



OTAGO GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

International Department Newsletter Term One 2019

Welcome and Term One Highlights

The years seem to roll by quickly and we have already finished the first term of 2019. As usual, it has been full of opportunities to meet new people, learn new subjects, and delve into some completely new activities.

Our International Prefect this year is Harlyn Tran who is in her third year with us and is from Vietnam. She has written about herself and what she would like to achieve at OGHS. The Board of Trustees was honoured to hear one of our Syrian girls, Wafaa Haroura, describe her journey from her country at war to being a student of our school.

There have been some changes in the team in charge of the internationals this year. The staff is: Mrs Katherine Boomer (Dean of International Students, English Language and Spanish teacher), Mr Simon Edmunds (English Language and Mandarin teacher), Miss Thomson (English Language and Japanese teacher), Mrs Alison Stephenson (International Student Director), and Ms Linda Miller (Principal). Ms Natalya Latysheva was assisting Mrs Stephenson with her work but has now left this position. The very experienced Mrs Brenda Hogue has been helping out during Mrs Stephenson's absence.



We love welcoming students and families from around the world. Our international community this year has students from Germany, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Korea, Argentina, Samoa, Philippines, Brazil, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. Many girls have integrated well into our school and uphold our school values of positivity, respect, and integrity. NCEA results have been very impressive with twenty-five students attaining merit or excellence endorsements in their respective year levels. Their names and achievements follow.

This year we again started with course confirmation, then had Student Learning Conferences in March where students met with their mentor teachers to discuss their educational goals, and to plan how we can all work together to achieve them.

Sports day at the Caledonian was a very colourful affair and is often one of the highlights for international students as ours is done differently to their home countries. Along with the regular



track and field events, there are interesting tabloid events where all students participate and have fun together. Other school-wide activities have been swimming sports and the cross-country run. The field was filled with the four house colours and much enthusiasm. Hermione Hai has written about her experience.



The welcome BBQ was catered for by Wairua Puhou and we were treated to several waiata (songs). This greatly impressed the host families, students, and the families of the students. The delicious salads brought by the host families were enjoyed and quickly devoured. The BBQ is a great way for the international community to get together and have a chance to chat and meet other families.

In Term 1, the Year 9 students go on a two-day / one-night camp to Tirohanga. The confidence course can be quite a challenge for students, but our girls did well completing all the challenges. The Year 12 students had a choice of three: Borland Camp for biology and geography students, outdoor pursuits, or careers and work exploration in Dunedin. Borland had some stunning, and some wet, weather and everybody



was able to enjoy spending time in the beautiful outdoors.

Vicky Cui has written about her favourite outing of the week.



Outdoor education is popular with our students and they have thoroughly enjoyed themselves learning new skills, accepting challenges, and exploring the area. The Year 11 students have done rock climbing, abseiling and a day walk. The rock climbing and abseiling trip to Long Beach was as popular as ever and the girls managed to climb with smiles on their faces in some beautiful weather. The day walk to Pulpit Rock in the Silver Peaks was on a beautiful day and all were treated with magnificent views of the ocean and inland. The Year 12s and 13s have been mountain biking around the Dunedin tracks, and surfing at St Clair Beach.



OGHS offers a wide variety of subjects and the art department attracts many talented students

who are able to follow and develop their passions. Judy Xu was awarded artist of the week.

This newsletter contains articles written by students and photos of the students to let everybody know what they have been doing and achieving at our school.



Internationals and English Language Learners Term One 2019

Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
Yamama Al Naes	Maram Aboud Agha	Rama Alsaayde	Rahaf Al Hussein	Maria Paz Lahun
Zahraa ZI Naes	Neemat Al Ashour	Rahaf Al Hassan	Rania Allo	Kathleen Li
Hoda Aljomaa	Sulafa Al Khalil	Halima Al Naes	Emma Boonsom	Lisa Li
Larissa Silva	Naya Ghazzoul	Well Chomchoei	Annsen Chan	Jasmine Liu
	Huda Haroura	Aya Elyassin	Will Chomchoei	Valerie Lu
	Iman Suleiman	Maryangel Fretton	Vicky Cui	Crystal Tao
	Ella Xu	Naghham Ghazzoul	Chris Huynh	Lynn Teng
	Fuzheng Zhang	Nada Haroura	Dain Kim	Harlyn Tran
	Abby Poon	Wafaa Haroura	Michelle Li	Hathaway Wang
		Lindsay Hu	Mel Prathep	Teresa Wang
		Pin Soonklang	Yuki Mitobe	Vivian Wang
		Sakura Saito	Enie Freye	Sherry Wu
		Hermione Hai	Judy Xu	Starry Xiao
		Wenke Hofmeister	Elaina Yang	Jessy Xie
		Linh Vu Ngo	Hanna Heine	Sherry Ye
		Erina Yamaguchi	Lyka Lumapas	Fenny Zhang
		Racha Aljomaa	Izzy Sandle	Monica Zhang
		Joyce Wang	Najwa Al Naaes	Ashley Zhu
		Nisrin Al Naaes		Melanie Hartwig
				Elinor Armitage
				Kaya Zimmerman

