

THROUGH FAITH AND LEARNING

# BLUE & WHITE

FALL 2017

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## Principal's Message by Sue Moench, Class of '72

As I settle down to prepare the Principal's letter for this edition of the Blue and White, I reflect on the wonderful things MSA has accomplished over the past 128 years. Our school has been an integral part of the educational community in Bermuda and has provided an excellent foundation for our many graduates as they have pursued their goals both on the Island and overseas. MSA has a rich history, but it is the future, with its changes and approaches to teaching and learning, that will stimulate and engage our students to be well-balanced, engaged global citizens, collaborative leaders, innovative entrepreneurs, skilled problem solvers, and effective communicators. MSA continues to advance its teachers through professional development so they can provide optimum opportunities for students both in and outside of the classroom. The curriculum promotes competencies that help students build on what they know, how they think and what they can do. Student progress is assessed through standardized testing which allows teachers to maximize student learning experiences. As a Catholic school, our students learn to live and model the life that Jesus has taught us to live by being kind, caring, compassionate, humble, and honest.

So, with that being said, I want to share one of the many terrific things happening in our school this year:

**Kagan Cooperative Learning for Student Engagement:** Since the beginning of our school year, our teachers have been engaged in a professional development initiative known as Kagan—Cooperative Learning for Student Engagement. To date, the teachers have completed three sessions of professional learning as well as classroom coaching lead by Kagan instructor, Dr. Rick DuVall. What is Kagan? The Kagan process uses revolutionary instructional strategies to boost student engagement and achievement. The strategies, known as "Kagan structures", engage and motivate every student. The use of the Kagan structures in the classroom moves it from being a traditional classroom to one where students are interacting with their peers and with the curriculum. The more students are engaged, the more they learn.

Engaging our students in their learning and moving them from being great learners to fantastic learners is the key to this teaching and learning initiative. Engaging teachers in the process and coaching them on how to use the structure is moving many from being traditional teachers to engaged teachers with elevated levels of student activity happening in their classrooms. The structures are easy to implement in the classroom and students are

# Chairman's Report by R. Paul Fortuna

It is hard to believe that we are already three months into the 2017/18 school year!

This summer a number of enhancements were undertaken to improve the school infrastructure. We continued with our air-conditioning installations and upgrades and completed a full renovation of the Main Office and Development Office. In addition, the auditorium received a makeover with the installation of a new stage and new vents to improve airflow.

Four Board members stepped off of the Board at the end of the last school year;

Marisa Stones after 8 years, Joe Amaral after 4 years, Janice Gutteridge after 4 years and Father Paul Voisin after 8 years. On behalf of the Board and the entire MSA family, I extend heartfelt thanks and appreciation for their contributions and support of MSA.

It is with great pleasure that I announce the three newly appointed Board members: Father Joseph Tierney, Douglas R. Letson, and Father Vladimir Sobolewski all as Bishop's appointees. Father Joseph is the President of Cardinal Hayes High School in Bronx, New York. Douglas R Letson is a former President of the University of

St. Jerome's College, Waterloo, Ontario Canada. Father Vladimir is Pastor of St. Patrick's Church and serves as Vicar General of the Diocese. The current Board Executives are, myself, R Paul Fortuna as Chairman, Greg Rymon-Lipinski as Treasurer and Marcy King as Secretary.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the donors to our Annual Giving Program, who through their generosity allow us to enrich our students' educational experience. Thank you for your continued support of MSA.

## Principal's Message Continued

becoming accustomed to their increased engagement and interaction with their peers.

The Kagan initiative requires teachers to participate in five days of professional development to learn the variety of structures and to implement them into their lesson planning. So far, MSA teachers have participated in three days, with the final two days occurring at the beginning of the 2018-19 school year. The real success of the approach is the ongoing coaching support received from Kagan instructors as well as the school's administration. The goal is to have this engagement become part of the culture of our school. We look forward to a great school year, filled with great learning opportunities. To date, our students have challenged themselves academically, athletically and spiritually.

May the spirit of the Christmas season bring each member of our MSA community peace, happiness, and joy to be appreciated throughout 2018. In the new year, we welcome you to visit our school to enjoy the enthusiasm generated by this community of learners.

## Bazaar THANK YOU!

On behalf of the MSA Family, we wish to thank everyone who participated in making our 2017 Bazaar a success. From the organizing committee and construction team to the stall managers and raffle sellers - please know we value everyone's time and commitment to MSA. As you could see from all of the smiles, everyone had a wonderful time at the Country Fair!





# An Adventurous Journey-

## The Award is about stepping out of your comfort zone.

MSA senior, Emily Sinclair completed her Gold Award expedition and residential project in Zambia this past summer with three other female students as part of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Bermuda program.

