

Issue 4

March 2023



DBSEH

HALF-TERMLY JOURNAL

ENJOY • ASPIRE • ACHIEVE

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Welcome to Issue 4 of the *Half-Termly Journal*.

At the beginning of the school year I tasked staff with the 'Joy Agenda'; to bring back the joy of coming to school for our students, after the pandemic. Cast your eye over the next few pages and you will see the energy and passion that our staff have given towards achieving just that.

I'm delighted to share with you, as a significant part of that agenda, the refocus on the Performing Arts, which you'll find out more about on our 'Wellbeing' pages. Also closely linked to wellbeing are our overseas trips, growing in range and popularity, which you can read more about in our 'Opportunities' section.

What better way to end such an incredibly busy term than with a period of reflection; an opportunity to respect and consider those less fortunate than ourselves. As this issue 'goes to press' we begin the holy month of Ramadan, during which time in school students will have the opportunity to pause and consider how they can provide opportunities to support and uphold the wellbeing of others.

Ramadan Kareem to all of our families, and I wish you all a restful Spring Break with your loved ones.



Sarah Reynolds
Principal



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Dubai British School



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WELLBEING



'The arts boost confidence and make us feel more engaged and resilient. Besides these benefits, art engagement also alleviates anxiety, depression and stress.'

The Mental Health Foundation

WELLBEING

The performing arts are very close to my heart; as a music graduate and advocate for all-things performance related, I have felt first-hand the positive effects on my mental health having conducted my way through a musical, sung my heart out with a choir, or successfully made it to the end of a challenging piano performance.



Through the pandemic, the most crucial element of the performing arts, that is the sharing of the experience with others, was stopped dead in its tracks in our schools while we rightly prioritised our physical health. Now we are thankfully through those challenging times, we are breathing life back into our performance programme – and it feels great.

Our inspiring Music Specialist duo, Mrs Fiona McManus and Mr Neil Milton must, therefore, also be considered crucial members of staff responsible for our students' wellbeing. With an evolving performance programme that affords all students the opportunity to perform within their classes, as well as providing those students who demonstrate a particular aptitude for performance to access higher-stakes platforms, we are consciously developing the next generation of arts enthusiasts, both consumers and performers, and doing all this while complementing our wellbeing provision.



WELLBEING

The last few weeks in school have been incredibly busy in this regard; our FS2 children performed at the CMA Spring Fayre on Saturday 11th March, which showcased excellence in performance from across schools in Dubai. Our Desert Dancers represented both the Primary and Secondary school at Dubai College for the recent Dance Showcase which took place over the previous weekend. The Cheer Squad competed against other schools in Dubai at the recent inaugural inter-schools Cheer Competition, proudly organised and hosted by our own staff here on site.

Year 5 have been demonstrating the skills learnt in lessons on the Ukulele to their parents in a series of morning concerts, FS students have performed to their parents as part of their spring and Mothers' Day celebrations. International Day saw students through the school celebrating the arts from their home cultures. This week alone students and staff have performed in showcases in assemblies, and our secondary students have delivered on stage with their evening event 'A Night with Us'. Additionally, auditions have been taking place for the eagerly anticipated secondary show which will be announced shortly.



WELLBEING

And it doesn't stop there. Our students are clearly cottoning on to the feel-good factor that the arts bring: an increasing number of students are taking up instrumental provision offered in school by our partners at CMA and DPA; hang around after school on a Friday and our Sixth Form Rock Band can be heard rehearsing - their music warmly resonating through our quiet corridors. Our primary club leaders now regularly choose to lead dance clubs, and our choir is always full to bursting. Just last week student leaders from Year 6 brought their own dance troupe of Year 1 and 2 students to perform in front of the whole primary school. The performing arts are well and truly back, and we've only just started.



With big plans on the performance front coming for next year, I am very excited to see how the arts continue to flourish at DBS Emirates Hills and we look forward to continuing to welcome you through our doors to be a part of it.



Sarah Reynolds
Principal



WELLBEING



STUDENT AGENCY



'Student agency refers to learning through activities that are meaningful and relevant to learners, driven by their interests, and often self-initiated with appropriate guidance from teachers. To put it simply, student agency gives students voice and often, choice, in how they learn.'

