

Life @ Woodstock

Magazine for Parents



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Spring 2015



Win Mumby 2015 Photo: Ben Bowling

Beginnings



Students gather at Hanson field to celebrate the colours of spring and new beginnings during Holi. *Photo: Mathias Grade 11*

The end of an academic year brings mixed emotions – the pride of achievement, the excitement of future challenge and the sadness of farewell. It is a time for looking back on happy memories and good experiences. It is also a time for looking forward to new beginnings.

The 2nd Century AD theologian, Clement of Alexandria, put this well when he wrote, “The Lord has turned all our sunsets into sunrises.” Every ending is also a new beginning.

If memory is the rear-view mirror of life which allows us to look back, then our dreams are the window to the future. Our memories instil a sense of belonging and confidence in who we are. Our aspirations propel us towards who we are becoming and provide hope to fuel our efforts.

Woodstock gives students both mirrors and windows – that is to say, great

“Woodstock gives students both mirrors and windows – that is to say, great memories of an incredible educational experience but also a passionate confidence in what lies ahead.”

- Dr Jonathan Long

memories of an incredible educational experience but also a passionate confidence in what lies ahead. However, on their own these are not enough. The great people of this world have often been dreamers – but they have never been satisfied with dreams without the toil to make the dreams come true. Happy memories, courageous dreams and the determination to toil – together these are the ingredients for a life less ordinary. For generations, these are also the qualities which have characterised Woodstock graduates – qualities beautifully expressed in our school motto, *Palme non sine Pulvere* (loosely translated as, “no prize is won without effort”).

May we all possess the courage to dream – to dream great and bold and purposeful. As Henry Thoreau put it, “to go confidently in the direction of your dreams and live the life you’ve imagined.” May we also dare to bring our dreams out into the light of day through hard-work and committed effort.

As Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes, “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.” Now is a time for us to reflect on the road we have travelled, look forward to the road ahead and advance with expectation.

Jonathan Long

Global Connections

“It’s like coming back home.” Sara, Grade 11, smiles as she is thrown back into the lane of endless memories she made over exchange during her time in Melbourne, Australia.

Under the Round Square association, Woodstock sends a group of chosen students to different schools all around the world for a period of six to ten weeks. While Sara, Devika and Aakriti from Grade 11 enjoyed the city lights in different parts of Australia, Yigha and Joon from Grade 9, went on an adventure to South Africa.

Generally exchange students stay with families that volunteer to be their hosts. For many students it is difficult to think about staying away in a different country with a completely new family. But for most this experience becomes a life changing experience.

Aakriti went to Scotch College in Australia. “I had a really good time there. The people were so friendly and we were really treated like guests.”



Yigha and Joon in South Africa

Sara and Devika went to Carey Baptist Grammar School and Scotch College, Australia, respectively. I ask them what Woodstock could take from her exchange school, Devika is instantly ready with a response. “Woodstock could be more open. In Sydney it was so easy to get along with people...there were no cliques. Everyone kind of talked to everyone.”

When I ask them if they were closer than Woodstock as a community, both Devika and Sara disagree. “Woodstock is very closely knit. You know everyone around you. Carey is a big school, people barely know or notice you. Though everyone is really, really friendly.”

Devika adds, “I would agree, people would talk to you all the time and would be always ready to help you but still, Woodstock is a community. Scotch is a school.” Tenzin feels differently. She says “In South Africa I met the most amazing and kindhearted people. People you could build relationships with faster than you could think. Strangers are not afraid to walk up to you and compliment your outfit or walk you to class.”

She adds, “One thing I missed was diversity. It was weird not seeing different faces.”

It is surprising how much students learn while on exchange. “There is definitely a lot of independence. School finishes early so I would go around the city on my own and socialize with friends in the evenings. I learnt a lot about how to manage time and how to survive in a big city on my own,” is how Sara describes her learning experience.

Aakriti also finds it educational how being on an exchange taught her about independence and allowed her to find her own way. While Australia taught Sara, Devika and Aakriti about independence Tenzin learnt never to



Abby, 9th Grade, went on exchange to King’s Academy in Jordan, along with her classmate Tanya (not pictured).

miss any opportunity in South Africa, “I think I learnt to try new things and that every opportunity is something you should try out. Yes you don’t want to ride an ostrich, but you’ll regret not doing it later.”