The local program is overseen by National Director, Traci Burgess and, MSA Alumnus, Conor McLaughlin. When asked how the students fared on the expedition, Ms. Burgess said: "They were pushed to their limits, but together they reaped an amazing experience for each of them to take a leadership role and carry each other through rough times."



Emily agreed that it was a challenge to keep control of their emotions, but she's learned valuable leadership skills, "especially during stressful and somewhat scary times." The expedition also taught skills like lighting a fire with flint, organizing and cooking on an open fire, mountaineering, and proper navigation by nature. All of which were tested when scaling through a bat cave called "Devil's Mouth" and hiking the

Dambo marshlands with a map and compass through grass taller than their heads and dry riverbeds that were difficult to identify on the map.

The volunteer residential project at the Donada School for the disabled was one of the most rewarding aspects for all of the students on the trip. They had an opportunity to spend time with the local people and play with the children while volunteering at the village school. For Emily, "It was nice to put other people first. I will always remember their smiles."

For the past 12 years, Mrs. Charlene White has been involved in the D of E program at MSA as an Award Leader and an Assessor. "I enjoy getting to know students outside the classroom environment and seeing their progress during the school year. It is satisfying to know that they are well-prepared and receive good evaluations from their Assessors as part of our work throughout the year."

Mrs. White stays motivated by the energy of the students and the support from MSA's Administration. Ms. Janet Burke Laing is another faculty member who helps with the program and assists with weekend expeditions.

"As a high school teacher in Canada, I was deeply committed to the Provincial



Envirothon Competitions and environmental education initiatives. Its structure was very similar to the D of E program. Both are structured to help prepare students for a competition or expedition."

And for the students, the Award is more than hiking and completing the set number of skill, physical activity, and volunteer hours. "It's about meeting new people, having new experiences and stepping outside of your comfort zone," says Emily. "The Award provides opportunities to do things you never thought you would do. I am seventeen years old and through this experience, I have already crossed two things off my bucket list: staying up in an airport all night, and going to Africa."

MSA has had a long-standing tradition with the Award and we encourage all of our students to try out the program. If you are alumni of D of E, you can register on their website to stay connected with the program or consider becoming a volunteer. Get involved with the Award and make a difference in changing the lives of Bermuda's youth! The International Award program in Bermuda is available free of charge to everyone between the ages of 14 to 24. Contact the Award Office for additional details on programs, volunteering and alumni events.

T: 537.4868

E: [director@theaward.bm](mailto:director@theaward.bm)

W: [theaward.bm](http://theaward.bm)



# COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT SERVICES



## MSA's Ever-Evolving Support for Today's Students

As times change, so do the needs of our students. Today the most effective educational programs not only acknowledge this but embrace and rise to its challenges. MSA has proven its ability to continually evolve and improve upon its services, most notably by choosing to adopt the Alberta curriculum. Because it is based upon the newest and most valued research of how today's students learn, it is intrinsically modeled to promote active student learning through an inquiry-based approach, allowing students of all abilities to perform at his or her optimal level.

Recognizing this approach to learning must begin at the earliest ages with our new Early Years Program (ELP). Based on the Reggio Emilia philosophy which is an experiential and language-based program, it fosters the love of learning through exploration and the sharing of increasingly unique and creative ideas.

As one can imagine, unlike the days of teachers standing at the front of the class giving all the same information to all the students, this approach requires a great deal more direct teacher-student interaction. Instead, the instruction

is often given individually or in small groups in order to address a wide range of abilities. MSA acknowledged this need by not only establishing small class sizes, particularly for the younger students in ELP and Elementary but also prioritizing funding of the highest quality professional development for all teachers in order to develop the most effective practices.

In addition, MSA has ensured it has the necessary infrastructure to support parents, teachers, and students as they navigate their unique path to success by forming a Student Services Team. Valerie Martins, Dina Allen, Lisa Rhind and Bonnie Exell provide support for teachers as they offer modifications for learning differences as well as support for accelerated learners.

Mrs. Martins and Mrs. Allen are assigned to help ELP to Grade 5 teachers. At the start of each new year, they collect a wealth of information through a variety of screening tools and observations in order to assess strengths and identify needs. They assist teachers in the classroom during differentiated lessons and provide small group interventions or enrichment opportunities for students in both language arts and math. Parents are involved from the earliest stages in team meetings to share information

and help coordinate external support services such as speech and language, Reading Clinic tutoring, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, or vision and auditory processing as needed. In addition, Mrs. Martins and Mrs. Allen ensure all students needing special accommodations in the class are given every opportunity to perform to his or her own potential.

