

THE RAFFLES WAVE



**RAFFLES
GIRLS' SCHOOL**

*Nurturing Daughters of a
Better Age*

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RGS celebrated her 139th birthday during Founder's Day on 18 August 2018. The theme for this year's Founder's Day, which is also the school theme for the year, "Let Our Light Shine!", shone through the programme-of-the-day, where student and staff achievements were highlighted, and members from the various Performing Arts CCAs showcased their talents as individual groups, and as a collective for the finale concert item. Ms Chua Sock Koong, Group CEO, Singapore Telecommunications Limited and RGS alumna graced the event as Guest-of-Honour, where she presented Alyssa Marie Loo Li Ann from the class of 2017 with the pinnacle Rafflesian Award (look out for an interview with Alyssa in a subsequent issue of the Wave!)



WE ARE SINGAPORE!

The Evelyn Norris Hall was a sea of red and white as RGS came together to celebrate Singapore's 53rd birthday! Though the wet weather programme had to be activated, our spirits were not dampened as the Year 4 classes had everyone in stitches with their comedic LuvSG Performances, and wowed us with their talents in creating beautiful Singapore-inspired costumes out of scrap materials. The celebration culminated in a community singing segment, which also saw our Guest-of-Honour, Dr Kevin Tan, joining our girls on stage in belting out classic tunes like 'Home' and 'In a Heartbeat'.

Huge thanks goes out to our Uniformed Groups and Band Symphonic members who spent their afternoons over the past month preparing for the parade segment of the celebration! To view more photos, head on over to our [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) page.

Year 2 students (from left) Jiang Chen, Olivette Enqi Chen, Kim Yuri and Chua Han Ya were the student-artists behind the beautiful memento that was presented to Dr Kevin Tan. Their work expresses the viewpoints and emotions of what it means to be a Singaporean through four unique voices.





Parents' Voices



"On 20 July 2018, RGS, in partnership with PRGS, commemorated Racial Harmony Day (RHD). This year's theme for the celebration was 'Diversity Our Strength' and together with several RGS staff, we started planning for the event two months back. Our idea was to showcase Singapore's three main races by adorning the school canteen with traditional decorations, getting food for sampling, assembling costumes and accessories for students to take photos in, as well as recruiting parent volunteers and student helpers to help manage the seven booths that we plan to have.

On the day of the celebration, students came dressed in their colourful ethnic costumes, and we could see their happy faces as they experienced Singapore's multiculturalism in the meaningful ways that we had planned. They include trying out traditional food items like pineapple tarts, kueh putri, salad and vada at our food booths, playing traditional games such as capteh, donning traditional costumes and accessories prepared for them, as well as having henna art drawn on their hands at the various interactive activity booths! They also got to learn more about the different cultures in Singapore through informational displays we had prepared and explanations by our parent volunteers.

PRGS would like to thank all the teachers, student helpers and parent volunteers for working tirelessly to create yet another memorable RHD experience for everyone!"

- Parents for RGS Association

EVERY NURSE, EVERYDAY HERO



On behalf of RGS, Year 3 students (from left) Goh Shi Sien, Sarah, Cai Sirui, Koo Yi and Nicole, Lim Re Gin presented our school nurses with tokens of appreciation on Nurses' Day to thank them for their service to the school! Commemorated in Singapore on 1 August, Nurses' Day honours the work done by all nurses who are often the unsung heroes of our healthcare system.

ACHIEVEMENTS

*For more Achievements, please click [here](#).

Kids' Lit Quiz™ World Final 2018

A team of Year 1 students comprising Saara Katyal, Natalie Tan Kyi Ann, Faith Tan Xin Ning and Nicolle Yeo Minh competed in the National Finals of the POSB-NLB Kids' Lit Quiz™ 2018 and emerged as National Champions. They then went on to represent Singapore at the Kids' Lit Quiz™ World Final 2018 in New Zealand, where they emerged 2nd, making it the best showing by Singapore since we started taking part in 2014. Congratulations to the team and their teachers Ms Malyanah Binte Mawar and Ms Michelle Liu!



Spark IT Challenge

Year 1 students Pooja Sankar, Chezian Nandhana, Hemalatha Anbukkani Vevega Vathani and Avanthi Vasudevan participated in the Spark IT Challenge and won the Best Field Research Award! Mentored by teacher Mrs Leung Hui Leng, they were among the youngest of about 20 groups of student participants in the competition. For the challenge, which focuses on leveraging technology to solve education issues, the team designed an app that aims to educate and encourage girls to consider emerging STEM careers other than the conventional ones of medicine and law.



PORTRAIT OF A RAFFLESIAN

THE BAMBOO STRAW GIRL

Ever come across one of those inspirational quotes that tell you, “take small steps to big changes” and think it is a little idealistic? Well, for RGS alumna Melissa Lam (class of 2007), she has been doing just that on her quest to spread the green message. Her (little) weapon-of-choice? The unassuming drinking straw.

