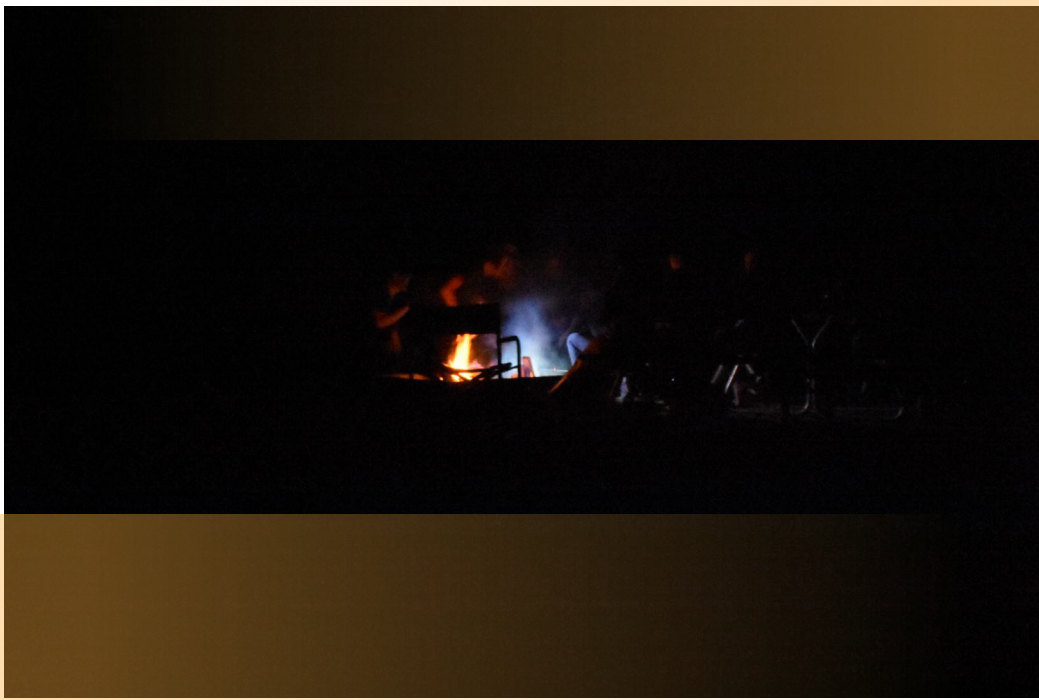


# CEDAR SENTINEL



THE SCHOOL NEWSPAPER

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# EDITOR MESSAGES

ALANNAH  
TJHATRA

EDITOR  
IN CHIEF



Hi guys!

It's October already, can you believe it? We're all in the regular flow of school by now -- for me, it's been pretty good. Hopefully your school year has been going well, too.

In this issue we have a variety of articles including: recaps on events and trips that have taken place this past month, advice, an interview, and a couple more really cool topics that we hope you will enjoy reading.

Have a good remainder of the month!

God bless,

Alannah Tjhatra

KACEY  
MORGAN

ASSISTANT  
EDITOR



What's up Kingsway?

I hope everyone's having a good month, and I hope you like this new issue.

Just so you know, during this month mental health awareness week takes place, so we will be showcasing a perspective on mental health and how you can help those affected.

This month is also all about blessings, so here are some things that I'm eternally grateful for. First and foremost is my bestfriend Kellie Abulencia; you have been there for me so many times and I can't imagine my life without you in it. No one else will tell me the things you do and I'll always have your back. To my not-so-little sister Jaymie, I love you so much and I'm glad you're so cool that we can just walk into each others rooms and rant. To my parents -- thank you for making sure I always did what I needed to no matter how much I complained. And Charlee, I'm so so so glad you are my little sister and I will always be there for you. To the Monica's; I love all of our memories and I'm glad we'll keep making them, to my boys (Karl, 'Bastian, and Bolis) you guys always make me laugh and I don't know what I would do without you three.

Just in case you didn't know, we would love to show off your art or story or any other creative (yet still Kingsway appropriate) thing you can do. If you're interested come talk to either me or Alannah.

