



THE CANBERRAN HEARTBEAT

CANBERRA SECONDARY SCHOOL

2026 | Issue 1

Start Well Programme



As we embarked on our new academic year, we enthusiastically participated in the four-day Start Well Programme, which set us up well for the year ahead.

The programme challenged us to think deeply about our aspirations and set meaningful goals. Through guided reflection sessions, we moved beyond simply attending classes to actively planning how we would achieve our academic and personal objectives for the year.

"The programme really helped me think about what I want to accomplish this year," one of us shared. "I now have clear goals that I'm excited to work towards."

We particularly valued the team-building activities, which strengthened connections with both peers and teachers, creating a supportive environment where we feel comfortable seeking help and collaborating effectively. For our new Secondary One students, these activities proved especially valuable for integrating into our school culture.

The programme also established clear expectations for behaviour, academic performance, and classroom procedures. Knowing what was expected of us made starting the year feel less daunting, and we began our learning journey with greater confidence.

Through the "Empower Me" workshop, we challenged ourselves to identify areas for growth. The enthusiasm and confidence we carried into our classrooms reflected just how much this programme meant to us, and we look forward to building on this throughout the year.

By Mrs Jesslyn Yeoh



Awards Day

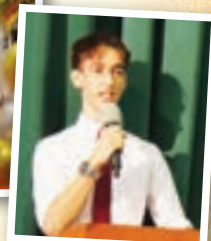


On 6 March, we came together to celebrate our achievements at the School Awards Day, themed "Leading with Kindness; Learning for Life". The event recognised both academic excellence and co-curricular accomplishments, reflecting our school's commitment to our holistic development.

A highlight was the heartfelt valedictorian speech by Adam Jeremy Didonato, who reminded us that growth extends far beyond academics. He reflected on how Values-in-Action (VIA) experiences and school opportunities shaped him as a person and expressed sincere gratitude to his teachers and the school community. His words resonated deeply with many of us, serving as a reminder of what it means to grow during our time in school.

We also took the opportunity to honour our valued partners, Friends of Canberra, whose generous support has enriched our learning experiences. The ceremony was a powerful reminder that true success lies not only in achievement but also in the character, compassion, and lifelong learning we carry with us beyond the classroom.

By Mdm Kumari Nagapan



Hari Raya Celebration



The Hari Raya Concert 2026 was a vibrant celebration that deepened our understanding of Hari Raya while showcasing the talents of both students and teachers. The concert opened with the lively beats of the kompang, performed by our Secondary One and Secondary Three students, ushering our Principal into the hall, followed by an energetic silat performance. We were also treated to an informative and entertaining skit by Wira Budaya, which highlighted how Hari Raya is celebrated across generations. Jazil Zafri Bin Johari and Muhammad Hairi Azahari, both from 4 Diligence, impressed us with their guitar performance of "Suasana Hari Raya", accompanied by the melodious voices of Inarah Dhaniyah Binte Sardi from 4 Kindness and Bella Eliana from 3 Harmony. The concert ended on a high note with a lively dance and sing-along, creating a festive atmosphere throughout the school.

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By Bella Eliana (3 Harmony)



Neryss Mohamed Ariffin, also from 3 Harmony, echoed this sentiment. "I really enjoyed bonding with my friends during rehearsals. Even though I was nervous, having their support made all the difference. It taught me the importance of teamwork and perseverance."

By Mdm Raudhah A R



On 13 February, we came together as a school community to usher in the Lunar New Year with joy and enthusiasm. We took part in the Lunar New Year Classroom Decoration Competition, transforming our spaces with vibrant festive ornaments and creative displays.

The celebration concert featured outstanding performances by our Performing Arts CCAs: Concert Band, Guzheng Ensemble, Dance Club, Guitar Ensemble, and Choir. We were also treated to external performances that brought traditional culture to life, including festive drums and stilt-walking, a captivating Sichuan Opera mask-changing act, and an energetic Lion Dance. The God of Fortune's special appearance brought blessings and well wishes to all, while our in-house Lunar New Year MTV showcased the creativity of students and staff alike.

