

Issue 29

June 2023

Matrix

Shatin Pui Ying Post

Celebrations



Message from the Editor

"Happy 45th Anniversary!"

Shatin Pui Ying College is now 45 years old, and we are proud to have served the neighbourhood for over four decades, providing quality education to young people living not only in Shatin, but also other districts.

To mark this special moment, our talented young writers wrote about what celebrations mean to them in forms of poetry, stories and essays. In addition, several senior form students stepped out of their comfort zones and participated in the AFS Intercultural Fair. We celebrate their success by inviting them to share the invaluable experiences they gained from the event. Let's revel in reading the masterpieces from our students.

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Huang 4C (8) and Leo Hsu 5A (19)*



The Sparks in Our Lives

by Clara Ho 4A (7)

The explosion of firecrackers
The burst of laughter
The blossom of fireworks
The release of joy

Celebrate your life
Always be thankful
Search for the sparks
That make your life meaningful

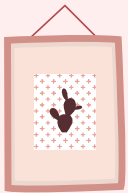
Celebrate with your peers
Enjoy the parties
Be intoxicated in the cheers
Gather together with memories



Revelry

by Charlotte Lai 4A (8)

Clapping and crying,
Everybody toasts, sounding
Like a symphony.
Everybody smiles and
Beams with harmony.
Raise your hands!
Applause for the baby!
Today is a special day.
I left my mother's tummy
Last year today.
Now I'm one year old! Hip hip hurray!





This Special Day

by Yannes Sze 4D (12)

I bought a cake just for myself.
I know I might be selfish,
but I just cannot help it.

No party, no presents, no guests — just me.
This is the way I set myself free.

I blew the candles, finished the cake,
and danced in the dark like a kid who's eight.
Releasing the joy to which nobody can relate,
I know this happiness is not coming too late.

It's my special day, so I'm here to celebrate
the years that I've gone through and what I've done great.

Imagine myself lying in a field,
hugging the wind as I am now healed.
There were parts that I did hate.
But now I welcome the future, which I surely appreciate.

Under the Lights

by Joyce Lee 5A (8)

Under the dazzling lights and flying flags,
the eagles called.

The celebration began.

Students awaited guests' arrival,
marking the start of the celebration.

The 45th anniversary –
What an important occasion!

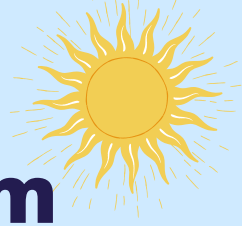
We got booths set up
by each and every club.
Performers were ready
to make the stage lively.

The bell had rung.
The crowd rushed in,
looking forward to all we had to offer.
From floors to floors, rooms to rooms,
we promised to fill guests with fun and joy.
This friendly atmosphere of our school
made the day memorable for sure!

The sun was setting.
It's time to leave.
Guests with faces of delight
were unwilling to go.

The celebration was a huge success.
Now enjoy the day like the story says.

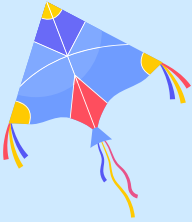




The Day in Full Bloom

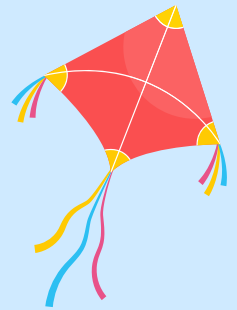
by Perry Chiang 5C (2)

Unzip the sky!
Let's see the blue
beyond the grey -
the turquoise
boundlessness that
could be ours
today.



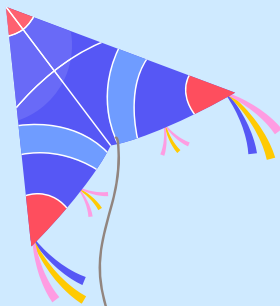
Let the celebration begin -
alley brimming with enthusiasm,
sparkles in their eyes,
blazing like meteors.

Daffodils, tulips, marigolds
in full bloom
during the day of euphoria.



Gathering up
fragments of memories;
piecing together eternity,
that never fades.


Unzip the sky!
Let's see the hope
beyond the gloom -
the hyacinth
boundlessness that
could be ours
today.





