

## PARENTS FIRST

#### MONTHLY BULLETIN FOR PARENTS OF SOUTHRIDGE SCHOOL



### • ONSITE, ONPOINT Making Sense of Parenting

With the Parents Forum back to face to face, the home-school team is up and running. It is a well-accepted fact that the home is the first school of the children, and that the children learn better when both the home and the school work to encourage and support them. That is why there is a need for strong and real partnership between the two relevant influences in the student's life. The systems we had in place were disrupted by the pandemic, but we need to move on. Children must hear the same messages from teachers and parents once more, so they can understand and live the same standards wherever they are.

#### COPING WITH THE EFFECT OF THE PANDEMIC

(Reactions from Grade 1 Parents)



By: Stephen & Patty Gardiner | Grade 1 Parent

The Parents' Forum was timely, highly insightful and helpful with Mr. Salamat's discussion on how we can help improve the way our sons navigate the first grade. He was able to discuss the effects of the pandemic on our children in a way that really connected with us, the parents, because he did not just discuss them theoretically or hypothetically. We appreciated that he shared actual feedback from both the kids and teachers and provided very solid, practical,

and concrete suggestions for how we can better adjust our home life to complement the kids' school life. It was also great to meet some of our coparents and know that we're all in this journey together! We're definitely looking forward to the next one!



By: Binky Navarro | Grade 1 Mom

My husband and I are glad to have attended the First Parents Forum. We chatted with co-parents and our son's Class Adviser. And immensely enjoyed Mr. Salamat's talk! His words gave assurance that the school understands what the boys are going through during this transition. More so, his interesting survey was a great reminder to parents of how seemingly minor things can help mold our kids into better persons.

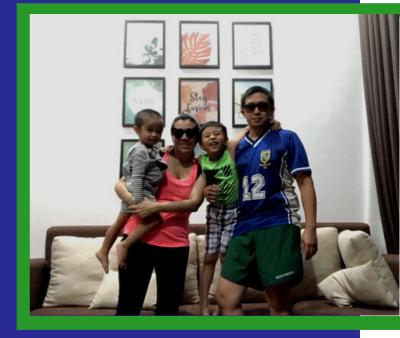


By: Raffy and Aimi Lim | Grade 1 Parent

My wife and I enjoyed the talk and get together for Grade 1 parents last Thursday. Aside from being given the opportunity to meet our co-parents and teachers, we truly enjoyed and learned from the talk of Mr. Luden Salamat. It allowed to appreciate the US challenges that our child has undergone due to the disruption caused by Covid 19, especially the points concerning "Blockers , Infiltrators, and Destroyers".

The talk which included the poll survey results from our kids, was both enlightening and entertaining.

We left the meeting with an abundance of learnings, and confidence that we are headed on the right path in molding our son to be the happiest and best person that he can be, while also acknowledging our "areas for improvement," which we embrace and hope to remedy immediately.



By: Paolo & Melissa Macapagal | Grade 1 Parent

The gathering was both refreshing and eye opening, my husband and I definitely picked up a few learnings. For one, we realized that being able to meet our co-parents gave us a sense of community and a venue to share our experiences with our sons' school life. We also found the talk given by the speaker, Mr. Salamat very apt and helpful; it provided us with so much insights on the effects of the Pandemic to our sons' development, which now affords us parents the opportunity to adjust at home.



#### By: Malu Salomon | Grade 1 Mom

We've been PAREF parents in the past 9 years, and yet, this kind of Parent Forum is always a learning experience for us. In fact, we always say that PAREF's competitive advantage over other schools the home-school collaboration <u>program.</u> There is an end-to-end character building from the child (in school) to the parents (at home), making sure the values that the school teaches are also aligned to the parents, so that kids will not be confused and therefore building a strong values foundation.

The session conducted by Mr Salamat on how pandemic has impacted our grade 1 son socially has been a good reminder for parents like us. While the discussion points may be simple and practical, however, these reminders are always helpful to ensure we consciously apply the learnings at home. We especially like the extra effort made by the organisers to conduct surveys to our kids and be able to learn beyond theories but really understand our kid's perspectives on things.

