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CHOKI TRADITIONAL ART SCHOOL

"Empowering the unprivileged youth as custodians of distinct culture"



Wishing you and your loved ones a very
Happy Summer!

Principal Foreword



Greetings to all!

It is a great honor and privilege for me to update all our supporters and well-wishers with activities of the school for this summer 2021. We hope you are in the best spirits and good health.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, we are pleased to inform you that the school is in full operation and students are performing well. They have been very cooperative regarding the restricted rules of exiting campus for the entire summer and strictly followed all safety protocols with minimum disciplinary issues. It is very encouraging to observe that the students are understanding and moving towards new self-care habits.

This summer, the learning atmosphere at school was tinged with the excitement of moving into the newly constructed classroom building. It has vastly increased the potential for new learning spaces and dynamics, greatly contributing to academic benefits. Hence, the building has been named appropriately as “Sherab Khangzang”, the “Knowledge and Wisdom Building”. The school is deeply grateful to Alan and Patricia Bickell, and all the supporters for making this dream come true. We pray that the light of wisdom shine in the darkness and spread sweetness of happiness.

In this summer newsletter, we have shared two entries from this year’s Creativity Competition with the theme “COVID 19”: the two aforementioned entries won 1st and 2nd in the competition and serves as a testament to the natural abilities and talents of our students.

The Coronavirus has brought travel and tourism to a standstill, and our school is one of the many which have been adversely affected by the pandemic. With limited income from sales of student products, your continuous support and solidarity in this difficult time is much appreciated. We thank you all for your continued generosity!

We are always praying for the safety and wellbeing of you and your loved ones during this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. I hope you enjoy reading our 2021 summer newsletter.

Thank you & Tashi Delek!

(Sonam Choki)
Principal

Completion of the new classroom building

With heartfelt gratitude and deepest emotions, the school is pleased to announce that the construction of the new classroom building has been completed and the students have happily moved in. With the support and contributions from everyone, we have raised a grand total of \$473,334 (Nu. 332,64,622), of which US\$ 473,152 was spent which included site development and retaining walls. Given the pandemic and increasing cost of materials and labour, we are very grateful to Alan and Patricia, who was very considerate of the cost escalation and enabled us complete the construction successfully. Thank you very much Alan & Patricia and all the supporters for your immense generosity!

This journey began in early 2018 when Alan Bickell, a long term supporter of the school, observed the risky and bad shape of the current classroom building. Moved by his compassionate soul, Alan brought up a proposal to construct a new building with a pledge to match every donation received for the new construction. This was such an unbelievable act of kindness and a dream come true for the school. The fund raising campaign was launched in 2018. The longtime supporters and well-wishers abroad have all come forward to share their solidarity in this effort. Such kindness and support gave us greater hope, inspiration and growing love. It is a true manifestation of your compassion and the school would like to sincerely thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

The students have expressed how fortunate of them to be able to study in such a beautiful building with a pristine learning environment and they have expressed their deepest gratitude to Mr. Alan and Patricia Bickell and to all the supporters who have contributed into creating this wonderful learning opportunity.



Traditional Bootmaking Progress

Thanks to the continuous support from the Ustinov Foundation, the introduction of the traditional boot-making courses at CTAS has been making good progress. The lesson is now well ingrained into the revised embroidery curriculum, which is in line with the national embroidery syllabus. The school is very grateful to Peter Ustinov Foundation for this wonderful opportunity.



Creating Creativity Creatively

The school is grateful to Ustinov Foundation for supporting the school for the last five years and we look forward to its continued support. Thanks to the Ustinov Foundation, the school was able to get exposure to creative learning and opening the horizon of the students on this important aspects of creative lesson.

With the capacity building support from the Foundation, the Creativity teacher is well equipped to ensure that the class has been progressing well. The students are really enjoying the class and expressed their deepest appreciation to the Foundation for this support.



