



# HEADLINES

*St Mary's Catholic School*

SPECIAL EDITION



Two of our Y13 students Julia and Alexandra have recently undertaken voluntary work experience with Samaritan's Hope Charity in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where they are assisting and supporting in an orphanage and school.

They also volunteered at the Samaritan Hope Home which provides food and shelter for those in need and the homeless.

We are pleased to share with you the diary and pictures the girls have sent us recording the work they have done.



# Week 1: 4th-8th November 2024

## Monday 4th November 2024

Our first day was incredible. We introduced ourselves to the kids, who started the day by singing prayer songs like "In Christ My Lord", a touching moment that instantly set the tone for our time together. They wore matching Catholic t-shirts, which made everything feel more like a community. We split into groups by academic level to teach the subjects to the kids aged 10 to 16.

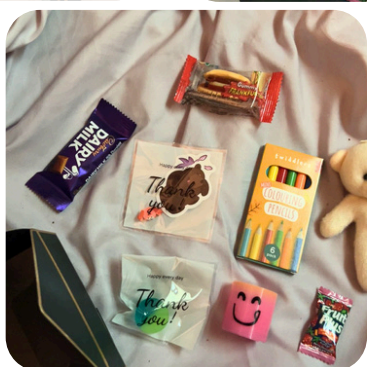
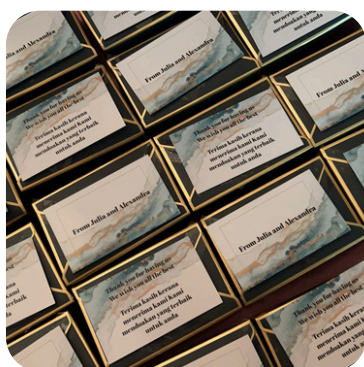
We practiced singing and dancing for their upcoming concert and their excitement was contagious. They were beyond eager to learn and seemed genuinely grateful for our presence, making us more motivated to teach them.



## Tuesday 5th November 2024

Today, we switched things up with Science and English lessons. We also played a few games to help everyone relax and get to know each other better.

One humbling moment was when the kids showed us their Christmas lists. They could request up to three items but only received one from a sponsor in another country. The lists had simple wishes: necklaces, watches, toys, clothes, electric toothbrushes, cargo pants, lip balm - things we often take for granted. They were so respectful, calling us "teacher" and even bringing me a chair when they saw me leaning on a desk. At the end of the day, they put away tables and chairs without needing to be asked. Their manners and thoughtfulness left a huge impression.



## Wednesday 6th November 2024

Teaching maths and English today, we managed to bond even more with the kids. We made some fun TikToks together, which led to a more open, meaningful conversation beyond academics.

We also handed out toys which we brought with us from London including items such as springs, teddy bears, stickers, cards, bouncy balls and stationery – they were beyond grateful for the gifts. It was wonderful to see how much they appreciated it, and I think it helped them realise that we genuinely cared about them, not just their grades. The younger children too (aged 3-10), spent the day also playing with their new toys, making the experience feel so personal and heartfelt. They even made a TikTok and videos of us all showing their love for us, which was such a sweet moment.

## Thursday 7th November 2024

Back to English and maths, but today felt special as we truly saw the struggles these children face. Some KFC was bought for everyone, so they all could enjoy a special lunch. However, the lady in charge cut each piece of chicken in half to ration it, which was hard to watch, knowing how much they would have loved a full piece.

Two children also celebrated a birthday between them, sharing one cake amongst 40 children, which made us feel even more grateful for what we have.

Later on that day, we gave a presentation to a different group of kids who have single parents or come from less fortunate backgrounds, sharing details about life in the UK, as they were keen to study abroad in the future. They were so curious about schooling, exams, and life in general, including life at St Mary's and the wonderful facilities we have, that one girl was keen to join straight away asking us how to apply.



## Friday 8th November 2024

On our last day, we wrapped up with another presentation about life in the UK to the previous group of children, then played games like hangman, wink murderer, and charades to bring laughter and joy before saying goodbye.

The kids surprised us with heartfelt gifts such as cards, bracelets, hair clips and treasures we will hold onto forever. They later messaged us on social media, saying they would miss us and hope to see us again. Some even cried, calling us the best teachers they'd ever had due to the strict old school teaching system they face and it was so hard to say goodbye. Leaving was bittersweet, but knowing we made an impact in just one week meant everything.

Teacher I miss you so much

i miss you too!! hopefully we will see each other soon again, and i wish you all the best 💕💕

Today Sarah, Angela and Me we cry at school

We miss you so much 😭😭😭

it's okayyy, i'm very happy that we got to meet you all and we can remember these memories forever

New messages



# Week 2: 11th-15th November 2024

We spent three days volunteering at the Samaritan Hope Home, a charity run by Sister Pattima, who dedicated her life to feeding the poor. Each morning from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., we worked in the soup kitchen, serving meals to people in need. It was a very humbling experience where the line outside never seemed to end and as people came in one by one, each of us had a role to play whether it was handing out rice, chicken, noodles or sauces. The process was efficient but deeply personal. Many of those we served were homeless, but some were working individuals who couldn't afford to pay for food throughout their day.

In particular, one man's story had stayed with us throughout our voluntary experience. He was 80 years old, undocumented, and had been in Malaysia since 2005. He was sick and had no money, yet he didn't let his circumstances stop him from helping others. He joined us in serving food, offering kindness and resilience that was inspiring to witness upfront.



Upstairs, the shelter had a small home with a few beds for those in need of rest and a chapel for prayer. After their meals, many of the guests gathered in the chapel for a 30-minute prayer session, reciting the rosary and reading the Bible. It was a moment of peace and reflection amidst their struggles, giving a sense of community and belonging.



At night, we prepared bags filled with essentials such as food, water, toothbrushes, razors, shower gel, tissues, mosquito coils, and medicine and walked around the city until 11 p.m., handing them out to the homeless. One area we visited was a locked space where many homeless individuals had formed a small community. Despite having so little, they shared what they had with each other, highlighting a powerful moment of the strength and kindness that can exist even in the harshest circumstances.



These three days left a deep impression on us, the work was physically tiring and emotionally overwhelming, but it also felt meaningful. Seeing the gratitude in people's eyes, hearing their stories, and witnessing their resilience has changed how we view our lives everyday. It reminded us that small acts of kindness can create ripples of hope and that we all have a role to play in supporting those in need. This experience over the last two weeks wasn't just about providing food or supplies - it was about the connection, compassion, and restoring dignity amongst society.

The voluntary work over the last two weeks not only allowed us to help those in need but also learn and grow ourselves. Helping the homeless taught us kindness, empathy, compassion and that you don't know how badly people face struggles and the smallest of acts can make such a positive impact. Teaching children taught us patience, responsibility and consistency to help others strive in the future, and value education helping personal growth and opportunities for the children. Finally, doing a presentation allowed us to gain confidence, expanding our social skills which was an accomplishment for us both.



LOVE - RESPECT - FLOURISH