Mrs. Lisa Rhind's role encompasses learning support for students in Grades 6-12. She works with students who might have diagnoses such as attention deficit disorder, dyslexia, executive functioning, organization or processing issues etc. as well as support for

students in the classroom who require one on one or small group instruction. "I prepare Individual Progress Plans (IPP's) with accommodations for our students with diagnosed learning disabilities who may need extra support in the classroom. This can include positioning in the classroom, additional time or isolation when writing tests, and note taking," explains Mrs. Rhind, who also assesses potential candidates for acceptance into middle and high school.

"I liaise with parents and teachers regularly to help support students and to provide information and communication." At the beginning of the school year, Mrs. Rhind and Ms. Bonnie Exell meet with all of the new Grade 6-12 students to make sure they are feeling comfortable in their transition to MSA and to help with any adjustments.

Guidance Counsellor Ms. Bonnie Exell helps middle and high school students in the areas of academic achievement, personal/social development and career development, ensuring our students become productive, well-adjusted adults of tomorrow.

Together the Student Services Team assesses the various needs of students and provides support to our entire school.



# Helping Students Figure Out Their Next Steps After High School -

## CAREER DAY, WORK EXPERIENCE, TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY

Once students enter high school at MSA, there is a focus on identifying a student's individual talents and interests to help them develop their Four-Year Education Plan. Each year Ms. Bonnie Exell, MSA's Guidance Counsellor, organizes a Career Day for our high school students in grades 10 through 12 and students in grade 9 attend work with their parents as part of the Take Our Kids to Work program.



The Career Day is a full-day program where students select from a wide range of information sessions given by local representatives of their fields and career paths. These volunteers, many whom are MSA alumni, offer their time and expertise to help our students expand their knowledge as they make academic decisions as part of our curriculum and work experience programs.

Once in grade 12, students may take part in the Work Experience Program. Working in the community during school hours, students seek to complete work hours in line with their career goals for diploma credit. As part of the program, students are responsible for seeking internship opportunities, obtaining approval and documenting their work hours.

There are two main purposes for students to complete Work Experience:

- To develop the skills, attitudes, and expectations to succeed in the workplace

- To explore career options and opportunities

There are approximately fourteen grade 12 students who are interested in participating in the program, they are required to complete 125 hours of work as part of the course.

It is preferred that students work close to school, in Hamilton or the central parishes as their work hours will be based on their school schedule.

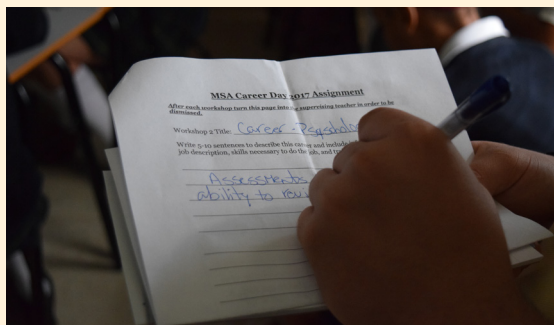
To monitor the student's progress, students are responsible for asking the employer to sign a time sheet and rate their performance on a weekly



basis. Mrs. White, the Work Experience Coordinator, visits the workplace on a regular basis.

We are seeking employers who may be interested in taking a student for work experience in the 2nd semester from February until the end of June.

If you are interested in providing student work experience or could open a door for them at your workplace, please contact Mrs. White at [cwhite@msa.bm](mailto:cwhite@msa.bm) or 292-4134 ext. 1953.



# SUPPORT ANNUAL GIVING

The Annual Giving Program (AGP) aims to support the renewal and improvement of our school for our students through sustained upgrades to our facilities, technology, and student enrichment activities as well as financial aid. Our AGP is a way to directly support the continued improved success of MSA, as tuition alone cannot meet that goal.

AGP contributions support a selection of the major renovation projects that take place around the campus. Most recently the auditorium stage and window vents were replaced as well as technology upgrades to computers and our wireless network. The MSA Auditorium regularly hosts assemblies, music and drama performances, parent conferences, and guest speakers. Outside of school hours, it is utilized by our Home & School and Alumni Association for events and fundraisers. It features prominently as a gathering place for all our MSA students, staff and families. Through the AGP, you can help us continue to upgrade and improve the many facets of our school.



We ask you to consider supporting the AGP fund by pledging to the MSA Foundation this year.

## ANNUAL GIVING PROGRAM GIFTS

Chairman's Club	\$5,000 +
Principal's Club	\$3,000 - \$4,999
Benefactor	\$1,000 - \$2,999
Supporter	\$500 - \$999
Contributor	\$250 - \$499
Friend	\$1 - \$249

☐ I have made a donation by direct deposit of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
BNTB: 20-006-060-556420-200  
HSBC: 010-726784-011  
Please include your name in the memo field.

☐ Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ payable to MSA Foundation – Annual Giving

Donations can be made through the International Charitable Fund of Bermuda which is a 501 (c)(3) entity.

