

Principal's Message: What Happens When a Ball Gets Stuck in a Tree at ACS?

It was one of those improbable comic episodes. The Year 2s were playing football on the artificial turf – and the next moment, someone had kicked the ball up a tree and it got stuck there. Soon a small and vocal group of Year 2 students gathered beneath the tree – most looking upwards, some pointing at the ball, while others were just standing around hoping for a miracle. Amidst the shouting, there were some valiant efforts to retrieve the ball. A few students started throwing their shoes and plastic bottles to dislodge the ball. A bright spark tried shaking the tree branches – but to no avail. I could tell the young ones were feeling quite defeated.

And then the older students – I suspect from Years 4 and 5 - playing at the other end of the field stopped their game and moved towards the tree. The renewed energy and enthusiasm to get the ball down the tree was palpable – there was more shouting, more carefully targeted



throwing of small objects up the tree, more shaking of the branches – but nothing worked.

Then two of the older students went off and returned shortly with a long pole – probably taken from the Scouts store. Hope and anticipation were in the air – and as the older students skilfully lifted the pole and nudged the ball off the tree – there was a loud collective cheer and high fives from those gathered – mission accomplished. Their world was back in equilibrium and the football games of the Years 2s and the older students could now continue.

I was watching all this from my office balcony – curious of what the outcome would be and I even managed to video this episode. It was heartwarming to watch again – because here was a simple but powerful example of what family means at ACS. It did not matter whether the two groups of students actually knew each other – I am certain they did not. But the older group sensed the plight of their younger schoolmates and with little persuasion or hesitation, they jumped into action to bring about a solution. That is the spirit of family – sensing a problem, lifting a helping hand to bring about respite or resolution without even being asked – and then, celebrating together. This is the spirit of family - knowing you will always have support and encouragement and indeed timely help – when a need arises.

The challenge for us is how do we, as a school further extend this spirit of family beyond our school gates? How do we help more of our students to use their gifts and abilities and the benefits of an ACS education to bless others in the extended family – whether these are the communities that we belong to or sectors of the nation where our attention, care and support can make a tangible difference to others? This will certainly be in keeping with our Founder, Bishop Oldham's intention for the setting up of ACS 132 years ago – that the students will be of service to “God and humanity”. We have a strong family spirit at ACS – let us now find new ways to further extend this outwards so that the future is one where truly the best is yet to be.



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