

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT FOR 2009 – 2010
(Read on Prize Day, Saturday, 20 March, 2010)

Members of the Local Committee of Governors, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a privilege to welcome as Chief Guest today, Mr Prashant Trivedi, I.A.S., Commissioner, Lucknow Division and ex-officio Member of the Local Committee of Governors, La Martiniere College, Lucknow.

With your permission, Sir, it is an honour for me to present the Annual Report of La Martiniere College for the year 2009 – 2010.

TRUSTEES AND GOVERNORS:

Mr Atul Gupta, Chief Secretary, Govt., U.P., and Mr. S. M. A. Abidi, Principal Secretary, Law and Legal Remembrance, continued as our ex-officio Trustees. We thank them for their co-operation and support and wish them well. We hope that they will continue to enjoy pleasant tenures.

In October, 2009, Mr Amit Kumar Ghosh took charge as District Magistrate, Lucknow, and ex-officio member of the Local Committee of Governors from Mr Chandra Bhanu, in September, 2009. He in turn, was relieved of that charge by Mr Anil Kumar Sagar in February, 2010. We are grateful to them all, wish them well in their new posts and hope that

Mr Sagar will enjoy a pleasant tenure as a member of the Local Committee of Governors. We are more than grateful to all the other members of the Local Committee of Governors, Mr Justice Pradeep Kant, the Chairman, Mr Prashant Trivedi, Brigadier S. Ahmad Ali, ex-officio members and the two co-opted members, Mr Justice S.N. Sahay and Mr P. Fanthome, for their continued co-operation, advice and assistance in ensuring that the administration of the College is carried out efficiently and effectively.

On the recommendation of the Local Committee of Governors the Trustees granted a further extension of service to the Principal till 28 February, 2011. In accepting the gracious offer of an extension of service gratefully, he values the trust reposed in him by the Local Committee of Governors and the Trustees far greater.

BEREAVEMENT:

It is with great anguish that I report on 25 April, 2009, when twelve students, belonging to the College, were coming to school, a fearsome accident occurred to the bus, in which they were travelling. The outcome was horrendous. The life of Divyansh Bhardwaj, of Class 3, was tragically cut short. Another, Vedansh Shahi, was critically injured and took several months to recover. He is probably still suffering from the effects of the accident. Some of the other children were hurt quite severely, but fortunately, their injuries were not life-threatening.

Divyansh was barely eight years old, but he, like all children, was the pride and joy of his parents, who had only recently, in February, been blessed with another son. He had been excitedly looking forward to participating in an Elocution Contest, in which he was to play a starring role. He was a lively and spirited child and took great pleasure in coming to school, of which he was very proud. He studied hard and was considered a bright student. His was a life filled with promise. We shall never be able to understand why he was so suddenly and shockingly taken from us, but it is a harsh reality which we shall have to learn to live with. It is a great loss that the life of such a bright and gifted child came to such an abrupt end.

The anguish of the parents of Divyansh and his relations is very deep, but we pray that as time passes, their wounded hearts will heal and that they will take comfort from the thought that Divyansh was a wonderful gift and blessing from God, even though they could only enjoy it for a short time. As they continue with life, may the pain they feel in the loss of their beloved child, gradually diminish and become only a lasting, blessed and sweet memory.

STAFF:

Appointments

In March and April, we were pleased to welcome several new members of the Staff. Mrs Jacqueline Abraham, joined as an Assistant Teacher in the Junior School, in an existing vacancy and Mrs Jyoti Garg, Mrs Amrita Lawrence, and Mrs Shinu Sinha, joined as Assistant Teachers in the Primary School, in newly-sanctioned posts.

Mrs Palak Sujanani joined the Preparatory Department in March in a newly-sanctioned post. In July, Mrs June Medley joined as Assistant Teacher and Mrs Meenu Mohan, as Hindi Teacher in the Preparatory Department. Mrs Medley was employed in a newly-sanctioned post. Mrs Mohan filled a vacancy which arose owing to the resignation of a teacher. Mrs Ann Marie Cooke, temporarily filled the post of Mrs S. Yadav, who resigned in August, 2009.

In the Senior and Middle School, Ms Noorein Raza joined as Art Teacher, in place of Mrs S. Rastogi, who had resigned.

Mr Ashish Gupta and Mr Sandeep Kumar joined as Office Assistants, in a purely temporary capacity in July and October, 2009.

Owing to various reasons several members of the staff took leave during the year. In order that the work of the school was not disrupted unduly, many people were employed to help as teachers in a temporary capacity. We are most appreciative of the help they extended and are grateful to Ms Sara Khan, Ms D. Singh, Mrs M. Mohan, Ms Norein Raza, and Mrs Ann Marie Cooke.

