Issue #3

JANUARY 2023

PL PARCEL

New Beginnings

FROM THE PL PARCEL TEAM TO YOU,

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HAPPY NEW YEAR AND WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL!

Did you know that New Year's Day is the most widely celebrated holiday all around the globe, with people of all ages and nationalities partaking in this worldwide celebration? New Year's Day signifies new beginnings where anyone can turn over a new leaf and try to improve themselves in the upcoming new year.

On this special day, individuals reflect on their successes as well as disappointments of the previous year and look forward to a fresh start in the new year. Many people also make New Year's resolutions in hopes of improving themselves to be better people in the upcoming year.

What about you? Do you have any New Year's resolutions? A new year's resolution is usually when a person resolves to continue their healthy habits, correct their bad behaviours or even accomplish a personal goal. It does not necessarily have to be a big and unrealistic aim but rather an achievable goal that you can reach by working hard to improve yourself. It can be as simple as starting a new hobby or trying to work harder in your studies, and so much more.

With 2023 just beginning, the new year is bursting with potential and the possibilities are endless! Never forget that the sky's the limit — anything is possible if you just put your mind to it!

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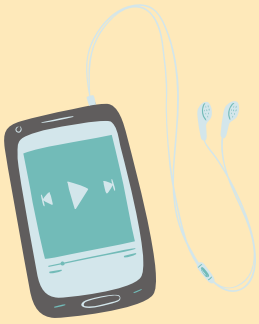

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back to.... school?!

Run

Start

Yes

Written and Designed by: Heidi Foo (4.1) and Amelia Chan (4.2)

and the morning march is back on!

Over the holidays, most of us have soaked in the luxury of sleeping in, catching up with our friends, and slowly tackling our homework. Now, it's time to start the new school year together!

Some of you may recall, the PL Parcel team posted a series of polls on PL's very own Instagram page, @myplstory, to hear what worries you most about returning to school. With the flood of responses, we've narrowed them down to 2 main aspects of school life which affect us all. As students ourselves, we understand these issues on a personal level. So here's some advice to help soothe your anxieties!

Responses from @myplstory's Instagram:

results

The workload

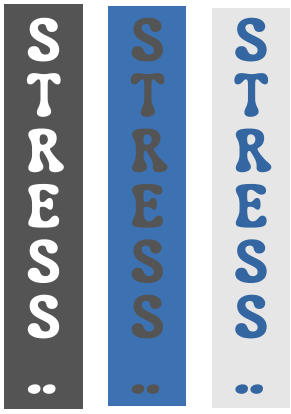
Will I make new friends?

MEETING MY FRIENDS AND TEACHERSS AND CCA

1. it's simply toooooo much!

Academic pressure is no stranger to most of us. As we age into secondary school, it is more present than ever. Academic pressure, or synonymously referred to as 'stress', may manifest itself in the form of expectations from your surroundings and yourself. Be it peer pressure, the desire to improve, or to score for that rewarding A1, the stress that comes along with it is inevitable.

oftentimes, what we fail to realise is that stress is essential to obtaining a healthy mindset. To elaborate, not all kinds of stress are harmful. Good stress, known as eustress, may spur individuals to achieve greater heights, and inspire good habits. Bad stress, on the other hand, distresses you and triggers intrusive thoughts of being insufficient and lacking.



So, in terms of academic pressure, what serves as a suitable yardstick to measure what defines the good and bad in stress? Frankly, there's no model answer. Different individuals tend to react to different levels of stress differently. What is good to someone may be perceived as bad to others, and vice versa. So, it's up to you to define the most fitting conclusion. Training yourself to recognise when you require a break is a crucial skill for you to find moderation between work and personal life.

on the other end of the stick,

to cope with our different stresses, identifying what triggered them in the first place is of utmost importance. When you have a strong awareness of yourself as a person, sooner or later, you come to realise what works and harms you. Let's say you have an academic rival who can motivate you to study harder, but they may unconsciously feed you into a ravine of aggressive and negative thoughts. This explains that, while useful for others, perhaps forming an academic rival is counter-effective for your source of motivation.

Another aspect to be aware of is your healthy coping mechanisms. When our worlds seem hazy and our plates seem chock full, do reconnect with the little things that ground you as a person. It can be anything -- listening to your favourite playlist, meditating, taking a warm bath, journaling or even soaking in prayer. They will guide our consciousness to the world surrounding us and help us realise that the hurdles we have now are things we can and will overcome eventually.