Through these festive performances, interactive cultural activities, and friendly competitions, we experienced the richness of Chinese culture and strengthened our bonds as a school community. We extend our thanks to our Parent Support Group members for their invaluable support and contributions in making this such a special celebration.

By Mdm Yong Mui Leng

Lunar New Year Celebration



Hosting of Hwa Chong Students



Twenty students from Hwa Chong Institution (HCI) visited our school from 9 to 13 March 2026 for a local student exchange programme. Sixteen of us had the privilege of hosting our HCI friends during this enriching week.

Throughout the programme, we warmly welcomed our HCI friends, who joined our regular lessons and co-curricular activities. We formed strong bonds during recess, sharing experiences and building lasting friendships across cultures. As student hosts, we developed better communication and teamwork skills through our interactions.

This experience embodied our school values in action. We embraced the challenge of stepping out of our comfort zones to engage with students from different educational backgrounds. We learned to conquer obstacles through resilience and creative problem-solving when navigating activities and addressing unexpected situations. Most importantly, this exchange allowed us to contribute meaningfully to building bridges between our school communities and fostering cross-cultural understanding.

The exchange concluded with a memorable farewell session, where we received printed group photographs as keepsakes. These friendships remind us that learning stretches far beyond the pages of our textbooks, broadening our perspectives and preparing us to be global citizens.

By Mrs Jesslyn Yeoh



On 27 February 2026, our Parents' Support Group (PSG) brought us together for a heartwarming lohei session that beautifully captured the spirit of the season. Students, families, staff, and teachers gathered for a delightful evening filled with laughter, good food, and the time-honoured tradition of tossing yusheng. This vibrant, colourful dish of shredded vegetables, crackers, pickled ginger, and fresh salmon carries rich meaning in every ingredient, from prosperity and good health to longevity and happiness.

As the ingredients were added to the platter one by one, the air buzzed with anticipation. Then, with chopsticks in hand, we tossed the ingredients together, reaching as high as tradition demands. It was gloriously messy, wonderfully loud, and exactly as it should be.

Our PSG team went above and beyond to make the evening memorable, organising ice-breaker games that got everyone mingling and cheering each other on. Whether it was parents teaming up with students or teachers joining in the friendly competition, the evening was a wonderful reminder that Canberra Secondary School is more than just a place of learning. We are a close-knit community, and we are so thankful to the PSG for their warmth and dedication in making this celebration possible. Here's to many more evenings like this one!

By Ms Cheak Su Peng



PSG Lohei Celebration



EL Debate Competition



At the start of the year, seven of us joined the English debate team and took part in the Singapore Secondary Schools Debating Championship. Most of us had no prior experience, and we began our journey feeling both nervous and uncertain.

What followed was a series of long afternoons staying back after school, preparing our cases and supporting one another through every round. We quickly discovered that debate is very much a collective effort, not just about the speakers at the podium, but everyone working together to build strong, thoughtful arguments. "At first, I thought that the people in the team were the ones making the arguments, but in reality, it is a collective effort from everyone," reflected Defany Poh Wan Yee from 2 Resilience.

Our most memorable moment came when we waited anxiously for the results of our final first-round match, which would determine whether we advanced further. Against all odds, we made it to the Quarter Finals, a milestone none of us had anticipated. "What surprised us the most was making it to the Quarter Finals, especially since we had started from scratch," shared Zhang Xinyue from 2 Kindness.

Through this experience, we developed our public speaking skills, learned the importance of teamwork, and grew in confidence. We are grateful to Mr Koh, Ms Diyanah, Ms Goh, Ms Wong, and our senior Don for their invaluable guidance and support throughout this journey.

By Zhang Xinyue (2 Kindness)



EL Scrabble Competition



In late 2025, thirteen of us came together to form the school's Scrabble club, guided by Mr Koh Tze Hou and our coach, Coach Ben. What began as a small, informal group quickly grew into something we are all deeply proud of.