Resignations

Mrs Sabita Rastogi, Art Teacher in the Senior and Middle School, Mrs S. Yadav , Teacher in the Preparatory Department, and Mr Devendra Kumar, Band Master, resigned during the course of the year for personal reasons.

Awards for long and meritorious service

We are proud to congratulate Mrs Anna Holmes, Assistant Teacher in the Preparatory Department, who completed twenty-five years service shortly before her retirement, and Mr Peter Collins, Housemaster Hodson House on his completion of twenty-five years of service earlier this month. According to the custom established here, the Local Committee of Governors, recognises and acknowledges their long and valuable service by making available to them two advance increments. They shall also receive a small token of esteem at the awards ceremony later this evening.

Twenty years is a considerable time in the life of an individual. As such, it is now an established custom that when Members of the Staff have worked in the College for twenty years they are made a small presentation in acknowledgement of the fact. Mrs Afshan Khan and Mrs Rita Mullick, Assistant Teachers in the Junior and Primary School respectively have served the College well and so, it is with pride and pleasure that we shall present each of them with tokens of recognition and appreciation here this evening. We congratulate them both and trust that they will continue to give the benefit of their service to the College for a long time to come.

FINANCES:

The Trustees and Local Committee of Governors were pleased to give their approval for an increase in the salaries of all categories of the Staff in accordance with the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission and as implemented by the State Government. Unfortunately, this had to be accompanied with an increase in the fees of the students as well. However, bearing in mind the burden to be placed on the parents and guardians, the increase in salaries and the fees, the Trustees and Governors implemented the revision in salaries in a phased manner over a period of two years.

DEVELOPMENT:

Additional Classes

In an attempt to meet, in a small measure, the increasing demand for admission, and in continuation of the new cycle, a sixth section, Preparatory F had to be opened to accommodate those who had been promoted from the additional section of the Nursery Class, opened the previous year. A fifth section was also added to Classes 2 and 7 to accommodate the students who had been promoted from the additional sections of Classes 1 and 6 added in the academic session 2008-2009.

Restoration of Constantia and Appeal

The first stage in the restoration of “Constantia” is a task which has been proceeding since July, 2006. It is pleasing to report that the exterior is now almost complete and the results are quite evident. Meeting the exorbitant cost has been daunting but it is satisfying to report that this continues to be met. We are extremely grateful to the Major Claude Martin Memorial Trust in New Delhi, with Dr R.K. Pachauri as Chairman, which helped pay a bill amounting to Rs 5,11,107/-.

Mr Roshan Abbas, an old student, has also helped us tremendously. Recently, he chose La Martiniere as a site of a film he is directing for the Production House of “Red Chillies”. They paid the College Rs 1,00,000/- a day for shooting a section of the film here. At the end of the session the College received Rs 12,00,000/-, which will help immensely towards the Restoration of “Constantia”.

A great deal of money is still needed to complete the interior work . As such, we appeal to all well-wishers and old students to contribute generously to a cause well-worth espousing.

ENROLMENT:

As on 28 February, 2010, there were 3503 students on the roll of the College. This consisted of 3397 day scholars, 167 boarders, 23 Foundationers and 6 Demi-Foundationers.

HEALTH:

Except for seasonal illnesses, the health of the students, particularly that of the resident scholars was fairly good. We are grateful to the visiting physician, Dr Mukesh Handa, and to the Hospital Matron, Mrs N. Mukherjee, for looking after the health of the boarders in the College. The Steward, Mr Kevin Peters and Mr B. Fernandez, superintend the preparation of meals. We are grateful to them and acknowledge with gratitude the difficult job they do to the best of their ability in keeping the children healthily and nutritiously fed.

EXAMINATIONS:

In March 2009, 146 candidates were registered for the ISC (Year 12) Examination. Of these, 145 were awarded Pass Certificates, and one boy did not appear for the Examination. Maulik Rastogi of the Commerce Stream stood first in order of merit securing 96% in the four best subjects. Aarush Mohit Mittal, Raghav Bansal and Saaransh Rai, all of the Science Stream, were jointly second with an aggregate of 95.25 % each. Kunal Singh with an aggregate of 92.25% stood First in the Humanities Stream.

In all 26 candidates scored an aggregate of 90% and above and 48 boys scored between 80% and 90%.

