



O.B. MONTESSORI CENTER

COSMIC JOURNAL

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Christmas Spirit in Sta. Ana

By Gabino Joaquin G. Barcelona, Grade 10-Ruby

A mood of festivity and solidarity takes over Sta. Ana during Christmas time. The community lives the spirit of the holidays amid the pressing demands of scheduling and shopping.

As early as September, seasonal lights and decorations spruce up the surroundings of the town, a show of color set against the night sky. Local groceries and malls are packed with people planning the perfect meal or the perfect gift. Just outside of these centers, a variety of *tiangge* or bazaars, crowd the Felipe Calderon Plaza.

A unifying factor for the town is, without a doubt, the local food fare sold on the streets and around the church. Almost every day, vendors sell *puto bumbong*, *bibingka*, and *suman*, impressively cooking them

right on the spot. These delicious rice desserts are often paired with coffee, *tsokolate* or *salabat*. Seasonal delicacies have become an iconic part of the holidays, attracting lines of people around the food stalls.

Despite the constant hustle and bustle, the heart of the celebration still lies in the Sta. Ana Church, also known as the Parish of Our Lady of the Abandoned, which hosts many Advent and Christmas activities and events.

Church lector Benjamin Tejada has lived in the town for fifty years, taking part in half a century's worth of Christmases in the community.

"It's always a special time," Tejada said, "because Sta. Ana really comes together during the holidays."

Central to every Christmas celebration is the *Simbang Gabi*, a

series of devotional dawn Masses that lasts for nine days. It begins on December 16 and culminates on December 24 with the midnight Eucharistic Mass. Children and adults flock to the parish in anticipation of the Birth of Jesus.

"The tradition never gets old. It's been a part of the Church ever since it was established four hundred years ago," said the lector.

These Masses are an intrinsic facet of the celebration, providing a chance for the people to blend in harmony. Together, individuals from all walks of life can celebrate and practice the values that Christmas advocates.

"That's the beauty of Christmas, it's universal," Tejada said, "no matter what kind of person you are, it's a time of peace, love, and giving."

NEWS

An English Tea Party for All

By Ikea Raine Pahate
Grade 8-Emerald



Skills in baking, pastry production, service, hosting, table manners and proper etiquette taught in the Technology and Livelihood Education Program (TLE) class were once again put to the test as Grade 8-Emerald students hosted a traditional English afternoon tea party on October 10 to 11 at Bistro Terraza.

Dressed in colorful day dresses, frocks, hats and English suits, Grade 8-Emerald students took part in planning and organizing the two-day event while being assisted by TLE teacher Ms. Geneva Aguinaldo. The class was divided into two groups.

The first group was assigned to serve the

English tea, sandwiches, pastry, and dessert to the student-guests on the first day then it was vice-versa on the next day.

In-charge of the first day's table set-up and service were Janielle Cruz, the manager, assisted by Aaron Lanuza. When asked about her experience as a manager, Cruz said, "At first, I was surprised that they assigned me as the manager. It was a challenge [for me], but I learned the importance of order and open-mindedness."

Heading the service team on the second day, Assistant Manager Gabriel Villanueva said, "I was able to learn managerial skills ... and how to carry teapots [with the help of JD Salazar, the manager]."

Moreover, four selected students donned their formal wear and showcased their hosting skills as the event's emcees.

"It was a great experience. It boosted my confidence," emcee Mehar Ganshani said, "I learned more about the history and culture of tea parties. We watched our classmates work hard ... Also we got to bond with our teachers over a cup of tea."

Meanwhile, academic coordinators, guidance counselors, and our campus manager, Mrs. Katherine Chua, were also in attendance to observe the students in the said activity.



COSMIC JOURNAL
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FEATURE

Our Lady of the Abandoned Church



The Grandeur Beyond

By Shanley Jose
Grade 12-Jose

One cannot talk about Sta. Ana, Manila as a site of exploration without mentioning its age-old stone church. Since the first construction of the original edifice in 1720, it has been one of the most suggested places to visit for people wanting to explore the old district. Its notable features such as the Spanish Baroque style *retablo* behind the altar and the magnificent dome interior that extends all the way up to the ceiling have often been described, but not many know about the Marian exhibit found in the convent's cloisters, which people can visit by climbing a flight of stairs from the church itself.

Just before the second landing of this staircase there can be found a statue of San Miguel with one hand holding an up-raised sword and one foot on a slain beast.

