



# Class of 2022



## Our 2022 Valedictorian Laasya Potharaju

Please see page 8 for an article by the  
2022 Valedictorian.

# Grade 12 Awards

## D'TORCH AWARDS

The awards are given to two students (one male, one female) who exhibit all the qualities of the D'TORCH. They received medals for this very high honor:

Emily Chang and Eric Chang

**Rewards for the five Schoolwide learner Outcomes:**

TRUTHFUL : Kotono Yamasaki

ORGANIZED: Jane Huang

REFLECTIVE: Irene Hsu

COURAGEOUS: Andrea Yu

HELPFUL: Yuino Yamasaki



## DISTINCTION AWARDS

This award is not given by ranking the top students, but it recognizes outstanding performance. The merits and demerits a student received in grade 12 were perused during deliberation.

To qualify for this award, candidates should have been students at DIS for the last two years. They should have completed the entire course in no more than the number of prescribed curriculum years, and should never have failed a subject in any quarter. To graduate "with distinction," a student must have qualified for Academic Honors in at least one quarter during grade 11 or grade 12 and must obtain a general average of at least B+(87%) or higher, including Department, in grade 11 and grade 12 respectively. The following students received Distinction Awards:

Wang, Hung-Tai  
 Huang, Jane Yichen  
 Yu, Andrea Hao Chin  
 Lee, Michael  
 Chang, Jo Han "Emily"  
 Yamasaki, Kotono  
 Lee, Cheng Hsing "Josh"  
 Chien, Bryan Chun-En  
 Yamasaki, Yuino

**Michael Lee was the recipient of the Loyalty Award.** This award is given to student/s who attended the first three grade levels (either from Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, or Grade 1) at DIS and who have never left the school up to the year they graduated High School.

Brandon Huang received Athlete of the Year the Athletics Service Award, and Most Valuable Player for Track and Field.

Laasya Potharaju and Morris Yu received the DYM Leadership Award.



## In Memoriam Sr. Margarita Lin

By Erick Gonzales

**Sr. Margarita Lin, O.P. devoted 60 years of her life to being a faithful religious sister, serving the Lord according to the example of St. Dominic.**

She was the first vocation\* in Taiwan to join the Congregación de Religiosas Misionera de Sto. Domingo (The Congregation of Religious Missionaries of St. Dominic). She lovingly accompanied her sisters in different communities, as well as all the people around her. She was as thoughtful as she was graceful. Her warm presence and the testimonials of those around her show that she fulfilled her promise to God and to the Congregation. Sr. Socorro, O.P. shared that the prayerful nature of Sr. Margarita was shown in her great love for the liturgy. Sr. Flor, O.P. recalled how Sr. Margarita’s vow of obedience had become a constant guiding principle in her community life. Her presence was not only a blessing to the community of sisters but also to the entire DIS community. She always arrived ahead of time before a celebration of the Holy Mass and always shared a smile or laughter at different celebrations. Sr. Zenaida, O.P. affectionately recounted the days that she would see Sr. Margarita gazing at the students playing on the field or at the teachers and staff getting ready for work and silently offer her warm prayers. She was as loving as she was lovable. Indeed, for most of her life, she was a blessing to people around her, and now she is an eternal blessing to us,

for she has joined her Creator and Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ. In the last moments of his life, Dominic, consoling the brethren, said, “My little children, do not weep. I will be more helpful in heaven than on earth.”

\*Vocation - someone who pursues religious life.



Sr. Rosa and Sr. Margarita on a teachers' field trip in 2018

## Jason Shih Receives Global Citizenship Award

By John Erick Moje

**Jason Shih is the recipient of this year’s EARCOS Global Citizenship Award.**

The EARCOS award is presented to a student who exemplifies the qualities of a global citizen. While proudly representing his/her nation, this student remains open-minded and respectful of the diversity of other nations. EARCOS award winners have empathy, foster a sense of community, and demonstrate a strong commitment to make the world a better place. Possessed of the ability to interact and communicate effectively with people from all walks of life, awardees all share a sense of responsibility for all who inhabit the globe. Since DIS began participating in 2016, Jason is the 13<sup>th</sup> Global Citizenship Awardee from our school. May his shining example inspire other Dominicans to make a difference in this world.