206 candidates were registered for the I.C.S.E. (Year 10) Examination of March, 2009. Of these, 204 were awarded Pass Certificates. Ankit Awasthi stood First in order of merit, securing 98.4 % in the five best subjects. Adhyan Hirwani with an aggregate of 97.6% came Second and Akshay Ratan, Utkarsh Srivastava and Abhishek Tandon with an aggregate of 97.0% each, were jointly Third.

In all 35 boys scored an aggregate of 90% and over and 74 boys scored between 80% and 90%.

ANNUAL COLLEGE EVENTS:

The Annual Prize Distribution was held on Saturday, 27 March, 2009. His Excellency, Dr Gerald John Mathias, Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Lucknow, was Chief Guest. As is customary, after the function, while the parents, guardians and visitors, were entertained to tea on the Principal's lawn, the students of the entire Middle and Senior School, partook of the Founder's Feast in the quadrangle outside Sykes Hall. At the Feast, the Chief Guest raised the toast in memory of the Founder.

The Lucknow Inter-Martiniere Debate was held in La Martiniere Girls' College, on 01 August. Ankit Tahalani, Romil Talwar, Nishesh Bhasin and Raghav Seth represented the College. They won the Debate and Ankit Tahalani, the Captain was adjudged Best Speaker. They shall receive the Martin Memorial Trophy this evening.

The Annual Entertainment in Hindi was held on 15 August, 2009. The highlight of the programme was the play, "Sarfarosh". It depicted terrorism as a growing menace for the civilised world, particularly in India and showing how our ATS Team is trying its best to combat this threat.

Nishesh Bhasin, as the ATS Chief gave an enthralling performance, for which he shall be awarded the prize for Histrionics in Hindi.

The programme was interspersed with lively dances and musical items hugely enjoyed not only by the audience but by the boys themselves. Ankit Tahalani is richly deserving of praise for his noteworthy choreographic skills. The Entertainment in Hindi practically kills its organiser and reduces her to a state of nervous prostration, but Mrs Ranjana Chakravarti, never fails to deliver the goods. We are deeply appreciative of her efforts and those of all whom she inspires to work with her.

The Inter-Martiniere Meet was held in Kolkata between 17 and 20 August. It was not a very satisfying year. Although each team gave of its best, none was able to win a trophy, except Ankit Tahalani, who was adjudged Best Speaker in the Debate.

On 13 September the Founder's Commemoration Service was held in the College Chapel. Rev. Solomon Bodhan of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, delivered the Founder's Day address. The singing of the College Choir was especially commendable.

We are immensely grateful to Mr P.V. Collins and Mrs Genevieve Lobo, who helped train the children and to Mr G. V. A. Frank, the organist.

This year the greatest casualty of the “Swine Flu” scare was the Swimming Programme. In view of taking adequate precautions, it was not considered advisable to complete either the Individual or the House Championships. As such, the customary conclusion of the Swimming House Championships were not held after the Commemoration Service. However, the Individual Championships were decided on the basis of events which had been held. Akash Gupta, Abhinav Agarwal and Karan Agarwal won the Senior, Junior and Colts Championships respectively.

I am pleased to report that records continue to tumble in Swimming. Akash Gupta was responsible for setting six new records, in the 100 m, 400 m and 500 m Free Style, 100 m Back Stroke, 100 m Butterfly Stroke and 100 m Individual Medley Events respectively.

The Day concluded with the Entertainment programme in English which was organised in the evening. The main item was the play in English ”An Irish Engagement” by Walter Watts. It was entertaining and well-presented. Rohil Mehta was particularly engaging as the rascally scheming Tim Rafferty. For his portrayal he shall receive the Metro Goldwyn Mayer Award for Histrionics this evening. The programme was enlivened with songs, dances, a skit on Harry Potter and a Charlie Chaplin mime. Boys are only too willing to give of their best if it means that they can escape classes for a while. They hugely enjoy themselves and provide much entertainment to the audience. It is largely the responsibility of the English Department and they deserve great credit for producing the show. However, all the other Staff involved need to be appreciated and thanked. In helping to present the programme, they are able to showcase the skills and talent of the students, which otherwise would lie dormant, if these opportunities were not provided.

The Dr. B. K. Das Environmental Awareness Awards Essay Competition was held for the Senior and Middle School. Romil Talwar, 12 C and Nishesh Bhasin, 12 Commerce were adjudged First and Second respectively. They shall receive their prizes this evening.