Overall, we enjoyed the Parents Forum! It's not only a venue to meet co-parents but also a date time for mommy and daddy!



### "HERALDS OF OPTIMISM, POSITIVITY AND PATIENCE"

By: Marc & Johanna Paula "JP" Cox | Grade 1 Parent

The talk given by Mr. Salamat is such a timely, well thought out analysis of the effects of the Covid pandemic. It was a straightforward approach insightful and practical in its application. He started off with a survey he did on how the students are handling school activities. His questions in the survey were simple yet the impact is profound. Using this survey, he was able to formulate his ideas where the gap can be bridged from the teacher's perspective, students and parents.

No one was prepared for the pandemic. We all had to learn to do things differently. The Home became the School; the Bedroom became the Classroom. The Parent (Mom) became the Principal, Teacher, Technical Assistant, Tutor. The teachers also had to learn how to teach online, and had to deal not only with the students but also the parents supporting the child. The children did not have clear marked boundaries in terms of school, play and authority.

3 things that we had to watch out for are: Destroyer: virus itself, we can't see the enemy but it's there and therefore the need to protect ourselves thru handwashing, vaccines, physical distancing, masking.

Blockers: masks. As humans, we are social in nature and we learn to understand feelings and emotions by watching faces, when we have been required to wear masks, the children have a harder time discerning emotions and as a result, harder to empathize and harder to regulate emotions.

Infiltrators: Yayas and Grandparents. We have to be careful of the people that we entrust our children to as they have a strong influence on our kids. The Grandparents mean well, but usually spoil the children into having or getting away with what they want (basta wag lang sasabihin kay Mommy) while the yaya will let the children watch whatever they are watching.

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As parents and teachers, we have to herald OPP: Optimism, Positivity and Patience to our kids. If as parents we think pessimistically, or look at the world in a gloom and doom way, our kids will feel scared, and use that as their natural state of mind. For us parents, patience is needed more than ever as they will act out and resist and it's up to us to hold our peace. We cannot change the habits our children have in one day, it's through consistent, calm application of the virtues that our school teachers has that this collaboration can be successful.

With respect to the teachers, we want the children to be respectful and obedient, not just compliant. We want to teach them and let them be boys with virtues that they will not depart from.

For the dads, dinner and bedtime are great times to connect with our boys. Have dinner at least 2x a week and be consistent with it. If you cannot make it, tell them and say when you can make it up. They look forward to that. When it's bedtime, read them a book, tell them a story, because all is quiet and calm. Be the Heroes of your boys, not Mom, Spiderman or Mr. Dimaano. Pray and show them how to be men. They will emulate you in prayer, so make time for this in the family. These are just some of what I remember from the talk.

I am so glad I went to this forum. I personally needed to hear all of these. Affirms and validates my thoughts and experiences. I hope all PAREF Schools will have this talk. We all need this pandemic addressed and not glazed over. We can work together to make our boys the best they can be. Footnote, the boys are potty trained, no "accidents" yet so tar mentioned by the teachers to Mr. Salamat. I think with just that, we as successful parents, are already! Hahaha!

My key takeaways are:

- 1. OPP- Optimism, Positivity, Patience
- 2. We as parents are guides, not managers.
- 3. Bed time is the best time to connect.
- 4. If you can go to the mall, you can go to the Church.
- 5. Let the Dads be the boy's heroes.

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### "THEY WATCH WHAT WE DO"

By: Ace & Jinel Bautista | Grade 2 Parent

As part of welcoming the boys back, Mr. Luden Salamat's talk centers on the unfamiliar situation to which the school, families, especially students, have been forced to - online classes. And our responsibilities as parents to guide them back to the physical community. Not just to help them survive but to actually thrive. To achieve this, we particularly learned two important values from him—empathy and being a role model to our kids.

Empathy, serves us two functions.

