

The JUNIOR REPTONIAN

Repton School Newsletter

Issue 133

Thursday, 27th October 2011

Welcome

I hope you have enjoyed our weekly bulletins issued by your child's departments. It is hoped that these will provide you with all the relevant information you need for the coming week. To supplement these, we will also issue a half-termly round up of news and events from the Junior School and this is the first.

My first task is to welcome all the new pupils, parents and teachers to Repton. The first half term has been quite long but it has flown by and I am tremendously impressed with how quickly our new children have settled into the school. I am grateful too, to staff old and new, for their wonderful efforts in these first few weeks of the school year, we have concentrated on settling the children down as quickly as possible and establishing routines and the pattern of the day. I am grateful to all the staff and parents for making the start to this year the smoothest in our short history. A House Point everyone!

The 'i' Generation

"Good breeding consists in concealing how much we think of ourselves and how little we think of others"

Mark Twain

Back in June I made reference to the Mark Twain quote above. It

came back to me last month when I attended the IAPS Conference in Birmingham at which there was much discussion about what educators are calling the 'i' generation. It appears the nagging concern I have held for some time, is shared by my colleagues in the UK and it is this: a growing unease that the individual (i) is fast becoming wedded to the belief that the wants and needs of the individual are more important and worthy than those of others and of society as a whole.

Since the appalling riots in the UK last summer, questions have been asked of educationalists and schools. We have been scrutinised in the role we play in preparing children for society and standards of discipline called into question. What emerges from the debate is that we seem inexorably drawn to a world of freedom without responsibility, a society where inward looking individuals are failing to contribute to the greater good. Like the moth drawn to the flame, if we continue to be drawn down this line, we are certain to get burned.

Is it possible that crucial and civilising relationships with parents, family and friends are being eroded and replaced by an obsession with technology and computer games? Is it feasible that real relationships are being

replaced by a virtual existence created to fill the void? Perhaps, in assuming an avatar, we actually lose sense and perspective of who we really are and therefore become plastic and superficial? Anonymous in chat rooms, we have the power to reinvent ourselves and say and do things we would not do in 'real life'. When living in an on-line world, the difficult parts of life and relationships are removed and, in doing so, our character, that which truly makes us individuals, is destroyed. Human interaction, real not cyber, talking and listening, leads to a better understanding of the lives of others - their hopes, their fears, their stresses, loves and concerns and surely, once we begin to understand others, we may once again act in a less selfish way.

As teachers we have a role to play. The Repton values espouse community, service, good manners and thinking of others (as do all the world's religions). School uniform reinforces our sense of community and belonging. Parents need to play their part too. Everyone's child is special but we should not become so focussed on our child that we overstate their sense of self-importance for, in doing so, we propagate the 'i society'. At the Birmingham IAPS conference, Heads shook their heads in despair as stories were exchanged about parents who

Junior Reptonian

attend school concerts, arriving just before their child performs, only to leave immediately afterwards. Of parents who refuse to park anywhere other than immediately outside the school gate rather than in spaces provided thereby causing huge tailbacks, and of those who refuse to dress their children in prescribed school uniform claiming the requirement to conform to school rules is 'in breach of their civil rights'! In Dubai too, these are issues that loom large. Just this week (not at Repton I hasten to add) a parent had complained long and loud to the media about their son's right to wear a Mohican hairstyle even though it was in breach of school rules and even more disheartening was the support the parent received in a radio debate. Teachers do their best to educate children but parents must also realise the lessons they so effectively deliver with actions that confirm to the child their status as better, and more important, than everyone else.

We increasingly live in a world where some children have stronger relationships with their phones than their families or where the thoughts, feelings and needs of others are dismissed as irrelevant. To provide a real service to our children, we have to teach them that relationships and real social interaction are crucial. The UK inspectorate have now placed 'excellence in relationships' at the top of the agenda for the next round of inspections and it is certainly something we work upon here,

which thankfully, has been recognised at Repton.