Further up the stairs, the visitors are finally greeted by the Marian exhibit where various statues of the Virgin Mary are lined up along the cloisters of the convent, some of which were selected from the private collections of cultural leaders such as Jaime Laya, one of the people involved in the restoration of the Sta. Ana Church.

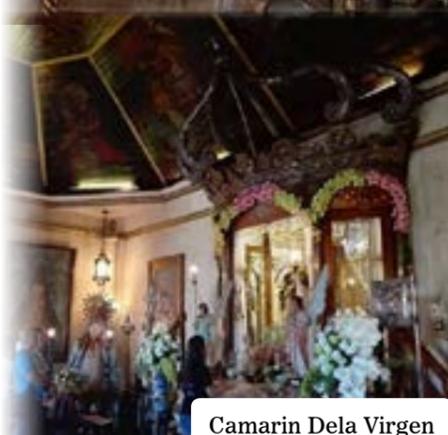
Polished narra floors and exquisite beamed ceilings further accentuate the Spanish-style convent, adding to the colonial feel of the exhibit. One of the most-viewed

statues found in the exhibit is the replica of the original *Nuestra Senora de las Desamparados* or Our Lady of the Abandoned, the patron saint of the Sta. Ana Church. It displays Our Lady of the Abandoned carrying the Holy Child, both of them wearing an imperial crown atop their heads. The image of Our Lady's sunburst halo is quite a sight to see, as it uses a rare *sala-salamin* or mirror-like technique. Even the cross the Holy Child carries is adorned with all sorts of jewels. On January 20, 1720, the *baston de mando* (baton of command) held by Our Lady was perceived to be of such fine quality that the Governor General and Archbishop of Manila personally donated the image. Upon this new addition, the image was then named "*La Gobernadora de Manila*."

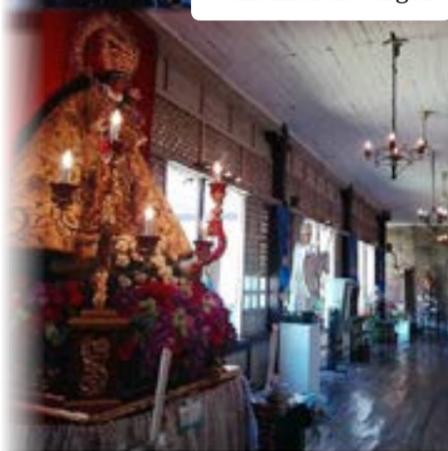
Behind its noise, dirt, pollution, and traffic, Sta. Ana holds treasures of the past that are worth more than any gold. Behind the most beautiful architecture, Sta. Ana cradles cultural treasures that define our glorious past. The grandeur this district possesses is bountiful, all we need is to look beyond the obvious. As a members of the Sta Ana Community, I know that we are excited to see the grandeur behind the next wall.



Retablo



Camarin Dela Virgen



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STUDENT PROFILE

Christian Fernandez: A Pokemon Card Trader's Journey

By Ianne Ramirez
Grade 7-Emerald

Known for his unpredictable strategies that are guaranteed to take his opponents by surprise, loyal Montessorian Christian Fernandez of Grade 7-Emerald, competed nine times in seven different countries. He even joined the World Championship for Pokemon Trading Cards, representing the Philippines in 2017.

"Joining the World Championship was like the scariest roller-coaster ride [because of the highs and lows I experienced in each game]," Fernandez said. His impressive performance in the said sport led him to compete regionally in Indonesia, Malaysia, Hongkong, Thailand, and in Anaheim, USA.

His most recent competition was

in Hong Kong last June 11. His crafty techniques helped him clinch the 36th spot out of 1088 international contestants.

Moreover, Fernandez also shared one of his memorable competitions in the Pokemon Trading Card Game (TCG) World Championships in Anaheim, California last August 18-20, 2017. He admits that he could have prepared better strategies if only he had more time.

"I only had one week to prepare," he said, "On top of that, it was exam week." From around 1000 TCG players who competed, he earned the 54th spot.



This November, he was supposed to compete in Brazil, but he was not able to go. Despite the many challenges he has had to face, like having to balance his competitions with school, he is still a happy and positive person.

NEWS

OBMC Sta. Ana wins 1st Place in the first GREENVIRO Quiz Bee

By The Campus Editorial Board

Kristen Carl Ona and Ma. Alexandra Mansibang of Grade 10 Emerald with their coach Ms. Ma. Severina Llanto emerged victorious in the first GREENVIRO Quiz Bee held on November 16, 2018 at the Air Quality Management Training Center of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). They competed against various schools from ten Metro Manila cities.