First, by looking at things from the point of view of our children, we get to understand not just how they process things, but more so, how they really feel about a particular situation.

By doing so, we are able to address their needs and shortcomings in a manner that is not just easily understandable to them, but also in such a way that would really stick to them long-term—eventually ripening into an acquired virtue.

Second, by understanding our children's psyche and feelings, we save ourselves from emotional stress. Once we start asking ourselves, "when I was my child's age, did I really understand the gravity of the problem, and how would I have felt or dealt with it," we begin to temper our expectations towards our kids and this quickly waters down our inner anxiety or stress towards them. Empathy instantly shifts our parental focus from the wrong that ought to be guided.

Empathy, therefore, will not just improve our relationship with our children, but also be beneficial to our own physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Lastly, the speaker emphasized that we (especially the fathers) should be role models to our boys.

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There is a quote that goes, "pay less attention to what men say, just watch what they do." This mentality is built into our system, and our children, young as they are, have been practicing this when they look at us. They are walking camcorders, closely looking at our every action.

Having said this, we cannot be a successful molder if we cannot first be a good model. From the way we address small problems, to our habits and temperament, all of these are observed, remembered, and mimicked by our boys.

In the same way, we cannot demand from them patience, discipline (like avoidance of screentime), or whatever ask that may be, if we, ourselves do not first, practice it.

We, as fathers, are our boys' first and most important heroes. And as their hero, our kids do not just look up to us, but try to imitate us in every way they can—whether knowingly or unknowingly. Having said this, we should guard not just our words, but more importantly be mindful of how we live our lives.

On a final note, our kids' adjustment, disposition, independence, values, and prayer life will only go as far as we, parents, would exhibit it. The way we live our lives is their default template. If we live it with positivity,

"Empathy, therefore, will not just improve our relationship with our children, but also be beneficial to our own physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing."

happiness, and faith even in the most difficult of situations, then we have nothing to worry about in terms of how our kids would turn-out in the future. Afterall, our role as parents is hold our children's hand and guide them on their journey, as opposed to pushing them or dragging them to our chosen direction.

Problems/concerns regarding our kids are always a given. Them making mistakes or failing will naturally happen. These are all part of their growth and toughen them. But to be able to impart to them the virtue of courage, faith, positivity, that strong resilience to take-in a struggle and press forward, in spite of failure or fear thereof, these are invaluable principles that they will carry for the rest of their life. As one writer aptly put it, the most important inheritance we could give our children is their own happiness.



# "DON'T LET A GOOD CRISIS GO TO WASTE"

By: Kat Abelarde | Grade 2 Mom

I made it a point to leave work earlier than usual and attend the First Parents Forum, face to face – finally! The mood was somber compared to the prepandemic forums, which had parents chit-chatting over food and drinks. This time, we entered the auditorium quietly, took our seats and waited for the program to start.

His talk was entitled "Welcome Back to the Outside World" – and my, my, what a welcome! It was eye opening hearing our childrens' perspectives on real life habits

(formed over the last 2 years at home which now extended to covering eating, hobbies, potty, studying and their thoughts friendship, family, God. Indeed, the pandemic has shaped our differently (whether good or bad, I left my judgement at the door) – but what was clear is that deliberate parenting is needed to re-assimilate into the outside world.

My biggest take-away is not to underestimate our children as they have become little men under our noses. They stand by their own feelings, thoughts, needs, wants – and desires. The best way forward is to find ways to engage them in conversation, and spend meaningful moments with them. I know that this becomes more difficult for the working-set, such as myself – but I remind myself of key learnings from the pandemic: simplify, prioritize.

"Indeed, the pandemic has shaped our boys differently (whether good or bad, I left my judgement at the door) – but what was clear is that deliberate parenting is needed to re-assimilate into the outside world."



