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IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Chairperson Jaffna College Board
Alumni Message from Principal Solomon
Editor's Greetings
College Students Perform Well in Examinations
Upgrade to Daniel Poor Library
New Junior Vice Principal
English Language Resources
A Generous Gift for Physical Education
Starting an English Laboratory



WELCOME TO "STEPPING UP" FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

On behalf of the Jaffna College Board of Directors, welcome to this first E-newsletter for our College Alumni, *Stepping Up*. I congratulate Principal Solomon and Junior Vice-Principal Gladys Muthurajah for their initiative in starting *Stepping Up*.

Their initiative has stepped up to the Board's challenge to implement a new policy of stakeholder engagement with our Alumni. The Board has recently carried out an extensive review of our governance performance. Following best practice advice specifically for governance development in low-income nations like Sri Lanka, we have adopted a policy to improve our *relationships with stakeholders*. The Board is committed to work together with Alumni for the benefit of Jaffna College students and staff.

I second the Principal's invitation to you to visit the College. I am continually delighted when Alumni visit me to discuss the College's development, how they might contribute, and express their interest in better understanding the Board's role and responsibilities. The Board is committed to better informing you of our work, and looks forward to receiving your feedback. Board minutes are available to you in the Principal's office, for your information.

As a Board, we have been stepping up to meet the challenges facing us. Good things are happening. I trust that this is a journey we may take together.

Rev. Dr. Daniel Thiagarajah, Chairperson, Jaffna College Board of Directors



Alumni Message from Principal Solomon

Welcome to Jaffna College's first Alumni E-newsletter. Greetings to Alumni living in Sri Lanka and overseas, from the Jaffna College Board, staff and current students. Thank you to Junior Vice Principal Ms. Gladys Muthurajah for editing this new newsletter.

The purpose is to keep our Alumni informed about new developments at Jaffna College, and to invite Alumni to share in our joys, struggles and achievements.

Some of you may have heard mixed reports about your College. There is no doubt that the long civil war deeply affected our ability to provide the very best educational environment for our teachers and students. We are making progress, but there is a long way to go. Some of our historic buildings need urgent upgrading. We need to revitalise our English Language program. Our physics and chemistry labs are not up to scratch. The front yard and the playing field still flood in the rainy season. We are not yet connected to Wifi. We would like to pay higher salaries to our dedicated teachers. We need to introduce modern educational technology and teaching methods.

On the positive side, Jaffna College has modernised its governance, policy framework and financial systems. We have a hard-working supportive Board and senior management team. Our teachers are enthusiastic. The College still achieves solid academic results and produces excellent sportsmen and women. We have set priorities in development for staff, teaching of English, upgrading buildings, and new technologies. In 2016 we completed the renovation of a large hall, and in 2017 we repainted the historic Daniel Poor Library – both made possible with assistance from generous Alumni. We have plans for an English Lab. Jaffna College forges ahead despite inadequate resources. The past six months have been particularly difficult.

I welcome Alumni and visitors from around the world to come and visit, to share and contribute your knowledge and support, and to play a role in our future.

Rev. Dr. Davidsathananthan Solomon, Principal Jaffna College solomon3111962@gmail.com

Editor's Greetings

Greetings and welcome to Jaffna College Alumni and supporters from around the world to this first edition of the Jaffna College Alumni E-News.

We plan to feature news and developments from Jaffna College, student and staff achievements, and to use the newsletter to suggest ways you might like to assist the college with educational projects, upgrades to college facilities, projects, scholarships, sponsorships and so forth. We plan to feature reunions and news we receive from Alumni Associations.

We would like to feature short biographies of significant Alumni who have made contributions in their particular field or profession. These could be current Alumni or those who have passed. I cordially invite Alumni and former teachers to email me suggestions.

I invite your feedback and ideas on any newsletter items. Please feel free to post this newsletter on your Facebook page, and to draw it to the attention of other Alumni who may be interested. Names and email addresses to include in our Alumni newsletter database may be emailed to me or to Principal Solomon.

Gladys Nirmala Muthurajah, Junior Vice Principal, gladnirma74@gmail.com

College students perform well in examinations

The most recent Sri Lankan Ministry of Education statistical data on island-wide examination results for 2016 show that Jaffna College is maintaining its reputation for high educational standards. This is especially true of the primary school, which has received outstanding results in the grade 5 scholarship examinations. These results contradict some recent reports that Jaffna College is stagnating.

Thirty-five of the 105 Jaffna College grade 5 students who sat the exams passed above the scholarship cut-off mark, a remarkable 33% compared with 10.49% for the Northern region and just 9.5% for Sri Lanka. Principal Solomon explained, saying, 'this excellent result is due to the dedication of our primary teachers, and the enthusiasm of parents and students to do well'.

In 2016, Jaffna College results were also an improvement on 2015 results for grade 5 and A-level, and were equivalent for O-level. These results exceeded the results for the Northern region at each level, were well above the national average for grade 5, and marginally below the national average for A-level.

The College is proud that its staff, students and parents continue to step up to the challenge of improved educational achievement.

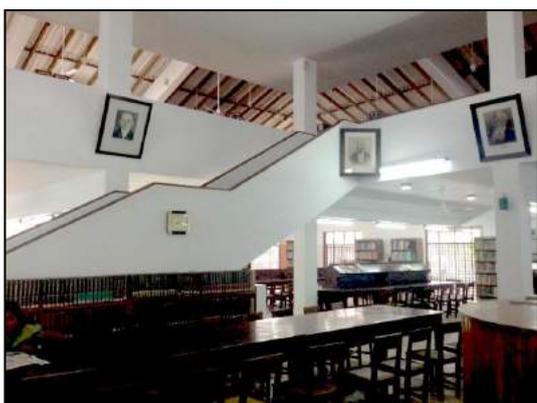


Upgrade to Daniel Poor Library

On 27 June 2017, the College celebrated the repair and repainting of the Daniel Poor Memorial Library at Jaffna College. The Thanksgiving Ceremony was attended by Diocese and College staff. The upgrade was made possible by a generous donation from a Canadian Alumnus.