STUDENT AGENCY

In a noteworthy example of student agency, a group of Year 12 BTEC Business students are organising a fantastic initiative which will be very beneficial to senior students and also help harness the collective wisdom of our community. The students are arranging a DBSEH Speed Networking event on 3 May 2023 from 8:15am to 10:10am during which students will learn about career pathways in a range of professional industries. They will speak with parents and staff about the realities of working in various sectors, and the skills and mindsets which are likely to lead to success in such companies.



In planning such an event, and bringing it to fruition, the students have shown great initiative and are continually developing life skills and competencies which will stand them in good stead for their lives beyond DBSEH, at university and in the workplace. We look forward to a great event in our fabulous new café facility which will help bring the wisdom and experience of parents to our students. If you would like to be part of this please contact Mr Barfoot ibarfoot@dubaibritishschool.ae, who will ensure our BTEC students secure your services!



Sheridan Teasel
Deputy Head of Secondary

OPPORTUNITY



OPPORTUNITY

'Third Culture Kids' - the term given to children who grow up outside of their home culture, i.e., most of the children in our care at DBS Emirates Hills. Being a third culture kid, or TCK, comes with its fair share of benefits; their horizons tend to be broader; they interact more comfortably with other children from a diverse range of backgrounds, races and perspectives, and on the whole, they are more socially confident than their home-born peers. But the challenges that children face as a TCK are also significant. Most predominantly, TCKs report challenges about a sense of 'belonging' - Where do they come from? Who are they? Where do they belong?



One of the reasons why opportunities feature so importantly on our agenda at DBSEH is because they help our students to understand themselves, their interests and their identity, and the value they possess as contributing citizens to society. This forms the foundations of understanding who they are, and their sense of belonging.

Overseas residentials are a key feature of the opportunities programme because they help students to develop skills, interests and talents in specific disciplines, but they also provide students with an opportunity to bond with their TCK peers and share the experience of being away from their common 'home'. This in turn helps them to understand who they are and informs their personal conceptual tapestry of belonging.



OPPORTUNITY

So far this year we have taken Year 7 & 8 students to Barcelona for the World School Games football tournament and currently have 50 students from Year 5 to Year 10 in Switzerland carving up the slopes on our long-awaited ski trip. Later next term we will be offering the opportunity to our senior girls to compete in the World Schools Games netball tournament at Loughborough University, England – a university internationally recognised for its excellence in sport. We are lining up plans to offer the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award next year, which features an overseas project, and plans are afoot to afford some students the opportunity to go to Japan to support their studies, as well as taking even more students to the piste in 2024!



As students undergo these experiences, they will undoubtedly face challenges; from navigating airports, to communicating across language barriers, battling home sick feelings, to handling success and defeat in the projects they have undertaken. However, they are doing it with each other, building supportive and lasting relationships that will hopefully see them through their time with us and beyond, and giving them confidence and faith in who they truly are.



Sara Donovan
Director of PE & Sport

OPPORTUNITY



INCLUSION

Another busy half term has hurtled past us and yet again it has been a fun-filled one for Inclusion.

We have been delighted to officially launch Lego Therapy after our wonderful Ms. Harris completed her certified training. The sessions have been rolled out across Primary and Secondary and have seen positive gains in social communication and teamwork, as well as having great fun with one of our staple toys for young and old.



Alan Williamson, CEO, engages with our ASDAN students in our new student kitchen

The approaches to Lego Therapy empower our students to both make decisions and to take on collaborative roles. This team-based approach requires development of various different social communication skills such as turn-taking, teamwork, and negotiation. The leader of the group is very much the facilitator and guide, helping students to navigate difficulties, all whilst making impressive Lego structures and designs.



INCLUSION

We were thrilled to be part of the recent opening of our new DBSEH Cafe, which boasts a beautiful bespoke student kitchen area that will greatly enhance our ASDAN provision, ensuring that students leave school with well-rehearsed and safe routines in the kitchen, and a repertoire of nourishing dishes in their back pocket!



It was a wonderful opportunity for our Inclusion students to be part of the grand opening, explore the facilities and test drive the new kitchen. A true highlight was learning how to professionally make a hot chocolate via the Barista Institute based here in Dubai, who were on hand to provide us with some practical learning.

We are so looking forward to future learning opportunities that will arise, so watch this space for future ASDAN enterprise initiatives coming very soon.



Jacqueline Baxter
Head of Inclusion



COMMUNITY

It would be remiss of us not to spotlight the incredible event that was our PTA Spring Fair 2023: The Royal Edition. Over 1500 of us enjoyed the offerings carefully curated by our passionate PTA, all around the delightfully British theme which aimed to celebrate the imminent coronation of King Charles III.