Hope for a new era of Computer Lessons

This year, in order to invigorate the computer classes at CTAS and to maximize the full potential of the excellent equipment donated by all supporters and Mr. Thomas, Dairu Foundation, the school has created a new curriculum centered around project based learning and practical experience. The lessons covered in class are aimed to provide a basic understanding of computers and equip the students with fundamental basic skills of using a computer.

In the course of two months, the students learnt about file navigation, Microsoft word, Microsoft paint, internet and Microsoft PowerPoint. The final project of the junior students is called “All About Me” and consisted of creating a MS Powerpoint slideshow about themselves. While simple at a glance, this project allows them to use all the skills they have learned in class such as navigating folders, downloading pictures from the internet and so on.

The final project of the senior students was to pick a country in the world and research various aspects of the country and its culture. The students had to then create a MS Powerpoint slideshow featuring their research. In addition to utilizing the skills taught in class, students are also able to hone their research skills.

As flag bearers for this new era of computer lessons at CTAS, we encouraged the students to push their limits and set a new standard for the school by presenting their final projects to the entire school. We hope that many of their friends would get inspired and take an interest in the computers as a whole and take steps to join the class.



School Welcomed Fresh Batch of Students

Unlike in the past, the interview selection was kept for two days (10th & 11th March). This is in keeping with COVID protocol of preventing overcrowding and maintain social distance.

The selection interview was held on 10th and 11th March 2021. Out of over eighty applicants, 61 were selected; 45 boys and 16 girls. The selection was based on three areas of assessment:

1. Skills Test (50 points) to assess basic aptitude and competency of the students
2. Oral Interview (20 points) to assess communication, confidence and personality of the applicant
3. Family Background (30 points) to ensure that the slots go to deserving candidates.



COVID Vaccination

As part of a nationwide Covid-19 Vaccination Program, the staff and students of CTAS received its first dose of Covid- vaccine on 29th March and the second dose on 20th July. The school is grateful to His Majesty the King, the Government, health workers, Desuups and the donating countries for this wonderful opportunity to keep safe from this pandemic.



Expert briefing on Bhutanese Iconography

Mr. Ngawang Tenzin, a researcher in Bhutanese iconography and a close acquaintance of the Bhutan's master painter Iopen Ugyen Lhendrup conducted a three hours' session on Bhutanese iconography to the students and staff on 17th April 2021. The presentation was comprehensive covering the history and origin of iconography in general and specifically in Bhutan. It also touched on the types of painting (lug), importance on accuracy of measurements, etiquette to be observed during painting including conduct of purification and cleansing to invoke blessings of the concerned god/goddesses that is being drawn and positive motivation of bodhisattva mind and dedication.

The session was beneficial as it has enriched the knowledge on theory for the students and teachers. The session was also attended by few alumni who asked several questions which made the session very interactive.



Session on Y-PEER

A team of experts from the Department of Youth & Sports, Ministry of Education organized a sensitization program on Y-PEER (Youth Peer Education Network) on 19th April 2021. The objective of the program is to create awareness on the importance and benefits of becoming a registered member of Y-PEER and how it could benefit CTAS in gainfully engaging, educating and empowering its students through awareness and addressing youth related issues and in particular SRHR (Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights). It will also provide opportunity for the students to enhance their communication and leadership skills.

The sharing of experience by the youth volunteers from Gedu Business College was very helpful as the students could relate the knowledge and experience. CTAS has expressed its interest to avail this membership opportunity in promoting a healthy student lifestyle and contribute to creation of productive citizen in the country.

As a follow-up to this session, the five selected students from CTAS attended a five days training of the trainer workshop organized by the Department from 15-19 July 2021. The participants were all selected students from various institutes and colleges. It's a great exposure and learning opportunities for our students. They are expected to take lead on SRHR at CTAS and share their knowledge with rest of the students.



School Rimdro (Annual Ritual)

On 22nd April 2021, coinciding with Zhabdrung Kuchoe (the Death Anniversary of Zhabdrung Rinpoche, an important figure in the history of Bhutan who unified and ruled the country until the start of the 20th century), the school held its Annual Rimdro.