We sadly had to farewell four international students this term as they have returned to their home countries to continue their studies. They are: Melanie Hartwig, Enie Freye, Pin Soonklang, and Maria Lahun. We wish them well for their studies back home.

NCEA LEVEL ENDORSEMENTS

Congratulations to the following international students who achieved their respective NCEA levels endorsed with merit in 2018.

Level 3: Charlotte Hou, Radi Li, Rose Li, Snow Martpunyachon, Teresa Ning, Pear Sae-lee

Level 2: Jasmine Liu, Lynn Tang, Hathaway Wang, Starry Xiao, Jessy Xie, Fenny Zhang, Monica Zhang

Level 1: Annsen Chan, Will Chomchoei

The following students achieved their respective levels endorsed with excellence.

Level 3: Anna Cho, Echo Hu, Louise Lin, Muychheng Oeng

Level 2: Lisa Li, Valerie Lu, Harlyn Tran, Sherry Ye

Level 1: Chris Huynh, Dain Kim

International Prefect: Harlyn Tran

Kia Ora, Xin Chào, I'm Harlyn Tran and I'm privileged to be the International Prefect of OGHS for 2019. I'm from Vietnam and I've been in NZ for three years. This year I'm taking Accounting, Calculus, Statistics, Economics and Classical Studies while still being a participant of the Global Leadership Programme. I enjoy working with numbers, reading mythologies and doing outdoor activities. I'm part of the rock climbing team at school and in my free time I often go swimming and tramping.



As the International Prefect I want to make sure that the international students always feel welcomed at OGHS so that they can realise their full potential and achieve something that they did not quite manage to do when they were in their home countries, whether if it's academic, sporting or cultural. I want them to know that speaking a different language does not make them isolated from the community, rather, they are contributing to the cultural diversity in OGHS as well as in Dunedin, which should and must be highly valued. During term one I've organised two activities for the international students which involved students at OGHS as well as students of other high schools around Dunedin. The events were a massive success; there were good friendships, connections and bonding made which had extended the social network of internationals at OGHS. I believe these relationships will be the key to a global network that each student here, including myself, have to encounter in the future.

I'm working alongside with the amazing teachers and caretakers of the International Department of OGHS in order to provide the girls with the best environment for their time at school. Others than that I also have International leaders and prefects across Dunedin to help me planning out fun activities as well as supporting the international students with their school works.

My motto is: "Knowledge has no limit", meaning there is no limit on how much knowledge a person can possess. I acknowledge myself as someone who is always eager to know more about the world, and so I'm encouraging the girls to never limit themselves inside their comfort zone, as the world offers plenty to be explored. Before OGHS, I was a 'young woman', but my time here has taught me to become more than that. It guides me to become an independent, powerful young woman and this is also what I want the girls to recognise themselves as. I look forward to making 2019 the best year with everyone with my role.

OGHS Sports Day by Hermione Hai

Otago Girls' High School's sports day was held at the Celedonian Ground last Friday. We arrived there at 8:30 am and went on the stand at 8:40 am. Then we had an opening ceremony, all the students went down the stand and walked around the playground with their house. If you are in the birds view, you can see plenty of blue, red, orange and green are move on the track. Each house has their own chant, but I just heard the chant from Benjamin house because they have the most people in their house.

The sports day started off with our principal's speech. I forgot which race started first, but my race--200 meters started at 10:45. Actually I was very anxious about the 200 meters. I didn't do any exercise for a long time, and I knew many of sporty girls are in my group. Finally I finished the 200 meters though there were some pebbles came into my shoes when I ran. And the lucky thing was I was not the last one, a girl was behind me. I must say thank you to her to show my appreciation.

The final winner of 2019 Otago Girls' High School was Allan! Why I used an exclamation mark? That is because Allen is my house! hahahahahahaha.)

Year 12 Programme by Vicky Cui

Last week, we had international camp and lots of activities. We were so excited at that time because that was my first time to join the school camp. The one that impressed me the most was on Thursday we went to Mt Cargill to mountain climb with my friends and teachers.