Celebration House

by Doria Ng 4B (14)



It was time for another night at the Celebration House, the place to celebrate with ultimate customization. I switched on the lights and looked at the list of reservations: Lucy, who wanted a quiet celebration by herself; Will, celebrating his birthday with his sister, Reese; and the Chan family, who were having an end-of-test party.

Ding! “What’s up!” Belle, Kristy and Josh shouted at me. “Has Will arrived?” they asked.

Kristy frowned as I shook my head. “He’s coming, right?” she asked.

“He’s made a reservation for tonight. Why are you here anyway?”

“We’re here to surprise him!” Josh produced a chocolate cake from a box. “You know he never remembers his own birthday, so when he arrives, we’ll pounce on him and start the party!”

Belle smiled mischievously. “Will you do us a favour and let us hide in your kitchen?”

“Nope!” I cried, “The kitchen’s out of bounds. Besides, you’ll...”

“They’re coming!” Belle jumped. “Hide!” And the trio barged into the kitchen without my approval.

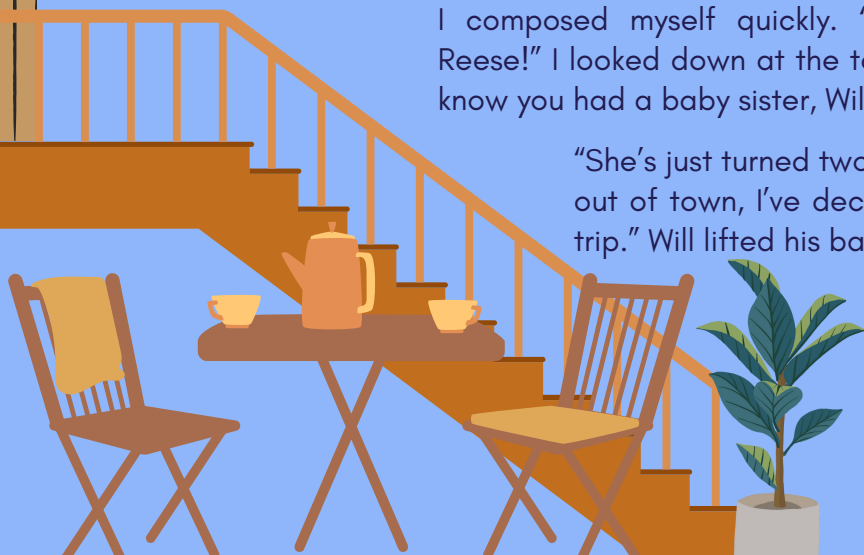
“Ugh!” I had time only to frown before my actual first customers arrived.

I composed myself quickly. “Good evening, Will! And Reese!” I looked down at the toddler next to Will. “I didn’t know you had a baby sister, Will!”

“She’s just turned two, and since our parents are out of town, I’ve decided to take her on a little trip.” Will lifted his baby sister up. “Say hello!”

Reese looked at me with her curious eyes.

I led them to their seats and headed into the





kitchen. “Hey,” I said, pointing at Belle, “If you crack the eggs for me, I will let you hide here.”

With that, I exited the kitchen and found a clown at the door. “Hi, I’m Dan,” he said in a small voice. “I’m hired here tonight...?”

I had forgotten about the clown that the Chan family had hired! “Yes, you’re in the right place. Come in!”

“Thank you,” Dan nodded carefully and shuffled into my shop. *What a shy clown*, I thought. Then, I saw my second customer.



“Greetings, Lucy! You’re looking great today!”

“That’s because I got rid of a toxic friend,” replied Lucy with a serene smile.

“Good for you! That’s worth a celebration!” I left Lucy at the most comfortable seat in the house and headed back to the kitchen. To my dismay, the three had put pork chops directly on the stove.



“You imbeciles!” I scolded them, “Take your hands off my precious ingredients!”

Despite the disaster in the kitchen, I managed to put together one mac and cheese, one toddler-sized sandwich platter, and a mega strawberry milkshake for Will and Reese. Before I left, I told Josh to reach for the puzzle on the shelf – the gift I had stowed away for Lucy, who loved puzzles. When I returned to my counter, I saw my last group of customers arriving.

“Good evening,” the father said cheerfully. “We’re the Chan family.”

“Dad says if we study hard, we get to eat outside!” The younger kid beamed at me with two missing front teeth.

“Yes, all hard work should be rewarded, regardless of the result,” the father explained.

