



# OTAGO GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

## International Department Newsletter Term Three 2022



It is spring time! But you wouldn't always know it in Dunedin. As always, our weather keeps us guessing, and putting on and taking off layers of clothing. Our students have been able to enjoy a wide variety of activities this term and you can read about some of them as students have written delightful articles to share.

We sadly had to farewell two students at the start of this term. It is difficult to say goodbye as they became important parts of our community. Baihe Jiang has gone to university in New York, USA to study design. Shiho Kasai has moved back to Wellington to live with her mother and continue her studies there.

On the other side of the coin, we have been extremely happy to welcome new students. The long-term students are: Ashley Lit from Singapore, Hoi Tung (Chimmy) Chim from Hong Kong, and Dorothea Bluethner from Germany. We also had two Japanese girls, Ayane Iwamatsu and Rioko Yahata, for three weeks. It was absolutely fantastic how the new girls got involved in school so quickly as Chimmy and Dorothea went on an outdoor education high ropes course to Invercargill at the end of their first week at our school. We all got to attend the Mayoral Welcome at the Edgar Centre, another event that was brought back this year.





There have been some wonderful achievements by our girls. Allison Han received the Aurora Award, University of Otago Computer Science Award for her work *Shocking News* in the science fair. Allison also is a keen debater and you can read about her debating club. Kate Lui was awarded a trip to Wellington for Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington's International Open Day on Friday 30 September. Rebecca Zhuang in Year 13 was an artist of the week with her beautiful photography work.

Term three certainly had numerous events throughout the ten weeks. Open Night at the beginning is always a big focus and there were many young students and their families enjoying themselves in the activities offered in the tours. Twice a year, in terms one and three, we have our SLC (Student Learning Conferences) where each Year 10 to 13 student meets for half an hour with their mentor teacher to discuss their schooling, goals, and plans. The annual ski trip to Queenstown was back this year after one year off, and they had bluebird ski days on the mountains. Ashley Lit has written about her experience on this trip.

The school council, of which Pamela Peng is a member, organised a cultural lunch time showcase and an international evening potluck. Pamela has described success of these events. Due to COVID, we had to postpone our sports day so we held it in September. It was a strange feeling having it at that time of the year but the enthusiasm and participation was a wonderful change part-way through the term.



Parallel examinations for NCEA were near the end of the term. The passing of Queen Elizabeth II was an historic event and one where many people will remember where they were in the world at that time. The commemoration of her death was on the final Monday of the term. The following day, we held the Speech New Zealand Oral ESOL examinations for the students who take English Language. We are very proud of how well those who participated prepared, presented and answered questions from the external examiner.

Please enjoy reading about some of the amazing events our students have been involved in.



Cultural Day



Chimmy in Speech NZ exam

## School Council Events: Pamela Peng

Due to COVID-19, New Zealand has suffered from lockdown, border closing and lots of negative impacts since 2020. Fortunately, after two years, things are looking up in 2022. The border has reopened, probably no lockdown, wearing face masks isn't mandatory any more. However, COVID-19 has caused a New Zealand wide issue of a lack of international students. It is a bit sad that we do not get any new international students for the past 2 years, only a few in 2022. As a result, those international events we used to hold with other schools cannot be held as usual, due to some limitations under the traffic light system a few months ago. We really hope that everything will get back to normal next year, so the international students can actually experience their high school life in New Zealand, and participate in school events properly.



It is my pleasure to be selected as one of the year 13 School Council Representatives, and organised the International Food Festival & International Potluck Party in term 2 and term 3 respectively. Although there aren't any events specially held for international students, having some events that are related to "international" and allow the whole school to participate in, would be a good opportunity to encourage international students to integrate in the school society. The International Food Festival was held on the 13th of June, the goal was to create an event that allowed the whole school to be involved and to celebrate our diversity. We gathered a variety of food and drink from nine different countries, including France, Japan, The Netherlands, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Syria, New Zealand, India and the Pacific Islands. Shiho and the Japanese language department made the Japanese noodles, Kate, Rebecca, Rachel and I made the cake rolls. Mrs Boomer & Allison came and Hebe & Claire brought their friends to support us! Another thank you to everyone who participated in the festival, and made an incredible success on the International Food Festival, which led my team in School Council to consider running another similar event in term 3.

After the success of the International Food Festival, the School Council team decided to run another first ever event, a school society-wide and cultural event, called International Potluck Party. The International Potluck Party was held on the 8th of August, every student including their friends and family from all cultures were invited to this event, and brought a plate to share from their culture. We had a number of performances such as Jazz Band, the opening performance from our Maori group, year level music groups, speakers from Global Club and the music performance from my own etc. Once again, we had an amazing night, supported by every family who came and attended the Potluck party. Many people dressed up in their traditional costumes and there were tons of food prepared by different families from their culture. It was an awesome evening that everyone was able to come together, sharing kai as a community to form a stronger relationship in the school society, which was the aim of the School Council running the International Potluck Party.