This ritual and prayer session is performed every year as part of school function for the well-being of the students, staff, supporters and well-wishers of the school both within and outside the country. The school made its sincere prayers and dedication to ease suffering of all beings from the unprecedented Covid pandemic and hope to provide a sense of safety and comfort for all.



Teachers Day Celebration

The Birth Anniversary of the Third Druk King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck is celebrated as Teacher's Day in Bhutan. This is because of His Majesty's endeavors in bringing education and modernism, hence he is known as the "Father of Modern Bhutan".

On May 2nd, the students of CTAS came forth with their creativity, talent and full enthusiasm as they planned a grand celebration for the teachers and staff of CTAS. The students demonstrated their creativity through vibrant art and decorations, their amazing talents through songs and dances, and their initiative and enthusiasm through the wonderful lunch that they had prepared for the teachers.



Organic garden

Apart from the existing vegetable garden, the school has also experimented use of the plastic greenhouse to grow tomatoes. We hope this technology will help provide a suitable environment with ideal growing conditions to protect crops from unfavorable weather and various pests. Depending on the outcome, the school hopes to expand its farm to meet part of its vegetable consumption.



MoLHR Conducts QMS Trial Audit

As per the request made by the school, the Ministry of Labor & Human Resources (MoLHR) fielded an expert of four Auditors to conduct the trial audit on Quality Management System (QMS) from 4-6 May 2021. The auditors carried out an in-depth review of the following ten processes and issued their observations and areas of improvement;

1. Process of Programme Development, Delivery & Evaluation
2. Process of Resource Management
3. Process of trainees' Registration and Admission
4. Process of trainees' Support Services
5. Process of Document Control and Records
6. Process of handling of complaints and non-compliances
7. Process of trainees' assessment
8. Process of Internal and external communications
9. Process of Internal Monitoring & Measuring System
10. Process of Internal Auditing

The whole process was educative and provided good learning opportunity for improvements on the best practices of quality assurance. The school will make improvements on the observations made by the Auditors, after which request will be made to the Ministry for another round of audit and subsequent issuance of QMS certification, which the school hopes to acquire by end of this year.



Creativity Skill Competition 2021

The Annual Creativity Competition is one of the two major skill- based competition that takes place during the school year. The Creativity Competition is inclusive of all 5 courses, with the exception of the Level One students, and students are presented with the rare opportunity to demonstrate their unique individual tastes in their art. Since traditional arts and crafts are supposed to be made according to the ancient texts, prayers and prescribed measurements, students rarely get the opportunity to let their inner artist free. Which is why the Creative Competition is a rare opportunity for the students to show off their individual tastes and art styles.

This year's Creativity Competition was held from May 18 through May 21 and the main themes for the competition were "Before and After Covid 19", and "Covid 19" for the Lhadi (painting) and Patra (carving) respectively. This year the school management decided to make the Tailoring and Embroidery course students collaborate and create dolls with the theme "Traditional Animals".

The assessment criteria for judging the competition entries are based on:

- Innovation
- Precision in Idea
- Overall Composition
- Application of Materials
- Compliance with the theme



Health Talk by Apollo Bhutan Institute of Nursing

On 25th June, the young nurses-in-training of the Apollo Bhutan Institute of Nursing gave a talk session with the objective to create awareness on prominent youth-related health issues such as menstruation, teenage pregnancy and drug abuse.

It was a very lively session with colorful graphics on the slideshow and engaging discussions regarding the aforementioned topics. There were even live demonstrations of the use of sanitary pads which was entertaining and informative to the students. Since the presenters were youthful and around the same age group as the students, it was a lighthearted discussion with questions answered and new awareness of these topics settled in the minds of our students. The talk was then closed with a group photo session.



CHOKI TRADITIONAL ART SCHOOL WISHES YOU A VERY HAPPY SUMMER 2021!

Your support has helped us sustain the program so far and we look forward to your continuous help. Please support us through any of the contact below:

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