2. I cant seem to make friends...

In a nutshell: socialising is natural for some, and challenging for others. It's an area of life which is vital for each one of us to thrive well outside and a key factor to making school life more sustainable and fulfilling for us. Whenever we face change, be it arriving at a new school knowing almost no one, or switching classes, it is easy for us to slip into an unhealthy mental cycle of worrying that we may never find genuine friends and be well-accepted socially.

Perhaps the truth is that friends are more found, than made. Often, we may feel the urge to 'shapeshift' or alter parts of our personalities in order to blend in with the crowd better and feel more liked by our peers, to quickly display your best self so that others would think you are cool and want to befriend you. However, an unfeigned advice that we cannot stress enough is for you to **focus on being comfortable in your own personality and trust the process!**

Trust the process!

I'm trying :(

whats the point of making numerous new friends but never really feeling like yourself around them? If you struggle to find your circle of genuine friends in school, remember to have faith in your personality. Over time, that will naturally attract others who favour you as your own person, and maybe even those who share a similar sense of humour or the same hobbies. From there, friendships naturally blossom.

Throughout secondary school, we work slowly towards the common goal of the O/N levels. The cumulative effect of stress that builds up due to our examinations, relationships with others and ourselves, is common to us all. Establishing your aspirations and having a clear vision of what you want to achieve by the end of your secondary school journey is wonderful, but the experience of this journey you give yourself may be even better. Realise that these few years will be years of growth for you as an individual. So as you counter stress, be sure to **take extremely good care of yourself by searching for sustainability in your lifestyle.** This way, you will surely recognise that **you are fully capable of thriving in secondary school**.

MEGA-AWESOME:
REFLECTIONS FROM MEGA CAMP '22

The annual Mega Camp is a three-day-two-night residential experience at Sarimbum Scouts Camp which gave students a chance to participate in activities such as cooking smores outdoors, Dragon Boating, and a cozy campfire night! It has been a PL tradition for most student leaders, where students can push themselves mentally and physically into their 'stretch zone', with the common goal of bettering themselves and those around them into more confident youth leaders.

After a two year hiatus from this tradition due to COVID-19, PL's Mega Camp was back in full force! Guided by our 5 leadership practices, our dear teachers and organising committee worked hard over several months to put together challenging, yet insightful, activities intended to help our student leaders learn in-depth about themselves and leadership itself.

The beginning of a full body workout. Starting off with a 12km hike through the Marang Trail & Kallang Riverside Park, followed by an exciting dragon boating experience. Everyone was tested mentally and physically to stay strong throughout the long day!

A campfire into the late evening! On Day 2, everyone present huddled together for the cheerful carolling of songs and listened to each other's personal sharing on their experiences.

Over the span of 5 hours, our student participants and teachers joined the camp instructors to play an array of activities ranging from fun games such as Minefield, which is a twist to the globally renowned Squid Game glass bridge challenge, to outdoor cooking where students tried their hand at making yummy smores!

We also spoke to a few of the PL-Lites who were involved in this year's Mega Camp, about their fondest memory and takeaways!

CHARLOTTE CHIA (4.3)

My fondest memory was the campfire on day 2! I found it heartwarming to see how these 2 days at camp had brought everyone together to bond as a PL leadership board. The enthusiastic cheers and Singspiration really helped to close off Mega Camp in a memorable way! The planning process also helped build up my resilience , creative thinking skills and confidence as we faced many setbacks and had to come up with many different activities to make camp as fun as possible for everyone, and I had opportunities to speak in front of a crowd.

ASHLYN MAK (3.2)

My fondest memory was when we went dragon boating. Despite being in random groupings, I liked how everybody worked together without hesitation. After the instructor taught us how to do it, we were able to go super fast and even placed second in the friendly 400m competition! The camp also helped me learn how to speak up and have more self confidence. It taught me to not be embarrassed to speak loudly in order to be heard. Being a facilitator of my group, I was a little shy as I was also leading the Sec 3 (students) who were older than me. It was a little awkward for me, but I eventually got the hang of it and was able to confidently lead the group.

SONIA SIDHU (3.2)

The campfire night! It was really great to see everybody singing songs together and having a great time. We also got our camp shirts and lanyards then, I thought 'Wow, This is the Mega Camp we were waiting for!' which felt very rewarding.