Kacey Morgan

# BLESSINGS

KELLIE  
ABULENCIA



It's a new month, another chance to refresh and start new. speaking of blessings, have you counted yours? i know i've been (blessings on blessings btw). if anyone remembers my last article i was basically talking about self-love & positivity, which is one of the many things i am grateful for. along with self-appreciation, i would also like to take time to acknowledge the beautiful things i am surrounded by and am eternally grateful for. for example: one of the great things about having three hundred & sixty five days in a year is the fact that you have three hundred & sixty five chances to start fresh. Mary Woll-

stonecraft Shelley said, "the beginning is always today". out of the many days in the year, we are given thirty-one to specifically give thanks. this year specifically, i have decided to take advantage of it. i hope you do too, because there are so many things to be thankful for. this is a part of my genesis.

let's first start off with what i know will be the longest, and my most favourite, paragraph -- my friends. sometimes, they are my only motivation to go to school every morning. there are no words to express how beautiful they are. i was provided with a bundle of blessings when i met them. kacey, my best friend, thank you

for existing. danielle and aubri, you continue to put a smile on my face every morning when you compliment me. i love walking in and hearing, "welllll, don't you look cute everyday." seriously, it brightens my day. the boys in my class (adan, armel, rondail, jared, bolis, sebastian, reiniel, jensine, xamuel, etc.) 'cause without you guys, my days at kingsway would be dull. to ateh sellu (selena ly), you provide me with everything and i literally do not know what i would do without you (ilysm). emerald, almost three years of up and downs and our bond is still unbreakable. life is better with you around. to my baby sister (not so baby now), i'm thankful for you as well. maddi, for always making me look good in photoshoots and for being such a kind-hearted person. jovi-ann, you're just great. actually while i'm at it, let me just thank my whole class, and everyone that's been a part of my life. i love you all.

alongside the people i've known for quite awhile, i'm also thankful for the people i met recently. neshae & nije, so far, never a dull moment with you two and i'm ultimately grateful for the memories we've made. shoutout to the freshmen



class. most of you i've already talked to, you guys are such a great group and i love getting all your hello's and hugs every morning when i walk through the halls. meeting people is my favourite thing and when i was provided with all of you, i haven't stopped smiling since. i also want to give thanks to the faculty and staff, because of their continuous devotion & commitment towards Kingsway. attending this school was something that never crossed my mind and yet here i am, junior year. i love every single moment of it.

here's to the little things in life. thank you alannah, for letting me write my arti-

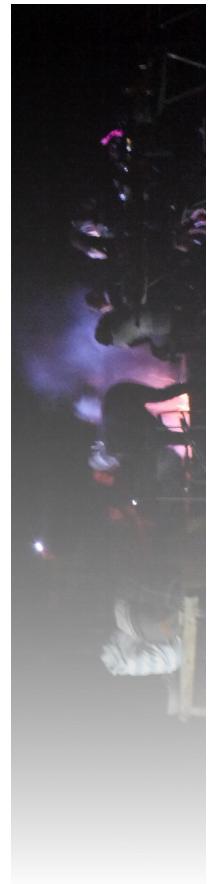
cles without capital letters, all because i said i thought they were ugly. thank you to the chef, who never forgets to provide me with almond milk every day at lunch. i'm thankful for sweater weather and the aesthetic that the fall season gives me. i'm thankful for smiling, 'cause i love smiling. i'm thankful for red carnations and sunflowers. i'm thankful for the sun and nature itself. i'm thankful for iced coffee, i love love love love iced coffee. i'm thankful for fake eyelashes and sephora. i'm thankful for nail techs. i'm thankful for music & plants. i'm thankful for fast food and candy. i'm thankful for twitter and

pinterest. i'm thankful for the little things that make up my life. i'm thankful for the positivity i hold, and the confidence i've developed in myself. i'm thankful for being able to finally love myself, and properly love those around me.

i'm thankful for my God. without Him, i wouldn't be where i am. so this month is especially dedicated to Him. He has provided me with more than i could ask for, and exceeded the expectations i held in my heart.

chronicles sixteen verse thirty-four says, "give thanks to the Lord, for He is good: His love endures forever."

stay positive.