### "RISE TO THE CHALLENGE"

By: Chesa Baltazar-Puyo | Grade 2 Mom

Having pushed and pulled for the past 2 years to give my children a semblance of a "normal" childhood, I rejoiced with many when in-person classes resumed. I commend Southridge for the school's dedication and tenacity in constantly making the appropriate adjustments to ensure that our boys are formed properly during these critical times. I also thank the Southridge teachers and personnel for being so patient not only with our children, but with us parents as well.

Mr. Salamat's presentation during the first Parents Forum was not only engaging; it was incredibly eye-opening. I agree that while it is important to be conscious of Covid-19,

it is equally important to recognize that prolonged pandemic restrictions are unleashing an unseen violence on our children. My son may be good at Math and Science, but what kind of childhood will he have if he does not cultivate relationships outside of the family? He may have his lessons memorized, but these are not as important as basic life skills, in the greater scheme of things.

Now that the disease no longer poses a clear and present danger, we have a lot of work to do in making sure that our kids have not suffered any permanent or long-term damage, and still have a good chance at growing up happy and well. We are fortunate that Southridge takes this matter very seriously and is always ready to rise to the challenge.

What I appreciate most from the forum was the underlying message in Mr. Salamat's presentation – we must always remain positive and optimistic. We must never lose hope. After all, was it not hope that kept us thriving all these years?

"My son may be good at Math and Science, but what kind of childhood will he have if he does not cultivate relationships outside of the family?"





# "FINALLY, FACE TO FACE!"

By: Pia Bersamin-Embuscado | Grade 2 Mom

"Mom, I am excited to go to actual school but I am scared because you will not be there with me." – Othello on the first day of the trial run for school.

Our boys started their journey to big school online and we, the moms, dads, grandparents and yayas, were their teacher, proctor, principal, guidance counselor and "classmate" last year. I smiled when Mr. Salamat confirmed this during his talk as he recognized the roles we played in our boys' pandemic life. We were not alone. We all knew that the quarantine protocols kept our children safe from COVID 19 but also deprived them of "actual school" experience — learning, playing, interacting with their teachers and classmates.

So when the school finally said "Okay, let's open up the school for face-to-face classes, who is in?", I signed our family up for the mental health of my kids and myself. I am a full-time working mom and I, too, needed to report back to work in my actual office.

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Salamat pointed importance of personal and physical interaction between the boys, and true enough, my son is happier having his classmates around. Squeals of laughter at dismissal time and happy farewells as they part for the day shows they had a wonderful time in school. Meeting the teachers for each subject in person taught our boys responsibility and respect for authority because they are in a different setting, outside their comfort zone. Recess scheduled and not an easy trip to the kitchen at home. And the best part, they are freed from their gadgets!



One thing struck me though: the face mask makes it hard for our boys to actually "read" and empathize with another person, especially their teachers. I am not yet ready to give up on this minimum health protocol and I commit to actually letting

my son listen more so he can identify the tone of the voice used by his teacher or classmate. The tone of voice and the eyes can compensate what the face mask covers for now.

Our home is now back to being "home", and big school is now a real thing for my son. He used to ask his dad to bring him to the classroom because his trolley bag was heavy, but I knew it was his way of telling us he was still adjusting to "actual" school. Now, he goes off on his own the moment he is brought to the gate and excitedly walks with his classmates on the way to their classroom.

Othello turned 8 on the first day of "actual" school, August 8, 2022, and he told me he had the happiest birthday this year because he had friends outside of family and he was not scared of big school anymore.

"One thing struck me though: the face mask makes it hard for our boys to actually "read" and empathize with another person, especially their teachers."



### "WELCOME BACK TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD"

By: Emerson U. Palad | Grade 2 Dad

A talk on coming back to onsite learning could not have been given at a better time. Prior to his talk, my wife Rhea and I have been discussing the effects of the pandemic on our kids most especially relating to their social and developmental competencies. We figured that they have been "scarred" so to speak because as primary students,

their ways of studying in school and interacting with classmates were left underdeveloped by the pandemic. The discussion during the session proved a lot of our points to be correct and his observations jived with ours. Of course, the speaker's insights as a career educator added depth and analysis to the current situation of the kids. What's good about this is there's light at the end of the tunnel. What stuck to us is the reality that parents, more than ever, need to be proactive in raising their kids to counter the adverse effects that the pandemic has inflicted. At one point, the speaker said that parents have now become truly the primary teachers of the kids. This may hold true for a few more years, hence, the handin-hand partnership between the home and school must remain in force. The formative years of the children are happening today and it is our duty to ensure that with the school's quidance, the proper direction is achieved.

