Dear Parents & Carers,

What an incredibly busy month we’ve had! We finished October off with a fun filled day of Halloween festivities. This was fantastic to see; everyone in the school participating in themed activities, from Pre-School to the Year 5 and 6’s. As ever, both the staff and pupils (with no doubt, more than a little help from their parents) outdid themselves with their costume efforts! It was very difficult to choose, but the winners of the Staff Costume contest were the Year 2 teacher, Ms. Joanne and the Pre-School TA, Ms. Trang. Personally, I can’t wait to see what they’ll come up with next year!

At Saigon Star, we pride ourselves on celebrating the cultural diversity of the pupils in our ‘global school community’. On November 13th, we celebrated Diwali – the Indian Festival of Lights. Early Years, KS1 and KS2 each made their own Rangoli out of flower petals and the school corridors looked amazing. This, coupled with class activities and children wearing the traditional Indian attire, the Saris, meant that the school was very much filled with colour!

This month we also celebrated Teacher’s Day. The teachers and staff of Saigon Star would like to thank the PTG and all the parents and children who organised the lovely gifts for us. The teachers were touched by the thought and consideration.

To further demonstrate what a busy month November was, we also held three very different, yet very useful, Parent Workshops. On Tuesday 6th November, Mr. James held a workshop on the new Computing Curriculum and our emerging use of the iPads. This was very well received from a number of parents. Later that same week, Ms. Adrienne hosted a comprehensive Parent Workshop on the Montessori stage. Lastly, Mr Brendan took a Workshop on ‘Phonics’, which covered crucial strategies to enable your child to read. As a staff we pride ourselves on our commitment to ensuring your child makes progress. By running such events, we can ensure that you, as parents, are involved in that process too. Please ensure you do your best to attend in the future, as we have further Workshops planned for January 2016, details of which, you can find above.

On behalf of all the teachers, I would like to thank all those parents who were able to drop by our “Open House” and look forward to seeing you again at the next one. A gentle reminder that we will be sending home mid-year reports on Friday 18th December.

Matthew, the children and the teachers have all been putting a lot of time into the Christmas Production and we expect it to be better than ever. Who doesn’t love the story of the Grinch? Don’t forget to book your tickets with Ms. Thanh as soon as possible. On a final note, we will be taking School Photos the week of the 7th Dec. All children should wear the NEW sports uniform. There will be a class photo, as well as individual ones taken. Your child’s teacher will have more details closer to the time. This will include the exact date and price of the package should you wish to order it. I look forward to seeing you all at the show on Saturday the 5th of December at 5pm.

Ellen Thompson

Dates for your Diary
★ 5.12.2015 - Christmas Concert
★ 18.12.2015 - Last day at school
★ 18.12.2015 - Mid-Year Reports Sent Home

Parent Workshops
★ Internet Safety - 30th January 2016
★ Reading - 2nd February 2016
During the month of November, the children were engaged in many different yet imaginative play activities. They pretended to be doctors, vets, drivers, bakers, firefighters and photographers. It was such fun! Children got to choose their favourite role and really ‘act’ the part. The activities were very simple but helped them learn practical life skills such as; dressing themselves, how to cooperate and sharing with others. The children enjoyed taking up the role of adults in these jobs as well as the learning of new words and practising their counting. They have also been busy and have had fun practicing for the Christmas show too. Ms Sherley and her class are really looking forward to ‘wowing’ the audience with their terrific stage performances!

Pre-School

Mr. Warren’s Nursery class have had a very creative month. Focusing on their “Let’s Pretend” IPC topic, the children have designed and created a variety of puppets which have helped them to retell stories and to take on the role of a character. Mr Warren was grateful to parents for sending in socks for the children to make sock puppets at the beginning of the month, while stick puppets the following week allowed the class to retell the story of Diwali in a different way. The class have been choosing backgrounds and settings for stories too and with the use of a fun application called Puppet Pals, the children were able to record their voices and watch the show back on an iPad. The application and idea of recording the children’s voices was to improve confidence with communication and Mr Warren was very pleased with the response. November also saw Nursery celebrate a class birthday for Lucy who turned four! While the following week, the class joined preschool in designing a Rangoli pattern in the school corridor as a part of our Diwali celebrations. The children looked fantastic in their traditional dress and had a wonderful day.
Montessori
Ms. Adrienne

Time flew during the Montessori sessions after the October break. Ms Adrienne is confident that this is because everyone was having fun! Many new activities were gradually introduced to the children in the Montessori class this month, including some brand new original Montessori materials and other materials that Ms. Adrienne believes will help nurturing the children's independence and concentration. Additionally, to comply with the Early Year's IPC topic, ‘Let's Pretend’, the children explored some great theatre fun, such as making a mini stage with magnets and a cookie sheet to retell one of the books of the week, ‘Cock-A-Moo-Moo’. They also assembled a road map as a backdrop to their own stories.