Finally, a quote from a gentleman called Tim Flannery, Australian of the Year 2007, who said,

"If we do not love each other as much as we love ourselves, no further human progress is possible"

Mark Atkins
Deputy Headmaster

School Accreditation

Next term the school will, once again, be inspected by KHDA. This is a valuable process and one that helps us in our quest for continual school improvement. In addition to inspection by the Dubai authorities, we place great store in the opinions and support of other UK and international agencies, all of which feeds into our quality assurance programme. As I have previously mentioned, the school has been accredited by the Independent Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS) and I attended the annual general meeting and conference last month. In addition, the Headmaster is a member of, and the school is accredited by, the Society of Heads of Independent Schools (SHMIS). I am also pleased to announce that we have recently undergone an accreditation visit by the Council of International Schools of which we are now also a member.

Building Developments

Work is now almost complete on the development of a new block of classrooms situated just behind the boys' Boarding House. In this block are a number of specialist Junior School classrooms including 2 new science labs, an IT suite, music classrooms and practice rooms and Arabic and Islamic Studies classrooms will be provided.

When work began on this project in the summer, we were anticipating the building to be ready to receive the children in September but unfortunately, the project was delayed in order that the building comply with new fire regulations, that were unfortunately implemented mid-way through the project.

The building will be ready for occupation in January and the children will be travelling over for some lessons from January onwards.

UAE 40th National Day



On Wednesday, November 30th the school will be celebrating the the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of the United Arab Emirates. This is a very important day in the Nation's history and we aim to make it a very special day. I am deeply indebted to all the parents who have worked so hard to make past events such a success and to those who are supporting

Junior Reptonian

this year's celebration with such industry and generosity.

This year, the celebrations will be starting earlier at 10.00am and will continue until 2.00pm. There are many more stalls and activities this year offering children and parents a chance to join in the celebrations.

Please look out for a letter containing details of the arrangements that will be issued shortly.

Exam Success

It is normal at the start of an academic year to review exam performance of pupils the previous summer. I am delighted to report that our Y6 pupils, passing into the Senior School, did so with excellent end of year examination results. The papers the pupils sat were firmly rooted in the standards and levels expected of 11+ Common Entrance exams overseen by the Independent Schools Examination Board.

External verification of these standards came with Junior School pupil examination success for those who actually sat the 11+ entrance examinations as well as success in passing for other schools that set their own papers. In entrance examinations to UK independent schools, we are proud that Repton pupils passed for the following schools: Cheltenham Ladies College, Haberdashers Aske, Sherborne, Rugby, Oundle, Eton, St. Catherine's Bramley, St Mary's Ascot, Roedean, Downe House, Bancroft School, Forest School,

New Hall School, Holy Trinity, Manchester Grammar School, Cheadle Hulme School, Oxford High School, Oakham, and Tormead. In addition, our former Head Boy, Johnnie Fagin, has been appointed Head Boy at Port Regis School and has been awarded a sports scholarship to Rugby.

This exam success is of course, of great credit to the boys and girls who worked so hard to achieve success but also to the excellent and dedicated Junior School staff who helped them achieve these excellent results. I would like to make a special mention for the work of Mr Neil Evans who advised and liaised with parents and the many different schools and oversaw many of the examinations.

We look forward to building on this success next year.

Child Stars!

We are delighted to announce that Callum Bell, Rayyan Uddin, Shayli Chandarana, Siena Curtis-Oliver, Sophia Chapman and Aurn Pert are all performing in 'Oliver, The Musical' at the Dutac Theatre, Mall of the Emirates. There are two performances on Saturday, 29th October; one at 2:30pm and one at 7:30pm. Tickets are AED120 and can be purchased at the Box Office or Time Out online. I'm sure the cast would greatly appreciate your support.

Sports Round-Up

This has been an excellent start to the winter term in all sports for the pupils at Repton Dubai. The inter-house leagues are up and running and most, if not all children, have had an opportunity to represent their House in football, netball or hoopball. There have been some terrific matches and all the pupils have played with great spirit. I have been really pleased to observe a real House ethos developing during the term.

Rugby Squad training has returned to Repton this term and the Year 6 boys have been preparing for their forthcoming Dubai College 10s tournament later in November. They have been training hard and they are looking forward to playing as team. I would like to wish the boys and Mr Brown the best of luck for this tournament later next month.

