

**SPEECH BY MS LIM GEOK CHENG,
PRINCIPAL, SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
SOTA AWARDS 2017
15 MAY 2017, MONDAY, 2.05PM
SOTA CONCERT HALL**

Ms Grace Fu, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth

Distinguished Guests

Teachers, Parents and Students

Good afternoon

1 Thank you for making time to join us at SOTA Awards Day. Congratulations to all students who have done well, and we would like to thank the parents who have been supportive of your education in SOTA. My special thanks to the teachers for you have been instrumental in our students' development. And today, I would also like to thank the principals and staff of the primary schools who are here to celebrate the achievements of their students.

2 We take the opportunity to announce, on this Awards Day, that our fifth batch of graduating cohort has done very well with a 100% pass rate in both the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme and the International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme.

Let me share with you a recap of the IB results released early this year and what some graduates shared after getting their results.

[Video]

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Creativity

3 It is important to nurture a creative generation who will provide a different perspective and solution to life's challenges. What sets us apart from other educational institutions is that we offer a holistic education that develops in equal measure the artistic, academic and affective aspects of each student. In the design of our curriculum, we also seek to create the space for our students to make connections across subjects, explore, discover and experiment.

4 As a result, our students can approach issues from multiple perspectives of the arts, humanities and sciences. Their training in the arts equips them with the capacity to construct an independent view of the world, generating original ideas seeded with practical potential. Our students are creative and they will inject a new dimension to whichever profession they embrace in the future.

5 I would like to share with you an example of an innovative project by our alumna, Ai Lin, from Class of 2014. She is currently studying Industrial Design in NUS. She started a kickstarter project with her course-mates. They did crowdfunding for their project and within a day, they raised \$30,000, way beyond their initial target of \$4,000. And in a month, over \$280,400 was raised to fund the project.

[video]

Making a Difference

6 When I read our students' reflections on their service learning projects, it's heartening to know that many of them hope to use their artistic skills to inspire and give back to the community.

7 Early this year, SOTA partnered the Tsao Foundation in a community art and heritage exhibition, 'In An Echo We Remember'. Ten IBCP Visual Arts students met up with the elderly residents of Whampoa. The residents shared on their most valued possessions and their memories, sentiments and stories behind those items. Ranging from a porcelain pillow left behind by a dear mother to a coin given by a much respected supervisor, the items held a special place in their hearts. The students then injected their perspectives and experiences and created refreshing artworks that are meaningful to both parties.

8 This project showed how art has helped bridge the generational gap between the elderly residents of Whampoa and the young students from SOTA, enabling them to learn from and inspire one another. This is also one of the many examples on how we can preserve and enrich our shared heritage.

Here's a video on the project.

[video]

9 Such experiences provide our young artists with valuable insights into issues in the community, and mark the first steps to becoming leaders who will draw on their creativity and empathy to make a difference in the future.

Diverse Possibilities

10 At SOTA, we constantly seek to broaden our curriculum, so that there is greater diverse possibilities for our students. In 2012, film was introduced as an IB subject. The following year, we enrolled our first Creating Track music cohort. In 2014, SOTA pioneered the world's first IB Career-related Programme in music, theatre, dance and visual arts and our graduates from this program have gone on to study in prestigious arts institutions. Aqilah Bte Hassah, identified as an emerging young artist, is currently pursuing Fine Arts in Glasgow School of Arts, Scotland. Lin Xiangning, who was accepted into the prestigious Young Artist Programme of the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music while she was in SOTA, is currently an undergraduate there.

In 2015, we launched Literary Arts and this is steadily growing in popularity. We also started to offer the subject, Literature & Performance, allowing our students to honour the arts even if they wish to pursue double sciences. This year, we introduced the Arts Plus Programme for students who wish to dedicate more time to deepen their understanding of their respective artistic disciplines.

11 Beyond the programmes we have at SOTA, we also seek meaningful partnerships and collaborations that would provide authentic learning

opportunities for our students.

12 One of the partners we work closely with is the Singapore Chinese Orchestra. Through our collaboration with the SCO, our students get the chance to jointly perform with their musicians and our students also get the chance to have their compositions played by the SCO members. This is a rare privilege. Some of our partners such as LASALLE College of the Arts and Singapore Chinese Orchestra are here today, I take this opportunity to thank them for their support and partnership.

Opportunities for all

13 At SOTA, we believe that all our students should be able to realise their full potential without being hindered by financial concerns. To help them, we have the SOTA Student Assistance Fund. While students from low-income households are already supported by bursaries, the SOTA Assistance Fund augments this support and students can have additional help to pay fees, purchase school uniform and go on learning trips.

14 Last year, we organised our first ever Fundraising Carnival and raised \$65,000, which go into supporting our students in need of financial assistance. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the SOTA Community, our parents, students, and alumni for being part of the carnival. It was heartening to see the entire school community coming together for a good cause.

15 SOTA has also been benefitting from the generosity of corporate organisations. Tote Board has contributed to part of our setup and building fund. The Ngee Ann Kongsi and Temasek Foundation Nurtures have been generously contributing through scholarships, bursaries and sponsorships of our programs. JP Morgan has been funding our students in need of financial support for their service learning trips. To the sponsors and donors, thank you for your generous contributions and your belief in SOTA.

16 Finally, let me extend my congratulations to all the students receiving awards today. You have worked hard and done your parents proud. I wish you all the success in your future endeavors.

Thank you and I wish all a great afternoon ahead.