*By Br. Patrick  
Bugarin, OP*

## Easter Mass and Initial Sacraments



**When it becomes so difficult to be charitable, when our useless anxieties leave us vulnerable, and during times of uncertainty, Easter reminds us of God’s eternal love, which is greater than all of these combined.** The Easter proclamation reveals that Christ’s resurrection “dispels wickedness, washes faults away, restores innocence to the fallen and joy to mourners, drives out hatred, fosters concord, and brings down the mighty”. It is and will always be about Christ’s entering willingly into his passion, death, and most importantly, His glorious resurrection. Here, He suppressed the powers of darkness to show us that it is not death nor evil that will have the final word. By offering Himself, He reconciled Heaven and Earth by ultimately establishing eternal salvation for mankind. The inestimable tenderness of the Living God’s love for us is what we celebrate during Easter. It is what brings us hope in the midst of our troubles, now more than ever.

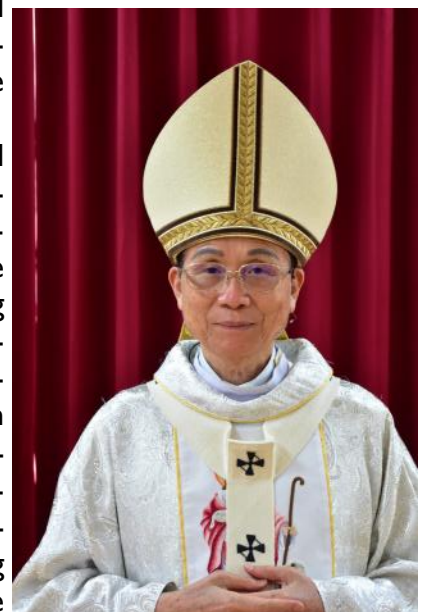
On the 26th of April, 2022, His Excellency, the Most Reverend Thomas Chung An-Zu, Archbishop of Taipei, celebrated Easter Mass and the administration of initial sacraments at DIS

Taipei. Concelebrating were Rev. Fr. Arturo Morales, a Claretian Missionary, and Rev. Fr. Tomasz Zalewski from the Order of Preachers, who is our School Chaplain. Through the hard work of the school’s catechist, Sr. Rosa Dabhi, CCV, the community rejoiced as Psalm Danielle Madeleine Lacangan and Bridget Chu received the

Sacrament of Baptism, Mia Isabella Luna, Ricardo Lima Amaral, and Jacob Francisco received the Sacrament of Confirmation, and Pia Samantha Eddio, Tanner Caleb, Justin Ying, and Teresa Chiang received their First Communion.

In his homily, the Archbishop expressed his gladness to be at DIS for the first time. He described the privilege that the community enjoys: being endowed with concern for not only with what is human but also with what is divine. He likened the sacraments to treasures revealed by the grace of the Lord

which, although intangible, are precious because they keep one closer to God and his everlasting covenant. Sharing the message of Christ keeps the light of the faith shining brightly. May we experience Christ’s resurrection anew by seeing him among the people at Easter. We ask Him to generously pour out the abundance of His redeeming grace among all those whose hope is in Him.



# DIS Parents' Dinner 2022

By Ellen Chu

**The VIP is moved by the energy and support of the parents from all grade levels.** The pandemic has shifted everyone's path. Social distance has set up barriers for us and the school. However, DIS parents still kept their passion and support for their children's education high. The DIS parents' dinner is normally held at the end of the year, but because of the pandemic, this year's was moved up to March 26, 2022. The parents' dinner gives the DIS family an opportunity to understand and bond with the school. An annual festive banquet also allows the parents to meet other parents. This year, the registration was very successful, and we had about 100 parents take part. The theme of the night "Spring Blossom" expressed hope that the pandemic will be over soon, and we can once again embrace the beauty of life. The VIP vice-chairperson, Mr. Dan Clarke, kicked off the evening with a keynote speech to highlight what the VIP committee has been doing in the past year and plans for our future mission. The VIP also invited Dr. Mercia, the English department head and the head of the steering committee for WASC, to speak to the parents about WASC. Next year, the school will be renewing its six-year WASC certification. Therefore, it is important for parents to understand that as stakeholders, they too play a major role in the process.

The night was filled with great food, wine and entertainment. One of the best performances was brought to us by DIS Humanities department head Mr. Samir. His lovely voice warmed the event up, and parents were dazzled by his voice. We were also honored to have our superstar celebrity dad Mr. Chao Chuan to perform for all the parents. Many of the parents, who are fans of Mr. Chao Chuan, were mesmerized by his live performance. After the performance, the celebrity dad stayed and mingled with the parents, and the entertainment continued on with karaoke. Later in the night, our chairperson, Mr. Dennis Nieh rushed back from an event to join the family and performed a lovely song for us. The night was filled with warmth and laughter, which we have missed since the pandemic started. The VIPs were happy that the night was a perfect success, and we look forward to next year's event.



