingly and in no time he had the volunteers on stage. Aside from the D’TORCH: “truthful, organized, reflective, courageous, and helpful,” it delighted him to hear values such as loving, caring, inspiring, wise, compassionate learner, respectful, faithful, religious, and proactive (see video below). This level of awareness is important and it was from where the Master urged the DIS Family to be passionate for truth and compassionate for humanity.

He recalled the time during Pope Francis' 2015 visit to Manila, when Glyzelle Palomar, a formerly homeless child, broke down in tears and asked, "Why did the Lord allow children like her to suffer?" While it is impossible to explain why, the Holy Father responds that “certain realities in life can only be seen through eyes cleansed by tears.” Br. Gerard added that it is compassion which cures our blindness to suffering. This, then, helps us to find The Way that gives us meaning to our lives in relation to others.

After his speech, he spent time with some members of the Dominican Family in DIST, the Misioneras Sisters, the Dominican Laity, and the Dominican Youth Movement. He lauded the school culture. In particular, he praised the Schoolwide Learning Outcomes or the D’TORCH values and how the institution’s customs and traditions seamlessly wed with the Dominican pillars of prayer, study, community, and service. He thought that this is best emulated in all similar institutions of learning affiliated with the Order. The establishment of a formidable network for Dominican Schools worldwide will help facilitate exchanges of best practices in education. Before concluding the meet and greet, Br. Gerard bestowed on those who are present the 13th Century Dominican Blessing:

May God the Father bless us. May God the Son heal us. May God the Holy Spirit enlighten us, and give us eyes to see with,
ears to hear with, hands to do the work of God with,
feet to walk with, a mouth to preach the word of salvation with,
and the angel of peace to watch over us and lead us at last, by our Lord's gift, to the Kingdom. Amen.

Parent Dinner 2023-24

A Night of Elegance and Enchantment

by Ellen Chu

In November, parents gathered at the newly chosen Marriott venue for a formal dinner, adding a touch of glamour to the annual event.

The evening featured a special guest, Dr. Mercia de Souza, who shared insights into WASC accreditation.

Mr. Joe Schoeman contributed by presenting the college list from the previous year, while Mr. Tank Tien simply enjoyed the night's festivities.

To infuse fun and information, Joseph, a Northwestern alumni and interviewer for Kellogg Business School, joined as a guest speaker. Adding a magical twist, a celebrity magician performed enchanting table-side magic, turning the night into a memorable experience.

The universal language of music brought parents closer, as karaoke singing became the bonding activity of the night. Surprisingly, Mr. Tank showcased his singing talents to everyone in the house.

With a new venue and a fresh atmosphere, the aim was to bring a touch of magic into everyone's lives. Even though the parents mingled without their children physically present, the essence of the evening remained centered on the kids, creating lasting memories for all.



Ms Lynn, Mr Tank, Dr Mercia and Ms Ellen at the Parents Dinner



Student Council members also attended the dinner



Ms Rebecca and Mr Joe

THE DOMINICAN TORCH Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief :
Dr Mercia de Souza

Photography:
Mr Edwin Portillo

Technical and Computer Support:
Mr Ian Crisostomo

Thank you to all our contributors.

A special word of thanks to Dr. Patrick Bugarin, and Dr Gustl Pido for their regular contributions to this publication.

Dragons' Chamber Final Round

by Mercia de Souza

Camelia Huang, Isabella Hsieh, Allison Tsai, Michelle Chang and Ella Sarmiento, five of our Grade 12 entrepreneurs participated in the November 2023 Dragons' Chamber event at Meet Taipei 2023.

In this annual event finalists pitch their businesses to long-term, established expatriate entrepreneurs in Taipei. The organizers has been giving one of the school's student businesses the opportunity to pitch their businesses to showcase the Dragons' Chamber organizers' commitment to the training of young entrepreneurs for the past seven years. The young entrepreneurs are the only high school students who present in the Dragons' Chamber event.

Seven years ago Dominican International School student entrepreneurs pitched their businesses for the first time to the "dragons" in the first elimination round, hoping to eventually get into the final. The organizers of the event have supported the young entrepreneurs ever since and every year, all the DIS teams participate in the first elimination round of The Dragons' Chamber.

This year, the organizers again gave the most promising DIS business a chance to showcase what they are doing, and to show the continued support the Dragons' Chamber organizers give the school and the young entrepreneurs.

Elias Ek, one of Taipei's best known expatriate entrepreneurs and the author of "How to Start a Business in Taiwan" is one of the school's esteemed supporters of the Entrepreneurship project. He knows how to identify with the young entrepreneurs and how to inspire them, because he started his first business at the age of fifteen. The students know that they are given serious business advice and they act on the recommendations of the business people present during their initial pitch.

Jessie Chou, one of the main organizers of the Dragons' Chamber has also been a student supporter for the past seven years, giving her full support to our students. She is always ready to share valuable ideas with them, and to give much needed advice.