In celebration of the National Environmental Awareness Month, National Clean Air Month, and the National Climate Change Consciousness Week this November, the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) headed by Assistant Director Vizminda Osorio facilitated the GREENVIRO Quiz Bee activity. This competition commemorates the 10th Anniversary of Republic Act 9512 or the Environmental Awareness Act through Environmental Education.



There were two categories in the competition, College and High School, wherein the participants hurdled through preliminary and final rounds. OBMC - Sta. Ana students bested around 30 schools in Metro Manila in the High School Category. All the winning teams were awarded certificates and cash prizes.

Congratulations to Kristen Carl Ona and Ma. Alexandra Mansibang! OB Montessori is proud of you!

- Champion**
OB Montessori Center-Sta. Ana (Manila City)
- First runner-up**
University of the Philippines Integrated School (Quezon City)
- Second runner-up**
San Francisco High School (Quezon City)
- Third runner-up**
Caybiga High School (Caloocan City) and North Fairview High School (Quezon City)

TEACHER PROFILE

Our Casa Gem, Diamond Altasin Ramos

By Adrienne Michell Malabanan
Grade 10-Ruby

A certain teacher in the Casa department has touched the hearts of generations of OBMC Sta. Ana students. Brimming with passion, Mrs. Diamond Altasin Ramos has been one of the school's many treasures and the years she has spent with OBMC can testify to her dedication to the teaching profession.

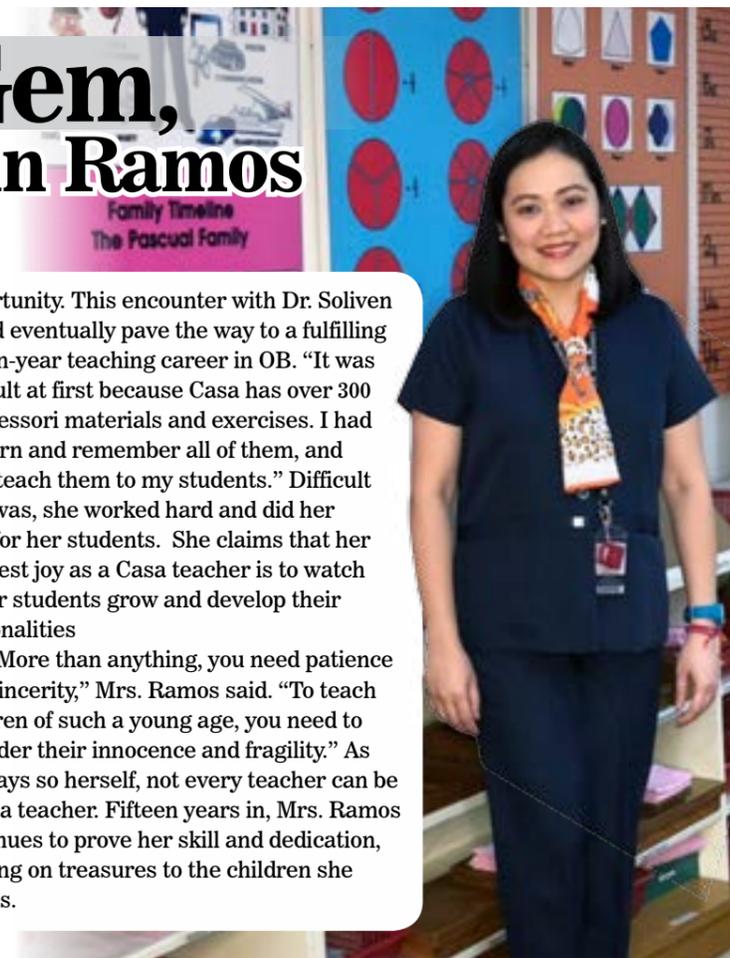
"There's something about the innocence of children," she said, "It's great to see them achieve milestones such as learning to read and write."

Coming from a family of teachers, and with a heart for children herself, it was no surprise that Mrs. Diamond ended up taking a course in elementary education at Centro Escolar University. It was also there that she met Dr. Preciosa Soliven, who at the time was taking up her doctorate at the university.

Dr. Soliven invited her to teach at OB Montessori, and Mrs. Ramos gladly took the

opportunity. This encounter with Dr. Soliven would eventually pave the way to a fulfilling fifteen-year teaching career in OB. "It was difficult at first because Casa has over 300 Montessori materials and exercises. I had to learn and remember all of them, and then teach them to my students." Difficult as it was, she worked hard and did her best for her students. She claims that her greatest joy as a Casa teacher is to watch as her students grow and develop their personalities

"More than anything, you need patience and sincerity," Mrs. Ramos said. "To teach children of such a young age, you need to consider their innocence and fragility." As she says so herself, not every teacher can be a Casa teacher. Fifteen years in, Mrs. Ramos continues to prove her skill and dedication, passing on treasures to the children she guides.