Training every Tuesday from 3 to 5pm, we started from the basics, learning the rules, understanding scoring, and picking up strategies we had never encountered before. The camaraderie extended well beyond school hours, with teammates challenging each other to online matches and gathering at each other's homes to practise on the physical board.

Our efforts were put to the test at the 2025 Super Zonals competition held at Mind Cafe in October. Competing against established schools like MSHS and MSS, we arrived buzzing with nervous energy. "When we first arrived, we were vibrating with nervousness and excitement," recalled Namirah Binte Mohamad Hafidz from 2 Kindness. The hard work paid off as Team 4 clinched third place, and one of our players was crowned the competition's best player.

"We went from not knowing how to play the game at all to being able to defeat powerhouses like MSHS and occasionally MSS," Namirah shared. "That was when we knew that our training was all worth it."

We are so thankful to Mr Koh and Coach Ben for their unwavering belief in us. This club has taught us not just Scrabble, but resilience, teamwork, and the joy of giving our very best.

By Namirah Binte Mohamad Hafidz (2 Kindness)



Model United Nations



When our school launched the Model United Nations (MUN) programme based on student interest, we knew we were in for something special. The programme strengthens our understanding of international relations and diplomacy, centred on the art of negotiation and debate.

We have been fortunate to receive training from experienced delegates from the United Global Model United Nations group, including students from Raffles Institution, Crescent Girls' School, Catholic High School, and St Nicholas Girls' School. These sessions prepared us to represent our school at major conferences including Victoria-Cedar Alliance (VCA) MUN 2025, United Global (UG) MUN 2025, and River Valley (RV) MUN 2026.

"I had a lot of fun participating in the Historical Crisis Council at the River Valley MUN conference," shared Breanha Charlene Dalisay Buhrman from 4 Empathy, who participated in all three conferences. "The complex topics and fast pace taught me to adapt quickly. The councils are well-researched and cover very interesting and relevant topics."

Through MUN, we challenged ourselves to think critically, overcame our public speaking fears, and contributed innovative solutions to real-world issues. These are skills that will serve us well beyond our school years.

By Ms Chow Cai Wen



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By Breanha Charlene Buhrman (4 Empathy)



Florah Esther Prince, Brayden Khoo Wee Kiat, Aathithya City Babu, and Luzaina Khalil Baig represented Canberra Secondary School at the National University of Singapore Geography Challenge 2026, organised by the NUS Geographical Society. Held at the NUS campus on 28 February 2026, the Preliminary Round comprised both an Individual Component and a Team Component, centred on this year's theme: "City for Tomorrow: Shaping Our Liveable Future."

Beyond the Preliminary Round, we also participated in the Creative Component, which encouraged us to adopt a geographical perspective to analyse the world around us. Through fieldwork and research, we explored how liveability has shaped the development of physical spaces in Singapore.

We are proud to share that Brayden Khoo Wee Kiat clinched Silver and Aathithya City Babu earned Bronze at the Preliminary Round, a testament to their hard work and passion for the subject.

"Representing Canberra Secondary at NUS GC 2026 was one of the most intellectually stretching experiences of my secondary school journey," shared team leader Luzaina Khalil Baig from 4 Diligence. "Our fieldwork on liveability opened my eyes to how thoughtfully Singapore's neighbourhoods are designed. Working alongside my teammates taught me the true value of teamwork, and I hope this inspires more Canberrans to take up the challenge in future years."

By Ms Cheak Su Peng



NUS Geography Challenge

CL Learning Journey



at

Jiu: The
Kuo Pao Kun's beloved play, the production captivated us with stirring songs, energetic choreography, and a vibrant spectrum of puppetry.