November has, as always, been an eventful month. Children in the Montessori class took the chances that were presented to celebrate cultural diversity. They have been enjoying Halloween and Diwali symmetrical cutting. Soon, Ms. Adrienne will also introduce more activities for Thanksgiving at the end of November and for Christmas in December.

Reception
Ms. Rebecca and Ms. Grace

Reception made an exciting start to their new IPC Topic – ‘Let’s Pretend’ this month, visiting ‘Kizciti’ in District 7 with the Nursery and Pre-school classes. Children spent the day ‘pretending’ to be different roles in the community. This included riding a Fire Engine, taking part in a Flash Mob and dressing up in various uniforms such as Police Officers and Doctors! The children thoroughly enjoyed the day and showed outstanding behaviour throughout; behavior that Ms Rebecca and Ms Grace were extremely proud of. November has also been a wonderful month to help Reception celebrate various cultural festivals. Firstly, there was the Hindu festival of Diwali, when Ms Rosie kindly brought lots of Diwali decorations to help the children prepare for this colourful day. The children also enjoyed tasting some traditional Indian snacks and creating Diwali lights. Secondly, the children wowed the school staff with their amazing Halloween costumes! It was a sight to behold! Ms Becki and Ms Grace are always so impressed at how respectful the Reception children are of all the cultures and commented on the thoughtfulness and friendship they showed towards each other this month.
For Year 1 pupils, November saw the beginning of a new, exciting IPC topic “The Magic Toymaker”. As the title suggests, the unit is all about toys and games. Just in case a topic about Toys wasn’t exciting enough, for the Entry Point, the children were invited to visit “Santa’s Workshop”, to make toys that Santa could give out at Christmas. With Christmas decorations all around and Christmas music booming, the children got busily to work. Using both their imagination and the various Arts & Craft materials that were lying around, the children created many wonderful homemade toys. Needless to say, as a stimulus to motivate children about their learning, it worked brilliantly!

For the last 3 weeks, Miss Joanne’s class have been using the story “Lila and the Secret of the Rain” in Literacy. It is a lovely story set in Kenya and describes a young girl called Lila who lives in a rural village where it has not rained for weeks. She learns the secret of the rain from her Grandfather and sets about trying to make the sky bring rain to her village. The children were asked to imagine that they were any character from the story and describe their feelings and life in the village. Some children wrote as Lila; some chose to be a villager; and one child even chose to tell the story from the point of view of the sky! What the children most enjoyed though, was the group work where they had to make puppet theatres of the setting and puppets, which they then used to perform the story. They concluded the unit by writing poems thanking the sky for the rain and describing how good the rain felt by comparing it to
Dinosaur fever has well and truly taken hold of Year 4! An IPC topic entitled ‘Footprints From The Past’ had always promised to be fun and inspiring, and this hasn’t failed to deliver so far. Mr. Huw (who was, himself, somewhat of a dinosaur expert during his childhood years!) has been really impressed by the enthusiasm shown by his class so far. Their entry point saw them making dinosaur eggs with the Year 3 children and ‘excavating’ them from the school sandpit… They were then cracked open and the contents examined. Working in pairs, they researched some of the species of dinosaur that they found. So far, they have looked at a timeline which outlines the timescales involved with dinosaur evolution, researched some of the more famous paleontologists and have begun to examine the differences between dinosaurs from different eras. Outside of their topic work, the class has begun to be increasingly excited about the Christmas Show… they are eagerly anticipating their performance on the 5th of December!

The Year 3 students and Miss Stacey have looked to the past to study the age of the dinosaurs! They have been examining how the history of Earth can be measured by different periods of time and how different environmental events can create change and affect life on our planet. They have made their very own timeline of the dinosaurs’ impressive 160million year rule, including a break down of the animals that roamed the Earth during the Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous periods. They also made their very own dinosaur eggs, and then with the help of Year 4, excavated their ‘dino-mite’ findings like true archaeologists! However, these dinosaurs seem to be getting up to quite a lot of mischief at night when they leave the classroom. Every morning, the students find the dinosaurs have made a huge mess! From flour and measuring cups, to setting traps to catch people with candy, to having their own beach day, these dinosaurs keep the IPC topic exciting and new for the students every day! It seems the class cannot wait to see what hatches next in this unit!
Upon returning from Autumn Break, students in Mr. Michael’s Physical Education classes spent three weeks participating in the much-loved sport of Dodgeball. The focus of this sports unit was on the essential skills of throwing and catching a ball. Students participated in a variety of activities and games, including: catching a self-tossed ball, playing throw and catch with a partner, throwing at stationary and moving targets, and defending team space in the fast-paced game. The students learned to quickly react to catch thrown balls, accurately aim at stationary and moving targets, strategically defend their side of the court, and use teamwork to compete against an opponent… all while having a ton of fun in the process! Mr. Michael also continued to focus on developing the students’ flexibility and endurance through stretching and cardiovascular exercises, including: the “Fitnessgram Beep Test”, the “Golden Mile Run”, and the “Dance Party Jam” movement activities. The students are having fun improving their physical fitness, which is the hallmark of a quality physical education program. The next units of study in Physical Education will be the team sport of Volleyball for three weeks followed by a return to the swimming pool for continued water safety and swimming instruction during the two weeks prior our Winter Break.