NEWS

Back on track!

By Leela Rodriguez
Grade 8-Emerald

OB Montessori - Sta. Ana volunteers flocked to Manila Bay to respond once again to another round of coastal clean-up on October 20, Saturday. They joined youth volunteers from the other OBMC campuses and from schools around Metro Manila

The International Coastal Clean Up (ICC) is said to be the world's largest annual volunteer program, which generally aims to make students and adults aware of the worsening condition of our environment. The youth, our future changemakers, and some professionals were invited to help in cleaning the garbage from the coastline of Manila Bay.

With the common goal of properly disposing junk, which have been carelessly thrown into the waters and coastline of Manila and of fully eliminating ocean wastes, student-volunteers from OBMC Grades 8, 10, 11, and 12 participated in the activity.

While expecting for the experience to be gross and stinky, the thought of helping clean the coastline of Manila Bay pushed the student-volunteers to join the said program.



OB Montessori student-volunteers swarmed a strip of the Manila Bay coastline for its clean-up campaign on October 20.

Continue to page 6

Continued from page 5

"It was fun, and it felt good that I helped to clean our environment," Alyssa Desiongco of Grade 8-Emerald said when asked of her first-time experience as a volunteer.

Moreover, Aniel Ventura felt anxious before going to Manila Bay. "I felt like anytime, an accident may happen, but I'm still thankful that I had the opportunity to help clean. I have realized the discipline and humanity that we have in ourselves to make our country better."

Spearheaded by Mr. Jose Mari Dela Peña, Citizens Army Training/Leadership Training



With the collective effort to clean the Manila Bay coastline, OB Montessori students across all campuses gathered at Roxas Boulevard to once again promote a "Trash-Free Manila Bay."

(CAT/LT) teacher and joined by Ms. Beverly Jane Banga, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) teacher, and other student-officers, the activity concluded successfully, with 28 plastic bags of

trash collected by the campus volunteers.

Although sad about the remaining trash on the coastline, Aaron Malabanan and Lamees Almutairi of Grade 8-Emerald still felt accomplished after knowing that their efforts helped in collecting the garbage that destroys our marine life.

From the tally kept by Mr. Dela Peña, most of the trash collected were plastics. Students who joined the movement have

realized how indiscriminate plastic consumption affects the environment, mostly the water ecosystem, and even vowed to join the ICC program next school year.

Star Wars visits OBMC!



A Star Wars stormtrooper is amused with the OB Montessori children working on the Pink Tower during a Casa exhibit at Circuit Makati last October 20, 2018.

■ FEATURE

My 2018 Christmas Bucket List

By Alessandra Gepte
Grade 11-Amorsolo

Regardless of the many nuances of how we see it, I think the essence of Christmas is about humanity: a time of being with those we love, and showing kindness and compassion to other people. So what better way to join in and celebrate the Christmas spirit than with family and friends, festivities, people, and good food. Here's the 2018 Christmas Bucket List for you!

- 1 Spend time and bond with your family. One of the most important things we celebrate on Christmas, after all, is our family. Regardless of your relationship with your mother, father, brother, sister, or dog, take this time to reconnect and show each member how special and important they are in your life.



■ FEATURE

What Christmas Truly Means

By Charles Edmon Perez
Grade 10-Ruby

The cool December breeze is here! Food stores are selling delicious special treats and almost everyone has decorated their homes with red and green, the vibrant colors of Christmas. Often when we become engrossed in outwardly preparing for the festivities, we forget the reason we celebrate it; we miss out on what it truly means to us.

- 2 Reconnect and make amends with someone you haven't talked with in a while or had an argument with. It may not be easy, but it will always have its merits. And what better time to do it than on Christmas, the season for connecting and reaching out?
- 3 Enjoy the food and music. It is always great to celebrate Christmas with the ones you love while eating good food and listening to good music at the same time. With the Filipino tradition of *Noche Buena* and Jose Mari Chan's iconic Christmas

The significance of Christmas may differ from one person to another. "It is a time to reflect on our current relationship with God," Gabriel Alabanza of 8-Emerald said, taking a more religious look at it.

Still, others consider Christmas as a yearly tribute to the passage of time.