Going to a completely different part of the world and then coming back to lots of work is sometimes what holds people back from going on exchanges. Tenzin and classmate Joon have just returned from South Africa to face exams and are dealing with the work they had left behind.

When I ask Tenzin if she would do it all over again despite the amount of work, she replies enthusiastically, “Yes., it was totally worth it.”

-Shreya, Grade 12

Live @ Lincoln Center



"We came from different places but we all sang the same music - together and beautifully."

-Isabella, Grade 10

Photo: Bethany Okie

When I was in high school, I was fortunate enough to be part of choirs and drama productions that traveled to festivals and competitions where we felt the thrill of performing for a wider audience, receiving constructive feedback, and seeing how we stack up against peers.

At Woodstock, we have a fine music program that stands out in India, but due to our remote location, our students lack access to the sort of enriching activities I found so meaningful when I was their age.

Two years ago, a dorm parent suggested to me that I contact his friend who worked for an organization in New York called Manhattan Concert Productions. MCP organizes high-profile concert

events in prestigious performing venues for participating high school ensembles. It was the sort of experience our students were missing and to participate would take massive efforts in preparation, fundraising, and several rounds of auditions.

Piece-by-piece it came together and on March 31st, 21 students from Grades 9-12 left Mussoorie to take part in the National Festival Chorus under the baton of renowned choral conductor Dr. Rollo Dilworth. This was the first time MCP has had participants from another country. After a few days of sight-seeing in NYC, the students took part in 3 days of intensive rehearsals to get ready for their performance in Lincoln Center.

In between, they visited museums, landmarks and sampled some of New York's finest street food. We also heard a cathedral choir, a black gospel choir, and were fortunate enough to see two Broadway shows during our time in the city as well.

As is always the case with these sort of high school enrichment experiences, the full impact won't be understood until years have passed, but here are a few of the students' own reflections as expressed on the journey back to India. I trust that they will reflect our thankfulness for those who supported us financially and logistically.

-Abe Okie, Choir Director



Photo: Abe Okie



Photo: Bethany Okie

"I fell in love with the love for music that exists in the city. Every place had its own performers and artists. Music for them seemed to be a way of life."

-HyunYoung, Grade 12

"Trips like these can give students a wider perspective of the world and some time out of the Woodstock bubble... It's important for students to have arts-related enrichment because they help us have a wider view of things around us...we learn more from experiences than from our books."

-Patthamawade, Grade 12

"As a group, it was so beautiful when we sang together in Grand Central station. It was the best we had ever sounded and I felt really close to the group."

-HyunYoung, Grade 12

"My favorite part of the trip was the final rehearsal with students from the US. At first, we had very different understandings of the music so we did not sound great, but as we rehearsed together, we became as one group and started to sound much better."

-Donghyun, Grade 12

"I learned that music isn't only about what's written on the paper. I learned that music is a lot about the soul, the story behind it and listening to fellow musicians."

-Haesoo, Grade 11

"My most memorable musical experience was singing for children at the women's shelter. Before that, I never realized that our singing could make a child so happy or interacting with them for 15 minutes could make them feel cared for."

-Meghna, Grade 10

"We came from different places but we all sang the same music - together and beautifully. We all worked together and no one was judging anyone because we didn't all know each other. There was a joy of being surrounded by other amazing singers, people I didn't know, and putting different dynamics in action while singing."

-Isabella, Grade 10

"I feel so happy to be able to come on this trip. Not only because it's New York, but the whole experience of seeing street performers, Broadway shows, church services and performing in a place as prestigious as Lincoln Center. It shows the musical culture of an entire city."

-Aditi, Grade 11

"I learnt how to blend with an unknown group and understand various backgrounds of people. I learnt humility because sometimes you are only as great as the people you meet. The people I met were outstanding musicians. I learnt how to love and feel the music. Our conductor Mr Dilworth really instilled the idea of soul within us which took our music to a whole new level."

-Rishi, Grade 11

"Singing in the Lincoln center was unforgettable. This isn't some ordinary hall. This is a place where people dream of performing and I am eternally grateful for such an opportunity to perform there. I also really enjoyed our group singing together at random moments, I feel like those times have the most meaning."