Year 5 and 6 have spent this month immersed in their Mission to Mars IPC topic. They have been exploring the topic in depth through different subject areas, showing great adaptability by using and applying a wide variety of skills and knowledge. Whilst exploring the Geography aspect of our Mission to Mars, they assumed the role of ‘Geologists’ and conducted investigations to find out if water could have existed on Mars. The class were amazed at how their investigations resembled the landscape on Mars and concluded that water must indeed have existed there. In Technology, the children designed and made their own ‘Mars Rovers’, using robots. This required vast degrees of resilience and thoughtfulness as the robots were challenging to make. However, the children relished the challenge and every group made a robot with a working electrical circuit that could be powered by remote control. Finally, through studying the International aspects of the Topic, they wrote ‘Mars Space Treaties’. This enabled them to agree on rules for the world to follow on Mars, and researched the big issues facing our planet now, such as overpopulation and climate change. Ms Natasha was really impressed with Year 5 and 6’s hard work throughout the topic and looks forward to beginning the next topic at the end of November, ‘Go with the Flow!’

PE & Swimming
Mr. Michael

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Sun Bear Fans!

Our Sun Bear basketball team completed a very successful season with three consecutive victories to finish with an impressive record of 4 wins and 1 loss for our first-year basketball program. We are very proud of their efforts, as they learned many new skills and complex rules necessary for basketball and played with cooperative teamwork and admirable sportsmanship in competitions against other international schools. By our last game, their level of play was exceptional, as each player could interchange the various positions, run well-executed set plays, terrific high and low picks, dribble skillfully through defenders, complete accurate passes, make fantastic shot selections and play solid defense. Our young Sun Bears represented Saigon Star with the class, style, and hearts of champions!

As a fitting end to their successful season, our Sun Bear team had the privilege to learn from and play with some professional basketball players from Saigon Heat. Coach Michael arranged for Heat Players Moses Morgan (#8), Nguyen Thanh Nhan (#6), Nguyen Ngoc Thanh (#4), and Assistant Coach David Singleton to visit Saigon Star for an interactive basketball clinic that included skill development drills, fun competitions, and a full-court, 5-on-5 basketball game. In keeping with their winning ways, our young Sun Bear players won the “friendly” game against the professional Heat players by a score of 16 – 11! Our Sun Bear Team included: Kobi – Year 3, Thinh – Year 4, Alaric – Year 4, Angus – Year 4, Jasmine – Year 5, Rebecca – Year 5, Maya – Year 5, Pallavi – Year 5, Jaeden – Year 5, Ema – Year 6, Chi Bao – Year 6, Calvin – Year 6, and Coach Michael.

The Season Results were as follows:

- **Won (10 – 0)** - Thursday, October 8th vs. British Vietnamese International School
- **Lost (2 – 13)** - Tuesday, October 13th at British Vietnamese International School
- **Won (5 – 0)** - Monday, November 2nd at Saigon South International School
- **Won (12 – 10)** - Thursday, November 12th vs. FOSCO International School
- **Won (20 – 12)** - Wednesday, November 18th vs. European International School

Go Sun Bears!
This month the much anticipated Saigon Discovery Trail took place on Saturday the 28th of November. This exciting event, organised by the PTG, was a fantastic opportunity for all of Saigon Star families to come together, explore the city, and compete for some incredible prizes! The families and teachers taking part arrived bright and early on Saturday morning and were greeted by a delicious breakfast of Dunkin’ Donuts. Fuelled with energy, the teams were ready to begin the trail, which consisted of trying to solve challenging riddles set by lead organiser Mrs Lofgran. Every team had to work carefully to study the clues and hunt for the answers hidden in the area between Reunification Palace to the Notre Dame Cathedral. Competition was fierce as the teams with the most correct answers would be winning amazing prizes! After two hours of careful hunting, it was time to return to the Café de la Poste for a Popeye’s Chicken lunch, and even more importantly, to find out the winners. First there was a raffle, with prizes such as discounted luxury hotel stays, bags, t-shirts, discount vouchers and cupcakes! Then the winners of the trail were announced. They won luxury hotel stays and vouchers for up to 1000 dollars off school fees! A huge thank you to everyone who helped organise the event and took part in this impressive event, which raised money for the school and for the charity Heart Beat Vietnam. It was wonderful to see all the Saigon Star families, friends and staff working together to solve the trail and we look forward to many more events like this in the future.

Saigon Discovery Trail
Parent Teacher Group