"It is a reflection of the past, a celebration of the present, and a beacon for the future," Gabino Barcelona of 10-Ruby shared.

- 4 Go Christmas caroling! Christmas isn't Christmas without the lively sound of happy children tapping on their *tambol*, shaking their recycled tambourines made of *tansan*, and singing Christmas songs. If you really want to experience the joy of Christmas through a child's eyes, then I suggest you grab your *tambol* and tambourine, be ready to walk door-to-door, and sing your heart out!

People may have different takes on Christmas, but many Montessorians believe that the true meaning and reason for Christmas is family—members creating fond memories together while embracing the spirit of Christmas in each other's presence.

Beyond the lights and the glitter of the season, and no matter how people celebrate it, Christmas is and always will be a reflection of God's love, peace, and unity in every home, in every family.

- 5 Do a random act of kindness. The humanity that Christmas embodies is best shown through the compassion and kindness we share with each other ... and with others. Not all families get to celebrate Christmas wholly, and it is our duty to share the warmth of love not only this Christmas season, but every single day of the year as well. Make a homemade gift, volunteer or donate. Make someone smile this season.

May this Christmas season bring out the human in you, and in every single one of us. **Merry Christmas!**

■ FEATURE

Who is Your Santa Claus?

By Louise Mae Aguilar, Grade 6-Venus
Miguel Joaquin Abellon, Grade 6-Saturn

Some people may think that Santa Claus never existed or that he never really lived in the North Pole with Mrs. Claus and a bunch of elves and reindeer. He may be the man who goes down your chimney every Christmas to give you presents in exchange for milk and cookies. Or maybe he is the man who watches you 24/7 to check if you are naughty or nice. Although it may seem weird, many of us think all of it as real.

We all have our own "Santa Claus"—one who gives joy, love, and hope to the people around him. Santa Claus can be you, or maybe Santa Claus is the friend who helped you with school work or your neighbor across the street who gave you some



food. He may be your mom or your dad who spends quality time with you. Anyone can be a Santa Claus, all you have to do is open your eyes, look around you and share the spirit of giving.

But you know, as we grow older, we will realize that Santa Claus is not just a single person. Young, old, short, or tall ... anyone can be a Santa Claus! When we do acts of giving, acts of kindness (when we share a piece of ourselves to our families, friends

and even to strangers in need), we are sharing the love and joy that Santa Claus embodies.

Christmas is in starting small and creating a ripple effect that touches the lives of those around us. Christmas is all about giving love not just on the day Jesus was born. Having fun and showing love are a great way of celebrating Christmas. It is not with our wealth that we can measure our act of giving, but it is in how we can sincerely give to others.

■ SPORTS



Janah Kristine Zaplan delivers a smash towards the opponent.

OBMC Sta. Ana bags silver in ISSA Volleyball League

By Reenon
Darren Cabilzo
Grade 11-Amorsolo

After an exhilarating game with Immaculate Conception Academy (ICA) last October 13, OB Montessori Center - Sta. Ana Women's Volleyball Varsity took home the 1st Runner-Up trophy for the Inter-Scholastic Sports Association (ISSA) Volleyball League. The championship game, held at Colegio de San Agustin, went on for three sets: 9-25, 28-30, and 23-25. The OBMC team had been overpowered in the first set, but put up a good fight for the remainder of the game.

During the game, the OB volleyball players knew they had one ultimate goal: to bring home the gold. The game was highly anticipated by many, as this was the first time OBMC came close to winning 1st Place. To top it off, the team hadn't lost a single game since the start of the season. The pressure was high.

"I had to be strong, not just for myself but

for the whole team as well," Team Captain Janah Zaplan recounted, "We shouldn't let any weakness peek through, but to tell you the truth, we were nervous."

Amid the tension and the deafening screams, ICA scored their winning shot. Shocked, the OB team saw their peers standing up, cheering them on. In the end, it was almost as if they did not lose. The court erupted in cheers and whistles, with family and friends embracing each player

as they stood in the middle of it all. It had been a good fight.

"I was on the edge of my seat every second of the game, and although OB Montessori -Sta. Ana didn't win the championship title, I felt proud as a Montessorian, seeing how they gave it their all and fought valiantly until the end," Symour Goyal, a Grade 11 student said.

In the end, the entire community felt like one big team, who is nowhere near giving up.



OB Montessori Center - Sta. Ana Women's Volleyball Varsity, together with coaches Mr. Leoncio Mariano IV and Ms. Abigail Fernancel, are ecstatic with their win.