



Christmas is the season of love around the world. In the coldest, darkest time of the year, we are touched by the warmth and the light of ideals like brotherhood, charity, and goodwill for all. However, for many, the air is filled not with the melody of carols, but with the sound of gunfire, bombs, and the screams of the wounded and the dying. Education should not only consist of the training of the intellect, but of the call for compassion, of becoming aware of our gifts and our "privileges." With this in mind, I offer you the following poem that is the imagined thoughts of a fallen soldier who gave the ultimate gift to his country this Christmas.



I Wonder

A Poem by Laz K.

*My hands that worked in
This lovely earthly garden,
And, for my transgressions,
Palm to palm, often begged
To receive your pardon; and
My feet that often stumbled
Among the ruins of dreams
Whose castles in the air I built;
And my eyes that were a mirror
To heaven, and to its
Celestial procession; and
My heart, this garden of
Many a wondrous flower
That gave me simple joys
In the day, and their thought
More in the midnight hour --
All these, and more, you took
To see how much they are worth
Compared to your slogans and
To your proud, age-old flag.
I admit, I had no cause to brag,
But, were they really worth
Less than your colorful rag?*

*These are things I wonder
Now that I died a soldier's death,
And I'm six feet under.*



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HWIS Christmas Talent Show

By Zachery Shieh, Grade 11

Another annual event at HWIS is the Christmas Talent Show, which takes place yearly around the same time as Hong Wen Star but is specifically tailored for the creative and expressive members of HWIS. This time, there were some returning artists but also some new talent and new faces; many teachers showed off their inner maestro, with a great variety of singing, dancing, rapping, and other instrumental pieces, both as individuals and in groups.

The variety extended not only in the medium of delivery but also in the content itself. Life lessons were interwoven with folk music, pop danced with classical, and the variation of languages truly exemplified the international spirit of the school. Some performers were scheduled to perform multiple times; in fact, the schedule was so packed that some teachers sacrificed their time for the students. Nevertheless, everyone gave their best effort and performed well.

Not to be outdone, the administrators and select teachers had to say to themselves, "Here we go," as they stepped onto the figurative stage (too many teachers were dancing to comfortably fit on the stage) and danced in front of the whole school. To be candid, some did better than others, but that is completely beside the point.

Apart from that, the host and hostess, one of our very own teachers and one of the seniors, made a motivating duo that served to intensify the enthusiasm of those in the crowd who were excited. It was also a great prelude to the events of that evening.



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2023 Christmas Party



By Jessica Chou, Grade 10

Seeing that dress in the wardrobe brings back memories of prom night. Back in October, we began planning the ball from the ground up. We started with a basic idea and developed it to the point where we had a clear understanding of its feasibility. Throughout the planning process, we encountered arguments, unhappiness, sadness, and uncertainty. However, after numerous meetings and discussions, we successfully organized the event.

During the days of preparation, we learned how to communicate more efficiently with the companies and the docking operator. We also acquired new skills, such as setting up the photo wall frame and dimming the lights. Additionally, I learned to listen actively, absorb information, and incorporate everyone's opinions to improve the outcome. These are valuable lessons that I gained from this experience.

I conducted brief interviews after the party with the people who participated in the prom to gather their opinions and feelings about the event. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with everyone expressing satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment. Some attendees even mentioned doing things they were previously too nervous to do, such as dancing with their partners or taking photos with their crushes.

As a student council member, I am grateful for the opportunity to organize this activity. Its success brought me satisfaction and fulfillment. Although the work was challenging and there were problems, I genuinely enjoyed

the process of building up this activity. Lastly, my thanks go out to all the people for their support, attending the festival, participating, and helping with the cleanup afterward. 🌟



Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.



By Ruby Lai, Grade 11

During my first experience volunteering to teach students at Taiping, I was captivated by the remarkable children in attendance. The majority of these children participated in Saturday classes due to their parents' time constraints or a need for additional support. Alongside my classmates, we engaged in activities such as reading novels and playing sports, utilizing our skills not only to enhance their English abilities but also to fill their lives with the love they might have missed. Unfortunately, due to the traveling distance and rising workload, we reluctantly suspended our journey.

In August, as I scrolled through the photos I took with those children, I resolved not to let challenges hinder my commitment to volunteering and spreading love. Contemplating the inability to attend physically, I proposed the idea of online teaching to the association. After months of preparation, I received the green light.

December holds a unique charm, primarily due to the beloved holiday, Christmas! Motivated by the festive spirit, I decided to create something extraordinary for the children, crafting a memorable experience. Collaborating with my teachers and a few classmates, we meticulously designed a curriculum that encompassed various aspects of English learning. Our engaging activities included incorporating English through songs, reading novels, and fostering creativity with DIY handcrafted Christmas trees and Santa Claus figures. We also crafted material packages for the children, packaging them one by one.

On the day of the online teaching, witnessing the laughter of those children on the screen was heartwarming, making me feel as though I were right there in the room with them. As we shared laughter and imparted knowledge, our collective impact extended beyond the virtual classroom. This reinforced my belief in positive change through kindness and highlighted the importance of consistently uplifting others with time and compassion. 🌟