-Sophie, Grade 9



Photo: Ein Jung '14

Academics Outdoors

“Our Himalayan location is the perfect extension of any classroom. It comes with authentic learning circumstances that can challenge students beyond the four walls of a building.”

-Andrew Hepworth



At the Aglar Photo: Trish Pearson

On the 17th and 18th of March, Woodstock students took their academic studies outside the classroom for the annual Outdoor Learning Weekend. Released from the constraints of the school buildings and bells, learning can come alive and students get to learn through experience. Our Himalayan location is the perfect extension of any indoor classroom. It comes with authentic learning circumstances that can challenge students well beyond the four walls of a building. Here are a few student reflections from their Outdoor Learning Weekend experiences.

**-Andrew Hepworth
Head of Outdoor Education**

Geography, Physics, Math and the Aglar River

“For Outdoor Learning Weekend, the 10th Grade geography students went on a trip to the Aglar river. When we reached the river, we felt in a very light mood because the whole landscape was so beautiful. My favourite task was calculating the speed of the river and the slope gradient. I learned so much about math, physics and geography all while having so much fun.”

-Sohail, Grade 10

“My group was the first to calculate the speed of the river using a measuring tape, stop watch and an orange. Soon after this we wrote descriptions of the landscapes and drew different parts of the river. We also measured the slope of the valley using a clinometer we made from a protractor, a straw and a pebble dangling from a string.”

-Aadevg, Grade 10

“We got to experience river erosion, deposition and other river processes. I never imagined that I would have grasped these concepts so easily. I found outdoor learning to be a unique way to learn what we would in the classroom.”

-Vashisht Grade 10

“The best part of our trip was applying what we were learning to an actual river. We were able to learn about river formations and calculate the speed of the river and the slope of the gradient of the surrounding hills.”

-Apoorva, Grade 10

“My favourite part of the trip was getting to draw the different landscapes simply because I love art. The best thing about the activity was that there were multiple subjects involved so we didn’t have to focus on only one aspect the whole time.”

-Meghna, Grade 10

Environmental Studies in Rajaji

A group of Upper Years students spent Outdoor Learning Weekend at Rajaji National Park. Here are a few of the things they learned from their experience:

“There are various indicator species in Rajaji including deer, king cobra, tiger and the wolf spider. These are species which indicate the overall health of a forest.”

-Kabeer, Grade 12

“I learned about the Lantana. It is from North America and is an invasive species with a pungent smell. The Lantana provides shelter to animals and its flowers are eaten by butterflies. However, it takes over the land.”

-Kartik, Grade 11

“I learned about the weird Hornbill birds that cement the female in while she takes care of the eggs. I also learned how important the Sal tree is to them.”

-Miriam, Grade 12

“I learned that the Asian and Indian tectonic plates made the Himalayas but the Tethys Sea formed the Shivaliks.”

-Priam, Grade 11

“I learned how the barking deer signal for predators - individual barks for tigers and barking together for leopards.”

-Amrita, Grade 11

“I learned a lot about endemic species and how it differs from indigenous species and each of their value to the ecosystem.”

-Prathana, Grade 11

“I learned that Peacocks lose their feathers during monsoon because its hard to maintain their tails with less food.”

-Fioana, Grade 11

“Elephants eat the branches of the Rohini tree and remove the leaves to get salt they need from the plant.”

-Rhea, Grade 12

“I learned how camera traps have been used to classify tigers and count them and check their density. They are triggered by motion or thermal sensors. Most animals don’t mind the camera flash, but the elephants hate them.”

-Prathana, Grade 11

“I learned that berries from the Rohini tree are used to make *sindoor*.”

-Gurnihal, Grade 12

“I learned about succession; how plants, shrubs, herbs and bushes help in the growing of other plants and trees.”

-Sumi, Grade 11

“I learned how to tell the difference between leopard and dog paw marks”

-Arvid, Grade 11

“I learned about the tissue paper plant and that while it is super soft, it is also an invasive species.”

