THE OVERSEAS SCHOOL OF COLOMBO: 64 AND GOING STRONG

Posted on

The Overseas School of Colombo, Sri Lanka’s oldest internationally accredited educational institution, celebrated its 64th anniversary on the 23rd of September. “Never erase your past. It shapes who you are today and will help you to be the person you will be tomorrow,” said Ziad Abdelnour. Looking back at the past, the journey began in 1957, and the original name was ‘The Colombo School for Overseas Children’. In 1967, the school was granted ‘accredited’ status by the International Schools Association in Switzerland. In 1982, the school changed its name to ‘Overseas Children’s School’. In 1983, the school gained accreditation from the International Baccalaureate Organization, and in 1984, the school was moved to its present location at Pelawatte, Battaramulla. In 1990, the school received further accreditation from the European Council of International Schools and the Middle States Association of Colleges & Schools. In 1996, the school took its present name: The Overseas School of Colombo.

The school follows the International Baccalaureate program from grades one to 12, and current student enrollment is around 350, with a very healthy teacher-student ratio of 1:7. The students represent over 40 countries, and aptly, the school motto is ‘Unity in Diversity. It has always harnessed its diversity as a significant strength.

> Our wish is that The Overseas School of Colombo will continue to be a success story where attributes such as love, care, togetherness, trustworthiness, innovation, and positive energy will sparkle and glow.

Its mission is a commitment to guiding the community toward international and intercultural understanding and to develop the whole person as a responsible learner, striving for personal excellence within a culturally diverse environment.

The school has also been offering scholarships to deserving Sri Lankan students to pursue their secondary education. It is heartening to note that these students have done well in their academic courses and continue to shine in their chosen universities or professions.

In January 2020, recognizing that a pandemic was growing worldwide, the school’s management started working on a Distance Learning Plan. It was implemented in

March with the closure of all schools in Sri Lanka.

The school has prioritized a child's well-being over academics, with the understanding that optimal learning cannot take place without a healthy body, healthy mind, and a sense of belonging. Five areas have been iden[1]tified as the reasons for the success of the distance learning plan offered by the school.

– Clear policies and expectations for all staff

– Caring, innovative and invested teachers

– Healthy parent-school partnership

– Efficient technology systems to support continuous education

– Valuing and embracing ambiguity

In line with the school's vision of being a model of excellence in education through nurturing and empowering its community of learners to achieve global success, the present Head of School – Dr. Michelle Kleiss, has spearheaded developing a strategic plan viewed through five lenses as given below:

WORLD: Leveraging collective efficacy for the benefit of our students

PURPOSE: Prioritizing high quality learning experiences for everyone

POWER: Unleashing empowered thinking across the school community

CHANGE: Committing to an ethos of continuous improvement

STORY: Developing the story of the school as a learning community and build & nurture trust

The Overseas School of Colombo is blessed with a green and spacious campus. Over the years, the school authorities have contributed immensely towards developing its infrastructure and classroom facilities and creating an environment where all stakeholders feel safe, supported, and respected. Even if these physical resources cannot be used at present due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic, the distance learning plan is implemented with the belief that a positive impact on student achievement can be gained despite all other influences in their lives that challenge their success.

The Overseas School of Colombo is a culturally diverse community with students, parents, and staff working in harmony. Our wish is that The Overseas School of Colombo will continue to be a success story where attributes such as love, care, togetherness, trustworthiness, innovation, and positive energy will sparkle and glow.