Dear Parents and Guardians,

In this newsletter, I would like to share my thoughts on two newspaper articles from The Straits Times and the passing of one of the world’s greatest sportsmen, Muhammad Ali. I will also be sharing an article from Schoolbag on making Science a more enjoyable subject and ways to learn the subject together with your child.

During the June holidays, I came across the following article in The Straits Times. I could not help but wonder what would life be like for our students, or for the children in Singapore, if they were to live under the same conditions as those mentioned in the article.

While most children in Singapore took a well-deserved break during the June school holidays, it was reported that this family of four, comprising of this girl, 11, and boy, 8, along with their parents, had to toil away in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Collectively, they earn less than $5 a day for carrying 1,000 bricks, rain or shine.

Source: The Straits Times “Kids Toil For a Few Dollars A Day” 8 June 2016

To these children in Dhaka, they often have to forgo their education in order to help their parents make a living. Attending school means having to pay school fees, something which many can ill-afford, not to mention taking an extra pair of hands away from their only livelihood.

Do our children know how fortunate they are to be able to attend school, without the constant worry of when the next meal is going to be? Do they make the best use of their school holidays to do something meaningful, instead of simply let the days fly past in an instance?

In another article titled “Going to School is an Uphill Battle” published about a week earlier, it highlighted the perilous journey that a group of 15 children has to go through to get home from their boarding school. The children, aged six to 15, belong
to 72 families in Atuler village in Zhaojue county, in Sichuan province, China. Most of the families live in houses made of mud, thatch and wood. The villagers said their ancestors chose to live on the top of the cliff to keep away from war and tribal conflicts.

Every two weeks, the children have to use a rickety chain of wooden ladders - made from vine and tree branches - to scale an 800m cliff to get home from boarding school. It takes about two hours for the children, led by an adult, to climb up the cliff, and 11/2 hours to get down.

Source: The Straits Times “Going to School is an Uphill Battle” 28 May 2016

To many of our students, school is literally a stone’s throw away. Most of them walk to school. Others commute using public or private transport. I am quite sure none of our students has to walk for a few hours to get to school. Neither do they have to take treacherous paths or scale dangerous heights to get home from school. Yet, there are students who miss school because of a little discomfort or could not wake up on time for school. It is really a pity as there are always new things to learn in school.

We can certainly learn a thing or two from those children from the Atuler Village. Their desire to go to school is admirable. Their willingness to gain new knowledge allows them to overcome any obstacles along the way.

Helping Your Child to Enjoy Science

Children are naturally curious. They explore, question, and wonder about what happens around them. To encourage their love for learning, check out the following suggestions.

Exploring Science with Your Children

Science is all around us and children are constantly observing their surroundings. Help your children make sense of the world around them by showing them science phenomena that occur in everyday activities. Be it outdoors or indoors, draw their
attention to objects or things happening around them to trigger their curiosity and encourage them to explore.

**Learning Science through Questioning**

As they explore, children tend to generate many thoughts and ideas. Engage your children by inviting them to ask questions or by asking them questions. For example, as you explore the environment with your children, lead them to observe the diversity of living and non-living things around through the questions you ask.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of living things around us</th>
<th>Examples of questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding the Water Cycle and Transfer of Heat:</strong> Condensation on a car’s windscreen</td>
<td>Where does the water on the windscreen come from? Can you describe the process that is taking place?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observing the Impact of Pollution on the Ecosystem:</strong> Illegal dumping of hazardous materials</td>
<td>What would happen to the living things? What can we do to reduce pollution?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes, we may encounter challenging questions that you do not have an answer to. We do not have to be a walking encyclopaedia to guide our children. Invite them to learn together. Acknowledge your children’s efforts in asking questions and guide them as they look for an answer.

Exploring Science with your children through daily activities can spark their interest and encourage them to learn, especially when they ask questions. The best way for our children to learn is when they are having fun!
The above article was reproduced from Schoolbag – The Online Education News Site by MOE, 22 Jun 2016.
For a more detailed write-up, please visit https://www.schoolbag.sg/
The Passing of a Boxing Legend: Muhammad Ali

On 3 June 2016, the world lost one of its greatest sportsman, Muhammad Ali. Not only was he a fighter in the Boxing ring, he was also fighting against Parkinson’s disease in the later stage of his life.

Though I am not a big fan of Boxing, I do read about his achievements and his famous fights. As I reread his life story, I could not help but admire the confidence and courage that he had shown throughout his life.

Muhammad Ali had given us plenty of famous quotes, some of which are both inspiring and very relevant in a child’s learning. Below are a few quotes which I would like to share with you:

On not to give up and keep on fighting:

“I hated every minute of training, but I said, ‘Don’t quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion.’”

“I am an ordinary man who worked hard to develop the talent I was given. I believed in myself, and I believe in the goodness of others.”

“It isn't the mountains ahead to climb that wear you out; it's the pebble in your shoe.”

On everyone has his unique strengths:

“If they can make penicillin out of mouldy bread, they can make something out of you.”

“I said I was ‘The Greatest, I never said I was the smartest!’”

On being courageous and visionary:

“He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life.”

“A man who views the world the same at fifty as he did at twenty has wasted thirty years of his life.”

One need not be a great sportsman or sportswoman to be successful. We each have our own strengths and positive attributes. What is more important is not to waver from our goals and targets and persevere till we have achieved what we have originally intended to accomplish.

Yours sincerely,
Feel free to contact me at lim_chee_kwee_samy@moe.edu.sg if you have any queries or feedback with regards to your child's education in the school.