The Middle School Variety Entertainment was held on 13 November, 2009. All the students are encouraged to took part. They literally came alive for a short while and were hardly recognisable in their stage personas. They are to be commended in no small measure for the expertise they showed and for the joy and pleasure they gave to their parents and friends. Their teachers were driven to the verge of hysteria, because the management of young high spirited boys is no mean task. They are not only to be thanked and appreciated but to be congratulated as well for their gargantuan efforts to maintain order in spite of the chaos that reigns behind the scenes. The Second Assistant, who shoulders the main responsibility for the production, is to be heartily commended and thanked, not only for his patience and endurance but for his extremely skilful handling of a motley crowd, both boys and staff.

The 127th Annual Inter-House Athletics Meet and P.T. Display was held on Saturday, 05 December, 2009. Mr Navneet Sehgal, Secretary to the Chief Minister, presided as Chief Guest. Mrs Sehgal very kindly distributed the prizes and certificates. Vibhushit Rana, Osama Rashid and Sarthak Singh emerged as Champions in the Senior, Junior and Colts Divisions respectively.

Allen Raj Singh is to be congratulated on setting a new record of 10 minutes, 20.51 seconds in the Junior Marathon, improving on his own record set the previous year.

The Central Command Trophy for the Overall House Championship in Athletics was won by Martin House.

Sports Day continues to be a grand spectacle. It is a delightful occasion filled with flags and pageantry. The Chief Guest commended the organisation and the colourful sight that the occasion provided. The co-operation and the assistance of the entire Staff is necessary and so only the greatest commendation of their combined efforts must be made. Appreciation must also be expressed for the contribution of the Vice-Principal, the Second Assistant, and the House Masters. The Gymnastics team under Mr Deepak Sahae performed splendidly but the Rope Work, which was exceptionally performed, stole the show. Nevertheless, the greatest responsibility is borne by the Athletics Secretary, and so, Mr Alfred Gomes is not only worthy of the greatest thanks but of the highest praise as well, in making Sports Day the spectacular event that it was.

No mention of Sports Day, however, would be complete without a reference to the two Bagpiper Bands of the College. Mr Devender Kumar, the Band Master resigned suddenly in June. I am happy to say that enthusiasm to be in the band did not die with his leaving. In spite of having no one to guide them the Band persevered and with a little help it kept the flag flying. On a somewhat more subdued note but nonetheless praiseworthy and deserving of thanks was the small group of boys led by Dhruv Garg and Yashasvi Virendra under the tutelage of Mrs G. Lobo, who provided the recorded music necessary for the occasion

The English and Hindi Annual Elocution and Declamation Contests were held as is the custom.. Those who won prize winners in these competitions shall receive their awards this evening.

The Annual College fete was held on Saturday 21 November. This year the venue was shifted to the Senior School complex, which was found to be more suitable. It was well patronised and enjoyed immensely. However, the most satisfying feature was that it earned Rs 2,79,830/- for the restoration of "Constantia".

The Annual Carol Service was held in the College Chapel on 17 December, 2009. As is the custom, all the readings and recitations were done by volunteers from among the College Prefects. It was a most solemn and devotional experience. The credit for presenting the Service is to be shared by Mr G.V.A. Frank, Mr Peter Collins and Mrs Genevieve Lobo.

All the soloists, readers and those who rendered the recitations are to be commended greatly for their talent and skill. Pranav Kansal's rendition of the Bach-Ground "Ave Maria" was deeply moving, as was the "Birthday of a King", sung by Rajbir Singh Dhindsa and Arjun Tandon.

The Annual N.C.C. Competitions were held on 18 December. The Air Wing won the Hashman Memorial Shield for the Best N.C.C. Troop in the Junior Division. Platoon No. 1, Army Wing, comprising students from Class XII, won, yet again, the Intermediate Trophy for the Best N.C.C. Troop in the Senior Division and also The Boardman Trophy for the Best N.C.C. Wing in the College. Akshay Sahay (Jr. Div.), and Vishesh Tiwari (Sr. Div. Army Wing), were adjudged the Best N.C.C. Cadets in the Junior and Senior Division respectively. Shriyank Mittal was adjudged Best Scout. They are all to be congratulated and shall receive their awards this evening.

Apart from the above competitions, N.C.C. Cadets of all three Wings, Senior and Junior Division, the Scouts and the Cubs and the Bagpiper Band participated in special parades on Independence Day and Republic Day.

On Republic Day, the former students of the College organized a Cricket Match against the College XI. They won the match. They are not only to be congratulated but also to be warmly thanked for kindly providing much appreciated recreation and lunch for the boarders on that day.

Lt. Col. Deepak Vashisht, Additional Director, N.C.C. Directorate, was Chief Guest on Independence Day and Col. S.K. Tripathi, Col. "Q" (Co-ord), Headquarters, Central Command, was Chief Guest on Republic Day. They took the salute, inspected the Parade and addressed the students. They both congratulated the boys on the smartness of their turn-out and the Parade in general.