At the beginning, I was very worried that I could not climb to the top. But I did not give up at that time because my friends were working hard to climb. They inspired me.

We spent 2 hours to get to the top. We all were very proud of ourselves. And the view was very nice! It made us felt quite happy and excited. We almost forgot how tired we were. We ate our lunch at the top and admired the beautiful scenery.

This is my perfect memory with friends!



Board of Trustees Presentation by Wafaa Haroura



Good afternoon teachers, student and parents. Before I start I want to thank Mrs Boomer for asking me to come and tell you my story.

My name is Wafaa. I'm 15 years old. I come from Syria. I came with my family. In my family, we are six members, mum, dad, a younger brother and two little sisters.

Let me tell you a little about me. I'm the type of person who doesn't like to get into a fight or an argument or anything that causes harm. I think of myself as an awkward, clumsy, curious and sometimes shy person. I like to read, sometimes write, draw, food, my family and friends.

I like to help others. I feel like I would do anything to help anyone even if they didn't want my help. For example in the school if you want to find me at morning tea or lunch just go and look around for someone that holds the door for the whole school, any door in the school. Yeah that's me, if you were on the other side of the school I would still hold that door.

I have been studying in Otago Girls' for three years, I'm year 11. These three years of high school have been fine, absolutely fine, besides being the shortest in my class in Year 9, 10 and some of my classes in Year 11. Yup! They are great.

My subjects are English, English language or ESOL, Math, Science, Art and DVC. I really enjoy ESOL because in ESOL there is a lot of students from around the world and that's what makes it enjoyable. I enjoy it because I'm curious about everything new especially when it comes to new people. I like to know new things from different cultures and countries around the world.

Like I said before I came from Syria. Well I didn't exactly "come" but I was forced to leave my country, my home, my family and my friends. We didn't have any choice but to leave. If we stayed we would get badly injured and if we run away we would die, but I thank God that I'm alive and my family too. Not all my family because some of them got injured and I lost some.

I was nine years old when I left my home. Do you know what a nine year old child will ask? "What did we do to deserve this? Why is everyone yelling and screaming in pain and fear? Where did these booms and guns come from? "Is it over yet? Are we going back home? Why is everything destroyed? Why?" These questions kept going in my head until now.

After we fled, we went to Lebanon. Lebanon is next to Syria. I thought that people would welcome us, help us...but I was wrong. People there didn't like us and they always said. "Why did you come here? Go back to your country!" They treated us as if we were outsiders, as if we didn't have any feelings. No matter how many times we told them, "There was no other choice," but they ignored us giving us the cold shoulder.

Do you know what we did? We kept quiet, every time we opened our mouths and fought for our right they shut us up by saying, "People like you Syrians are worthless. Why did you even come here to bring the war to our country too?"

It was hard for me to make friends at first, no one played with me and if they played they tricked me and started to bully me telling me "HA! A refugee, what a big loser." I didn't like to be called a refugee. It wasn't my choice but no one cared. Yeah, I've been bullied a lot actually. I know you feel sorry. In fact I don't want your pity, I want people to treat me for the person I am, not of what rumours said. You can not and I mean not know them without their story. Trust me because I'm one of them.

Everything changed when I came to New Zealand. I have been here in New Zealand for three years and let me tell you they have been the best three years in my life, but like many stories, I faced a lot of new things. When I came here it felt like the world gave me a new chance to live. Everything was so new for me: the school systems, people, the houses. Everything was new to me. It felt as if I was from another world that made me feel like an outsider because I felt like I don't belong here and if I try to blend in there's something pushing me aside.

That thing was people's point of view. They were afraid of me, afraid of the rumours that have spread around. Maybe you're wondering what I did in the end? Did I start to change how people thought of us, me by showing them my true colour? I told them, "You don't have to be afraid of me. I'm only a human, what you feel I feel"and here we are. From living in a war zone, forced to flee, getting bullied to changing other people's point of view and showing them who I really am. Thank you for listening.

Term 2 Upcoming Events

These are some of the main events at school.

Week 1

Whanau Class Photos

Week 2

Dunedin Tertiary Open Day: Years 11 and 13, Year 11 Geography

Mt Cook Camp

Week 3

Senior Interim Reports

Week 4

Year 10 Marae Trips

Week 5

Parent-Teacher Interviews (A-L)

Week 6

Queen's Birthday, Parent-Teacher Interviews (M-Z)

Week 7

Big Sing Regional Competition, Sports & Cultural Photos, Career's Expo

Week 8

Year 12 Loves Me Not Programme

Week 9

Senior Production: Hairspray

Week 10

Junior Option Changeover, Junior Reports, Junior Production, Year 12 Formal