The overall experience taught me to be more adaptable and independent because the camp taught us to adapt to different circumstances. Day 1 felt like the longest day for most of us, so it taught me to press on and make the best out of my experience.

In the words of Ashlyn: With this tradition back on track, future PL-Lites are able to experience the camp, to become better leaders at heart!

Written by: Evelyn Naga (4.2), Amelia Chan (4.2), Clarissa Yuen (2.5)

Designed by: Adele Wang (3.6) and Aisha (2.1)

Photographs taken from PL's Instagram page @myplstory

Yo, the world's richest man took over Twitter.

Written by: Amelia Chan (4.2), Heidi Foo (4.1),
Designed by: Teo Yew Kee (4.2) , Myu Quek (4.2),
Amelia Chan (4.2)

Plastered all over the media, it has seemed like the *blue bird has turned grey*. Twitter -- a popular Social Media app known for their convenient tweets, had very recently been bought over by Elon Musk. Otherwise known as the world's richest man, Musk's sudden hostile takeover of the app has caused several issues that we will be zooming into.

So, why did Musk spend $44 billion to acquire Twitter as his own? As one of Twitter's most prolific users, frequently tweeting about his companies and favourite memes, Musk was also the leading shareholder of the platform, holding 9.2% of shares. Prior to everything, Twitter had offered Musk a place as a board member of the company, meaning it would also restrict the percentage of ownership he could attain, and his ability to freely comment about the company. Thus, he declined the offer.

A mere three days after, we found out that being an avid user and shareholder of the app was not enough for him. Musk needed to own his favourite social media. Along with his huge unsolicited takeover bid, Musk announced his motives for turning Twitter into his private company: To enhance free speech on Twitter. He claimed that he wanted to make Twitter a place where "a wide range of beliefs can be debated in a healthy manner."

Elon Musk 2023
Teo Yew Kee

Now, free speech is far more complex than openly saying whatever you want. Under his lead, he had lifted guideline restrictions for users, and even reinstated accounts of people such as Donald Trump and Jordan Peterson, who had initially been suspended for playing foul with Twitter's strict guidelines on Abuse and Hate speech.

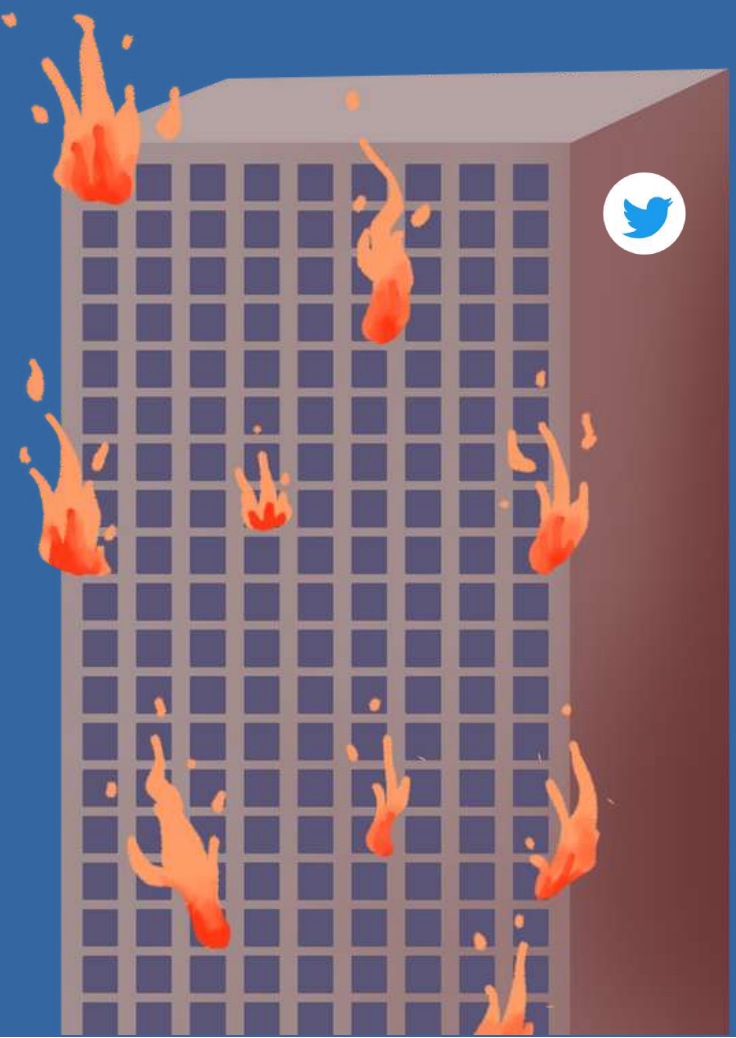
The lack of proper moderation of tweets had fostered a dangerous environment for most users, driving off major advertisers like Chipotle and Nestle, as well as over 1,000 former employees from working with the troubled company.

