

## **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT 2009**

Our Chaplain Rev. Fr. Dushyantha Rodrigo, Sister Chandrani and sisters of St. Margaret, Dr. Mrs. Indranee Amarasinghe, Members of the Board of Governors, Principals of invited schools, Ladies and Gentlemen. We warmly welcome you to our Prize Giving and it is with pleasure that I review the activities of 2009, an eventful and fulfilling year, and we thank God for his grace and mercy to us.

We are greatly blessed to have a distinguished past pupil as our Chief Guest and we very warmly welcome Dr. Mrs. Indranee Amarasinghe back in her school today.

Dr. Amarasinghe completed her primary and secondary education at Bishop's College and entered the Medical Faculty, University of Colombo. She obtained a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery Degree, a Master of Surgery by examination and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh, Honorary Fellow of the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland, and Honorary Fellow, College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka. Her Honours list includes the College of Surgeons Award for the Best Scientific Paper 1993, Zonta International Women of Achievement Award for Medicine 2003, Zonta International Award for Overall Outstanding Recognition 2004 and College of Surgeons Award for Scientific Sessions 2009.

She served as President College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka, President College of Oncologists Sri Lanka and is a member of the National Advisory Committee on cancer control. She also served as a member, Court of Examiners of the Royal College of Surgeons of England since 2008 and is Chairman, Specialist Board in Surgical Oncology – Post Graduate Institute of Medicine, Colombo.

In her present appointment, she is Consultant Surgeon and Head of Department of Surgical Oncology at the National Cancer Institute, Maharagama. She has served in many parts around Sri Lanka, namely, Galle, Kandy, Trincomalee and Jaffna. She is responsible for the formulation, development and implementation of projects to develop oncological services in Sri Lanka.

She is an external lecturer, clinical tutor and external examiner for final MBBS at the Medical Faculty Universities of Colombo, Ragama and Sri Jayawardenapura. She has attained recognition with her valuable contributions at international symposia namely at SAARC Conferences and at Annual Scientific Meetings in Great Britain, Ireland and Sri Lanka since 1993. She also has publications in many scientific journals.

When she reflects on her illustrious career, her most rewarding years one assumes would be spent in wartime service from 1993 to 2000 working in the Trincomalee Naval Base and Palaly Air Base. She worked as a volunteer naval officer and rose to the rank of Surgeon Commodore. She continues her services as a surgeon at Naval Headquarters Colombo.

She is married to Mr. Rohana Amarasinghe a marine engineer by profession and presently a lecturer at the Engineering Faculty, University of Moratuwa. They are blessed with two sons and we are happy to have Rohitha in our midst this evening. As for her hobbies, she spends time breeding fish and is a keen wildlife camper. She is also a good rally navigator for her husband and a keen participant in competitive sailing.

We are thankful that your success has proved, children educated here in Sri Lanka can reach recognized international standards. I am sure our prize winners today will be inspired and encouraged by your address.

**Staff** – Our school family continues to grow and we welcomed new teachers from January. We believe that the close, supportive interaction between students and staff is the foundation for so much in our school. Hashini Dissanayake, Mihiranzie Samarasinghe, Karthiga Anbalagan and Prashanthi Krishnamoorthy joined the upper school and Stella Murray, Karen Fernando, Wendy Thenuwara, Nirosi Karunaratne, Ashanthi Ratwatte, Shazrah Zahir and Sharmila Mohamed joined the Kindergarten and Primary School. These teachers, many of them in the first years of their career have been a great asset to the school.

We said goodbye to Shiranthi Karunaratne, Vasanthi Mahendran, Kumari Undugoda, Nelum Kudaligama, Charmaine Jayasinghe and Miriam Seneviratne who retired. The school wishes to place on record its deep sense of gratitude for their faithful service.

Encouraging members of the staff to pursue further studies is bringing the desired results in the classroom. Nayomi Peiris obtained her M.A in Sociology, Priscilla Roshan, Sashi Raviraj, Vathminee Jeerasinghe, Anushika Liyanage and Sandamalie Jayaratne, Post graduate diplomas, Aparna Sudasinghe, Madhu Fernando, Ransirini Fernando and Mihiranzie Samarasinghe, B.A degrees and Sulakshana Ariyaratne The Diploma in Early Childhood and Primary Education.

On Teachers' Day we felicitated Mrs. Cheryl Cooray, Mr. Amal Nandakumara, Mrs. Nilani Galbada, Mrs. K.S. Perera, Mrs. Lalanthi Jayasinghe, Mrs. Aruni Wijesekera, and Mrs. Kumari Undugoda for 25 years of service to the school.