Thank you for everyone's support and all your efforts in International Food Festival and International Potluck Party, we have gained lots of positive and favourable feedback. Thanks to Mrs Davidson, Ms Dick, Ms Joyce and the School Council Prefects, they were always there to help the team sort out issues and provided resources. Thanks to Mrs Boomer, who helped me to transport my heavy instrument to school, so I could perform in the school activities. A huge thanks to my team in School Council, we cooperated with each other so well and made a huge success on both the events. It is now the end of term 3, NCEA external exams are coming up soon, hope everyone is currently focusing on the final exams. How exciting that we are able to go home at the end of this year!

## Debating: Allison Han

Without a doubt, I had surpassed my own expectation of myself. As someone whose first language is not English, I've always been mocked for my speech and made to feel inferior in English literature. Looking back, I indeed have come a long way. I took on debating as a challenge for myself at the start of year nine, expecting nothing more than gaining confidence for public speaking. Yet I had attained more than I could've ever asked for; precious bonds between my fellow debaters, learning from such wonderful coaches, having a supportive teacher to guide us on our way, even making unforgettable friendships with debaters from other schools. These experiences are what I hold dear to my heart, what I truly treasure.



As one of the four members of the Junior OGHS 1 debating team, it had been an exceptionally pleasant experience. From acquaintances to closely-knitted friendship, we as a team had grown together. Whether it be fixing each other's mishaps in a debating match, or helping one another out outside debating, we had grown fond of each other and had learnt to lift each other up. After all, debating is all about teamwork and, as cheesy as it sounds, queens fixing one another's crowns. As a whole team, we've also become quite close with the Columba 1 girls. Creating wholesome friendships even outside our school, through friendly rivalry.

I cherish these two years of junior debating. For it, I had resigned from my position as a member of the Dunedin Youth Council, due to time clashes. Debating had slowly fabricated itself into a big part of my identity. I will be looking forward to taking up senior debating next year, debating the idle afternoons away with my dearest, most capable team-mates.

## Ski Trip: Ashley Lit

I had the most amazing school trip ever! My school organised a 5 days 4 nights ski trip, and I knew I had to go as the last time I skied was three years ago.

On the way there, I was so excited and could not wait to get there. As I was the new student, I got the chance to introduce myself to the rest of the girls. They were friendly, welcoming, and even shared their snacks with me. After filling my stomach, I fell asleep and when I woke up, we were nearly there.



The adrenaline at the start of the trip lasted even till the next morning. I woke up at the first sound of the alarm. Our first stop was to Remarkables. I still remembered vividly the beautiful and peaceful scenery as we made our way there. Even though I was taught how to ski once before, I wasn't very confident with my skills, so I joined the first-timer class and we progressed gradually.

Our lessons lasted for 2 hours each day, and to be honest, the first day was so tiring and I could not imagine continuing for the next three days. I felt like giving up but seeing those advanced skiers and even kids younger than me skiing so well assured me that I could do it too. After the lesson, my buddy and I took a break and continued practising our skiing skills. On the second day at Remarkables, we practised our turning and I felt more confident as I was starting to get the hang of it.

We went to Coronet Peak on the fourth day of the trip, I had an unpleasant fall as my group was practising skiing backward and I told myself that I am never trying again but eventually did and succeeded. I personally preferred Coronet Peak as the mild ski field is longer and more



challenging. The view was great too when taking the chair lift. Surprisingly, I did not feel tired at all and was getting used to skiing. We were given free time in Queenstown so together in a group, we went to Fear Factory. It was a scary, yet enjoyable experience and I would recommend going there when you are in Queenstown. After all the fun, My friends brought me to a pizza shop and the pizzas were so delicious!



Time flies and it was soon the last day of the trip. The coaches were all so friendly and I had a great time overall. I made new friends, and the trip was lively because of them. Going back to Dunedin, we played songs and sang along, and I loved the vibes of it. I certainly would recommend this ski trip to all students who have not gone before as it would definitely be one of the more memorable school trips throughout school life

### Term 4 Events

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| Week 1  | Year 12 Outdoor Education Journey (Monday 17 & Tuesday 18 October)<br>Cultural Evening (Tuesday 18 October)   |
| Week 2  | Labour Day MONDAY 24 October (school closed)<br>Year 13 Outdoor Education Journey (Tuesday 25- Friday 28 October)   |
| Week 3  | Celebration Service (Tuesday 1 November at 6:30 PM at Knox Church<br>House Singing Competition (Wednesday 2 November)<br>Last day for seniors (Thursday 3 November)<br>Junior exams (Friday 4 November) |
| Weeks 4 | NCEA starts (Monday 7 November)<br>Junior exams (Monday 7 & Tuesday 8 November)   |
| Week 6  | Junior Sports Week (Monday 21 - Friday 15 November)   |
| Week 7  | Year 10 Camps (Monday 28 November - Friday 2 December)  |
| Week 8  | Leavers' Assembly & Prize Giving (Monday 5 December)<br>Year 9 Film Festival (Tuesday 6 December)<br>Year 13 Formal (Wednesday 7 December)<br>Last day juniors Wednesday 7 December)                    |



### International Team

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Alison Stephenson (International Student Director)  
Katherine Boomer (International Dean)  
Bridget Davidson (Principal)

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