

Saint Mary's School of Sagada
PRINCIPAL'S BULLETIN, 2009-2010 SERIES # 12
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Dear Parents, Students, Alumni, and Friends:

Today marks the end of the 3rd week of the 2nd Quarter, and time seems to be going very fast. Soon, the 2nd Quarter parent-teacher-student conferences will be held as a follow-up to status of the action plans developed in the 1st Quarter. Both parent and student can compare the student's progress as indicated by the student's predicted grades in the 1st Quarter, the actual grades earned in the first quarter, and his current academic standing in the middle of the 2nd Quarter. I strongly encourage parents and guardians to attend this very important conference at the end of September.

Overall, the school average for the first quarter reached **85.34**, compared to last school year's 1st Quarter average of **84.65**. What does this mean? It can mean that the students and faculty, old and new, have adjusted much better to the demands of the SMS style of education, than last year's batch. It can also mean that the first quarter is merely a honeymoon period whereby the teachers are more "giving" or generous at the start, and perhaps the harder work is ahead. My personal conclusion in analyzing the performance of the school is one of caution—there are still 18 failures, many of which are a result of non-submission of work, particularly among veteran students in the 3rd and 4th Year. I still perceive the freshmen no matter how bright they are, as immature playful children with a short attention span. The end of this quarter will be a telling one—for the results will reveal whether or not we are on the right track to the quality education we all strive for.

Congratulations to Irish Dalis (2nd Year), who won first place (Level 3-based on age bracket) in the Poster Making Contest sponsored by the Population Commission and DepEd in Bontoc last weekend. Alona Alto, 4th Year student, placed 12th in Level 4. Twenty-seven high schools participated, each with two representatives. Irish is eligible to join the regional competition.

Our thanks also go to the members of the Garden Club, the Dormitorians, the CAT officers, and the SGO Officers for preparing and planting 50 persimmon trees in the school orchard. Under the guidance of Mr. Randy Deligen, the students spent the whole of Saturday completing the task.

The Dance, Music, and Fashion Modeling Competition among dap-ays, dubbed as the SMS Variety Show, was held last Friday, August 28, after Vespers. The SGO, under the mentorship of Mr. Mike Benter, used the event to raise money to buy T- shirts as prizes for deserving students who adhere to the English rule at SMS. Dap-ay Losban won the overall competition. Starting this afternoon, competitions in spelling, vocabulary, speed math, science and social studies trivia, will be held prior to Vespers. The series comprise an Academic Quiz Bowl competition among dap-ays. A third major competition in intramural athletics is scheduled on September 25 and 26. Finally, a cultural song and dance competition is slated in December during our Foundation Day and Cordillera celebrations. The winning dap-ay will be treated to a sit down dinner at the end of the school year, prepared, hosted, and served by the losing dap-ays.

Faculty Corner:

Meriam Beverly Pacyaya Ticobay, one of the veteran teachers, has been teaching English at SMSS since SY 2006-2007. A native of Sagada, she brings with her many invaluable insights regarding the community environment and the cultural values needed to make our educational mission successful. She had also spearheaded the Service Learning program at SMS. Here are a few of thoughts about education:

When we first had our faculty meeting last June, I was struck by a line from Sir Dennis who talked about making comparisons (similarities, differences, and analogies) as an effective pedagogical tool in the classroom: *“Making comparisons is part of human nature.”*

I agree. Wherever we go, whatever we see, hear and feel all around us, we compare. When we do so, it is not enough to merely note what is similar and what is different. Why is it important to *“see”* what is the same and what is different? This is because, comparing promotes critical thinking. Once a person compares, the process will create new understanding.

After years of teaching at Saint Mary’s, I still make a lot of comparisons. I continuously compare how the school has taught and molded me into what I am today. I keep comparing to see how such differences can make one better over another. Through this, I desire to be like the better one, if not even better.

As an educator, the comparison that I make with students deals with their learning styles. Many prefer certain methods of teaching. These in turn serve as an aid for me in planning and delivering the curriculum. Providing for different learning styles provide my students opportunities to learn in multiple ways. Unlike past beliefs and practice, the teacher can no longer be the primary source of knowledge. Students now cannot be treated as identical sponges fed with information and be expected to understand and retain the data. As people learn different things in different ways, how can we expect our young children to learn the same way?

While it is true that often times we fear and avoid comparisons, we fail to see the purpose why comparisons are made. It is when we are compared that we are challenged further. A person who compares and understands comparison can positively analyze the situation, and make provisions for improvement. While we prefer to be similar to others, we can strive to be better and make a difference. Let us compare in order to grow.

Have a good weekend!

Dennis Gomowad Faustino
Principal

P.S. Our condolences to the Botengan-Sagalla families. May the soul of Rev. Anthony Sagalla (Class '33), father of Brigitt Santiago and Lambert Sagalla, rest in peace.