**Nursery** – The arts and crafts exhibition encouraged every child to try out their talent of imagination and creativity using the materials in the school garden and plenty of colour ‘Olympics’ was the Nursery theme for ‘Activity Day’. Fun Day was out at the Mt. Lavinia beach and the Avurudu Celebrations at the grounds. Every year the interest seems to grow and the traditions of Avurudu seen at school are appreciated by the students who persuaded the parents to follow them in their homes. The ‘Grandparents Day’ was very special and the children entertained their grandparents to a day of love, fun and entertainment and distributed gifts specially turned out by them.

**Primary** - Our curriculum goes beyond the classroom – We promote the value of indoor and outdoor sports as Athletics, Swimming, Tennis, Table Tennis, Badminton as well as Short story writing, Creative writing, Oratory and Kavi.

Cookery days, excursions to Pinnawela and Peradeniya, Children’s day celebrations, social service day and year end concert were the main events. Through the Primary library centre we continue to identify and assist students who need reading support. Morning assemblies turned out to be extremely interesting with parents and visitors addressing the students on various topics.

Mrs. Nilani Galbada our Primary Headmistress attended a conference for Primary School Principals in Lucknow.

**Middle School and Upper School** – Our Assembly programme is designed to provide an opportunity for visitors, staff and pupils to participate. We celebrate the achievement of individual pupils and teams by congratulating them at assembly and consider it an important vehicle for assisting the development of students’ characters and values. The officials from the Education Department visit the school and carry out inspections and evaluations in the areas of curriculum development and teaching / learning support.

While being mindful of the need for change in education policy we would have also liked to have more farsighted and focused planning. For example with the revision of syllabi in 2008 History, Geography and Civics could be taught in all three languages but after an year of teaching, History was pulled out and now can be taught in Sinhala and Tamil only while Geography and Civics continue to be taught in English. Educationists and parents were beginning to be satisfied that English had slowly picked up its lost standards when again we

are being informed that it is to be taught in a different way namely 'English the Sri Lankan way'.

The highly exam oriented education culture yet exists in the country but here at school we try to strike a balance to ensure the best possible programmes focused on giving our students knowledge, skills and positive attitudes.

At the O/ Level examination held in December 2009, of the 145, 142 qualified for A/ Levels'. Savini Chandrasinghe was ranked the best from Bishop's College. At the A Level examination 2009, of the 113 students 84 qualified for University admission. Gayathri Yogeswaran and Azeera Mohammed obtained best results in Science, Shenika De Silva best in Arts and Samanmalie Herath Best Results Overall.

The results of the London A/ Level examination held in Jan' 2009 and June 2009 were very satisfactory. Sandra Godwin, Keshia Pendigrast and Treshie – Marie Perera were awarded Edexcel World Prizes for Science and Commerce. Sandra Godwin was ranked highest in Sri Lanka for Economics and 5<sup>th</sup> in the world. Treshie – Marie was awarded Matriculation Prize for Best Entry to The School of Psychology of Nottingham University in Malaysia.

**Sports** – Sports at Bishop's College continues to be successful and popular. As a result of the students commitment to sports a well selected number of colours were awarded. A very special thank you to the teachers in charge of sports and the relevant coaches for their hard work and commitment. Mrs. Aruni De Silva a Past Head Prefect and Games Captain arrived from Australia to be the chief guest.

We happily welcomed two former games captains, Tharanga De Silva and Surekha Buell for the Colours Awards' Ceremony. The dream of a swimming pool for Bishop's College is now a reality. The pool was blessed by Bishop Duleep and opened by Mrs. Tara Bolling at a simple ceremony. The under 17 Relay teams were placed 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 4 x 400 m and 4 x 100 m relays at the divisional meet. The under 19 team emerged 1<sup>st</sup> place and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners in the 4 x 100m and 4 x 400 m relays. Chanushka Abeysooriya, Gayanga Boteju and Tamaris Fernando emerged 1<sup>st</sup> in their respective events. Sabiha Wafik and Gayanga Boteju were placed at the Zonal, Western and Provincial meets.

Badminton recommenced after many years and there is a high turn out at practices at the St. Michael's courts. Sachini Weerasekera represented school at the Colombo North Schools team, Sri Lanka Girls team and the Colombo District Women's Basket ball teams. She also toured Bangalore as a player in the Sri Lanka School Girls' Basket ball team. Our

diving team once again emerged the Overall Girls' Novices Champions, at the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Sri Lanka Schools' All Island Swimming and Diving championships for the 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. The Annual hockey encounter between Bishops and Ladies' College was held at the Police Park for the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year and we congratulate Ladies' College for winning the championship. Our hockey players have gained more experience playing against Colombo Schools and Outstations.

