

## Save our only home!

From: Tara Sim, Pri 6, Tao Nan School

After reading "Australian fires warn the world to fix the climate crisis now" (January 2020), I realised how bad the start of 2020 had been. First of all, global warming and climate change have affected many things, such as glaciers melting at an alarming rate, floods, Australia's deadly wildfires, and the list goes on.

Though many responsible and selfless Australians have done their part in the wildfire situation, at least 33 humans (four of which were firemen) and an estimated 1 billion animals such as koalas and kangaroos have perished in the raging fires.

In this seemingly never-ending situation, over A\$150 million has been donated to charities such as Australia Red Cross by people from all walks of life. Other Australians have also made helpful gestures, such as sewing or knitting beddings and bandages for injured or orphaned animals. People from all over the globe are hoping that Australia's current situation will improve, as will all the other natural disasters that humans have caused.

Let's all play our part in saving our only home,

be it by donating to charities or by simple acts such as recycling. Every small gesture counts!



PAUL BALFE

Australia is home to some very unique animals, such as these rock wallabies. Deadly bushfires have killed a large number of Australia's wildlife recently.

## Every action helps

From: Liang Zhongchen, Pri 6, Telok Kurau Primary

The world still has a lot to do to reduce plastic waste. The world produces billions of tonnes of plastic waste every year. Where does the waste plastic go? Most of it gets burned, producing more carbon dioxide, adding to the greenhouse gases. Some of it will end up in landfills and seas, causing harm to animals which might eat it by mistake and die.

How can we reduce plastic waste? We can bring our own water bottles when we go out instead of buying bottled drinks. Bottled drinks are readily available at meetings and at supermarkets. We should say "no" to plastic bottles, and not just straws. If there can be a change in our daily habits as a society of people living in a modern city, we surely will be able to drastically cut down on using plastic. It takes just one to bring about a change.

If one country starts the change, then many other countries will follow suit. People visiting the country may find it an inconvenience at first, but the conscious change in habits will come with greater impact. We can **upcycle** plastics and turn them into useful items for daily use, such as using plastic bottles as stationery holders.

I hope *What's Up* will have more articles on different ways of recycling or upcycling to bring about greater awareness to younger readers like us. I believe that we all have a role to play in reducing the amount of plastic waste. If we work together, we will make a big change to our environment and not to just profit from it and cause harm. We should care for our environment if we, the younger generation, hope to see a good future. Keep in mind that every action, even seemingly insignificant ones, means a lot to our environment.

# your letters

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## Spreading love



From: Neveah Hor Yan Ting, Sec 1, Methodist Girls'

**EDITORS' PICK**

It was just a few days before Valentine's Day. Many children find it disgusting because they think that Valentine's Day is about lovey-dovey couples. However,

children and teenagers are never too young to celebrate Valentine's Day. Well, how did I make Valentine's Day meaningful for myself?

Firstly, my school organised an annual activity called "Post-a-blessing". It is when you can write postcards and post them to people to encourage or support them. This year, we were strongly encouraged to write a postcard to a frontline worker. We worked in groups and designed a postcard together. We wrote encouraging statements in there, expressing our gratitude towards the frontline workers. I hope they will feel blessed.

Secondly, on Valentine's Day, also known as Friendship Day in our school, we bought each other small gifts to celebrate friendships made and pleasures shared. My best friend and I have been friends for about seven years and her present to me was a card which touched my heart very much.

Thirdly, we can also celebrate Valentine's Day with our family members by spending time with

them or even writing cards to them. I wrote a card to my mother and I could tell she was really touched.

Last but not least, during Valentine's Day, I learnt to love myself. This message is also dedicated to those who have not been loving themselves — eat healthily, exercise regularly, take frequent breaks, and encourage yourself along the way!

## Wildfires: a stark warning

From: Lim Sze En, Pri 6, Punggol Primary

Since last year, bush fires have been and still are ravaging large parts of Australia ("Australian fires warn the world to fix the climate crisis now", January 2020). The total area burnt so far is almost 90 times the size of Singapore! Although most Australians have been able to escape the fires unharmed, buildings, farms and natural habitats have been destroyed. The fires also killed tens of thousands of sheep and cows on the farms, and millions of wild animals. The fire disaster in Australia is just one example of how climate change is making the planet more dangerous for humans.

This disaster is a **stark** warning to humans that climate change is real. Hence, we must change the way we live before it is too late. A little action on our part definitely goes a long way.