-Antra, Grade 11

Spring 2015



Art in Rishikesh Photo: Adam Hubbard



Jazz Jam 2015 Photo: Mathai, Grade 11



Students visiting Dunda Village



Swish-a-thon Photo: Mayuri, Grade 11



Spring Play: Metamorphosis Photo: Bethany Okie



Celebrating Losar Photo: Lalitha Krishnan



Lucknow Field Trip Photo: Andy Francis

PASSAGE: International Math Competition



Photo: David Raju

In March, six Woodstock students traveled to Nanjing International School in China for the North East Asia Mathematics Competition (NEAMC). Their numerical adventure began last semester when the NEAMC PASSAGE programme was began by Mathematics teacher David Raju Vundi. "To select the team that would represent Woodstock School at the competition, we conducted a common eligibility test for students in Grades 7, 8 and 9 and selected a small group of potential candidates. After a month of coaching, the final participants were selected," says Mr David. The selected students went on to meet twice a week to sharpen their math skills and practice NEAMC rounds in the NEAMC passage.

NEAMC is an international mathematics competition for 14 and 15 year old students that is held annually. The competition is comprised of individual and team rounds, where students test their mettle against questions developed by international math professionals. While there exists a healthy competitive spirit, the emphasis is on providing students with opportunities to build teams and friendships with peers from other schools.

Woodstock's enrichment programme not only includes activities such as music, sports, life skills and the arts, but also encourages the development of core academic areas such as Mathematics and the Sciences.

"We went feeling nervous, tried our level best, and came back with smiling faces and one of the best experiences ever," said Mehar, Grade 9. She and her teammates had a good reason to smile as they placed 9th out of 38.

This is the first time Woodstock School has participated in the competition. "I feel that the PASSAGE was a tremendous success. Not only did we fare well in the competition, but high-performing students were inspired and pushed to a new level," explains David. Healeam, a Grade 9 student, captured the team sentiment well, "This competition has made me realize what level I was in math and motivated me to study harder!"

-Ben Bowling



Photo: Lalitha Krishnan

"My students are self-starters, self-motivated, and self-disciplined. They want to build. They want to create. They want to own their work. And, they don't want me to get in the way."
- Mike Pesavento, Head of Education Technology

The Robotic Club headed by Mike in Upper Years is a hubbub of mechanical whirring and clicking as students put their creations to the test.

According to Mike, the robotics programme provides a constant opportunity for students to solve problems. The combination of using engineering and software creates a dynamic environment. Students develop problem solving skills involving math, programming, engineering, physics, and logic. Tasks assigned to the students are designed to help them take ownership of the learning process. They actively develop problem-solving skills and the collaborative outlook necessary to become innovative creators.

Mike points to his students and says, "The future is here!"

"We're building a robot which takes 2 minutes on an average to solve a Rubik cube and we built it in 3 hours" says Umang sitting beside his smiling teammate, Florian.

"I'm building a robotic elephant which walks," says Cory, clearly excited about completing his project with the addition of a mechanical trunk.

Aryan, who joined the club when he was in Grade 8 echoes the voice of the club. "It's really nice to see the robot actually work after you've programmed it! I worked on a robotic snake that follows the remote as a tracker, he says.

Our Junior Robotics Programme like their senior counterpart, is a club of curious minds. Mentoring them is Rajneesh Daniel, Technology Teacher.

Playing around with Education/Expansion/Mindstorms Lego Kits these students pick up more skills than they bargained for. Whether its programming to detect colours or pick up objects, they understand the potential of robotics in the real world.

"Our next project is a humanoid...it can be useful in our daily lives for fetching water," says Sukhmanpreet, Grade 5.

Young Inventors



Photo: Mathai, Grade 11

"I think this was a nice opportunity for us to make our minds creative...this (robot) can turn and move in a 360° direction and can be programmed to shoot at different ranges," says Aaryan, Grade 5.

The Robotics club was made possible by funding from our Distinguished Alumnus, T Z Chu '52.

-Lalitha Krishnan



Photo: Ben Bowling



Junior Robotics Club

Cooking Up a Taste of Home



Photo: Jiyeon, Grade 11

“Cooking with friends shows how we bond as a sort of family in Woodstock and I think it is a very important part of our dorm lives.”
- Jahnvi, Grade 10

“On the weekend, the girls of Midlands regularly cook a variety of dishes from their home country to share with their friends. The aroma of simmering spices joins the clattering of pots and pans and fills the pantry with anticipation. Food from different countries; Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and American are all prepared simultaneously. This is one way to blend different cultures and experiences, and different tastes from other countries. My friends try to eat as healthy as they can by cooking healthy and fresh vegetables. Also, they cook homemade comfort food. The girls not

only enjoy eating together, but they have a lot of fun cooking with their classmates, cutting, frying, boiling food. Here is what the girls are saying about our weekend cooking times.”

