

Your Child, Your School, Your Voice

Heads Up!

Dear Parents and Carers

Firstly, my apologies for the delay in receiving last week's Heads Up – but as you may recall we were a little busy on the last day of term, running over a 1000 miles to raise money and awareness to support the #SevenHeaven Challenge, raising money for Leah's Wish. If you haven't heard of either of these, let me fill you in.

Leah Graham was a young lady who passed away on October 31st 2013, following a life coloured with pink and glitter, but clouded by her suffering with Cystic Fibrosis. Leah was a Fitzharrys student and member of the Abingdon community; those that knew her remark about her spirit and ability to brighten up a room. In her memory her family and friends set up 'Leah's Wish', a legacy to support other children living with Cystic Fibrosis, to allow them to live their lives in the way they and their families wish, and in doing so, keeping the spirit of Leah alive.



Dan Church and Andy Greening, friends of Leah, decided to do something extraordinary to help raise much needed funds for Leah's Wish, seeing the magic that this charity is able to bring to families who are often living in the dark. I met up with Dan four weeks ago, to see how TeamJMS could help support the fund raising. Dan explained to me the #SevenHeaven Challenge; to run the equivalent of 9 marathons in 7 days, tracking the River Thames, from its source, and then adding on the Abingdon Marathon on the final day, to bring Leah and her cause home to the town in which she lived and laughed.

I had never met Dan before that day, Andy I was fortunate to teach at John Mason when he was in my English class and a more unassuming and conscientious young man you could not wish to meet. Dan explained his challenge with such humility I had to check what he had said to me online to understand what he had said. For Dan and Andy, the challenge was the chance to do good, make life better for someone else, and remind Leah's family that she is missed but not forgotten, by her friends who continue to grow and age while she does not. They are embracing life; what better memorial could there be for Leah?



Dan and Andy set off on their first day of running on Monday 15th October, covering just under 42 miles. I caught up on Twitter that evening, seeing victorious thumbs up and big grins from Dan after Day 1. By Day 3 and 100 miles in, Dan had a stress fracture in his ankle, but was not going to let this stop him; the money being raised was heading towards their target of £2000. He strapped it up, got some sleep and cracked on with Day 4. On Friday 20th, we did our bit at John Mason, by wearing pink for Leah, and taking part in a colour run, updating the boys as they ran towards Lechlade, reminding them that they were not alone, that we were all behind them. Our day was great fun; how simple it is to pull together and show compassion for our fellow human beings – we just need the

opportunity. As I watched Year 7 run their 200 miles with huge grins and energy, it struck me how powerful it is to move. Those of you that have known me a while will know that I am a regular runner; for me it is the simplest of pleasures to pull on the trainers and get out the front door. I run because it allows me to chat through the highs and lows of daily life with my best friend; I run because it helps me to sleep better and think better; I run because it balances out the extra slice of cake I am very likely to eat; I run because it makes me feel alive; I run because, well, because I can. Perhaps that is enough on its own.

Day six of #SevenHeaven saw a message from Dan appear on the social media feed; he was injured – fractured ankle and now four torn muscles and a ruptured meniscus in his knee – he was devastated. Dan felt he had let down everyone who had contributed money, his friend Andy and Leah’s family. I was quite emotional if I am honest; this man had run over 200 miles; the fact that Andy would be finishing the challenge alone seemed cruel having seen what they had endured all week. Marathon running is lonely and pulls on every reserve you have – but 9 of them? That, that is superhuman.

Last Sunday I was totally over-whelmed as I watched Andy cross the finish line at the Abingdon Marathon; he did so in fine style, with Dan on crutches and Leah’s Mum, Selina, by his side; it was one of the most humbling things I have ever seen. What these two men achieved was physically extraordinary and I am sure will take weeks of recovery, but mentally was perhaps even more gruelling; what motivated them when there was nothing left? What made them get back in the trainers when they ached head to toe, when the pain set in, when it was cold, wet and dark? The answer for me is Selina, a proud, strong woman; a Mum who has experienced such loss that no number of marathons would ever come close to her pain. They put one foot in front of the other because they could, and in doing so touched the lives of those who cannot.



Dan and Andy embody the best of humanity; compassion, endeavour, resilience. I know if they read this that they will not recognise themselves in these words; it is not in their nature to do so. But, it was a privilege to watch their efforts and to get our school behind their phenomenal achievement – because we can. Much of what we teach our children is about just this – that if we can make a difference we should, that if we can show compassion to each other, we should – if that means wearing pink and running a mile? Well, then we should.

That’s all from me, have a great weekend

Sarah

Sarah Brinkley

Follow me on Twitter: @HeadteacherJMS

Focus On

Could you inspire our students?

On Tuesday 28th November (iDAY), Year 8 will be having their Careers Day to help them start the process of making informed option choices. We will be doing a variety of activities including using up-to-date careers software, investigating the real world of work and our very successful “Human Library”.

The “Human Library” is where a tutor group is split into groups of 3-4 students and they select an adult to interview about their experience of work, what they do, what they have done in the past, how they got there, who inspired them etc. They are given prompt questions and record details on their record card. After 6-8 minutes, a student then returns the adult to the “shelf” and selects another. The tutor group will spend approximately 55 minutes doing the activity and the small groups will see around 5 adults.