A popular addition to the scene this year were our enthusiastic sixth formers. With Head Boy Finlay Shaw working the PA system and Head of the Events Committee, Angus Fleming (or 'King Angus', as was his highly popular, sweetie-sharing persona on the day), as well as students manning many of the most popular stalls, the student presence was a most welcome one.



The entertainment line-up was also greatly enhanced this year, with our Choir, Cheerleading Team, and quintessentially English maypole dancers performing to delight onlookers aged from 3 to 93. Particularly special was that our maypole dancing team was taught as an ECA by PTA members this term, a wonderful and culturally enriching contribution to our ECA programme.

COMMUNITY

Almost all of our teaching body managed to attend the event as well to lead the fun of the games stalls, or even be the stall itself, with Mr Houghton, Mr Keeney, Mr Edwards and myself proving popular targets for soaked sponge projectiles. (Having seen the students' enthusiasm at launching the sponges at Mr Houghton and Mr Keeney, a new 'underarm' rule was introduced for when I took the stand...)

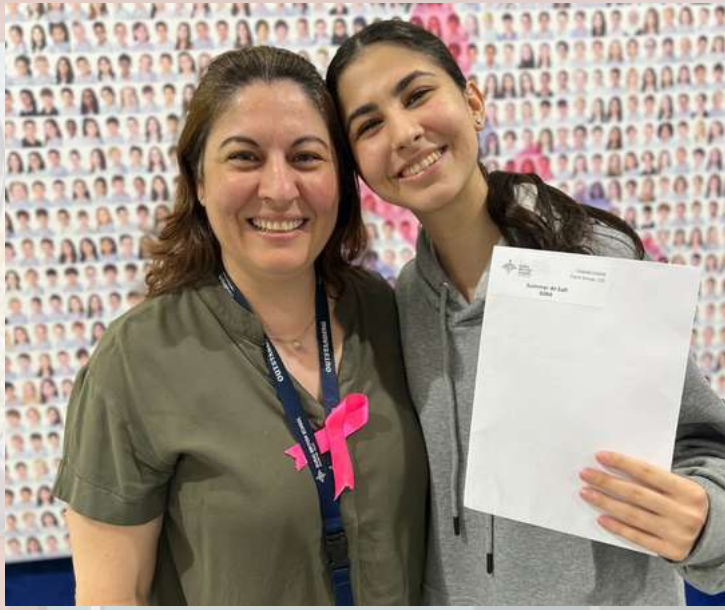
Also in attendance were families who are not yet with us but joining the school in September; they're invited so we can give them a sneak preview of what they can look forward to, and one attendee's comment says it all: 'No other school in Dubai that I've seen manages to create such a cohesive sense of community both inside the school day, and out. Can we come now?'



Sarah Reynolds
Principal



EXCELLENCE



Our Year 11 students experienced their first public GCSE examination in January and subsequently discovered the personal satisfaction and joy that come with consistent effort, self-discipline and determination upon receiving their English language results earlier this month.

With 26% of grades awarded at 9, 66% at grades 9-7 and 94% at or above grade 5 - the strong pass standard, these results represent a very pleasing example of what our young people can achieve when the stakes are high. English language is one of the core qualifications that secures accession to many higher education and employment pathways and so these students should be very proud of the steps they have now made towards their extraordinary futures by virtue of their hard work and tenacity.



EXCELLENCE

'Small and mighty' is our mantra in all things, and never more so than in the sporting arena. For reasons known only to DBSEH athletic folklore we seem to have a disproportionately rich and broad seam of sporting talent that runs through our bijou learning community.

Perhaps it's the genes of our fighting-fit parent population, or the expert coaching and the wealth of opportunities to be active in and out of the school day. Maybe it's the superhuman pursuit of athletic perfection from our magnificent young people or even the exceptional nutritional quality of Leela's lunch time offerings (the author received no fee or inducement in the writing of this article) that has brought about this unusual clustering of physical prowess.



Most likely it's a mysterious combination of all the above, but what is clear is that DBSEH is resolutely and prominently on the Dubai sporting map - a fact borne out by our recent successes which this term include:

- DASSA Secondary Athletics Winners
- DASSA U19 Girls Volleyball Winners
- DASSA U9 Girls Football Winners
- DASSA 4 x Champion Gymnasts
- DASSA Primary Aquathon Winners
- Division 1 & 2 Netball, Football and Rugby Teams



EXCELLENCE

What new challenges await? Who knows? What we can be sure of, though, is that our students will prevail on many different levels, from outstanding personal and academic growth to pedestal-topping victories and notoriety.