I beamed back, let them settle down,

and returned to the kitchen. "Josh! Where's the puzzle?"

The three friends looked at each other, but no answer came. A moment later, Belle pointed to the pot.

"WHAT?"

"Hey," Josh said in defense of himself. "I spooned the pieces out one by one, and washed them with soap and water!"

"JOSH! They're made of cardboard!"

"I'M SORRY!"

I took a large sieve and scooped out the remaining pieces. I deliberated the pros and cons of serving soup contaminated by puzzle pieces and decided that, in an emergency, food quality could be compromised. Then, I filled some bowls with soup, picked out a final piece of puzzle, and served it with some muffins and pork chops.

"Do you need help?" Belle asked.

"NO!" I boomed.

"Who are those for?" Kristy asked.

"Anybody except you!"

"Okay, guys, we'll strike in three minutes..." I heard Kristy say as I left the kitchen.

On my way to serve the customers, I saw Dan in the corner, quivering like a leaf. "I'm scared," he confessed, rubbing his gloved hands. "It's my first time performing as a clown. I'll definitely mess up."

"Dude, come on, I'll introduce you to the kids."

I pulled Dan over to the Chans to get him started, "Ladies and gentlemen, may I introduce Dan to you. Um, he's a *real* clown."





The kids beamed so brightly they lit up the room. “A REAL CLOWN!” They screamed delightfully.

Dan seemed touched, but just as he was about to start his performance...

“SURPRISE!” *Oh dear.*

“Happy birthday to YOU! Happy birthday to YOU! HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO WI-ILL!” Belle, Kristy and Josh burst from the kitchen. Belle was carrying balloons, hand clappers, and had a party horn in her mouth, while Josh was carrying a cake. Kristy was holding a humongous sign that read “Happy Birthday WILL” and four confetti cannons.

“HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOOOOOOOU!”

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! Confetti shot out from the canons.

The silence that followed was broken by Reese, who started crying. Will tried to comfort her while taking in the sight of his name on the balloons, signs and cake. “What is going on?”

“It’s your birthday, fellow future-tense friend!” Josh said.

“Of course it’s my birthday, you dimwit! I’m celebrating it with my sister right now,” said Will.

Belle, Kristy and Josh looked at one another, gobsmacked.

Will continued, “Reese doesn’t like noisy crowds. I want a peaceful birthday with her. Seeing her happy puts me in another world, and I want to be in that world for my birthday.”



Belle, Kristy and Josh's smiles were completely wiped off their faces. Not only had they made a huge embarrassment of themselves, but they had also ruined the celebration. Ashamed, they scampered towards the exit.

I turned to the Chan family, "I'm very sorry. This doesn't usually happen." Then, I hurried over to Will and apologized for the unpleasant experience. Reese was still crying and the gang's surprise had not been helpful at all. Then, something caught our attention.

Dan the Clown was juggling. He tossed colourful balls under his arms, over his head, left, right, and centre. He even had ten balls going at once!

Reese stopped wailing.

Next, Dan balanced a small cardboard box on his finger. He added a larger gift box, a tissue box from the Chans' table, and a puzzle from the wall, until the pile became a tower taller than he was. Not finished, he added a clean plate from Lucy's table and topped the pile with one lit candle from Will's cake! Then, he asked the Chans for a basketball from their bag. Setting the ball upon the floor, Dan put one foot on the ball, and then the other, while still balancing the pile on his finger!

"Wow!" Everyone gasped in genuine awe.

Suddenly, "Woah-oah!" Dan wobbled violently as the room held its breath.

He stopped wobbling and laughed, "Got y'all!"

"Thank goodness!" Everyone sank into their seats, relieved. The kids, feeling tricked, screamed at Dan with feverish fury. Dan just smiled at their cute faces. Still on the basketball, he reached for the candle and put it back, then the plate, the





puzzle, the tissue box, the gift box, then lastly the small box, before stepping back onto solid ground.

“Splendiferous!” Everyone in the House applauded, but not too loudly for fear of startling Reese again. Dan the Real Clown smiled and bowed.

Reese was happy again, and the tension dissolved. Dan kept doing tricks for the Chan family. Soon, the celebrations were over and everyone left. Once again, there was only me in my shop.

What a day!