It has been extremely successful in the past and we would like to run it again. If you feel you could help with this year’s event by being available for the whole or part of the day, please contact me: ifer3990@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Mr Ferris

Are you interested in science and journalism?

Young Scientists Journal publishes articles written by 12-20 year olds on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and related topics.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT?

1. Your scientific (or related article) in word document format – with all figures inserted as high quality images and full references in the [Chicago Style](#).
2. A biography of you with 200-400 characters written in 3rd person and a photo of you.
3. A short 120 character summary of your article
4. Contact details of your school/organisation so we can inform them you are publishing an article and if necessary verify you are aged between 12-20

Full details about writing and submitting an article can be found at: <https://ysjournal.com/publish>

Please also send a copy to: p.scutt@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk

Follow us at: JMS_STEM

Calling all Girls interested in Engineering!

Can you find the engineering solutions to the world's biggest challenges? Don't miss out on the next competition. The 2017-2018 Talent 2030 National Engineering Competition for Girls opened on 25 September! Sponsored by PepsiCo, Rolls-Royce and Centrica, girls aged 11-18 have until 15 December 2017 to show us how they can use engineering to solve any twenty-first century problem.

Winners receive up to £1000 and all shortlisted finalists are invited to showcase their ideas to thousands of people at the Big Bang Fair in March!

So; the energy crisis? Improving elderly care? Living in vertical cities? How will you use engineering to impact the world and improve people's lives?

For more details visit: <http://www.talent2030.org> and contact Mr Scutt (STEM Ambassador) in S2 (p.scutt@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk)

For more competition and STEM events follow JMS_STEM on Twitter.

Dates for your Diary:

We make every effort to keep our calendar on our website up-to-date: click here to view: [JMS website](#).



 John Mason School
Excellence Through Creativity

Parents' Forum

Your voice, Your school

Tuesday 14th November, 6.00pm in the LRC

This forum's key topic:
Keeping your child safe – Part 1

Ms Batchelder, Designated Safeguarding Lead will be giving a presentation on keeping your child safe. This will be a two part Parent Forum and the second part will take place in the Spring 2018.

Topics that will be discussed at the forum will include sexting, online security and health and wellbeing. There will be an opportunity for parents and carers to ask questions on any other issues they may be concerned about regarding the safety of their child.

At this forum, Ms Batchelder will be joined by the School Nurse, Mr Bate and Student Managers.

Please let us know you are coming: events@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk





FREE places
Turn over
for details



Investigators needed

10 weeks among the
specimens at the Museum
of Natural History

Investigators at the Museum of Natural History



If you're aged 14-16 you can become a Museum Investigator to get access to special objects, experts in the field and take part in the Museum's science fair in March.



Choose your research project and submit your work for a British Science Association CREST award.



Investigators meet in the Museum on Saturdays 10.30am – 12.30pm. The 10 week experience starts in January.



Places limited. To sign up for a FREE place email sarah.lloyd@oum.ox.ac.uk by 19 December



Extra-Curricular Timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lunchtime	Beauty and the Beast rehearsal In music or drama Mrs Williams, Mrs Naylor or Mr Williams	Jazz Band Elgar room Mr Gilkes	Beauty and the Beast rehearsal In music or drama Mrs Williams, Mrs Naylor or Mr Williams	Lower school singers Elgar room Sophie and Ella-from year 10	Folks group Elgar room Mrs Williams
	Volleyball Sports hall- All years. Ms Gibson and Mrs Szekely	Netball (year 7&8) Sports hall- Girls Ms Gibson and Mrs Szekely	Keyboard club Nyman room Mrs Naylor	Netball (year 9 +) Sports hall- girls Ms Gibson/ Mrs Szekely	Badminton Sports hall Mr Sissons
	Table Tennis Sports hall- All years Mr Dhiman	Football (year 9) Gym- Boys - Mr Dhiman	Basketball (KS3) Sports hall- boys - JH	Textiles Craft Club D5- All years Miss Herringshaw	Fun science club S9 - Ms Batcheldor
After School	Homework Club LS1 TA- Erin Saunders	B'natural (upper school choir) Elgar room: till 4:20. Mrs Williams	Beauty and the beast rehearsal Drama, hall or music Mrs Williams, Mrs Naylor or Mr Harrison	Orchestra Elgar room: till 4:20. Mrs Williams	Homework Club LS1 TA- Erin Saunders
		Level up club E3 - Mr Burrell	Geek club IT2 - Mr Bate	Health and Social care & Business support catch up IT3: 3:20- 4:15 Miss Thornton	
		Football (year 8) Sports hall- Boys Mr Conroy	Homework club (year 9) E2 Mr Davies	Volleyball Sports hall Ms Gibson/ Mrs Szekely	
		Football Sports hall- Girls Ms Gibson and Mrs Szekely	Netball Sports hall- Girls Ms Gibson and Mrs Szekely	Rugby (year 8) Sports hall Mr Dhiman	
		EAL club L3 - Mr Hamilton	Homework Club LS1 - TA- Erin Saunders	Homework Club LS1 - TA- Erin Saunders	
	Homework Club LS1 – TA- Erin Saunders		Beauty and the Beast Costume Club D5- Miss Herringshaw	TechFuture- Girls IT1- Mrs Green	