The Rowing teams have improved in leaps and bounds over the year, participating in very many events, namely the Carlton Super Sports Regatta held at Tissamaharama, Bolgoda Regatta rowing on a 2000m course according to International Standards, Asian schools rowing association regatta in which a number of schools from around Asia participated. At the 500m sport Championship and the 25<sup>th</sup> National Rowing Championships, Dimithri Thilakasunderam, Anukshi Sumanapala and Ashanthi Sumanapala performed well winning Gold. We are happy to note that Dimithri Thilakasunderam is offered a 2 year contract to row for Sri Lanka Air Force. The scrabble team emerged 2<sup>nd</sup> runner up in the B Division at the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual All Island Inter schools Scrabble Tournament and were promoted to compete in the A Division in 2010. Sharindi Weerawardene was selected to participate in the schools 'Scrabbler of the Year' competition.

Our swimmers have fared well at the SLASU novices swimming Championships, Slasu Novices Swimming and Diving Championships, Age Group Relay Championships, National Short course and National Age Group Swimming Championships and Sri Lanka Schools Swimming Championships. We were happy to have Shalini Amarasinghe a past swimming captain as our chief guest at the inter house swimming meet held in our own school. The Ladies, Methodist, Bishops Triangular Swimming Meet and Visaka / Bishops Water polo tournament were held at our school pool. We are happy that Tehani Pendigrast, Akila Fowzie, Soraya Wickremasekera and Minuri De Silva qualified to be in the Sri Lanka National team at the 11<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Water Polo tournament in Hongkong.

Bishop's College emerged overall Tennis Champions at the All Island Inter School Tennis Tournament and the National Schools Tennis Tournament. Shanelle Abeysekera, Shankari Thayakaran, Sherene Wijesinghe, Indeevari Wijesekera and Dinushki Ranasinghe, Sineli Jayampathi and Samantha Samarawickrema performed well at many tournaments.

Table Tennis players Shabnam Ossen and Savini Chandrasinghe emerged Champions at the All Island Womens' Day Friendship Trophy and the rest of the team were placed 1<sup>st</sup> runner up. Table Tennis was also introduced to the Primary and it is a joy to see much

enthusiasm from this group. Henley House emerged Champions and Gayanga Boteju the 'Best Athlete' at the Inter House Sports meet.

**Clubs and Societies** – We believe that education should not only be for acquisition of knowledge and skills but that our students are encouraged to understand their identities, widen their horizons and pursue their different interests through a wide variety of clubs and societies. I thank all members of staff who are involved with these activities for providing such enriching opportunities for the students and to congratulate all the students on being involved and successful.

With the grace and kindness of our Lord, the senior and junior S.C.M are moving from strength to strength. The annual SCM camp was held at the Kelaniya Training Centre. The students also visited St. John's Orphanage, Moratuwa. We are happy to note that the students themselves organized seminars and workshops with the focus on topics related to their interest. The Buddhist society held its annual Bakthi Gee programme, the Sil Programme at Gangarama temple and the visit to Gamini Matha Elders' Home. Vesak decorations illuminated the school and the students were encouraged to make their own lanterns and flags. Quite a number of schools participated in Islamic Day programmes conducted by the society. The Ifthaar programme for the past pupils was organized for the 5<sup>th</sup> year.

Many students were highly commended for their entries to the Commonwealth Essay Competition. Our debaters performed extremely well during the year winning the 'Rev. Stanley Abeysekera Challenge shield' and being runners – up in the Asian Alliance Debaters' Council League Tournament. A series of workshops were conducted for the growing number of young debaters. Sandaruwani De Silva participated in the World Schools' Debating Championship for the third consecutive year and was appointed captain of the Sri Lanka team.

An inaugural festival of drama 'All the World's a Stage' was hosted by the English Drama Society with eight schools enacting excerpts of popular dramatists. This brought together students of eight schools organizing their own exhibition stalls and participating in interesting workshops leading to their plays on stage. Sinhala and Tamil Drama as always were organized by the respective societies with much interest.

The Entrepreneurs Club established their new company encouraging those interested in handicrafts to sell their products to the company. On tree planting day organized by the Environmental Club, students of the Primary and Middle School planted trees around the

school. Dengue prevention campaigns are continuously conducted. The General Knowledge Club has been updating the notice boards around the school with current events, encouraging students to be more aware of what is happening in the world.

Bishop's College once again brought back to school the Walden guitar presented by the Classical Music Association of S. Thomas' College emerging champions for the 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. The Youth Music Council founded by the Music Societies of Ladies', Nalanda, St. Thomas' and Bishop's was established with the purpose of empowering young musicians of Sri Lanka.