## MENTAL HEALTH FROM THE MENTALLY ILL

ANONYMOUS

**W**hy do we look at mental health as if it's just a passing thing? We treat it as if someone just watched a sad movie and started to cry, saying, "Oh, it's not a big deal. You'll be fine in the morning." Think about it. Imagine you have a young friend of twelve years old. Now imagine how you would feel finding out that the night before, she tried to take her own life. Imagine finding out that a twelve year old girl carries this incomparable weight all alone, and she has been shoving it down because people told her it wasn't

a big deal -- that she was just being dramatic. Imagine that girl -- she's fourteen now -- getting panic attacks and being forced to step up and take care of her siblings because her parents are arguing all the time. Imagine that girl at fifteen years old, thinking that she can't do anything about these overwhelming emotions she feels constantly. She knows she can't burden her family with paying for a funeral so she takes a knife to her arms because she literally can't see any other option. Now look that girl in the eyes after finding out all of that and say, "Don't be

so dramatic. You're just sad right now -- you will be fine." How can you do that? You know about the voices in her head, the shaking hands, the fits, the screaming and crying on the ground, the guilt she constantly carries... how can you know all of that, and just tell this little girl that she's "being overdramatic?"

The mentally ill are not begging for attention. We're not searching for recognition, we're not hoping to make up some horrible, invisible illness just so everyone will care a little bit more about us. Having these problems is

not as pretty as television and books make them seem. I can tell you that it is not fun to wake up at 2 am crying because you just had a panic attack. There is nothing pretty about shaking on your bathroom floor, pounding your fists against your head because the voices just won't SHUT UP; there is nothing great about breaking a razor in half because

nothing else works; it's not beautiful when you're falling asleep in class because the voices wouldn't let you sleep at night. Look me in the eye and tell me how poetic my mental illness is, tell me how beautifully broken it is that I have three people constantly talking in my head; tell me how tragically pretty it is when I slit my wrists crying on my bathroom floor be-



**THINGS THAT MAY HELP YOU IF YOU NEED IT**

**CONNECT**

TALK & LISTEN, BE THERE, FEEL CONNECTED

**BE ACTIVE**

DO WHAT YOU CAN, ENJOY WHAT YOU DO, MOVE YOUR MOOD

**TAKE NOTICE**

REMEMBER THE SIMPLE THINGS THAT GIVE YOU JOY

**KEEP LEARNING**

EMBRACE NEW EXPERIENCES, SEE OPPORTUNITIES, SURPRISE YOURSELF

cause I'm simply not enough, tell me how lucky I am to be inspired by my breaking down in the middle of school so that I can write such pretty words.

My words are not meant to be pretty -- my words are meant to sting, they're meant to make you look and see how much you can appreciate the fact that you may go through life without a constant background noise. My words are supposed to make you see that a failed test isn't really worth crying over when someone else has to study for the same test while ignoring the screaming in her head, or how not getting those shoes isn't as serious as you thought because

someone else couldn't see her therapist and now she's breaking dishes in the kitchen and falling over crying because she has gone absolutely crazy and it hurts so badly, because all she wants is to be like everyone else. She wants to be able to complain about those shoes; she wants her top priority to be her homework, not making sure she sees the doctor so she doesn't have another episode. So please don't treat us like we're burdens, don't make us feel any crazier than we already do. Just treat us like everyone else, because it's the nicest thing you could do.



A H O W T O

G U I D E :

D R I V I N G





ANNA FLORES

---

Once I'm 16, I'll finally be able to drive!" This must have gone through any teenager's mind at one point of time or another.

Well, just like me and many of my classmates, this was the year that we would all get our G1. The excitement of getting handed the car keys, the thrill of getting behind the wheel, and then taking your first ride in a luxurious parking lot...

One of the things that I have realized is that we as human beings always view the world through earthly lenses. It is not part of our nature to put a spiritual aspect on the things we do in our daily lives. We must start the day in communion with God, asking Him to help us align our thoughts towards Him. Isaiah 55:8 says, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord." Although this verse clearly says that we are not on the same level as God, through His help and guidance we can strive to see what it is that He tries to show us everyday.

If we make it a habit to look at the things we do through spiritual lenses, we will realize that it will not only give us a more positive outlook on life, but also a mind that is focused on God.

But now back to driving -- think of the typical vehicle you drive, nothing quite spiritual there, right? But let's turn that around...

# THE ROAD OF LIFE

This may sound cliché, but yes -- the road represents life. Sometimes it seems never ending, uneven, or winding. These are things that even we cannot control, it is all based on the destination we are trying to reach and how soon we want to get there. Just like how many people on the roads speed and go way past the speed limit, we may also choose to rush situations in our lives.