Ms Ellen Chu with Mr Chou Tzuan



Our gorgeous DIS Moms

## Good-bye, Teachers

**Ms Olivia Courtoy will not return to DIS in the new school year.**

She started as an ELL teacher four years ago, but when a Grade 3 Homeroom Teacher position became vacant, the school asked her to teach Grade 3 as a Homeroom Teacher.

Her students loved her and her colleagues were very sad to hear that she was leaving. We hope that she will be very happy in the USA, her home country. She will be reunited with her family whom she hasn't seen in three years, because of the pandemic



**Ms Stephy Ng will be returning to Hong Kong after four years in Taiwan.**

Ms Stephy started as an ELL teacher for Grade 2 in the 2018-19 school year, but in the next year she became a Grade 1 Homeroom Teacher at the request of the DIS Administration. Grade 1 is a crucial stage in a child's academic life, and Ms Stephy guided them through it with dedication and care.

**Ms Elina Papadaki, the DIS Drama teacher for the Lower School will soon be departing for Greece, her home country.** She is going to be a new mother, and would like to spend the first months of her baby's life where she has the support of her close family members.

Ms Elina was with the school for a more than three years, teaching Drama in the lower school, after spending one semester as a Teaching Assistant for Grade 5.

The students indicated very often that Drama with Ms Elina was one of their most enjoyable and informative classes.

**Message from Ms Lize van Dyk:**

**"I had a little girl on May 17th, and will not be returning to DIS next school year.** I have decided to take some time to take care of this new baby. I regret not being able to say goodbye properly. Covid 19 has made it quite difficult. It has caused a very abrupt end to my DIS journey. Many of you are very close to my heart and I want to remind you that I am not leaving Taiwan! I hope to see you again!

I would like to take some time to thank all of you. I feel extremely blessed to have journeyed with you for the last 5 years. You have greatly impacted my life and it was an absolute joy working with all of you. I am taking away a lot of good memories and friendships. You have been such a wonderful support structure for me, especially during my pregnancy. I really can't thank you enough. "



*We wish  
You  
all the  
BEST*

# Conference Presentation

## By Carolyn Hsu

On December 17, 2021, at the International Annual Conference of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language, organized by the Association of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language (ATCSL), Taiwan, Ms. Carolyn Hsu presented “A Preliminary Study of the Applicability of Chinese Textbooks from the Results of SmartReading® Test-Taking Grade 7 LI Learners at an International School in Taiwan.” Her research was motivated by the changing demographic in Taiwan’s international schools, which has shown an increase in the number of Taiwanese learners in the student body. Choosing suitable Chinese textbooks for those students is essential, but opinions differ on the selection of appropriate materials for this group of LI (Chinese as a First Language) learners.

Some instructors prefer to use self-edited textbooks, the quality of which is likely to be inconsistent. Others use textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education. However, the limited number of hours allotted to Chinese language study in English-medium schools has led many teachers to adopt the strategy of choosing a lower grade level of materials to meet learners’ needs. In response to the growing need to accommodate this student demographic, Hsu’s study explored the following questions: How many grade levels should materials be adjusted downward to meet the needs of LI Chinese learners at international schools? What is the reading level of those learners? How can teachers improve the effectiveness of Chinese learning for LI learners? Her study included 73 Grade 7 LI learners at DIS as participants, comparing the results of two tests taken by those students in 2019-20 and 2020-21: (1) the pre-test and post-test results of the “Diagnostic Assessment of Chinese Competence” (DACC) provided by SmartReading® Platform, developed by Taiwan Normal University and (2) the Nanyi Chinese Standardized Tests. Learners’ reading ability was assessed along five dimensions: word recognition, surface textual understanding, textual integration, inference comprehension, analysis and evalua-



tion. The data was then analyzed to explore possible correlations between Chinese textbook selection and learning outcomes. In addition, overall assessment of reading comprehension in Chinese as measured by DACC was compared with the reading scores of seventh-grade learners in Taiwan’s local education system in order to identify the reading difficulties of LI learners at DIS and propose ways to enhance their reading ability. The results of this research provided the Chinese Department with new ideas for redesigning our curriculum and with a clearer direction in choosing suitable Chinese textbooks for the upcoming school year, which will benefit all G1- G8 LI Chinese learners.