"Parents have now become truly the primary teachers of the kids. This may hold true for a few more years, hence, the hand-in-hand partnership between the home and school must remain in force."



# "PARENTS AS CO-PILOTS"

By: Ethel Vergara | Grade 9 Mom

The Parents Forum sharing was very informative to help us navigate the teenage years of our son. Oftentimes we find ourselves wondering why our sons are changing the way they do. Why their temperament is changing, why they have different moods and even why they may sometimes have lapses in decisions.

Understanding that anatomically the frontal lobe which regulates the brain develops later than the middle brain allow us to pause and reflect on how we should relate to our boys during this period.

Taking time to guide our kids and have sincere conversations with them to process what they are experiencing or what we are observing about them will help them get through the uncertainties of the teenage years.

As teenagers experience new things, these experiences include meeting and interacting with the opposite sex. Many moms probably worry about the day our sons would have a girlfriend. What I learned from the Parents Forum is that it is OK to allow these experiences for them, but what is essential is having a conversation with your child so that he understands and can decide on decisions he will need to make on his own. What is important is that he knows he has an experienced co-pilot in you as parents to help him navigate unchartered territories.

We cannot stop our sons from "growing up, but we can help him go through the teenage years through constant communication and guidance.

"But what is essential is having a conversation with your child so that he understands and can decide on decisions he will need to make on his own."



# "BOY-GIRL RELATIONSHIPS" A Parent's Reflection on the Topic of Teenage Interactions

By: Karen Cruz-Villegas | Grade 9 Mom

Being a mom of two boys, I felt relieved that I would be spared the drama of raising teenage girls. My own parents only had me and my sister. Like our boys, we went to a PAREF school but exclusively for girls. Our interactions with the opposite sex were practically non-existent. We were not allowed to go to soirees. There were no meet-ups in the mall or at the club with boys. My junior prom, my friend Alelee had to set me up with her friend. To ease the possible awkwardness of meeting for the first time during the actual event, my parents allowed me 2 10-minute phone calls with my date, Joel. Still, this did not ease the jitters of my 16-year-old self being face to face with a boy who was supposed to be my date for the next 4 hours...yes, I had a 12-midnight curfew. Everyone knows the prom is just the preevent to the actual after-hours party. I had no hope of hanging out with my friends and their dates given my curfew and parent-provided driver. Feeling a bit rebellious that night, I ditched the driver and came home 1 hour after curfew much to the disappointment of my parents. I was grounded indefinitely.

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I felt the injustice of having overly strict parents and compared my social life with that of my peers. I told myself I would be different. I would be a "cool mom" when my time came. With my kids able to talk to me freely about anything, even the more controversial topics like girlfriends, boyfriends, sex, etc.

Fast forward 30 years and here I am, not feeling as confident as I thought I would. Raising boys is a whole different ball game. It feels like the stakes are much higher. The environment has changed so much that there now exists a platform for boy-girl interactions in which we, as parents, have little to no control over. And therein lies the rub... how do we help our boys navigate a predominantly digital world where our own generation is still riding out the steep learning curve?

The key, of course, is focusing on knowing our sons – how their minds and bodies develop at this crucial stage. They may have already reached adult height and size at 14/15 but it won't be for another 10 years that the more important behavioral development is complete. It is during this development stage where we can step in by letting them have age-appropriate experiences, safe interactions, and assisted decision-making. Let them fail but also let them learn for themselves the consequences of their actions.

And real consequences, not just grounding them and taking away their gadgets (akin to parents taking away toddler's toys). If they destroy something, let them pay for the repair. If they fight with their siblings, don't immediately step in to try to mediate.