-Jiyeon, Grade 11

“I love eating and cooking with my friends. It’s a time where you can really chill with you friend without having to think about other things and it’s a fun time to talk.”

-Aakriti, Grade 11

“We get to bond and share different conversations.”

-Kezia, Grade 11

“Usually my cook or my parents cook for me so it’s interesting to be involved in cooking and eating as well. It is also cool to eat food from all over the place. It just opens you to be in a whole new world.”

-Amrita, Grade 11

“It’s a good time to bond with your friends and have fun.”

-Prapti, Grade 11



Photo: Jiyeon, Grade 11



Photo: Jiyeon, Grade 11

Preparing for Exams



Photo: Alex Manton '84

One of the hallmarks of a Woodstock education is attention to holistic development, but that is not at the expense of solid academic preparation. We may prefer that universities look holistically at young adults, but in many regions of the world admissions remains credential-based. For this reason Woodstock takes care to ensure our students may earn entry qualifications recognized around the world.

Faculty prepare students in the delivery of their curriculum, utilize practice questions for internal tests, and Upper Years students sit for preliminary exams to receive feedback before taking external exams. Other support available for students preparing for exams includes practice test materials in the library, dorms, and online, and PASSAGE activities geared toward test prep, for example SAT Critical Reading and SAT Math.

We know that for many of our students English is a second language, and while they are very capable of academic achievement, reading comprehension is often a weakness, particularly in timed testing environments. Students are strongly encouraged to read for 20-30 minutes a day at their grade level as this has been shown to be the best way to improve Critical Reading scores. As a parents, you can be involved to encourage your child to read during holiday periods.

The ESL and Counseling teams and Math and Writing Centres are happy to work with students to prepare a personalized study plan for testing and help students

manage test anxiety. The Centres are staffed throughout the school day when students have free periods, and extra faculty and peer support is made available at the voluntary extended study hall.

Dorm parents and advisors often go out of their way to provide a comfortable home atmosphere, a pet to cuddle, or some fresh baked goods during exam periods to reduce stress.

Several years ago, a reputable test prep vendor offered an SAT preparation course on campus, but results were inconclusive, with many participants showing negligible improvement or even suffering in their schoolwork. A decision was taken to encourage students desiring intensive exam prep to seek it during holiday breaks, when the impact on grades (the #1 factor in North American and Indian admissions!) is minimized. Students may take advantage of a curated list provided by the College Counselors for free online and external paid test prep referrals for use during holidays.

In addition to these supports and our formative internal assessments, our Learning Support and Counseling teams provide evaluations in-

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house and through referral partners. Learning Support works with an educational psychologist in Delhi to assess students to receive regular support and accommodations on exams. The counselors provide career interest inventories and screenings for depression and anxiety, and partner with the Institute of Career Studies, Lucknow, for Indian university aptitude testing.

At Woodstock we never want to be simply teaching to the exam, but we do want to keep academic standards high and provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their strengths and earn qualifications. Through our emphases on developing critical thinkers who are lifelong learners and whole, balanced people, we aim to prepare students for success in all aspects of their adult lives.

-Renee Bowling
College and Career Counsellor

Some of the external exams regularly taken by students


CEM Durham educational benchmarking
IGCSE
PSAT
SAT
ACT

TOEFL
IELTS
Advanced Placement
ABRSM music exams

On Holy Ground: Exploring Local Places of Worship

During Outdoor Learning Weekend, Grade 9 students visited local places of worship including a Mosque, a Jain Temple, a Hindu Mandir, a Catholic Church, a Protestant Church, a Stupa and a Gurudwara. They took their field manuals with them and recorded religious symbols that they encountered. Later, they researched the symbols to discover their importance and reported their findings as part of a class assignment. Here are a few excerpts from their field journals.

