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## Early Learning Centre News

### Cool End to Happy Year for the ELC

We finished the year with the sound of the beating drums in the E.L.C!! The children and staff enjoyed being outside in the cool and participated with the interactive style of the Dubai Drumming Company.

Other Celebrations included National Day Celebration with our first ever Assembly. The children along with their teachers presented a brief song and/or dance to family and friends. During the Celebration of Learning we welcomed Sheena Reynolds (British Institute of Learning and Development) who presented a talk on The Foundations of Learning to parents.

This was followed by teachers presenting hands on workshops in play dough, blocks, junk modeling, mark making, sand and water play. We received wonderful feedback, in particular a comment made by a parent. He stated "I didn't like attending school as a child, but when I bring my daughter to E.L.C. I simply wish I could stay and play."

**RashidaSamji**  
KG1C Teacher



Junior School canteen will be closed Monday January 18<sup>th</sup> only, MS/SS canteen open as normal.

## From the Principal's Desk

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Board to welcome back all of our students, parents and teachers for the second half of the year. In particular I would like to make a mention of seven new teachers who have joined VISS over the break:

- Kristen McLeod (ELC)
- Barb Sandford (ELC)
- Hayley Anderson (Gr 1)
- Shane Fyfe (Gr 6)
- Katherine Mignano (Commerce)
- Hivin Ramadan (Maths)
- Mohammed Mall (Physics/Maths)

I know that all members of our VISS community will welcome and assist them as they settle down in Sharjah. Each of our new teachers will no doubt add significantly to the strength and variety of our teaching cohort.

**Inaugural VISS VCE Results - Excellent**  
This year was the first graduating class (Grade 13) of VISS. Cameron Stewart and Simon Diviny were our first two students to complete the Victorian Certificate of Education here in Sharjah.

Both Cameron and Simon have done very well when compared with the whole student cohort of Victoria sitting the same exam. From the subjects Simon and Cameron completed, four of their subject scores were in the top 10% of the State of Victoria and three were in the top 5%. Simon and Cameron have applied to internationally recognised universities in Melbourne,

Australia in the areas of International Relations and Media and Broadcasting (Multimedia).

I would like to congratulate both Simon and Cameron and their families on their efforts throughout the year. Also I thank their hard working subject teachers. Further I would like to wish them well in their future studies on behalf of the VISS community. This is an excellent start to our Senior School and I wish all of our students, that are currently studying in their senior years, the best of success.

Further, I would like to thank Craig Lamshed for his role in working with the teachers and students in order to achieve this excellent outcome.

Well done everyone!

### VISS on the World Stage

Late last year we had a visiting television crew from Germany who were most impressed with our school and in particular the teaching and learning programs. Whilst here they conducted some interviews with staff and shot some footage which will be used to make a documentary for screening on German Television.

### Strategic Plan

For some months now we have been working on our five year plan which this past week has been completed with the assistance of Ken Tan (strategic Planner) from Victoria. As a result of this work I am delighted to say that our school is in excellent shape to face the challenges that lie ahead and will over the course of the next few months make announcements about new initiatives to further improve the quality of education on offer at VISS.

**New Finance & Administration Manager**  
This past week the Board has made an

appointment to the newly created position of Finance & Administration Manager. As the title suggests, this person will be responsible for the school administration, and the functions of the office staff in general.

Paul Fielding comes to VISS with extensive experience in school administration having recently left a similar position at an independent school in Australia. Paul will take up his position in February.

**Finally** - Just a couple of reminders about dates. Reports were sent home on 14th January for SS students and will be sent home on 28th January for JS/MS students. Tuesday, 2nd February will be reporting day and parents are asked to come to school at the appointed time for interview. Buses will not run on this day as students will accompany parents at the appointed time. Regular school will resume again on Wednesday, 3rd February.

**Gordon Pratt**  
Executive Principal

### Dates for Your Diary

**\*Thursday January 28<sup>th</sup>** -  
End of semester 1

**\*Sunday January 31<sup>st</sup>** -  
Start of Semester 2

**\*Tuesday February 2<sup>nd</sup>** -  
Parent Teacher Student  
Interviews/Reporting Day

**\*January March 21<sup>st</sup>** -  
Harmony Day.

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## Students get a taste of work experience

In the last school week of December, a group of eleven slightly apprehensive senior students embarked on the first Work Experience Program at V.I.S.S, with each student placed in employment for five whole working days.

As the Careers manager at V.I.S.S, I would like to thank, firstly, the parents of students and all local business people who volunteered their work-places for the Work Experience Program, Julie Howell for her many connections and the students of VISS, who conducted themselves in an extremely impressive manner.