For parents of boys, the stakes really are much higher. Even with this generation, boys still set the pace for boy-girl interactions subsequently relationships. They initiate the first move, dictate how fast or slow the relationship progresses. And that is of boys parents have responsibility to raise gentlemen who have the self-awareness of their readiness for a relationship, accountability for their actions, and the confidence to do the right thing despite peer pressure to do the opposite.

"The environment has changed so much that there now exists a platform for boy-girl interactions in which we, as parents, have little to no control over."



## "SO THAT'S WHY"

By: Noel Piamonte | Grade 9 Dad

Last September 30th, we had our first face-to-face Parents Forum after more than two years of having it online. Having the "Power Couple" Paul and Sharon Fernandez as our Parenting Teens facilitators a few years back, I knew that our guest speakers would be giving us a very insightful, engaging, and eye-opening talk.

The main topic of the talk was about Boy-Girl Relationships. However, the insights that Paul and Sharon shared covered more than just relationships – they gave us a deeper understanding into the inner workings of our sons' teenage minds.

As a first-time parent to a teen, I can personally see and feel the unique challenges of parenting someone who is not quite a kid anymore, but also not quite an adult just yet. There have been times when I would question - what in the world happened to my little boy who used to always look for dada, and now, doesn't seem to want to be seen with me? Admittedly, I would sometimes get frustrated and hurt at the situation.

I liked how the topic was approached from a scientific and biological perspective. Some of the facts shared were surprising to me - like how experts consider adolescent development to be from ages 10 to 25. I always thought that by the time women turn 18 and men turn 21, they are by then fully grown, mature adults. No wonder I did those foolish things when I was 22!

It was an interesting thing to learn as well, that the frontal lobe - the part of the brain responsible for providing higher reasoning, controlling impulses and regulating emotions, is what gets developed last - closer to the age of 25. So that's why you can tell your son to prepare his things the night before only to be ignored, and the boy ends up early the next morning in panic mode, circling around the living room not knowing what to do. It found it comforting and I must admit - quite amusing to hear such examples since I've witnessed the exact situation more than once in our home.

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This piece of information really stuck with me. For some reason it made me feel more empathy for my son. At 14, I realized that he still has lot of development and growing up to go through. He still has quite a long way to go before he reaches that level of maturity that I sometimes unreasonably expect of him.

Paul and Sharon also talked about the importance of allowing our sons to have guided experiences in safe and controlled environments. We set the rules and let them understand our family values, but at the end of the day we just have to accept the fact that our kids will still make mistakes. They can, and probably will, deviate from those rules and values from time to time, but it is important for our kids to experience both the good and the not so good for themselves. We have to be patient with them as they grow and develop. As parents, we need to let our kids know that we trust them and that they can trust us in all aspects of their lives, including relationships.

My own parents often compliment us for the way we are raising our sons. They keep telling us how they never had these talks back then and I appreciate Southridge for providing us these avenues for learning. More than anything, our goal is to be the best parents we can be for our two boys, and these valuable talks help us to be a little closer to this goal.

It was great to see our batch coparents face-to-face again. I personally felt the bond and camaraderie of the batch, and how we seem to have just picked up where we left off. It was definitely a Friday night well-spent.

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### "ROLE OF PARENTS IN A CHILD'S LIFE"

By: Dennis Belcher | Grade 11 Dad

The parent is the child's first teacher and will remain so, as a consistent mentor throughout a person's life.

The parent-child relationship is important because it lays the foundation for the child's personality, life choices, and overall behavior. It can also affect the strength of their social, physical, mental, and emotional health.

Parental values and expertise play a vital role in the healthy upbringing of a child

The proper role of the parent is to provide encouragement, support, and access to activities that enable the child to master developmental tasks. A child's learning and socialization are influenced by their family since the family is the child's primary social group. Happy parents raise happy children.