Enjoy, Aspire, Achieve. *Excel*



David Potts
Head of Secondary



FS Sports Day



HotDesk Business Studies Visit



International Day



Cheerleading Competition



Sewing ECA



Secondary Residential Trip



FS Turtle Trip



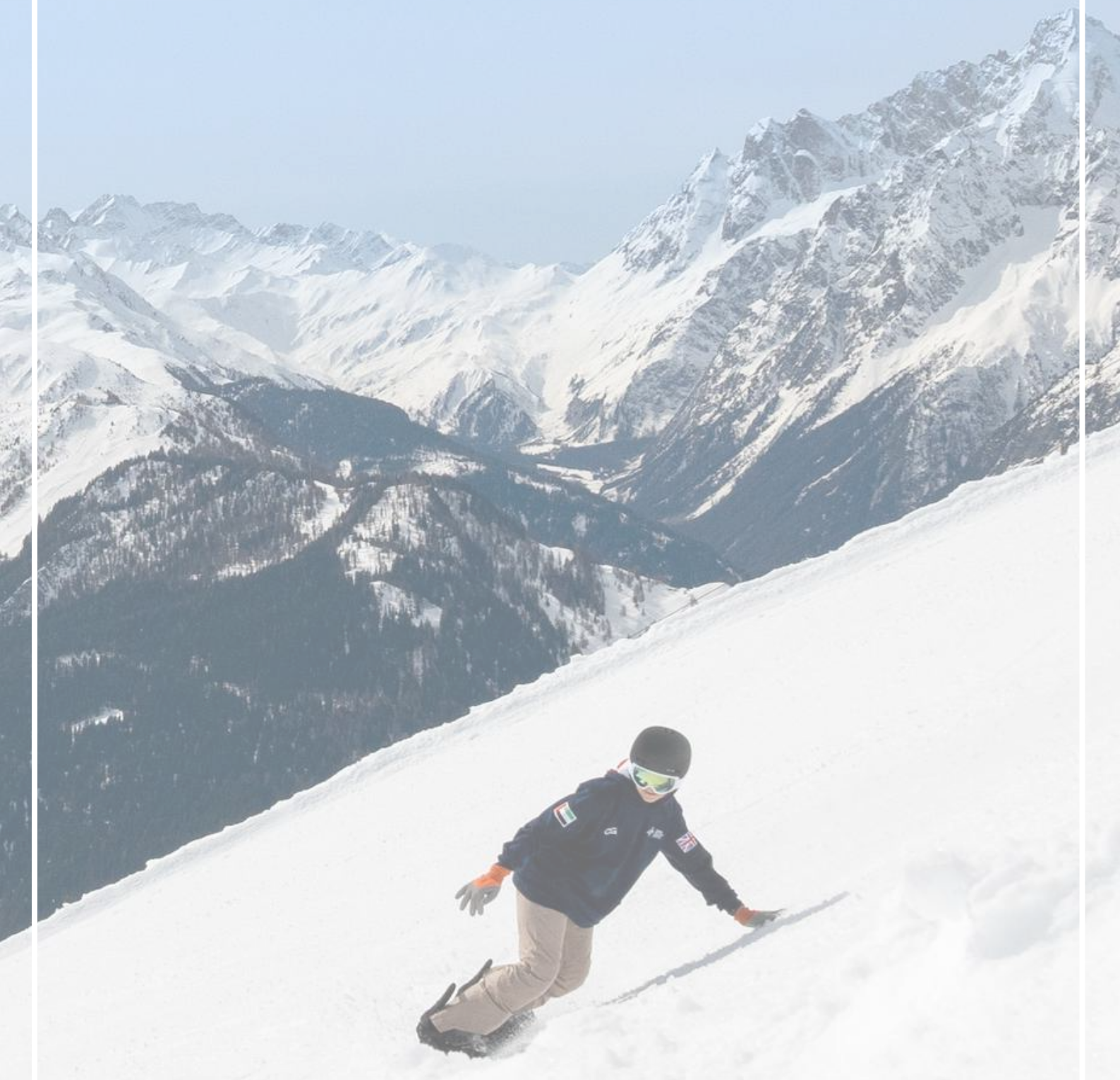
Year 2 Trip to Ski Dubai



WTA Tennis Championship

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