This year, our Chinese Language Unit organised enriching Cultural Programme Exposure Scheme (CPES) learning journeys for our students. Our Secondary One and Secondary Two students taking Higher Chinese attended a musical theatre performance at the Drama Centre the National Library, where we watched "Lao Jiu: The Musical" adapted from the late theatre doyen Kuo Pao Kun's beloved play, the production captivated us with stirring songs, energetic choreography, and a vibrant spectrum of puppetry.



Our Secondary Two students taking G2 and G3 Chinese attended "Here Comes Crosstalk 2026" at the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre. The live interaction segments and relatable daily-life topics kept us thoroughly engaged throughout the performance.

Both groups returned with rich experiences to draw from, applying our learning through class discussions and individual reflections. These learning journeys reminded us that our Chinese language education goes beyond what we learn in class, connecting us to the living culture and heritage of our community.

By Mdm Yong Mui Leng

Learning Journey to the National Museum of Singapore



Our Secondary Two students embarked on a cohort learning journey to the National Museum of Singapore, where we explored Singapore's rich history and heritage in an immersive and meaningful way.

Guided by specially trained museum educators, we engaged with a range of artefacts and exhibits that brought Singapore's past to life. The experience deepened our appreciation for the nation's story and invited us to reflect on our own Singaporean identity.

Outside school, this learning journey connected what we study in History to the real spaces and lived experiences that shaped our nation. By walking through the museum's galleries and engaging directly with its collection, we gained a deeper understanding of who we are and where we come from. It was a reminder that history is not just something we read about but something we can see, touch, and feel.

By Mr Edwin Cheong



NSG Badminton



Our Badminton team has made consistent strides over the years, driven by our belief that if we play our CARDS right, demonstrating Commitment, Academic attainment, Respect and responsibilities, Discipline, and a balanced Social life, we will succeed not just on the court, but in all aspects of life.

Our hard work bore fruit in 2025, when our B Boys' and B Girls' teams both placed third at the NSG North Zone B Division Championships. Our C Boys' team also earned promotion to Pool A for 2026 after a strong showing in the League competitions, while our C Girls' remained competitive in their division.

In 2026, our B Boys' finished in fourth position at the NSG North Zone championship after several intense rounds of competition. Our B Girls faced a tough draw against top-seeded schools but put up a spirited fight throughout. The C Division League competitions are ongoing, and we await the results with great anticipation.

Each season brings new challenges and new growth. We are grateful to our coaches and teachers for their guidance, and we look forward to greater achievements in the seasons to come.

By Mr Ho Ngai Tuan



NSG Taekwondo



This year, twenty-five of us represented Canberra Secondary School in the National School Games (NSG) Taekwondo competition. Eleven competed in the Poomsae category, five in Kyorugi, and two in both, making it one of our most competitive line-ups to date.

Though we did not secure any medals this year, there were commendable performances across both categories. In Poomsae, Amelia Sun from 2 Honour achieved a score of 8.87, while Doann Koh from 4 Respect scored 7.37. In Kyorugi, Nathan Wee from 2 Respect, Jenelle See from 4 Harmony, and Javier Fong from 3 Empathy all progressed to the quarter-final stage, a strong showing that reflects the progress we have made as a team.

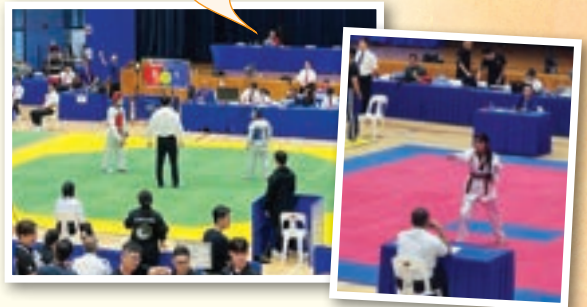
"Even though I did not place, the experience taught me resilience, discipline, and endurance," shared Amelia Sun from 2 Honour. "After months of training, all the hard work finally paid off. This experience taught me to stay determined even under pressure."