Entrepreneurship is part of Dominican International School's 21st Century Project Based Learning where the



Front row left to right: Jessie Chou, one of the organizers, with our entrepreneurs, Isabella Hsieh, Camelia Huang, Ella Sarmiento, Michelle Chang and Allison Tsai at the Dragons' Chamber final round. Behind them are the other presenters with Elias Ek (arms up) and the judges.

school teams up with outside partners to help students to create a public product. This means that students present their work to an audience beyond the classroom. These students run real businesses and the successful ones step away with well-earned profit at the end of the school year. Some of these young entrepreneurs went on to partially fund their university education from their own start-ups after leaving school. Joshua Ramos, one of the past entrepreneurs, who was a presenter in the Dragons' Chamber final round in 2019 is currently operating his own start-up in the US, and becoming very wealthy.

21st century Project Based Learning teaches students the very valuable 4Cs - they are critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication. Students therefore learn how to solve problems and how to think beyond the box. They learn to work together to achieve a common goal and to communicate in such a way that they convey their ideas clearly, hopefully making a healthy profit in the process.

Young Shakespeare Playwriting Competition

The annual Middle and High School Young Shakespeare Playwriting Competition celebrated outstanding achievements in playwriting skills and theatrical arts, recognizing talent and dedication across various categories.

The event takes the form of a Reader's Theater performance where the spotlight shines not only on the performance but also on the power of the written word. Middle and High School students carefully write their plays, emphasizing compelling narratives and thought-provoking varieties of the chosen theme which was "The Outer Limits". Here, the script takes center stage, weaving stories that captivate hearts and minds alike. Audiences are treated to a unique theatrical experience where the beauty of language and storytelling are celebrated with every word spoken.

From mesmerizing performances to intricate scripts, the event showcased the creativity and skill of students from the Middle and High School.

In the Middle School category, several awards highlighted exceptional contributions. Best Props & Costumes went to G8 St. Catherine of Siena for their captivating rendition of "Left Alone," while G7 St. Thomas of Aquinas took home the prize for Best Backdrops with their production titled "Time Out."

G8 St. Agnes of Montepulciano was honored for Best Sound Effects in their performance, "Searching For Home," and G6 Bl. Ceslao of Poland received recognition for Best Script with their production, "3023."

Individual accolades were also handed out, with Lancas Tsai, Camilla Lin, Jacqueline Kung, and Olivia Chen recognized for the best script in the Middle School. Additionally, Amber Lin of G8 St. Agnes of Montipulciano received the award for Best Poster.

The pinnacle of Middle School achievements was the recognition of G8 St. Catherine of Siena's production, "Left Alone," as the Best Middle School Play. The collaborative efforts of Mr. Elliott Wakeling and Mr. Kevin Henry were commended for their direction and guidance.



Transitioning to the High School category, the bar was set high with remarkable performances and production values. G11 St. Louis Bertrand was lauded for both Best Props & Costumes, and Best Sound Effects for their poignant portrayal of "Forbidden Love." G10 St. Peter of Verona claimed the award for Best Backdrops for their visually stunning production, "Blue Beyond the Stars."

The award for Best Script went to G10 St. Albert the Great for their thought-provoking performance, "Mirror Mirror," with Connor Hsiung, Ethan Pao, Liyeh Kang, Ryan Ong, Kyle Chow, and Jenny Chiang earning recognition for their outstanding script. Zoe Cheng of G11 St. Louis Bertrand received the Best Poster award for her exceptional design.

The crowning achievement of the High School segment was the recognition of G10 St. Peter of Verona's production, "Blue Beyond the Stars," as the Best High School Play. Dr. Jenny and Mr. Kevin Henry deserve praise for their leadership and guidance.

Additionally, special recognition was given to Lori Tai of G11 St. Anthony of Florence for her outstanding YSC Program Design, showcasing innovation and creativity in the field.

The Awards Ceremony in January 2024 not only celebrated the talent and dedication of students but also served as a testament to the importance of the arts in education, fostering creativity, teamwork, and self-expression among young minds. As the curtains closed on another successful event, the legacy of excellence in the Young Shakespeare Competition continued to inspire and uplift the school community.



Sports News

by Gustl Pido

Grade 4 J Fencers Came Out Tops

Our DIS fencers from G4J made it onto the podium for the top eight in the 2024 Taiwan Children and Junior Fencing League Tournament. They attained the prestigious award for winning in the girl's and boy's foil individual competition, standing out from athletes representing over 155+ schools, including schools from abroad, in this event.

Congratulations !

- Gold Medal- Chaumet Chang
- Silver Medal- Jeremy Ho
- 5th place- Ingrid Lien



Our JV Boys Basketball Team also qualified for the TISSA Tournament League. They are the top three best school basketball teams in the North. The TISSA Tournament League started in November and finished on January 27th, 2024.

Coach: Coach Tim
Team Manager: Mr. Jan Andrew

Varsity Boys Basketball



Our Varsity Boys Basketball Team qualified for the TISSA Tournament League. They are the top three best school basketball teams in the North. The TISSA Tournament League started in November and finished on January 27th, 2024.

Coach: Coach Bill
Team Manager: Ms. Janice



Varsity Girls Basketball



Coach: Coach Jayno **Assistant Coach:** Coach Emily



Varsity Girls Basketball

Coach: Coach Jayno, **Assistant Coach:** Coach Emily



High School Girls and Boys Badminton



Tennis

Jayden Kung from G4J
First place in the Cap-
tain Cup Junior Tennis
Competition



Coach: Dr John Nguyen
Assistant Coach: Ms
Sabrina
Team Manager: Ms
Emily