The Annual Contests in English Elocution and the Declamation and Elocution Contests in Hindi were held during the course of the year. The winners shall receive their prizes this evening.

OTHER EVENTS:

Development of the whole personality is the thrust of the educational transaction at La Martiniere. As such, there is a full co-curricular programme organised in the College. In spite of this, whenever, the College is invited to take part in events organised by other institutions, the students are encouraged to participate. This provides them with an opportunity to develop and showcase their skills, and to grow in confidence, which no amount of studying long hours can achieve. Some of the programmes in which they took part and performed well are summarised below:

On 10 May, an Inter-School Quiz, was organised by the HOPE organisation in St. Paul's School, Lucknow for students of Classes 9 and 10. Omar Gufran, Utkarsh Srivastava, Pranjal Sahay, Gaurav Chawla and Siddharth Sanadhya represented the College, and stood Second in the Competition.

Abhishek Bajpai and Gaurav Chopra represented the College in the Frank Anthony Memorial All-India Inter-School Debate held in St. Paul's School, Agra. Unfortunately they were not able to proceed further.

Later in the year, i.e. 24 and 25 October, the College participated in “Expressions” 2007” organised by St Fidelis’ College. Salman Khan, Nitin Srivastava, Raghav Agarwal, Tabish Siddiqui, Souvik Mukherjee, Sagar Tulsi, Varun Rastogi, Gaurav Chopra, Pulkit Misra, Utkarsh Prabhat stood First in Dramatics. Rhythm Arora and Aviral Mehta must be congratulated for the Light and Sound effects. Salman Khan, Raghav Agarwal, Tabish Siddiqui, Souvik Mukherjee, Sagar Tulsi, Gaurav Chopra, Pulkit Misra and Dhawal Tandon came Second in “Jingles”. The background song was composed and sung by Shubham Virmani, who was accompanied by Utkarsh Prabhat on the guitar. Special Prize for the Overall Best Male Actor was awarded to Utkarsh Prabhat. The overall Championship Trophy was won by La Martiniere College, Lucknow.

From 29 to 31 October, the College also participated in “Expressions” 2007” organised by St Francis’ College. Gaurav Chopra stood First in the Debate (English – against the motion), Arpan Agarwal & Salman Khan stood Second in the Collage Competition. Akshay Capoor, Devesh Kumar Misra, Dhawal Tandon, Himadri Upadyay and Shubham Virmani stood Third in the Indian Music Group Competition. Aadhar Jain, Akshay Capoor, Arth Agarwal, Dhawal Tandon and Shubham Virmani came Second in the Western Music Group Competition.

The Halwasia Captain’s Cup 2007 organised by the Lucknow Golf Club was held on 08 March 2007. Kanav Batra of Class 8 D took part in the Junior Category. Aman Tandon, Class 8 B participated in the Shri Shankar Lal Memorial Golf Competition, Junior Category held on 8 and 9 September, 2007, and stood Second. He also participated and stood Second in the Summer Games organized by the Lucknow Golf Club on 20 October, 2007. Ujjwal Krishna Class 6 C stood First in the Essay Writing and Instrumental Competitions in the 9 to 12 year category. Shivansh Jolly of Class 9 C stood Second in Singing and Instrumental Competition in the 12 to 16 years category. Shashwat Khurana Class 8 C stood Third in the Essay Writing Competition 12 to 16 years.

A Literary Festival was organised by St. Agnes’ Loreto Day School, Lucknow on 09 May, 2007, for Classes 9 and 10. Nishesh Bhasin, Ankit Tahalani, Avivar Awasthi and Raghav Seth of the College, participated in “Spin a Yarn” and stood First. Abhishek Krit Lal, Ankit Tahalani, Nishesh Bhasin, Bharat Thapa, Anuj Goel, Avivar Awasthi, Vidush Mukesh, Ramit Arora and Romil Talwar took part in “Anachronisms” and stood First. In the end the College team placed Third.

In the NIE and Reliance Mobile Fantasies Extravaganza competition held on 7 and 8 September, at CMS Gomti Nagar, Aviral Jain and Salman Khan, who represented the College, stood First in the Debate. Aviral Jain, Dhawal Tandon, Arpan Agarwal, Shubham Virmani, Aadhar Jain and Ankush Jain stood Second in the Hindi Group Song Competition. Arpan Agarwal and Sagar Tulsi came Third in the Flower Decoration Contest.