People relate celebrations to festivals, birthdays, and anniversaries, but everything can be and should be celebrated in the way we like. Isn't that the reason why I started the Celebration House, to let people celebrate with ultimate customization without rules or traditional boundaries? No matter what, there's always another day, another night, and another time of fun at the Celebration House. Right? I looked at my shop.

My shop responded by letting the clock tick on and on.

I smiled, switched off the lights and walked away.



Celebrations Bring Us Good

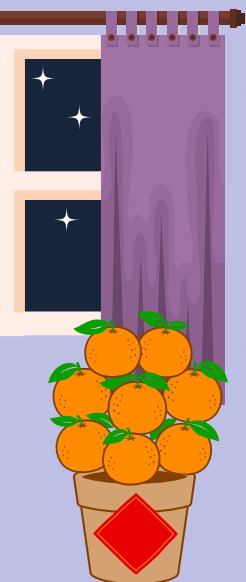
by Annie Chiu 4A (5)

A celebration is a special event such as a party, a scrumptious meal or a parade organised by people to celebrate a milestone, an accomplishment made and our relationships with others. Some may find it tedious to celebrate so many things in a year. However, celebrations are so important that we should celebrate regularly, perhaps even weekly. It helps promote connection in a community, give encouragement to others, and create excitement in our lives.

Celebrations help deepen our bonds with our family, friends and the community. For some huge celebrations like Christmas, people gather together and make use of the time to enjoy a family dinner, go to parties and exchange gifts with friends. Community centres also organise activities like singing Christmas carols in the neighbourhood. This provides a precious opportunity for us to connect with others, create special memories together and make new friends. We will be left with beautiful memories which will remind us of the joyful time we shared, making us cherish our relationship with others even more. Celebrations are definitely wonderful ways to strengthen human relationships.

Celebrating our achievements encourages us to pursue more. For example, we welcome the start of a year with a New Year celebration. Many people will review what they have achieved the year before and celebrate their accomplishments, such as finishing a degree, passing a piano exam or winning an inter-school basketball competition. When we realise we are able to accomplish our goals, we gain confidence. With greater courage, we can challenge





our limits and set new goals. Likewise, we should also celebrate small goals, such as finishing a book, revising for a test and completing a piece of homework, that we achieve weekly. When we celebrate, we acknowledge our progress and hard work. In this way, we build motivation and gain the strength to carry on. For example, if we preview five pages of our Chemistry textbooks this week, we will be bolstered by the fruits of our labour to set a higher goal of seven pages the following week, and to increase the amount week by week.

Celebrations add more fun and excitement to our lives. Without celebrations, our life will be dull and deprived of happiness. While buying narcissus for Chinese New Year at a flower market, organising a reunion with primary schoolmates, or even waiting for surprises on our own birthdays, we experience the thrill of anticipation, looking forward to a joyful future. Seeing the smiling faces of friends and family brings additional bliss too!

In a celebration, we gather together with one goal – to have fun. Life can be tough and sometimes disappointing: stress from school and work, getting poor grades, or even falling ill. However, celebrations bring us hope and delight, giving us licence to focus on fun and forget about our negative thoughts.

To summarise, celebrations are essential as they add sparks to our lives. Therefore, do yourself a favour – celebrate successes and special dates like birthdays and festivals. Give yourself something to look forward to, and life will certainly become more enjoyable.





The Power of Celebrations: Why They Matter

by Isaac Ma 4D (20)

When you think of the word “celebration,” what comes to your mind? The fascinating sound of fireworks? The sweet taste of a cake? Or the spectacular sight of colourful decorations? Celebrations are definitely more than just sensory experiences — they are ways to transmit cultural knowledge and mark important events, and they bring several benefits, such as improving one’s mental well-being and allowing one to relax.

Unlike texts or other forms of communication, celebrations are a highly effective way to transmit cultural knowledge from older to younger generations. Through participation in cultural celebrations, younger generations obtain a more memorable experience immersing themselves in the events, as well as learn the reasons for such celebrations and the stories behind them. For example, by participating in Chinese New Year celebrations, traditions such as handing out red packets to children and the symbolism of red in Chinese culture could be passed on to younger generations.

Celebrations also help mark important milestones in history or in our own lives. For instance, celebrating graduation from school marks students’ transition from





one stage of life to another. Likewise, weddings are usually largely celebrated as a significant milestone of a couple's life.