Our Grade 11 students were Kyo Duan, Karan Choudhary, Abdulqadeer Khan, Amro Ali, Ali Paknejad, Roman Pedure, Bilal Awada, Caitlin Dixon, Rhea Bhagat, Cathleen Howell and Asheera Parskotam from Grade 12. Most of the students had either little or no previous work experience. The Work Experience Program would offer students a taste of working life and a chance to appreciate the meaning of what is meant by "21<sup>st</sup> century skill sets", the skills that teachers, as well as C.E.O.s speak of as being a necessary requirement in today's world. Employers have always looked for the best and the brightest, but this cliché has had a definitional change over the last twenty years. Students need to be aware that employers are looking for not just exceptional people with a mastery of their core subjects

but also people with skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, creative thinking and innovation to meet the looking for not just exceptional people with a mastery of their core subjects but also people with skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, creative thinking and innovation to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Each student had to prepare in advance their Curriculum Vitae and sign a formal agreement to adhere to the conditions of the program and to meet the expectations of the workplace. Some students had the opportunity to meet with their workplace supervisors before their working week but others plunged straight in.

School can become a familiar environment and so for our intrepid Work experience students, stepping out of their comfort zone into unfamiliar surroundings could have been a very nerve-wrecking experience had it not been for the enthusiastic and professional support provided by their individual supervisors.

Our Work Place employers came from a wide range of professions; from business to hospitality to medicine.

Caitlin and Asheera had the unique opportunity to be placed at GMC hospital in Ajman where they shadowed doctors on ward rounds and observed clinical practice in a variety of departments. On their first day the girls were assigned to Dr Irene, Head of Dermatology. Dr Irene was treating a patient with a mysterious skin complaint who had also recently suffered a miscarriage. The patient was tested for Rubella. Asheera said, "I found this really interesting as we learnt about how Rubella is caused by the shortage of anti-bodies, and how you can have several symptoms that link together". In the neonatal department the girls were shown why new born babies are tested for APGAR (Appearance, Grimace-response and reactions, Activity and Respiratory). When one baby did not respond normally to the testing, it was found



## VISS Clubs Commence

The first round of VISS Clubs was completed last week and was enthusiastically welcomed by all students.

Clubs are held on Wednesday afternoons between 1.35 and 2.55pm, the Junior School on one Wednesday, the Middle/Senior School the next Wednesday. The first round of Clubs will continue to the end of this term. The Clubs are:

Junior School	Middle/Senior School
Arabic Dance	African Art
Arabic Language	Art and Craft
Beach Games and Activities	Allyoops (Basketball)
Cartoon Drawing	Chess
Court Games	Film Study
Craft	Guitar
Field Games	Human Powered Vehicles
Flute	Rock Challenge
French	Football (Soccer)
Jump Rope (Skipping)	Table Tennis
Rock Challenge	
Silk Drawing	
Football (Soccer)	

The next round of Clubs, when students will have the opportunity to select another Club that is offered by teachers, will commence in Term 4.

**Les Rauert**  
Manger of Community and Sport Development

## After School Activities

Dance, Drama, Karate and Football were very successful after school activities conducted at VISS in the second half of last year.

All of these activities continue this year, however, Drama requires more children to enrol if it is to continue.

To enrol in Dance/Ballet for Mondays, see Mr Les or Junior School reception.

To enrol in Karate for Sunday and Tuesdays at 6.00pm, collect registration forms from Junior School reception

To enrol in Drama/Theatre for Wednesday/Thursday, log on to [www.kidstheatreworks.com](http://www.kidstheatreworks.com)

To enrol for IFA Football see [www.intlfootballacademy](http://www.intlfootballacademy)

Other after school activities will be offered soon.

### VISS House Athletics Sports Carnival

This year's athletics carnival for the Junior, Middle and Senior schools, will be held on the afternoon of Thursday 11 February. It will commence soon after 1.00pm and is likely to be finished by 6.00pm.

Last year's athletic day was very exciting and this year's event promises to be even better. Parents are very welcome to attend.

We suggest parents and friends bring a chair and a hat –and loud voices.

**Les Rauert**  
Manger of Community and Sport Development



Snapshots -  
VISS Last year  
Athletic  
Carnival



that he had swallowed amniotic fluid which was removed with a tube and syringe. The girls also spent time in pediatrics, gynecology, family medicine, neonatal, endocrine and last of all, they scrubbed up and put on hospital greens to witness two Caesarian-sections in the operating theatre. "They pulled the baby out by the head and at that moment it started crying!" an incomparable experience which Asheera fittingly described as "mind-blowing".

This experience would not have been possible without the generosity and organization provided by the Assistant Hospital Manager- Mr. Essam, Dr Sherly Koshy, Dr Irene Nirmala and Prof. Gita Ashok Raj- Gulf Medical University Dean.

At Spearhead Training in Dubai, Ali and Roman had a far different experience in the hectic world of business training. Their first insight into the business product at Spearhead was through three training sessions where they learnt more about familiar terms such as 'organization' and 'time-management'. They discovered that business people continually upgrade their skills and are life-long learners. From there, they received training in the accounts and marketing division, then organized all the overseas post and delivery and put together all information folders for every training session. The boys' supervisor, Sumaya, was so impressed with their mature, responsible 'can do' attitude that she could not decide which one of the boys she wanted to keep.