Ujjwal Krishna, Class 6 C won a Consolation Prize at the Worldwide Tata Group Collage Competition held in July, 2007.

In the Inter School English Debate Competition held on 4 August, 2007, at St. Paul's School, Lucknow, La Martiniere College Team stood First and Shreevar Rastogi was adjudged the Best Speaker.

Ramit Arora and Avivar Awasthi represented the College at McFest 2007 held on 02 and 03 November, 2007 at Montfort Inter College, Lucknow, a competition organised by Mahanagar Boys' Inter College. They stood Third in the E'clat (thematic video graphic presentation).

At the Computer Fair and Seminar – COFAS 2007, International Computer Olympiad held on 24 to 27 August, 2007 at CMS LDA Kanpur Road, Mayank Rastogi and Ramit Arora stood First in the Web Tek Competition. Poojit Sharma and Rhythm Arora stood Third in the Soft Tek Competition. Shubham Virmani stood First in the Debate speaking against the motion. The topic was "Information Technology can open the doors for a peaceful co-existence in future".

The Walt Disney Company (India) Pvt. Ltd., organised a "My School Rocks!" Contest at Ravindralaya, on 21 November, 2007. 70 teams participated. Pranjal Pant of Class 9 B was adjudged the Best Male Performer.

The St. Paul's Ministry Devotional Music Competition was held at Lucknow Christian College on 30 November, 2007. The College was represented by Himanish Mansinghani, Madhup Trivedi, Divesh Mishra, Ojasv Goel, Sameer Singh and Russel Hendrick and stood First in the Group Song.

In the QUANTA 2007 organized by CMS Chowk Branch, Raghav Agarwal, Nitin Srivastava and Milind Raj stood Second in the Model Display out of 72 teams.

In the City Level Science Fair 2007 held on 16 December, 2007 at the Regional Science Centre, Romil Talwar and Dhruv Garg stood First and won a cash prize of Rs.1000/- for their project – Refrigerator Deodorizer, under the guidance of Mr. D. K. Srivastava. The team qualified for the Zonal Level Science Fair held at the National Science Centre, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi on 14 to 16 January, 2008. They stood Third and won a scholarship of Rs.1,800/- for two years. Anas Shamsi of Class 6 D won the Second Prize in a Maths Quiz Competition held at Model Computech organised by Sify Iway on 11 February, 2008.

In the 2nd UCMAS State Level Abacus & Mental Arithmetic Competition held on 20 May, 2007, Shubhankar Sharma of Class 7 A won a consolation prize.

In the 3rd International Literary English Fest called Odyssey 2007, held on 8 to 11 September, 2007, Gaurav Chopra of Class 12 C won the 3rd Best Speaker Award for an extempore debate called "Turn Coat" out of 52 participants from across the Globe.

On 18 December, 2007, in the Trinity College, London, Electronic Keyboard Examination 2007, Ujjwal Krishna of Class 7 C and Shriyank Mittal of Class 6 C achieved a distinction in Grade 2. Pulak Mehrotra of 7 B and Utsav Garg, of 7 A, achieved a Merit in Grade 2

Abhishek Bajpayee and Nitin Srivastava participated in the Wonder Kids Foundation Competition and the former was adjudged second in the debate competition. He also received a cash prize of Rs 1000/-In Geofest International Geography Olympiad 2007, a competition organised by the City Montessori School, LDA Branch, Kanpur Road, where 75 national and international schools participated, Anshul Verma stood Second in the Geotalk

Kushpreet Saluja of 9 C achieved Grade C in the All India Talent Search Examination 2007 organised by Children's Education Trust, New Delhi on 15 February, 2008.

Although it was not strictly during the Cricket season and the team was not at its peak, having practised very little, the College participated in the Second Khwaja Maroof Inter-School Cricket Tournament held in November and covered itself with glory by winning the Tournament. Vimal Verma and Shikhar Agarwal were the captain and vice captain of the team respectively. Achal Krishna was awarded the prize for the Best All Rounder of the Tournament. The trophy was won by the College for the second consecutive year. The team and its coach Mr A. K. Srivastava are deserving of the highest commendation.

N.C.C. Activities

The students are actively involved in the N.C.C. Apart from the Annual Republic Day and Independence Day Parades which are held, the cadets of the Junior Division Naval Wing attended a Combined Annual Training Camp held at Sainik School, Lucknow from 8 to 17 August, 2007. Omar Ghufuran won the Gold Medal for Public Speaking on the topic, "Role of NCC Cadets in the development of the Country". Aishwarya Dubey won a wrist watch as First Prize in a Quiz on Cancer Awareness. The College also won a Trophy for the Best Group Dance. 'A' Certificate Examination was held in the College on 2 February, 2008. 8 second year cadets appeared for it.