Some celebrations are also held to commemorate historical events or significant achievements. Some famous examples of these are Independence Day in the United States and the HKSAR Establishment Day in Hong Kong. These celebrations are usually related to crucial historical

moments or events in a region or a country. By celebrating these days, a sense of national identity and belonging can be promoted among citizens.

Furthermore, these celebrations also boost tourism and the local economy. In order to attract visitors, many countries host large-scale celebrations to support local businesses. These celebrations also help enhance the cultural and historical attractions of these places. For example, during Oktoberfest, a well-known beer festival in Germany, plenty of tourists visit Munich to celebrate this famous event, enjoying traditional German beers, food and music. These visitors usually contribute significantly to local businesses, which leads to a significant boost to the local economy.

This year marks a significant milestone in our school history as we celebrate the 45th anniversary. Clearly, this celebration also creates an opportunity to build a sense of belonging to our school among students, teachers, parents and alumni. The occasion also provides an opportunity for everyone to come together and celebrate their shared memories, strengthening their connections. Additionally, similar celebrations bring a sense of accomplishment by marking achievements, and this increases participants' self-esteem and promotes mental well-being.



Celebrations do not necessarily have to be very large in scale. Think about the day you celebrate with cakes and parties every year – your birthday. Some might think that these celebrations are simply small traditions that are being

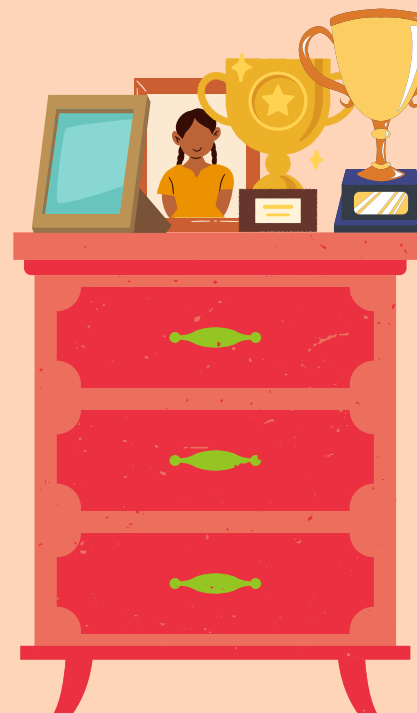
followed from time to time, and if these traditions were removed from our lives, it wouldn't really matter at all. However, these little celebrations do have a rippling effect on our lives. By celebrating our own birthdays, we get a time to feel special and valued, as well as a time to reflect on our personal growth and achievements over the past year. All these celebrations, certainly, have their unique purposes.

In addition to transmitting cultural knowledge and marking milestones, celebrations also have a beneficial impact on participants' emotional well-being and happiness. During celebrations, we often gather with our friends or family members to share our joy and express positive emotions, like gratitude. These feelings promote happiness and positivity. Additionally, expressing gratitude brings us satisfaction and contentment.

Nowadays, people are busy and often feel stressed and overwhelmed. Celebrations allow us to take a break from tedious routines and engage in enjoyable and meaningful activities. Celebrations provide us with much-needed breaks, allowing us to recharge and return to our routines with renewed energy and better concentration.

All in all, celebrations play a crucial role in our lives and the society we live in. It helps us transmit cultural knowledge, mark important milestones, build a sense of belonging, and improve our mental well-being. Celebrations give us positive experiences and

memories. With these in mind, let us continue to celebrate and cherish these significant moments in our lives and the world around us.



Special Festivals Around the World

by Thomas Lee 5A (20)

Festivals are often joyful times when people gather to celebrate. In Hong Kong, people often celebrate traditional Chinese festivals, such as the Lunar New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival. Meanwhile, there are some unique festivals from around the world that not a lot of people know about. Let's take a look at some of these unusual but amazing festivals.

One of the lesser-known festivals is called "La Tomatina", which means tomato festival in English. It is an event which takes place in Buñol, Spain. It all started in 1945, when a parade participant felt angry, grabbed tomatoes from a nearby market stall and started throwing them at others. The



following year, people brought their own tomatoes from home and this wacky festival began. Isn't it fun? The name of this festival makes it obvious that the tomato is the protagonist. During the event, people ride down tomato slides and have wild tomato

fights. Imagine throwing an endless number of tomatoes at each other – it would be just like having a snowball fight, extremely messy but fun at the same time.