-Dr Brian Dunn, Chaplain



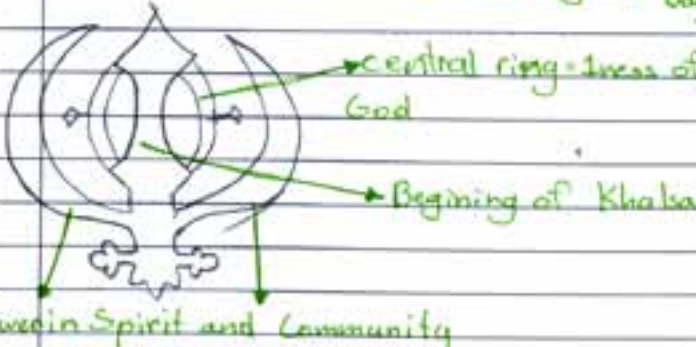
- Many Muslims wear a hat to show that they are a follower of Muhammad
- In the Quran all companions of Muhammad were head coverings, at all times, which is one of the reasons Muslims adopted this practice
- This was also one of Muhammad's wives
- A prayer cap is most often worn during prayer either at home or in a mosque
- For men, it is mustahab (seeking the love of God)
- Head covering is not required in a mosque but is a sign of respect
- Choosing not to cover your head is a sign of vanity / pride
- Sign of unity, all Muslims wear hat / cover their head

Tshokey, Grade 9

Gurud Wara 1511

Sikh Temple

Gurud = gate/door



Charis, Grade 9



→ the prayer wheel

Tibetan prayer wheels are used for spreading spiritual blessings and well being. The prayer wheels have the mantra inscribed on them (om Mani Padme Hum)

Rolling with your hand, you turn clockwise.


www.dharma-haven.org



→ lungta (wind horse)

Lungta refers to "good fortune" and "luck". When we entered the Buddhist stupa, we could see a lot of lungtas hanging. The lungtas are the prayers

Hamin, Grade 9




→ The two keys crossing each other is a symbol in catholic church. the symbolizes the keys of "Kingdom of Heaven"

God said to Peter, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

(Matthew 16:14)

Hamin, Grade 9

2. Paduka



- It is worn today by saints of Hindu
- It also means foot prints of Hindu gods
- Similarly, Buddha's foot prints are worshipped under the Bodhi tree in Bodhi Gaya.

Sooyeon, Grade 9



Photo: Brian Dunn

“I’ve come to realize that although reality is harsh, there is hope for change.” -Apurv, Grade 12

Clean Mullingar is an initiative to find lasting solutions to the problem of littering around Mullingar. **Ambar** (Grade 10) is the student leader.

How has your view of the world changed since getting involved?

I have always been conscious about not littering. Looking at Mullingar and the people who live around the area and the visitors, I realise that action and education have to go together if we want to succeed.

What have you learned about yourself?

That I can be a leader in anything that I want to do. When I joined, I had not taken a role in leading a project on such a large scale.

What have you learned about community engagement?

I have found that to get things moving requires time and patience.

What has been your most memorable experience?

Presenting to the ITM directors and to the Woodstock Board of Directors was very memorable.

Dunda is a village nearby to Woodstock that the school has partnered with to create sustainable development. **Apurv**, Grade 12, is the student project manager for the primary school building project and **Elizabeth**, Grade 11, has been involved in the project from the beginning.

How has your view of the world changed?

Apurv: I’ve come to realize that although reality is harsh, there is hope for change. However, this requires meticulous planning, smooth execution, a high level of expertise and creating social awareness.

Elizabeth: I realize how fortunate I am to have what I do. This gives me the motivation to help others and to improve the community.

What have you learned about yourself?

Elizabeth: I have learned to appreciate what I have instead of complaining and wanting more.

What new knowledge have you acquired?

Apurv: I have gained the skills and experience to be able to address large groups and lead small to medium-sized teams towards a clear goal. I have learnt to manage deadlines and handle unexpected setbacks along the way.

Elizabeth: How it truly feels to work as a team to accomplish a task that we are all passionate about.

What has been your most memorable experience?

Apurv: My most memorable experience was addressing a general meeting of the villagers and assuring them that I would do my utmost to help their dream come true.

Why should more students get involved?

Apurv: This an opportunity to discover more about yourself and make a positive impact on the lives of an entire community.

Elizabeth: Not only do you get the opportunity to help others, but you learn something from the people and about yourself.