There's nothing other that comes close to the sacrifice of parenthood. What parents do for their children out of love will always have an indelible mark on the child's life.

How do you build a successful rapport with your child?

#### Communication is the key

In any relationship, communication is the most important foundation. Talk to your children more often about topics other than school time. This helps in creating a better bond between both parents and child.

Throw away your ego and apologize for your mistakes you have made at various times, so that the children can stand up for themselves during future challenges, by knowing what is right from wrong (ethically right and morally right) and gain more self confidence in themselves

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### How can parents' actions influence their children?

Children who have a healthy relationship with their parents are more likely to develop positive relationships with other people around them. They can establish secure bonds and friendships with peers.

With a supportive parent, a child never regrets taking risks. Parents' interactions have a huge impact on the child's development, be it physical or mental.

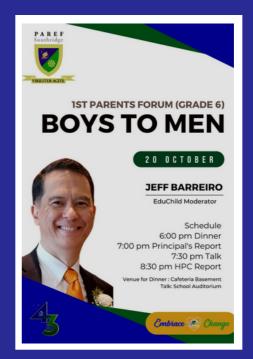
Even though each child is different and special in their capabilities, parents are the ones who shape and assist their children without fail. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure a safe and sound environment for their children. Parenting is sometimes about finding happiness in sacrifices.

"Happy parents raise happy children."

### - UPCOMING EVENTS -

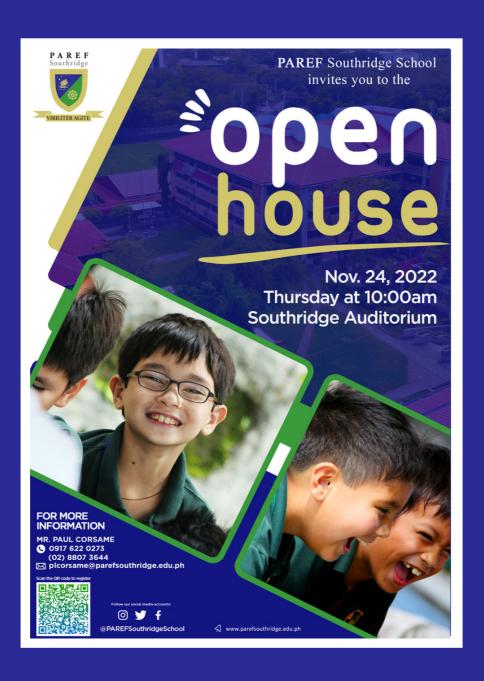




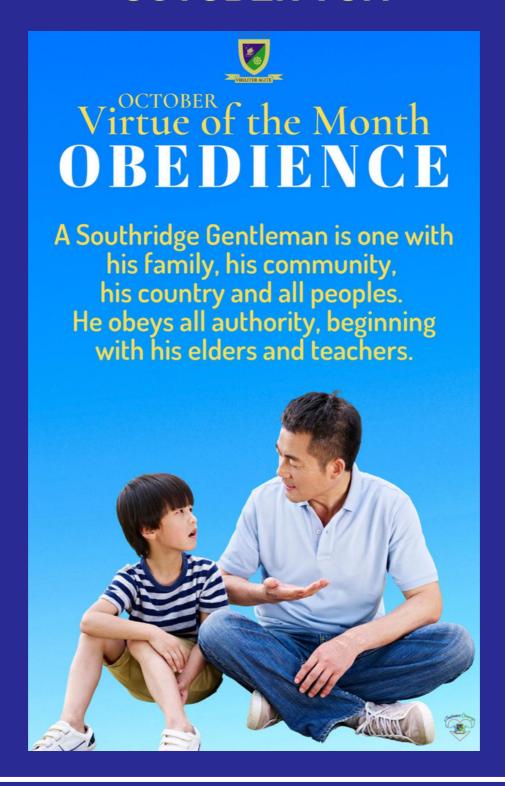




### - OPEN HOUSE -



#### - OCTOBER VOM -



#### - PARENTS ACTIVITIES -