Most expect a highly functional enterprise like Twitter to make conscious decisions with precise calculation with regards to possible consequences. Cue Elon Musk.

The poll function on Twitter is one Musk ardently abides by to make decisions, where the more voted option of the poll is his call for action. Perhaps his idea of relying of polls is his idea of making the impression of an inclusive society. However, research has proven that Twitter polls are easily manipulated, with the mass purchase of bots to turn the tide in the polls.

One such example of this — which leads us to the next chapter of Musk's journey on Twitter — is his most recent step down as the head of Twitter. On 19 December 2022, Musk posted a Twitter poll stating, "Should I step down as head of Twitter? I will abide by the results of this poll." **57% Yes and 43% No.** Clearly, the majority of users were upset with his power all over the platform, an outlet once for stress and opinions soon became more restrictive due to newer policies he had added.

In addition, public figures such as renowned YouTuber Mr Beast had vocalised his frustration in response to the recent addition of the policy which banned any free promotion of third party social media platforms.



This prevents content creators from making income as they are prohibited from linking their newest videos or pieces of art on the platform.

From the poll results, Musk announced he would "resign as CEO as soon as (he found) someone foolish enough to take the job." However, until then, Musk will still remain the CEO of Twitter.

The hostile acquisition of Twitter has brought up many questions and impressions from social media users globally. As we spectate the rest of this saga, something one can ponder on is — whether **power + money = great leadership everytime?**

Written by: Kristeva Loo (2.8) and Chang Zi Qing (4.1)
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STUDIO GHIBLI:

THE ANIMATION STUDIO THAT TOOK THE WORLD BY STORM.

Studio Ghibli (株式会社スタジオジブリ) is an acclaimed Japanese animation studio headquartered in Tokyo.

It has released a total of 22 motion pictures since it was founded in 1985 by directors Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata, together with producer Toshio Suzuki. Studio Ghibli is renowned for its artistic excellence and the remarkable calibre of its films; their immersive realism in films gives audiences a nostalgic yet heartwarming experience.

Even though Studio Ghibli is undoubtedly one of the most famous animation studios in this day and age, it was not always this way. Back when Studio Ghibli was a newly-established company, anime, a style of Japanese film and television animation, was often looked down upon in the film industry. Major blockbuster hits such as 'Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind', 'Castle in the Sky' and even 'My Neighbor Totoro' were not as well known as they are now. Instead of being household names, they were familiar to only a niche group of people.

An important turning point for the studio was in 1989. With the release of 'Kiki's Delivery Service',

Studio Ghibli made a quantum leap as an animation studio and paved the way for future Studio Ghibli hits. 'Kiki's Delivery Service' was actually originally a novel, but was adapted into a movie after Studio Ghibli secured film rights to the book. 'Kiki's Delivery Service' contains beautiful hand-painted landscapes coupled with a strong female heroine who is the main character in the coming-of-age film.

In 2001, Studio Ghibli took the world by storm with their award-winning film, 'Spirited Away'. The film rose to the position of the highest-grossing Japanese film of all time, which it retained for almost two decades. It was released at a time when cultural boundaries frequently prevented the international distribution of animations, for they were widely regarded as a genre reserved only for children. 'Spirited Away' dispelled these misconceptions about the genre, and demonstrated that a Japanese-made movie containing fundamental components of Japanese mythology can still have a profound impact on global viewers, thus revolutionising animated movies. 'Spirited Away' is widely regarded as one of the greatest animated movies of all time and among the top movies of the twenty-first century.

There is no doubt Studio Ghibli heralded a new age of animation as well as leaving an everlasting impact on animation for generations to come. The studio has elevated the craft of filmmaking and introduced many generations to its complex worlds and enthralling tales. In the same manner that Disney films have become classics,

Studio Ghibli films are not only of the highest calibre but have also shaped the animation industry and public perception of animation. With the help of Studio Ghibli, anime is now widely accepted by the general public. Studio Ghibli's rise to fame has also taught us that dreams do come true and that hard work can and will inevitably pay off.