This notable library, designed by famous Sri Lankan architect Geoffrey Bawa, was built in 1984 and dedicated to the memory of Daniel Poor. Daniel Poor, renowned Presbyterian minister and educator, moved to Vaddukoddai, and founded Batticoala Seminary, a boarding school for boys that was later to become Jaffna College.

Jaffna College would eventually become the most significant educational centre for the entire region, training teachers and Bishops for schools and churches throughout Sri Lanka. After periods of service in Mathurai India and Thellipalai, Daniel Poor returned to Jaffna in 1850 but was struck down by the tragic 1855 cholera epidemic.



Lack of funds held up a much-needed upgrade until 2016-7. Now the library has been painted inside and out, and the interior wooden fittings and furnishings varnished. The Daniel Poor Library is a rejuvenated space for study and contemplation by students, staff and scholars from all over the world. The library has also recently received an Australian donation of contemporary English language books suitable for middle and senior school students.

The Principal invites Alumni from all over the world to visit and admire the restored Library the next time they are visiting Sri Lanka.

New Junior Vice Principal

On 6th April 2017, the Board appointed Ms. Gladys Nirmala Muthurajah as Junior Vice Principal. One of her new responsibilities is Alumni relations, and editing the Jaffna College Alumni E-Newsletter.

Ms. Gladys Nirmala Muthurajah is an alumna who joined Jaffna College staff in 2008. She holds a B.A. Hons. Degree from the University of Jaffna, obtained her Post Graduate Diploma in Education in 2005 from the Open University of Sri Lanka, and has completed the M.A. program in Political Science at the Kamaraj University, South India. She is currently studying her Masters in Education under the National Institution of Education.

Ms. Muthurajah is a dedicated and popular teacher at Jaffna College.

The Board of Directors of Jaffna College and the Principal wish her well in her new role, and invite Alumni to contact her with any news items or suggestions from Alumni.

Gladys Nirmala Muthurajah, gladnirma74@gmail.com



English Language Resources

Australian volunteers in 2017 collected and shipped nine large cartons of English books for the Daniel Poor and Primary school libraries; 270 kilograms of books. The books will also be used in the proposed English Lab.



Margaret Neith organized the project. She said, "It is difficult for students to learn English if they don't have enough English books, DVDs and CDs so they can enjoy reading and practice English."



Jaffna College English teachers helped to unpack the books that have now been taken to the libraries for cataloguing and borrowing.

If Alumni would like to contact Margaret, her email in Australia is johnmarg@netspace.net.au

A Generous Gift for Physical Education

On 14th July 2017, the Williams family from the UK /Colombo came to Jaffna College to donate two large bags of new cricketing and soccer gear for our college students with funds raised in the UK from friends and family of Naresh.

Visiting the college were Naresh & Joyce Williams (UK), Shanthi Williams (wife of Suri Williams -Colombo), Chandran & Sarla Williams (Colombo) & a close friend Jayantha Edirappuli (UK) who personally donated some cricket equipment and was instrumental in sourcing the quality gear through his contacts in Colombo. [Suri the eldest, and their sister & husband Sakuntala & Dudley Subasinghe could not be present].

It was Shereene the daughter of Naresh and Joyce who had the idea to celebrate the 60th birthday of Naresh by raising funds in the UK to buy the sporting equipment in memory of her grandfather Victor Williams who studied in Jaffna College and played cricket for the College. He was one of the younger players in the team that played for Jaffna College in 1934, when they won the Inter Collegiate championship during the tenure of Rev. J. Bicknell. Many years earlier, Rev. Bicknell broke tradition when he invited Mrs. L.P. Williams (mother of Victor Williams) to teach at Jaffna College when she became widowed with four children, the youngest of whom was only an infant. She served here for 25 years.



The Principal organised a school assembly in Ottley Hall, where the students and staff gave enthusiastic thanks to the Williams family members for their thoughtfulness and generosity.

Starting an English Lab at Jaffna College

Improving student English at all levels is a key goal of Jaffna College.

An English Lab is a dedicated classroom where teachers assist students with reading, writing, and speaking in the English language. It is a student-friendly learning environment. The Lab usually includes specialized educational equipment and teaching aids – computers, headphones, multi-media facilities, internet access, recording facilities, DVDs, CDs, tables and chairs for students to work together in groups. The Lab needs bookshelves and cabinets with a large collection of English curriculum books, books on teaching methods for teaching English, a variety of reference books on different subjects, and books just for the pleasure of reading in English.

Jaffna College will introduce its English Lab in stages. For Stage 1, after deciding on a suitable, secure room (that seats up to 40 students, the first considerations are renovations, furniture, fittings and technology.

- Bookshelves and lockable cupboards for storing equipment and resources.
- Tables and chairs, rather than traditional desks are better.
- Some workstations wired for internet connection.
- Posters and other teaching aids
- Start a collection of useful resources (English books, DVDs, CDs and so on)

To get the most value from the English Lab, the English teachers will need more training in modern methods of teaching English as an Additional Language.

Already the College has received some offers of assistance, but more help is needed. If this project inspires your imagination, please contact Principal Solomon solomon3111962@gmail.com
