

**SPEECH BY MS AMELIA FONG, PRIME MINISTER'S VALEDICTORIAN AWARDEE  
SOTA AWARDS DAY 2014  
21 MAY 2014, WEDNESDAY, 1.00PM  
SOTA CONCERT HALL**

Good afternoon Mr Lawrence Wong  
Minister for Culture, Community and Youth

Mr Lee Tzu Yang  
Chairman, School of the Arts

Ms Lim Geok Cheng  
Principal

Teachers, parents, Mom, Dad, and friends.

It is my honour to be standing before you today.

This would never have been possible without the existence of SOTA: A fairy tale that became a reality, because of dedicated pioneers as well as committed supporters.

I chose this school without an understanding of what IB is. I think my 11-year-old self would have been scared off by the 4,000-word extended essay the IB requires. All I did understand, was that SOTA was different. The sort of difference that I liked. Indeed these past 6 years have shown that I have made the right decision.

For me, today marks the final closure of my SOTA journey. A celebration of everything this institution stands for, and has given me. SOTA is a place where every individual is given the respect and space to hold their own. It is a community of different people, brought together by their interest in the arts and held together by common experiences.

I have been fortunate to spend every day in SOTA with the most amazing and respectable people I have ever met. They are my friends, and my mentors. Some of whom are here, today. They've inspired me, tolerated my antics and reminded me of my own strength when I almost gave up.

I think I speak for all when I say that SOTA's class of 2013 will bring a part of this school with us. Geese don't stop flying in "V" formation. They fly in different directions, depending on the season. Wherever we may find ourselves, we will take on the next stage of life with the same tenacity that we conquered IB with. In the near future we will be in the same place again, working together to build a stronger arts community.

My dearest juniors, and especially the Year 6's, this valedictory is for you. As you encounter these last few hurdles, remember that a number can never define you. As artists, in your own right, you should understand more than anyone else that 'who you are' can never be encapsulated by digits.

Because as artists, interested in the liminal, we see the voids that exist between the routine of daily life and actually living. We explore these voids and create works that seek to engage others in the same discourse. Returning from this process changed; with renewed energy and direction to become better people and achieve greater things.

What is more important is how you finish the race. How you choose to conclude this narrative. What you continue to do, to define yourself.

Keep the fire burning. Take today, to bask in how far you've come and find strength to continue pushing. You guys have never ceased to amaze me. Cherish every moment of your SOTA journey. Hunt as a pack. Leave your mark. Win something for yourself and let's celebrate together.

Thank you.