The competition was a valuable reminder that growth is not always measured in medals. We return to training more motivated than ever, determined to build on what we have learned and achieve better results in the season ahead.

By Mr Yazid

"I had a lot of fun participating in the Historical Crisis Council at the River Valley MUN conference," I have also participated in all three conferences. "The complex topics and fast pace taught me to adapt quickly. The councils are well-researched and cover very interesting and relevant topics."

By Breanha Charlene Buhman (4 Empathy)



NSG Volleyball



Our Volleyball team has always believed that as long as the ball has not touched the ground, there is still hope. This spirit carried us through the 2025 and 2026 National School Games seasons.

In 2025, our B Girls' team fought their way to second place in the North Zone B Division Championship. It was a season filled with unforgettable moments, from nail-biting rallies to the quiet determination that kept every player diving for the ball until the final whistle.

Our B Division team in 2026 carried that same fighting spirit into a season defined by grit and growth. From Secondary One to Four, we trained together, laughed together, and pushed one another through both victories and setbacks. One of our most memorable matches was a fierce battle against Sembawang Secondary School. Though we fell just short of victory, the experience reminded us how far we had come.

"Volleyball CCA has shaped me into who I am today," shared Wong Jian Jun from 4 Diligence. "It taught me discipline, resilience, and the importance of never giving up."

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By Wong Jian Jun (4 Diligence)



We are grateful to our coaches, teachers, and teammates for making this journey possible. The bonds we formed on the court are ones we will carry long after the final whistle.

By Ms Cassandra Tay Hwee Min

Cross Country



On 10 April 2026, we arrived with an air of excitement, eagerly looking forward to the Annual Cross Country. This year's route took us on a 3.3km run from Republic Polytechnic through the lush greenery of Admiralty Park, where we would crown the school's best runners.

Some of us had been training and strategising since February, while others looked forward to a leisurely jog through the park. Whatever our goals, we set off together, supported by classmates stationed along the route as road marshals and first aid responders. We also appreciated our friends from the uniformed groups, NCC, NPCC, NCDCC, Boys' Brigade, and Girls' Brigade, who worked hard to ensure the event ran safely and smoothly for everyone.

From the moment the air horn sounded, energy surged through the crowd. The frontrunners pushed ahead immediately while the rest of us settled into our own pace. All along the route, words of encouragement rang out as students cheered on their friends. "It made me realise that Cross Country was about more than just the race itself," shared Thant Eaindrei Oo (Emily) from 2 Empathy. "It was about the meaningful connections we built along the way and the perseverance we showed."

When the results were announced, we erupted in cheers for our friends who emerged in the top ten. We rounded off the day with a well-deserved lunch, leaving with full stomachs and memories we will carry for years to come.

By Thant Eaindrei Oo (Emily) (2 Empathy)



Student Leaders' Investiture



As I reflected on this year's Student Leaders' Investiture, I realised how meaningful the experience was because it was one of the first events largely planned and led by students ourselves. While the journey came with challenges such as coordinating across different teams, managing tight timelines, and adapting to changes along the way, it became an eye-opening opportunity for growth. There were moments when things felt overwhelming, especially when unexpected issues and last-minute adjustments arose, but through perseverance and mutual support, we managed to overcome them together.

Through the process, I learnt valuable lessons about teamwork, communication, adaptability, and leadership. More importantly, I came to understand that leadership is not simply about holding a title, but about taking responsibility, supporting one another, and contributing positively to the school community. Working closely with fellow student leaders also strengthened our bonds and taught us how to collaborate more effectively despite our different roles and responsibilities.

Watching the investiture come together successfully gave me a strong sense of accomplishment and pride. It was especially meaningful to see student leaders recognised for their dedication and service, reminding me that every contribution, no matter how small, matters. Overall, this experience symbolised growth for many of us, not only as leaders, but also as individuals, and it is a lesson in resilience, commitment, and service that I will carry with me moving forward.

By Kor Jia Xuan Garnet Faith (3 Diligence)