Another cool yet popular festival is the Harbin International Ice and Snow Sculpture Festival. Each year between March and December, sculptors compete to make the most outstanding ice sculptures. When visiting the event, you can see life-sized sculptures and gigantic monuments sculpted from ice. During the day, the ice sculptures sparkle



majestically in the sunlight – but wait till it gets dark! Nighttime is when they are illuminated by animated lights. Not only can visitors find the most magnificent and colourful ice sculptures at the Festival, but they can also admire the craftsmanship of professional sculptors from all around the world. In addition, visitors can ride sleighs down some of the sculptures or on frozen rivers. That’s why many people consider Harbin a fantastic winter wonderland and visit the Festival every year.



If you like colour sprays, you will like the Holi festival in India. This festival of colour is for people to welcome the arrival of spring and it is traditionally celebrated by Hindus. This festival starts on the night after a full moon and that is when all the colours come into play. The goal of the festival is to paint people with marvelous colours. Revellers use balloons or squirt guns filled with colours to create their

“masterpieces”. You often see people standing in groups carrying a big bowl of coloured powder and throwing it all at passers-by. Revellers welcome getting sprayed with colour as they believe it is a blessing. Despite the mess they make, people of all generations have fun in the joyful atmosphere, enjoying this “Holi-day”.



Celebrations are an indispensable part of human culture. Festivals provide people an opportunity to gather together and have fun. Learning about different festivals allows us to be more culturally-aware and ready to embrace cultural diversities.





Little Bear (Part 2)

by Lois Leung
(alumna, 2017-2022)

The glowing sun illuminated the entire city of Hamburg, bathing the buildings in warm colours as I wandered through the streets of Germany's *Little Kabul*.

How ironic it is to be barred from home miles away, only to visit a replica of the city I'd once loved.

I sauntered down the street, going nowhere in particular. Numerous strangers walked past me – unrecognizable faces, yet carrying a scent of familiarity.

Are they Afghans, or are they Germans?

I came to a halt in front of a building tanned golden brown. It was a rich shade of brown, reminding me of the first puppy Mother got us in Berlin. There was a long queue spilling out of the front door. The enormous neon-lit letters spelling *Kabul Restaurant* caught my eye.

I peered at the strangers in the queue, all looking at the delicacies behind the shop windows eagerly. They looked thrilled at the thought of filling their stomachs with those mouthwatering treats after an exhausting day.

Are they Afghans, or are they Germans?

I walked to the end of the queue, and became one of them.

"Platz nehmen."

I lifted my eyebrows hearing such a familiar accent from the middle-aged waitress in a white hijab, who directed me to a seat at the corner of the restaurant. She put on a lovely smile and her deep brown eyes looked straight into mine.

"Danke."



Are they Afghans, or are they Germans? What are her monsters?

My question lingered on even as the lady returned with a plate of *lammspieß*. Her smile remained as endearing as ever.

No longer able to suppress my curiosity, I asked, "Do you mind if I ask? Are you from Afghanistan?"

"Ja! I'm from Kabul." Her face lit up at the mere thought of home.

Looking at her, I could almost touch and grasp the warmth radiating from that love. "So am I! Why did you come here?"

"Oh, it's such a long story." She scanned through the crowd, which had begun to thin out. She then sat right across my table and led me into her past as I savoured the *lammspieß*.

"My husband and I were artists in Kabul before the Taliban took over and demolished our home. We had two adorable boys who would crack a smile at everything they found beautiful and who loved eating *lammspieß* after school every day."

She came to a halt as tears slowly rolled down her cheeks, threatening to ruin her makeup. I couldn't help but notice the past tense.

"They... They were killed by a bomb striking the school. It took us seven days to find them."

My lips tightened into a line. Could we have been schoolmates?

I wanted to tell the lady that the monsters were gone, that we'd left them all behind, that we were safe... and free. Yet, the words got caught in my throat, again and again.

She blinked her eyes and inhaled deeply before continuing her story.

"It was ten years ago. We couldn't stay there... we couldn't. So, my husband and I boarded the military plane, and, luckily, sought refuge here. We saw a lot of Afghans staying here, so we opened this restaurant a few years later serving our boys' favourite dishes... hoping anyone who walks in could find comfort in them." She looked me in the eye and spoke softly, "And in that, I learnt to fight against my





monsters, and found peace.”