The cadets of the Junior Division Air Wing attended a Combined Annual Training Camp held at Sainik School, Lucknow from 30 August to 08 September, 2007. Karan Kris Kumar Class 8 D, stood Second in the Art competition. In the overall ranking, the College stood Third. Cadet Sergeant Vishesh Tiwari will be presented the Best Cadet medal in the Junior Division, this evening.

The Hashman Memorial Shield for the Best NCC Troupe (Junior Division), was won by the Air Wing. 37 cadets of the Air Wing were awarded 'A' Certificates.

Clubs

The Table Tennis Club

This club was introduced this year with two new table tennis tables. The club had an initial membership of 32 boys.

The Chess Club

This club was also introduced this year with 86 students of Classes 6 to 12, who joined the club with great enthusiasm to improve their talent if logical aptitude.

The Dance Club

This club was introduced for the first time for Class 6 and above. The boys from this club performed the Salsa at the Founder's Entertainment.

The Art, Music, Computer, Public Speaking and Quiz Clubs were also introduced and boys are encouraged to share their talents with others, while performing in internally organised tournaments.

The Photography Club

The Photography Club continues to perform a most useful function. Photographs of all College occasions are undertaken by the members of the Club and they do a very good job, under the able guidance of Mr John Rafi.

The Annual College calendar which helps us to raise funds for the maintenance of “Constantia” was once again a result of their efforts. The three best photographers shall be given their prizes this evening. An additional incentive for them is that they are given credit for the photographs which are used in the calendar.

This year again the calendar had twelve sheets, each with an inset of a bust of the Founder. Therefore, instead of only displaying the work of six students, we were able to showcase the work of thirteen students. We hope they will continue their good work.

The Social Service League

Under Mrs Hasan’s guidance, the Social Service Club by far does the most important and useful work, but receive the least plaudits. They collect items for the underprivileged and less fortunate sections of society and help to create a clean environment in the School. They go about their work unobtrusively and without projecting either her contribution or that of the Social Service League. We are grateful that in a day and age where people are becoming increasing self-centred and self absorbed, she helps promote the value of service with a smile and labouring without seeking any reward. We can only say a small thank you to her, but we hope it will boost the morale of the students and for them to realise that their work is acknowledged.

The Foundation Club

If our students fare well in competitions, much of the credit must be given to The Foundation Club. This body helps in recognizing, identifying and developing the talents of their fellow students. The Club is a nurturing ground for those who wish to participate in various activities. The boys are guided in this endeavour by Mrs Neelum Singh who is in charge. It is only fitting that they are acknowledged and thanked on this the most public of College days.

ENDOWMENT OF AWARDS

This year there have been several endowments which we humbly and gratefully acknowledge.

- (a) Mrs Sunita Agnihotri, widow of Mr B.B. Agnihotri, Hindi Teacher at the College for over forty years has most graciously presented two trophies:
 - (i) A trophy for Hindi Elocution in memory of her husband, in the Senior School
 - (ii) A trophy in the Junior School for Sports.
- (b) Mrs Chakravarti the grandmother of one of our former students has endowed a silver medal for the student who stands first in English and Political Science at the I.S.C. Examination, in memory of her late husband, to be called the Shaileshwar Memorial Medal. The first medal is to be awarded for the I.S.C. Examination of 2007.

- (c) Lt Col. Keshav Goel and his entire family has kindly instituted a trophy in the Senior and Middle School for the Overall Championship in Debating. His three sons have studied throughout in the College and his wife, Mrs Rekha Goel, is a teacher in the Junior School.
- (d) Mrs Meera Mathur, who recently retired from the service of the College as a teacher of Hindi in the Junior School, has endowed a silver medal to the student who stands first in Hindi Language in Classes 4 and 5.
- (e) Mrs Leela Rawat, a teacher who has taught for over thirty years in the Junior School, has endowed a silver medal in memory of her late sister, Dr Kusum Rawat, for the student who stands first in Science in Classes 3, 4 and 5. The medal is called the Dr Kusum Rawat Memorial Medal for Science in the Junior School.

We are grateful to these donors and welcome them all here this evening. In appreciation of their generous gesture, we shall invite them later this evening to present the respective medals and trophies for the first time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As Principal of the College one is dependent on many people and I would be failing in my duty if I did not express, in some small measure, my gratitude to those with whom I deal most frequently. The success of the administration of the College depends on the co-operation, advice, guidance and assistance of the Trustees and the Local Committee of Governors. I am absolutely indebted to them, especially the Governors and in particular, those who are here today. In the present Chairman, the College is fortunate to have a man who, rational in all he does, is guided by compassion and common sense.