One of the many outstanding features of our school is that it has a determination to understand, be part of and help the wider community. Members of the Social Service Club visited the Lankadara Children's Home in Wellawatte and entertained the little children with songs, games and refreshments.

The Interact Club celebrated 29 years of active service and emerged the third most outstanding club. We also received citations for Best President and Best Interactor. A dental camp, visits to Lady Ridgeway Hospital, Victoria Home for Incurables, Bethlehem Cresh and organizing Abstract, the sportsmeet for nearly 200 street children were some of the many activities.

The Global Spectrum Club and One World Youth Project continue a sustainable partnership with Limavady Grammer School in Northern Island and The Riverside School in Vermont, U.S.A. We had visitors from Limavady Grammer School who spent a week with us and Mrs. Niveditha Gunathilake and Mrs. Anushika Liyanage visited Limavady in the past year. The Pets Day organized by the club was special, when students brought in their pets to school beautifully dressed up. It was an extremely happy time for the school to host the Head Master, a few teachers, parents and students of Shire – Oak with us at school for two weeks.

Senior and Junior prefects who represent the Mediation Circle fulfil their roles as the neutral party when it comes to conflict resolution within the school boundaries. The workshop conducted by the Ministry of Law and Reforms helped the mediators learn more about the role played by communication in effective mediation.

The Little Friends and Guides celebrated the centenary year of the World Association conducting activities at school and participating in programmes conducted at the headquarters.

The Educational Support Unit continues to facilitate its thirteen students, their parents, their teachers and friends in the classrooms to create a suitable learning environment

for the special child. The School's culture allows for flexibility and has taken the challenge of increasing the capacity to provide a sound education for those in our care.

The school is grateful to the Past Pupils Associations here and in UK to its continued support, prizes and scholarships as well as special – fund raising projects.

Working together we can achieve much. Specially continuing to be closely associated with projects initiated by school with member representatives on most committees.

The contribution of the Parents Teachers' Association is greatly appreciated. It has been a pleasure to have worked with you over the year. Thank you for your willingness to serve, give of your time voluntarily and for your genuine, insightful involvement.

Every prize winner is congratulated for her achievement at examinations, music, drama, sports and other school activities. In my report I have had the opportunity to highlight only a few events and a few students, but there are so many others participating consistently and giving their mite unhesitatingly in many ways. This is what contributes to the richness and diversity of our school. While being jubilant in your success, remember to be grateful to your parents and teachers whose support can never be measured. You have all performed well in your class work or in various co – curricular activities – but we do not stress the acquisition of facts only, forgetting the importance of acquiring wisdom and the value to sensitivity.

The progress made by school today is the outcome of the dedicated services rendered by several who belong to the school community. We are sorry that Bishop Duleep who performs the traditional role in presiding at our Prize Giving is unable to be with us today. We record our gratitude to His Lordship, his visits to the school, his wise counsel and unreserved support. We are blessed to have his care and concern. Mr. Rajan Asirwatham and the members of the Board of Governors who give unstintingly of their time and have been a source of great strength throughout the year. Father Dushy thank you for your time and guidance given. We feel secure that you are always there for us.

My grateful thanks to Mrs. Cooray, with whom I share a perfect working relationship and I thank God for having given both of us this wonderful opportunity to work together. Mrs. Galbada, Mrs. Kumarapperumma, grade heads and the teachers for their continuing commitment, setting the very best of examples through hard work. We are very fortunate to have an efficient and reliable office staff. My thanks to Mr. Rohan Gunaratne, Manel, Jayanthi and the accounts staff for successfully managing the finances of the school. Anne, Viroshini, Surangi, Desiree and Dulcie who work long hours and cope with most exacting tasks. The library, hostel, auditorium and maintenance staff for their consistent

commitment. A sincere thank you to Sandaruwani and Charuni and the prefects who effectively and efficiently led the student body.

A very special appreciation to the Principals who presence here today consolidates our bonds. I wish that our schools together could make a contribution to a better educational environment.

A special thank – you to well – wishers, past pupils, parents and members of the staff who have donated awards and prizes. We are grateful for your contributions in support of this annual event. A special word of thanks to Ranjini De Fonseka and the teacher committees who very competently organize the prize – giving every year.

As we consolidate last year's progress and step towards the new year, we can humbly look back on 135 years of education at Bishop's College and reflect upon the words of the first lay Principal Miss. L.Y. Pode who said "to continue to prosper every school must grow organically, casting off what has decayed and putting forward the new shoots. Yet, the tree remains the same tree; the girl who grows up reliable and responsible is going to be a better citizen than the careless intellectual."

Thank you.