When Cathleen and Bilal began their

working week at ITP Publishing Group, which published magazines such as TimeOut and Ahlan!, they probably thought that they would spend most of their time behind a tea trolley. Instead they hit the ground running, immediately researching and writing articles. Each student participating in the Work Experience Program was also expected to spend 30 minutes each day writing their reflections in a journal. "To be honest, I didn't get around to writing my journal entries everyday" said Cathleen, "because, I have to say, for the four days I worked for Ahlan, I was very, very busy!" Her first assignment was to find the ten best Christmas Day brunches in Dubai, then "Bam! I was hit with another - 10 New Year's Eve Celebrations!"

When Mr. Craig and I went to the offices of ITP we found Cathleen busy researching celebrity profiles at her own desk, and Bilal about to be whisked off for a team meeting. One of Bilal's tasks was to pick the top DVD, CD and TV show of the week. He also had to choose one country, describe three good reasons for travelling there and then find any celebrities that may have visited; he discovered that Thailand was an amazing place and is now right on top of his own 'best places to go' list.

The thing that Bilal enjoyed the most was the work atmosphere, the collaboration and support he received from the whole team, and the informal yet busy work-day. The work experience that Bilal had at ITP has completely swayed him to take up a career in journalism.

Karan and Amro also spent their Work

Experience week in the media at Gulf Today in Sharjah where they both got a fantastic insight into how a newspaper is run. At first the students familiarised themselves with each department and spent time watching the journalists work on the latest headlines. They were intrigued by how the news arrived through a variety of different sources and websites; a specific website was constantly monitored for 'breaking news'. The most impressive aspect of the learning experience for Karan was the camaraderie, assistance and respect that they both received from all of their new "colleagues" who all treated them as one of the team, but especially from Editor in Chief Mr. Shaadaab Bhakt and Deputy Editor, Mr R. Ramesh.

Teamwork is high on the agenda at THEO where Kyo and Rhea spent their Work Experience. When I first emailed Ravi Singh at HR he was immediately responsive and enthusiastic about the collaboration between V.I.S.S and THEOne. I was also not surprised because I had done my research and discovered from the website that there was much more to THEOne than beautiful homewares. It is an amazing store (one of my personal favourite 'feel good' places to visit) with an equally amazing back-story. It began as one person's dream in 1996 when Thomas Lundgren already had two walls full of framed rejection letters, all gathered when he began looking for a financier for his dream project. "To save the world ... by establishing the funkiest home fashion brand on the planet"- His vision: Changing the world together through ONEdeworld: a sustainable



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Village Community Program aiming to support ninety nine villages in Kenya.

Every day the staff have a 'group huddle' to talk about how everyone is going, discuss the sales, how to encourage people, reach targets and "to discuss the most important product of all –feelings, we sell feelings!" said Kyo who shadowed the "selling professor" to watch him operate. It must have had a positive effect on Kyo because, Marion, the store manager, made a point of mentioning his talent for approaching customers.

Thomas Lundgren describes THEOne stores as 'theatres' where customers are provided with a Home Fashion Show that displays the latest collections. On the final day of her Work Experience at THEOne Rhea was given her own section of the store in which to create her very own special fantasy. When Rhea had finished creating "an Oriental theme with fresh white linen and Japanese screens", all the staff gathered together on the bed for a photograph which was then framed and presented to her as a very special momento.

Mohammad Sear was one of the first parents to offer his business as a work-place for the program. 'Inhouse coffee' in the Sahara Mall is serious about coffee ( it is excellent coffee!) and serious about its customers, as Abdulqadeer can testify after a week of work and training. When I visited him at 'inhouse coffee' he had already received an extensive history on the origin of coffee, the way in which it is grown and produced and the one thing that all coffee Nazi's (like me) angst over, how to make the perfect cup of coffee or

café latte, depending on your preference.

When I asked Abdulqadeer what was the most important lesson that he learned from his experience he replied without hesitation, "Self confidence! From the moment you get up for work to the moment you leave, every positive decision or choice that you make will have an influence on everything in your day- from start to finish. A positive attitude, such as service with a smile, will help you deliver the best service to the customers. Your attitude is what matters the most for the customer as well as being personally rewarding."

All students who participated in the Work Experience Program, will be presented with a Certificate of accomplishment and will present their experiences to the group in the forthcoming weeks. Every workplace provider that participated in the Work Experience Program has promised to remain in an ongoing relationship of sponsorship, community support and collaboration with VISS in ensuring that our students have every opportunity to

succeed as not only successful citizens of the community but of the world. Thank you again to all those that participated.

**Valda Rubio**  
Careers Manager

### Photo Gallery