His justice is tempered with mercy always and it is a pleasure to work with one who has only the good of La Martiniere at heart. I wish to thank him and all the others.

I am grateful to the Lady Principal of La Martiniere Girls' College for her co-operation in all matters that concern us jointly.

I cannot thank too greatly the many friends of the College on whom I am dependent in ways too numerous to mention.

I am thankful for the trust and support of the parents and guardians of the boys who study in the College, particularly those who take the time and trouble to interact with us,

I am dependent on all members of the staff, whether academic or domestic for all that they do to help in keeping the College functioning well. Again "Thank you" though inadequate is all I can say.

I must also express my gratitude to all members of the Class IV staff for their contribution to the day to day activities of the College and in most things which we take for granted.

To the Bursar and Office Staff I owe a debt of gratitude as well. I deal mostly with them on a day to day basis. As such, they are more exposed to my shortcomings, and, therefore, I express my thanks to them not only for their contribution to the work of the College, but for their forbearance as well.

I am particularly thankful to all the House Masters for their support and help in ways too numerous to mention.

I am especially grateful to the Vice-Principal and to the Heads of the Middle and Junior School and Prep. Department, upon whom I greatly depend. They have never betrayed my trust. For this I am immensely indebted.

My greatest debt of gratitude, however, is to the students. They rarely see the pleasant side of my character. (I doubt I have any). I often take mean advantage of them, but their tolerance is phenomenal and they have seldom complained. Words cannot express adequately my thanks for their forbearance and co-operation. It is around them that the life of the school revolves. They are the most significant part of the

College. It is a teacher's privilege and pleasure to serve his students. When he ceases to do that, he ceases to be a teacher. I thank them for giving me the opportunity to serve them. Thank you boys ! Vive La Martiniere !

Even though barely twelve years old, he had experienced a fair amount of tragedy in his life. He lost his father at a time when young children most need both their parents. He learnt at a very young age that he would in time have to support his widowed mother and his sister. To do so, he realised that he would have to work very hard, and so at a very early age he learned to shoulder responsibility. He studied hard and, he usually stood among the first five in his class. He also realised that his mother was making a great sacrifice in allowing him to continue studying at La Martiniere, so he took advantage of the opportunity and participated in sports and other co-curricular activities, which he knew, would help him to develop his personality.

One does not usually keep a record of what one has done, but every one in the school seems to remember that Prashant performed outstandingly on the sports field. He was also a member of the College Swimming team, which meant that he had to come to the College regularly for practice. Considering that he lived at a great distance from the College, it speaks volumes for his commitment and discipline. The most recent feather in his cap was that he was the proud leader of the Cubs Squad and took part in the Annual Republic Day Parade. It is a great loss that the life of such a promising and talented individual was cut short so early.

We wonder why young children in the prime of life are taken from us, but we may take comfort in the thought that according to Hindu philosophy, such souls are really blessed. In the cycle of birth and reincarnation, such souls return to earth simply because they have to complete or fulfil a minor requirement, before being elevated to a higher plane. As such, the time spent by such a soul on earth is necessarily comparatively short. According to Christian belief, the soul returns to God, and because the life of a child is not yet overburdened with sin, we may rejoice in the fact that the soul is now at peace and shall be with God for all eternity.

We mourn and are afraid of death. This is so because we may not have the faith to think beyond the sorrow of the present time. Yet if we look at Nature, life and death are all part of the same cycle. Unless a seed is planted in the soil, where it dies and decomposes, new life will not spring forth. Human beings are different in that they possess souls. The body may die and decay, but the soul is released and it goes back to God. It is these thoughts which help to sustain us in our deepest sorrow and grief. We must not continue to regret what is past.

We pray and hope especially today that Prashant's mother, sister and near relations may be comforted in their grief and that they place their trust in God. We do not yet know what He has in store, but we pray, that as time passes, they shall come to believe that the Lord moves in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform and take whatever comfort they can from remembrance of past and joyous occasions in the company of their loved one.

Let us, ourselves, remember with pride that Prashant has gone to a place, where there is no more pain, anxiety, sorrow, anguish, doubt or fear. Let us thank God and praise Him for Prashant's example

and life, however short. Let us remember Prashant with joy and with affection, and let us pray that the Lord will grant eternal rest to him and that he shall dwell perpetually in the light of God.

Introduction of Brigadier Kumbar.