Since 2014, Melissa or the bamboo straw girl, the moniker she is fondly-known as on her social media platforms, has sought to educate the masses on earth-friendly alternatives to chemical products and plastics through her business, Bamboo Straws Worldwide. Similar to her *modus operandi* in advocating for a greener earth, Bamboo Straws Worldwide started small, stocking only the reusable bamboo straw. In the beginning, business was slow as local reception to the idea of bamboo straws was lukewarm. But Melissa sought to change that through her own ways, and along with the growing awareness and changing attitudes of people towards a zero waste lifestyle, the online shop has not only grown to serve many more customers, but also with an added range of nature-inspired products such as thermal flasks, natural soap bars, bamboo fountain pens as well as toothbrushes. A private tutor as well, Melissa's ultimate dream is to combine her two passions to run a green school, which she thinks may be a little far-fetched for now. To that, we say that judging from her track record of success by taking small steps to reach a larger goal, that may very well be a reality in time to come.

Read on as Melissa shares more about her journey in green (as well as her journey in blue!), and gives us tips on taking baby steps towards adopting a more green-conscious lifestyle.

Fondest Memories in Blue

“I think those teenage years were a time of discovery for us all. I transferred to RGS in 2006 and spent two years in the school. During that time, I met so many talented friends, and there was always something going on – someone always had a project in the works. I was a member of the Drama Society back then, and some of my fondest memories were made at the backstage of the K S Chee Theatre, where we traded Subway sandwiches and chitchat. I also liked that we were just a stone's throw away from Far East Plaza, and if we ever wanted the buzz of Orchard Road, all it took was a short ride on bus 190.”

RGS alumna Melissa Lam (class of 2007) is the founder of Bamboo Straws Worldwide, an earth-minded lifestyle store focused on a green-conscious way of living. Click [here](#) to find out more about their products! Photo credit: Melissa Lam

PORTRAIT OF A RAFFLESIAN THE BAMBOO STRAW GIRL



In support of the school's 'No Plastics' Drive, bamboo straws were purchased as gifts for all our students for Youth Day this year! Photo credit: Instagram @bamboostrawgirl

Makings of a Green Advocate

"I was lucky to fall into a circle of friends who felt strongly about social causes. There were always projects and canteen table discussions on topics such as fair trade, disability, inclusiveness and the environment. After we graduated, I decided not to continue to the junior college, but I took those conversations with me, carried at the back of my head. Right now, as I run this eco business, I find myself revisiting some of the issues we have discussed every now and then: Why should people care about the environment? Are my makers benefitting fairly from our work? Are we affecting their local environment in a positive way? How do I build a company that is inclusive? Where do I go from here?"

Idea for Bamboo Straws Worldwide

"I was looking into ways of spreading the green message through my own lifestyle changes. When I thought about what would be an easy step for someone to take to make a difference, the plastic straw stood out. For most of us, straws are unnecessary – we don't use them at home, do we? A series of chance meetings then led me to the bamboo straw, which I then had produced in bulk in a more refined manner so that they can be reused repeatedly. My very first order, which was from a smoothie shop owner in the US, gave me the capital to kick-start this small business."

Challenges Faced

"At first, local reception to the idea of bamboo straws was very lukewarm. In my first two to three years of operation, I barely had any local orders. Hence, I set out to try to change mind-sets in my own small way. I reached out to schools, held little market stalls and wrote about my small lifestyle changes on Instagram and Facebook. I'd like to think that those little nudges were my little ripples in the big wave in eco trends we see locally today."

Bamboo straw-making process: "The bamboo is first harvested and dried, then cut to size and refined. Then, the bamboo stalks are boiled and dried once more before finishing off by sanding down any uneven areas. Each batch of straws can take up to 2-4 weeks to complete, highly dependent on the weather," explains Melissa. Click to view a clip of the process!

"Just Do It!"

"There will always be naysayers – people who say 'but it's just one straw' or 'why bother if everyone else won't'. I watched a movie once called 'Wasteland', about the pickers who salvage recyclable waste from what used to be the largest garbage dump in South America, and this dialogue from one of the pickers struck me '99 is not 100'. That's exactly how I feel about single-use plastic. Every little bit counts. So I would say if you want to go green, take small steps and Just Do It!"

Tips on Going Green

"It's important to look at 'going green' as a journey – doing it step-by-step is always less daunting! Many times, we don't realise that the 'tools' we need for a greener lifestyle are already readily available. You don't need to purchase anything to adopt a more green-conscious lifestyle. For example, you can take a set of cutlery from your kitchen out with you, and avoid having to use disposable cutlery that way. I think it's all about being more mindful of our actions and recognising that any actions on our part would have a consequence."

Hopes for RGS

"I hope that her students will always strive to have empathy even as they chase excellence. Being sensitive and showing care to our Earth and each other are the values that I treasured and admired in my classmates during my time in RGS, and I hope that this is what people will remember us for."



Know an inspiring Rafflesian with a story to share? Write to us at corporatecomms@rgs.edu.sg to tell us more, and who knows, you may get to see yourself or your long-lost classmate in subsequent issues of the Raffles Wave!