I was too stunned to respond as my thoughts were tied in a knot.

“I hope you’ll find yours too.” With that, she got up, leaving me lost in thought.

I stepped out of the restaurant into the city gleaming under the moonlit sky. The dazzling sun had already rested behind the mountains over the horizon.

I was finding my way back to the train station when my phone buzzed. Its screen lit up and the notification read: “NATO Put Down Taliban in Final Battle: Victory of Afghanistan in 11 Years.”

My hands quivered as I clicked into the news, not sure if it was from excitement or fear. As I read through the article, digging into every word, adrenaline rushed through my body.

I looked up from the screen to the lamp hanging above my head. It lit up the road as though it never grew tired.

My thoughts drifted off to the moment the bomb struck my school — how the lamps were blasted, shattered into shards.

I stared at the lamp, and it stared back at me. I could see the monsters hiding in its shadows, their teeth snarling at me, ready to devour me in whole. I turned my gaze to the monsters, and said with all my courage and strength, “I’m ready to get rid of you.”

Tapping on my phone, I booked an air ticket to Kabul International Airport, where my life ended, as well as started.

I trudged up the stairs to the fragments of granite and bricks which were once my school, inhaling the dust and smoke surrounding no one but me. I took a step, then another, and another, all the while trying to ignore the monsters roaring in my ears. Dust whirled around me in the spring wind.

A few moments later, I reached my school — or the remains of it. Crouching down, I picked up a piece of rubble. The blood splattered over it had already





faded into a faint shade of deep brown. I looked at it with intensity while my thoughts were draining away.

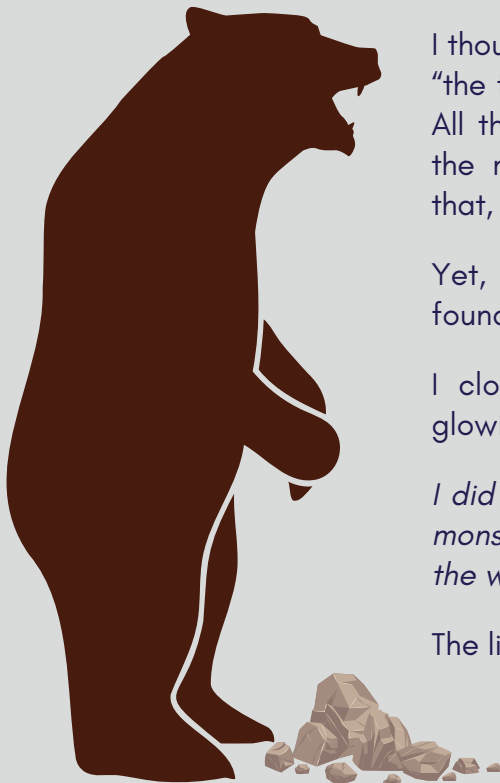
Then, I put down the rubble, turned to the sky, and let free the violent scream I had been withholding for 11 years.

“I AM FREEEE —” I shouted the three words at the top of my lungs. I had been telling myself this whenever the monsters sought to consume me, whenever I tripped and they stood in front of me, waiting to shove me down once more.

Only, this time, I meant it.

My throat was sore and my whole body ached. Yet, when I looked up at the sky, I found — rather than the murky gray and white — rays of the rising sun penetrating the thickness of the clouds, casting a rosy hue.

I searched for my monsters. They didn’t return my call. A smile found its way onto my face.



I thought about the way Mother always called me — “the fierce bear.” I never quite knew what it meant. All this time, I thought that we had escaped from the monsters. However, I guessed I always knew that, deep in our heart, they are still haunting us.

Yet, at this moment, they were nowhere to be found.

I closed my eyes, raised my head against the glowing sun and bathed in its warmth.

I did it, Mother. This time I really did it. I killed the monsters. I became the fiercest bear ruling over the war.

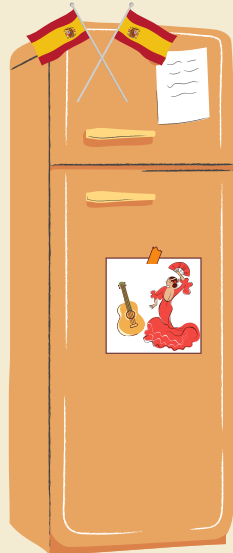
The little bear was free.