Students meet with the ITM Board *Photo: Lalitha Krishnan*



Apurv giving a presentation at Dunda *Photo: Sanjava Mark*

Each edition of Life @ Woodstock will provide an opportunity for a Woodstock parent to share their part of their journey with you. This month, we feature Jeph Mathias, who shares some of his reflections on staying close as a family even when you are physically apart. Jeph and his wife Kaaren live in Mussoorie with their four children, Shanti (Grade 10), Shar (Grade 10), Rohan (Grade 7) and Jalore (Grade 1) who attend Woodstock.

Staying Close, When You Are Far Away

After years in remote Himachal Pradesh, we came to Woodstock for its high quality education, extracurricular activities and the kind of peers it’s hard to find in a village of 200 people. We were fortunate to be able to change our work and live in Mussoorie as a family. As hillside parents, we have the best of both worlds - engaging in the development work we feel called to and having effervescent conversations (aka noisy) around the dinner table with our four children.

We are lucky but we do understand what separation is. Our two eldest children studied overseas for six months and only returned from New Zealand in December 2014. We’re very happy about being together again, but also feel very positive about the time away. Here are some of our reflections on staying close when you are far apart:

Communication

Skype calls several times a week, e-mails and letters were essential. I just don’t know how parents managed before the internet!

Quality Conversations

Of course we talked about subject choices and what club Shanti might choose and Shar’s holiday plans, but it was equally important – no, much more important – to make sure we talked about how our girls felt, what they were thinking about, what they enjoyed or feared.

Connections with Others

As well as directly with our children talking to the families they were staying with helped us understand their living space and their host-parent’s reflections on emotions and stressors showed us life from our girls perspectives.

Important Events

Birthdays of course, but also exams, music recitals, sports events etc. are times to be close. We tried to keep aware of events and stressors and be sure to talk about them, communicate at the right time, listen for feelings.

Visits

Lucky I had to go to NZ, and took the opportunity to spend time with the girls, doing things they wanted. A visit to a show in an art gallery stands out as a magical day. Spending time with both host families also helped me better understand my children’s worlds.

Of course we missed our kids while they were away but we were only apart, not separated. We shared their journey and their growth. We were all delighted when they returned to Mussoorie. We have also all been enriched by their adventures away. We are closer than ever now.

-Jeph Mathias



The Mathias family atop Bhaba Pass

From the Editor



The Greek philosopher Heraclitus once observed, "No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man." I might add that no student ever goes to the same Woodstock.

What the school was yesterday is not the same as it is today. Nor will it remain unchanged in the days to come. One's identity – both as and individual and as part of the school – can seem fluid and ever changing. However, a part of the school never seems to leave the lives of Woodstockers.



Woodstock Logo Circa 1934

I was excited to hear that Woodstock is developing a Heritage Centre on campus. This will be a place to welcome visitors and allow them to walk through over 160 years of Woodstock history.

Mark Windsor '78 and Anne McGregor are currently combing through the archives to lay the foundation for the displays. In the process, they have made some interesting discoveries. Did you know that the Woodstock logo was not the Lyre Tree until the 1940s?

Even more fascinating is that from 1900-1918 (and perhaps longer) the school colours were green and pink, reflecting the silvan surroundings and the geraniums in window boxes.

This first edition of Life@Woodstock marks yet another change in Woodstock's visual identity. The school's historic colours remain Brown and Gold. These colours will continue to be used for the Woodstock Tiger in sports, for the historic school gate and for vintage merchandise. The marketing, website and publication colours will be those of the publication that you are holding in your hands.

Much like the colours of early 1900s, the inspiration came from our surroundings – the red roofs of the school buildings dotted over the beautiful green foliage of the hillside. We felt it was time to refresh the way that potential students and parents meet us, as a school with a deep history but also one that is vibrant with possibility.

For all Woodstock alumni, whether the class of '35 or the upcoming class of '15, the Woodstock experience is entirely different and yet the same.

What are the common threads of a Woodstock education that span nearly 2 centuries? From my time here, they seem to include a focus on the entire person, soul, mind and body, our stunning Indian Himalayan environment, the richness of a multicultural community and the pursuit of service to humanity.

While the Woodstock river may swell and recede and its banks shift slightly over time, its heritage forms a deep and beautiful canyon that has etched its path in the unfolding history of our students' lives, India and the world.

-Ben Bowling

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