

CAS – Self Discovery

“CAS is so beneficial to you!” I remember sinking deeper into my seat as the teacher raved. At the time, I was more concerned about completing the requirements than benefiting from the experience. However, having completed two years of the program, I shake my head in disbelief at my attitude. Now I find *myself* at the front of the CAS insisting how invaluable the CAS program is. I’ve developed new skills and honed old ones; I’ve forged new relationships with people through a range of activities. Most importantly, CAS has been a journey of self discovery.

My leadership project was also a Creative one. I was an editor for the 2004/2005 yearbook and helped educate the new editors for the 2005/2006 one too. The activity allowed me to create a book that preserved the best memories of the year and was cherished especially by those graduating. The most difficult aspect of the activity was the lack of respect for deadlines. This made it increasingly difficult to gauge our progress. I overcame this by continuously stressing the importance of deadlines, chasing the required articles and setting deadlines in anticipation of lateness. The activity enhanced my writing and organizational skills while teaching me about the importance of commitment. I also learnt how to use many new computer programs. The success of the yearbook made me realize my capabilities as a considerate leader. A beautiful struggle, the end product was of high caliber and fully represented the effort put into it.

I fulfilled the Action element of the program by participating in the weekly circuit training and weight training activities. Circuit training helped me to tone my body and increase my physical fitness while testing my endurance. I feel that my will power has been tempered massively as a result. Weight training helped me increase my muscular mass and pushed my body to its limits. The most difficult part was to keep on going no matter how tired I was. I combated this by saying to myself “you can stop in 5 minutes,” and kept saying this until the end of the activity. By working towards a healthy body I develop a healthy mind.

The Service part of the program was probably the most beneficial to me. I worked with disabled children from the Mtoni School. I taught them how to swim and express paint. At Easter we even organized an Easter egg hunt for the children. The kids benefited hugely as they received exercise through sport and learnt how to express themselves through art. I was inspired by these children; no matter how serious their disabilities, they would arrive and leave with smiles. I’ve watched them take massive strides of progress because of their determination to learn and succeed. I now try to use them as a model for my own endeavors: no matter how great my difficulty I can work towards overcoming them. I learnt to be thankful for what I have, learning never to take anything for granted.

As I progressed through the CAS program I began to appreciate its benefits and even continued my activities after completing the requirements as a result. The hands-on experiences have been immensely educational. Now I realize that CAS hasn’t just been a compulsory program for I.B, but a journey of self-discovery that has been invaluable in so many ways.