BOBALICIOUS!

1) History

Tea has been a common drink for years, originating from China around 2700 BC. Throughout the centuries, tea has evolved and now there are hundreds of different flavours of tea. Adaptations of traditional tea have also popped up. Most notably, Bubble Tea, a prominent example, has taken the world by storm. Bubble Tea is a tea-based drink that originated in Taiwan in the early 1980s, and is usually served with chewy tapioca pearls, or with a variety of other toppings. Due to its aesthetic appeal, it has gained popularity as more people purchase Bubble Tea and share images of it on social media. Another factor is the mouth-watering, delicious flavour of the drink. It is so popular that there are over 60 different brands of Bubble Tea shops across Singapore alone.

2) The different flavours of tea

Since its origin, the basic boba tea recipe has developed into a whole category of beverages. Other than the classic Bubble Milk Tea, there are a multitude of different flavours to choose from. Bubble Tea shops often develop new flavours in accordance with yearly events or the latest trends to entice more customers to their shops. Classic flavours that can be found in almost any Bubble Tea shop include Milk Tea, Thai Tea, Taro Bubble Tea and Fruit Tea. Throughout the years, Bubble Tea has evolved to incorporate a variety of different teas such as black tea, green tea, oolong tea and white tea as well as a plethora of different toppings such as jelly, pudding, taro balls, fresh fruit and even cookie crumbs. Next time you are craving Bubble Tea, be sure to check out other menu items as well! Who knows, you might just find your new favourite iteration of Bubble Tea! Furthermore, most Bubble Tea outlets offer varying sugar levels, ice levels, and temperatures as ways to further customise your order. It is almost guaranteed that you will be able to find something to suit your taste!

DID YOU KNOW?

According to legends, around 2700 BC, some leaves from a nearby tree blew into the water that a servant was boiling for Chinese emperor Shen Nong. As he was a renowned herbalist, Shen Nong decided to try the accidental infusion of the leaves and water and was pleasantly surprised when he took a sip of the drink. Thus, tea was created.

3) Stay healthy while drinking Bubble Tea

Even though Bubble Tea is an appealing drink, what we fail to notice, however, is that drinking too much Bubble Tea can result in health related problems in the future as Bubble Tea can bring detrimental impacts to one's health. Thus, we should abstain from consuming it on a daily basis. Did you know? A single regular-sized 500ml cup of Bubble Tea could amount to a total of 335 calories! To put into perspective just how much 335 calories are worth, health experts recommend that the average daily intake for breakfast should range from 300 to 400 calories. Nonetheless, if you simply cannot resist the sweet temptation of drinking Bubble Tea, there are still several ways to enjoy the treat healthily.

1: Minimise your sugar intake by opting for a lower sugar level, and avoid adding those sugar-coated fruit syrups into your Bubble Tea.

2: Ask for fresh, low fat or skimmed milk instead of non-dairy creamers.

3: Opt for a smaller/medium cup instead of a larger one.

4: Choose lower calorie toppings or reduce the amount of toppings added in your Bubble Tea.

It is indisputable that Bubble Tea is a staple in Singapore's F&B industry nowadays. A prime example of its prominence was during the COVID-19 pandemic when Singaporeans were clamouring for their last fix of the mouthwatering drink with seemingly endless queues at Bubble Tea shops right after it was announced that all standalone F&B outlets were to be temporarily closed. However, the rise of Bubble Tea in Singapore also has its setbacks, as it could result in a higher percentage of health-related problems among Singaporeans. With Singapore's obesity rate at an all-time high, it is good to be reminded that too much of a good thing can also inevitably lead to bad consequences. Therefore, we should be mindful of the amount of Bubble Tea we consume.

Written by: Chang Zi Qing (4.2)
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About Us

PL Parcel is a student-initiated project — Our school's very own student publication!

With this addition to PL, we aim to cover a wide range of content and share timely topics with our readers. We hope these publishes can spark PL-lites to discover the joy of reading, as well as to keep up-to-date with social issues and school matters.

We thank all those featured in this magazine for their valuable insight and time, and we thank you for reading this issue of PL Parcel!

PL Parcel '23

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Source credits

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