The school swim team has been working hard in the pool during ECAs. The squad lost a few of its star performers last year but this year's squad have pulled together as a team and all swimmers competed extremely well at the recent Dubai School's swim league fixture, which was hosted at Repton. Our performance which placed us second behind DESS was a hugely encouraging result. This result means the team have qualified for the Dubai Schools 'A' Swim league. This gala is to take place on 17th November at JESS Jumeirah. Congratulations to all involved and I wish the squad the very best of luck.

The netball teams have started their fixtures only recently; however, they too have made an

Junior Reptonian

encouraging start to their season. The squads are enthusiastic, many of them practicing at their break times on the netball court, which is great to see. The results of matches so far are as follows:

Year 6 - W1 L1

Year 5 - W5 L1

Year 4 - W2 D2 L1

All looks good for the remainder of their season and good luck to the girls.

The boys' football has had an excellent start to the season with all teams throughout the school from Year 3 to 6 unbeaten. I hope this continues and I am extremely proud of the boys for their performances during the first part of the term. If they continue to play as they have been, all age groups will qualify for the cup competitions later in the term.

Many of the pupils at Repton play sport outside of school and it is difficult for the PE Dept to keep track. I would be really interested in following the children's sporting achievements outside school too and if your child plays sport for an external club or team please do email me to let me know how they are getting on.

I hope you have a restful half term and return ready for an action packed second half to the term.

Mr. E Hawkins
Head of PE

Chasing the Dream



This month, I achieved a dream; a dream which I have chased for some time. On Saturday, 8th October 2011, I competed in the Ironman World Championships on the 'Big Island,' Kona, Hawaii, USA.

I have chased this dream around the world as have 180000 other athletes. Only 1800, the top 1% of 180000, get to race in Hawaii each year and, after qualifying in South Korea in July, I had secured my slot in the toughest endurance one day event on the planet. Ironman Hawaii is the highlight for any tri-athlete. If I had been asked once if I had raced in Hawaii after someone had found out that I did triathlons, I had been asked a thousand times. Then I was there, on the start line with the world's best athletes.

Ironman triathlons consist of a 2.4 mile (3.8km) swim, a 112mile (180km) bike ride and a 26.2 mile (42.2km) marathon

run to finish. This is all done, one discipline after the other, on the same day, in under 17 hours. The race started at 7am in the morning and after a tough swim in the Pacific, a very windy bike leg followed by some major stomach issues on the marathon, I finished around 5pm in the afternoon. Not the time I had hoped for (a lot slower), but on reflection it was simply an honour to be there representing my country of birth (UK) and my country of residence (UAE).

The race was a 'hard day at the office' and was an amazing life experience that someday I would like to repeat. I spent much of the week with past and current Olympic and World Champions, training with them and simply spending time with them. Hawaii was amazing and the ocean was like something out of Finding Nemo.

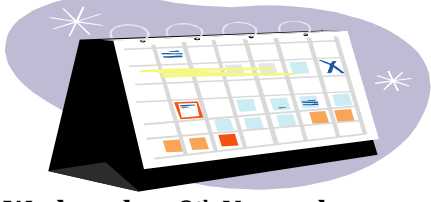
While the day's achievements were truly amazing, I could not have done it without the support of my sponsors (Probike.ae, teamt2a.com, Blue Seventy, sportinlife.ae and Newton Running). Others who I would like to thank for putting me the position to compete in Kona are Mr. Hughes-D'Aeth and Mr. Brown. Two special mentions should go to Mr. Atkins and Mrs. Hawkins for believing in me, allowing me to follow my dreams and for supporting me throughout this long, but worthwhile journey.

There is one take home message from my journey to Ironman Hawaii. Never ever give up on

Junior Reptonian

your dreams. If you truly believe, have the support of the people around you and work hard enough, you will and you can achieve anything!

The Calendar



Wednesday, 9th November

Term resumes 7.45am

Sunday, 27th November

Hijri New Year – School closed

Wednesday 30th November

National Day Celebrations 10.00
– 2.00pm

Friday 9th December

Winter Fair – 10.00am – 2.00pm

Monday 12th December

Junior School reports issued

Thursday, 15th December:

Term ends 12.20pm