### THE DOMINICAN TORCH Editorial Team

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## A message about Grades from our 2022 Valedictorian

By Laasya Potharaju

**Growing up, kids are always told that in order to be successful in life, they have to have good grades. In some cultures, this idea is ingrained into the minds of children from a very young age. Contrary to popular belief, though, good grades do not accurately reflect a person's intellectual ability or determine their success.**

It is commonly believed that those who get the highest grades in university are more likely to have successful careers in the future. During his research on this issue, though, Charles W. Cole came up with surprising results. His research showed that “students who received average or below-average grades frequently rose to the top in business and other professions” (Samuel, 2020). The problem with grades is that, depending on the student, they are not always a sign of effort. “If your child is getting straight A's without trying, it could be a sign that they are not being challenged. And without challenge, there is no effort.” (Bainbridge, 2020). When in a workplace environment and faced with a challenge, such a person may not know how to handle the situation properly. Why? Growing up, they were handed good results without putting in much effort. In contrast, “kids who study hard might get stressed and fail a test, but all we will see is the fat F on the report card” (Burger & Tabassum, 2019). Looking past the failing grade, a student who works hard in an effort to get a good grade learns more than one who gets a good grade without putting in much effort. Such a student is also more likely to perform better when faced with a challenge in a workplace setting. That is not to say that grades are not important, but unless the grades reflect “effort and hard work” in addition to “knowledge and learning”, the student may not achieve the success they expect from the straight A's (Bainbridge, 2020).

Now that it has been established that grades do not determine success, the question remains: What does determine success? According to Chuck Zulanis from The Leadership Society of Arizona, there are “3 keys to becoming successful in any area of life: Find what you love and are good at, don't wait, start doing it, put everything you have into it” (Zulanis, 2020). Practice makes perfect. Ideally, you would want your career to be something you are truly interested in. In order to excel in that field, you have to be good at your job. If you already know what you are interested in, do not wait for someone to teach you that in school. This generation has access to unlimited sources through the internet. It would not make sense not to use that to your advantage.

One question parents may ask is this: “How are my children supposed to get into good universities if they don't have good grades in school?” You want to send your kids to university to be successful in life, but a university degree does not guarantee success. In fact, “a recent study found that 38% of billionaires graduate from elite schools, but about 30% didn't go to college or it's not recorded where they attended. Another 23% of billionaires attended college (but not an elite school), and it doesn't say if they graduated. The fact that 30% didn't go to college and even more didn't go to an elite school means almost 1 out of 2 powerful people either didn't go to college or went to just a regular college.” (Zulanis, 2020) These are some of the most successful people of our time, and the fact that a considerable number of them did not go to college shows that a paper with an elite university name on it does not determine success. Plus, you would save yourself quite a lot of money by not attending overpriced schools.

Though straight A's might look good on paper, they do not necessarily reflect a person's intellectual ability or determine their success. In order to be successful in your career, you have to find what truly interests you and excel at it of your own accord, not because a teacher told you to do so.

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# Tennis News



Leo Hsu got 3rd Place in his first tournament in 2022. He reached Number 9 nationwide in his division on January 7, 2022

Tennis results:

Anna Hsu:

CTTA national Level A singles fifth place (quarterfinals)

CTTA national Level C singles bronze medal

CTTA national Level A doubles fifth place (quarterfinals)

CTTA national Level B doubles silver medal

Leo Hsu:

CTTA national Level B doubles bronze medal

Qualified for the National Team - "2022 ITF World Junior Tennis Competition Asia/Oceania Final Qualifying Event" (top three of Taiwan)

# The DIS Swimming Team



## Athlete of the Year

**Brandon Huang received the following awards at the 2022 Graduation Ceremony:**

Athlete of the Year

Athletics - Service Award

Most Valuable Player - Track and Field

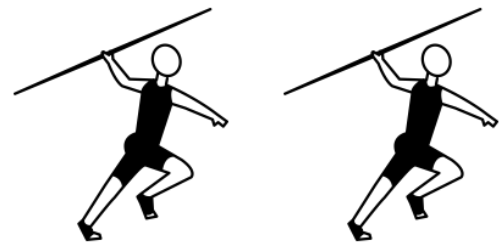
Throughout the year, in spite of difficult circumstances in which athletes had to compete he kept competing.

He was the STUCO Sports Representative, but he also created the DIS Athletics Committee that is dedicated to assisting the Athletic Director and the coaches to promote sport throughout the school.

# Sports News



Camelia Lei Huang achieved 2nd Place in the Girls Javelin Throw



At the Track and Field Tiger Classic Championship Meet at TAS Brandon Huang and Camelia Huang both a got silver medals for Javelin Throw, pictured here with Dr Gustl Pido, DIS Athletic Director