## Defining our own success

From: Tiffany Lee, Pri 4, Methodist Girls'

After reading "Success is a word with many meanings. Discover your own!" (October 2019), I learnt that I should not be ashamed if I had failed to achieve. Some children who do not do well for their exams feel discouraged. I think that they should not be, unless they did not try their best.

Many children are worried about their exam grades, resulting in stress, making them feel under pressure. This can result in a fear of not doing well and fearing that their parents will punish them. Even if we fail to do well in our exams, it does not mean we will fail to achieve our dreams.

Many of our parents want the best for us. They aspire for us to grow up and get a good job. They may say that we must become doctors or lawyers. If not, we would not be successful in life. However, we should not let our parents define our success. We should choose what we want to do.

Failure need not always be bad. It teaches us lessons that we would not have been able to learn otherwise. We should learn from our mistakes and do better next time.

## Keen to learn skateboarding

From: Tristan Phua, Pri 6, Tao Nan School

I read your article on the Tokyo Olympics 2020 in the January issue. I am really looking forward to this year's Games as I learnt that skateboarding and sport climbing will be included for the first time. I think it's a good move to include more "non-traditional" sports in the event, so that the Games are more inclusive and interesting. The **debut** of these sports

at the event will definitely help to raise more interest and inspire more people to take them up.

I have been interested in trying skateboarding after seeing others showing off their skills at my neighbourhood park a few years ago. But, I never got around to doing it myself. After reading about the Brazilian athlete Leticia Bufoni, I feel very inspired by her story. She demonstrated important values such as determination and perseverance in the face of adversity

and did not give up even when her father broke her board in two! Instead, she trained hard and became the number one ranked female street skater in the world.

I think we can all learn something from her. It has also made me keen on taking up the sport. Maybe I will approach the other kids at the park and get them to impart some skills to me.



SECRETARIA ESPECIAL DO ESPORTE

Brazilian skateboarder Leticia Bufoni in action. Tristan thinks the debut of this sport in the Tokyo Olympics will inspire more people to take it up.

## COVID-19: My shout outs

From: Joseph Chong Ze Feng, Pri 6, Northoaks Primary

I am writing in to express my sympathy to everyone affected by the COVID-19 virus. Those quarantined under lockdown are trapped against their will. Those trapped in Wuhan are further ostracised due to most people referring to the virus as the "Wuhan virus".

The frontline workers are also doing their best to curb the spread of this virus. These are extraordinary efforts. Instead of criticising China, we should appreciate all the efforts being put in place to keep us safe.

### VOCAB BUILDER

**stark** (say "stak"; adjective) = clear, obvious.

**debut** (say "dey-biu"; verb) = the first time something is performed.

**upcycle** (say "ap-sai-kel"; verb) = reuse discarded items to create products of higher value.

## Changed for the better



**EDITORS' PICK**

From: Marisa Wee, Sec 1, Zhonghua Secondary

I refer to the article "Visiting Japan after the horrors of the Occupation years" (January 2020).

Unlike the author, none of my close family has had first-hand experience of the Japanese occupation. Like the author, I used to be petrified of Japan for the war crimes it had committed years back. Through documentaries and social studies lessons, I learnt just some of the many methods the Japanese used to torture their prisoners of war. The author describes her fears of the Japanese based on the tales her family had told her about the war.

I personally cannot fully imagine how nerve-wrecking it must have been for the prisoners of war to be under the complete control of the Japanese. I feel that the war was an unnecessary thing to start since it scarred people's lives and traumatised them. The Japanese' malicious methods of torture are indeed inhumane.

Since then, Singapore has become an independent country that can fend for itself when the time comes. However, my opinion of Japan changed when my parents brought my siblings and me to Japan one year. During the trip, I saw with my own two eyes how much the country has changed from its war days.

As of today, Japan is praised for its cleanliness and environmental care. Additionally, the Japanese are well known for their ability to remain calm and collected in times of disasters such as earthquakes.

Furthermore, the Japanese have a note-worthy amount of courtesy and politeness. I believe that Japan has come a long way since the war. There are definitely many changes that modern-day Japan has gone through, making Japan seem like a completely different country culture-wise.

This goes to show that anyone and everyone is

capable of change as long as they do their best to improve. Japan managed to transform from a merciless country to one full of well-mannered civilians.

In my opinion, it is important to learn from past mistakes and strive to better ourselves. If Japan, home to roughly 120 million people, can change, why can't individuals like us do it?



DAVID MCKELVEY

Many tourists visit Japan to enjoy the country's sights and culture. Marisa feels that the Japan of today is very different from the one she learnt about in her social studies lessons on World War 2.