Reflections on the AFS Intercultural Fair

The AFS Intercultural Fair is an event which gathers local students and exchange students from around the world. There, exchange students decorate booths and host a variety of activities to introduce the culture of their home country in an interesting, interactive and immersive way to local students. The event thus celebrates understanding, acceptance and cultural diversity. Here, three participants of the event share their insights and reflections.

by Donna Tang 5C (12)



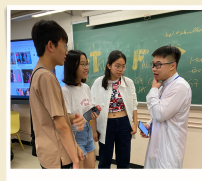
Recently, the anti-pandemic measures have been loosened. I told myself that I need to seize the chance to join more activities, and I found an interesting event – the AFS Intercultural Fair. There were a few international exchange students from different countries including Brazil, Spain, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan and Poland. This activity was really meaningful, interesting and beneficial.

This event provided me a chance to interact with people from diverse backgrounds and learn about different cultures. Unlike learning from books, I chatted with exchange students and learned directly from what they said and did, which was more engaging. On that day, we learned a Spanish dance taught by a Spanish student. It was amazing!

Apart from that, learning from these exchange students allowed me to develop a better understanding of their cultures. For instance, I asked one of the Italian exchange students whether most Italians hated pizzas with pineapple. She immediately explained that Italians never put pineapples on pizzas and they like their pizzas to be made in traditional ways. She also added that pizzas with pineapple are American-style pizzas, not Italian. Through interacting with her, my doubts were quickly untangled.

All in all, I am so glad that I have joined this Intercultural Fair. I learned a lot on that day and made some new friends from different countries. It is one of the most fulfilling days I've ever had! If you are interested, seize the chance and don't hesitate to join next year! I am sure you will feel the same as I felt!





by Ava Huang 4C (8)

Joining the AFS Intercultural Fair was definitely one of the most invaluable experiences of my life. It was the first time I talked and chatted with people from different countries, learning about their cultures firsthand.

In the Spanish classroom, we learned to say numbers in Spanish. The leader said some numbers in English and we guessed what the corresponding Spanish words were by throwing balls into paper cups with Spanish numbers written on them. The funniest thing was that my friends and I tried very hard to aim but we failed to score any points in the game! However, this made the words we learned more unforgettable! Learning about their culture of celebration has also broadened my horizons. The dancing song - Macarena - honestly had me hooked. I remember that the classroom was really full and everyone was dancing along to the music, which was incredibly entertaining and impressive!

We had another wonderful experience in the German classroom. We counted numbers in German. In addition, we learned various ways to greet others in German. Some of them were new and sophisticated in terms of pronunciation for us. During the fun games, we discovered that there are over 1000 types of sausages, about 600 main types of bread and more than 7000 varieties of beer in Germany. The figures were genuinely astounding!

I am truly grateful for the AFS Intercultural Fair for offering us this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to explore a bigger world!





by Leo Hsu 5A (19)

On 25th March 2023, I joined the AFS Intercultural Fair with some schoolmates. We participated in three sessions of classroom activities held by foreign exchange students.

One of the classroom activities was hosted by a Spanish exchange student who was from Madrid. There was a true-false quiz on Spanish culture. I was truly fascinated by some interesting facts. For example, people in Spain have breakfast at 7 am but have lunch at 4 pm, which means they have to wait for 9 hours between meals. If I were living in Spain, I would feel very hungry in the afternoon. Besides, she taught us a special traditional Spanish dance. She said everybody in Spain knows this dance, and it was really fun. She presented her culture to us in an interesting way. At the same time, we shared facts about Hong Kong culture with them. We recommended some local street foods to them, like curry fishballs, siu mai and dim sum.

We also chatted with a Hong Kong exchange student who was wearing traditional Egyptian clothing. He went to Egypt last year and made lots of new friends there. Even though he doesn't speak Arabic, he still made many friends in his school, speaking English. One of the fun facts he shared with us was that the toilets in Egypt were much cleaner than he had expected. I will not forget to take a look when I visit Egypt in the future!

I am so thankful to the exchange students who hosted us as we learned a lot about cultural diversity and felt enriched after the Fair. Later, I learned that the exchange students had been very anxious during the preparation as it would have been embarrassing if no one had been interested in the activities. I hope they know that their worries were unnecessary, because the event was, indeed, a great success.



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