☐ I wish to make a pledge of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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# Alumni Highlight: Conor McLaughlin

## Program Coordinator | The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Bermuda

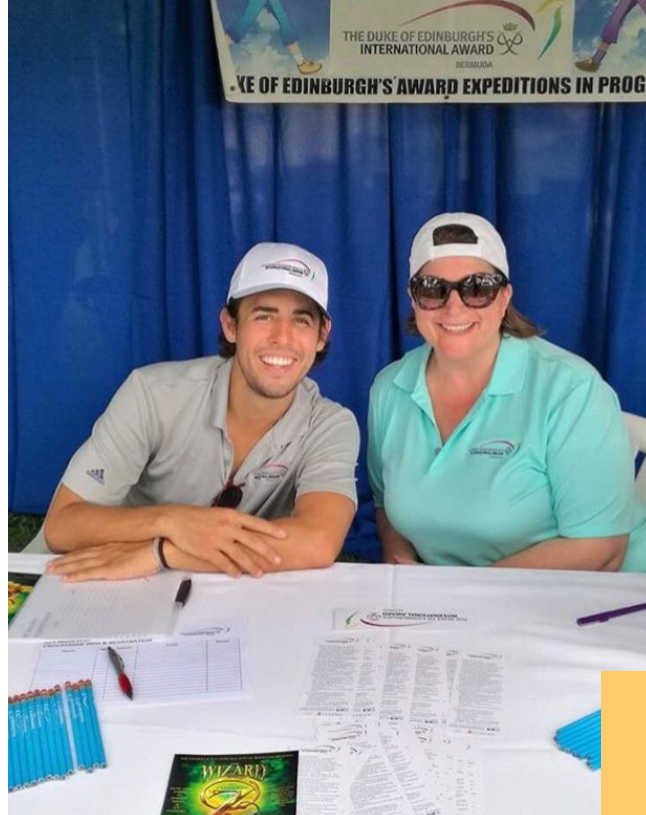
As the Program Coordinator for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Conor McLaughlin holds both the Bronze and Silver Award that he obtained as a student at MSA in 2007 & 2008. We reached out to Conor to ask him a few questions about his experience with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and his advice for any students considering the program.

### **Q: How did your participation with the Award shape you?**

**A:** "My experiences with the Award have shaped me in more ways than I could ever imagine. The Award promotes commitment, not only to complete the Award but a commitment to the community, as well as your own personal development and growth. The routine of a sport, skill, and service that is required through the program is still part of my day-to-day."

### **Q: What is something you learned as a result of D of E?**

**A:** "Through the Award, I found a passion for volunteerism which led me to choose to pursue a degree in International Development at university and has taken me around the world to Thailand, Europe, and most recently South Africa. The confidence and eagerness to explore I learned from my completion of the Award also led me to my current position with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Bermuda. What started off as a volunteer opportunity with the Award became a great opportunity for career growth within the philanthropy sector of Bermuda. I am involved directly with the most amazing volunteers and participants that Bermuda has to offer, and I can 100% say I love what I do!"



### **Q: Why did you stop after Bronze & Silver?**

**A:** "My only regret is not continuing on to my Gold Award. Everyone I speak to that have completed their Gold level have said it is the most challenging yet rewarding experience they have ever had. Bronze and Silver are both challenging and rewarding levels, but I feel I would have personally gotten a lot more out of Gold then I thought I would as a student in high school."

### **Q: What would you like students to know if they're considering D of E?**

**A:** "My advice for high school students would be to take advantage of the opportunities you are given now. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Bermuda is the only country out of the 143 countries and territories that the program is offered free of charge to participants. The friends I made through D of E have been long-lasting, the experiences learned through D of E have been incomparable, and the good times I had through the program have been irreplaceable. I highly recommend taking advantage of the programme and if not D of E then try something else, but be involved. No one ever says, 'Ugh I really wish I did less in high school'. Now is the time to enjoy and do as much as possible."

## Alumni Network

We invite all alumni and MSA family members to join our MSA network by signing up at [www.msacconnected.com](http://www.msacconnected.com). It is a great platform to reconnect with friends, plan your own upcoming events and even become a mentor for one of our existing students or recent graduates. We value each and every member of our MSA family, all alumni, parents, faculty, and staff are welcome to join.



# Calendar of Events

- Wed, Jan 17th, 12 pm & 5:30 pm: School Information Session
- Thurs, Jan 18th, 12 pm: School Information Session
- Fri, Jan 19th, 10:30 am: School Mass – St. Agnes Feast Day
- Wed, Jan 31st - Begin Semester 2
- Mon, Feb 12th - 16th - Semester Break
- Fri, Mar 2nd - MSA Birthday Prayer Service
- Fri, Mar 30th – Fri, Apr 13th - Easter Break



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