## USING THE BRAKES

Sometimes we just need to slow down and press on the brakes. God doesn't want us to be too preoccupied with the busyness of life that we forget to spend time with Him. Just like with a friend that lives far away -- if you don't invest your time to communicate with them you will find that the friendship may either intentionally or unintentionally drift apart.

## VEHICLE TYPES

There are many types of vehicles --

Cars, motorcycles, trucks, buses, and many more. It's like that in life; everyone is different, we all have different purposes and goals. No two licence plates are the same.

Someone once said, "Everybody is born to be different, that's the one thing that makes us all the same."

This is very true, because if we were all the same, nothing would ever get done. No change would ever be made. Everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses. We can either use our differences for the good or for the bad. It all comes down to the difference we want to make in life.



# THE CROSSROADS

Of course, along the way there will always be intersections. This represents the decisions that we have to make in life. But let's take it one step further -- when you reach an intersection it is always advised that you look both ways. Even if it's your right of way, there is always a possibility of other vehicles crossing your path. Just like us, we must look both ways and think of the possible consequences of the decisions we make.

Just as there are different situations that we go through in life, there are always different ways to handle them. For example, a driver in their right mind would never put their gear-shift in reverse if they wanted to go forward. Thinking and praying about the best option of action to carry out will save a lot of heart-ache and misunderstanding. Time in prayer **MUST** be invested, especially with situations that seem to have no easy way out.

**ROMANS 12:12 SAYS FOR US TO BE "PATIENT IN TRIBULATION; FAITHFUL IN PRAYER."**



## ROAD SIGNS

There will also be signs along the road...many times we fail to pay attention to them. They are there to give us warnings about what is ahead. We should always keep our eyes open and our ears listening to what God's warning is through the Holy Spirit's still, small voice.

## INSTRUCTION

Of course, with every new driver on the road, an instructor will be needed -- whether it be a relative, family friend, or even a professional driving instructor.

Being a driver for the first time means that instructions will be needed in order to learn. That is what the driving instructor is for...

**PROVERBS 2:2 SAYS, "TUNE YOUR EARS TO WISDOM AND CONCENTRATE ON UNDERSTANDING."**

The Holy Spirit is there with us every step of the way to guide us if we only accept and listen.

Let's make it our priority today -- not tomorrow, but *TODAY*, to be willing to let God show us the little things in life that could draw us closer to Him.



I cannot begin to explain how stressed senior year is making me! Anyone who knows me knows that I cannot make decisions for the life of me. It's not exactly a great characteristic to possess, especially when this is the year where many major decisions need to be made. I often get the question of what I want to do after high school, or where I'm going to go. The truth is, I'm still so unsure. God willing, I would like to stay in Adventist Education for university. When the opportunity arose for me to go see the Burman Campus, I took it, hoping it would help me in my future decisions. Here's a little bit of what we experienced.

For those who may not know, Burman University is a Seventh-Day Adventist University located in Lacombe, Alberta. At 6 am on October 1st, eleven seniors, one junior, and two sponsors left for the Toronto Pearson International Airport. We were late arriving to the airport, so we were rushing. Several students were able to check in on time and make it onto the flight, but I and four other students had complications, making us miss our flight.

Air Canada generously put us on the next possible flight, which was two hours behind the others. Grateful, we made the most out of our time in the airport and did homework. Time passed quickly, and before we knew it we were on the plane headed out to Alberta.

Four hours later we touched down in Edmonton. We got our luggage and boarded a bus that took us to the West Edmonton Mall. This mall is huge! In fact, it is the largest shopping mall in North America. It has a bunch of stores, a water park, and an amusement park inside! We spent a couple hours there and then we headed towards the University.

An hour later we arrived on the campus, which is beautiful. We were there at the perfect time, the trees had blends of color surrounding us in all directions. It also looks over a lake, which was so peaceful and calm. We got settled into the rooms that we were staying in, and then headed to the gym where a variety of things were happening. There was Acronaires practice, basketball games, and swimming. We spent a while at the gym and then headed back to the

dorm for worship. There were a variety of other schools there visiting as well. We were all tired from our day, so after worship we went to our rooms and called it a night.

We woke up the next morning to see the ground covered in snow and ice! We weren't expecting weather like this in the beginning of October. Because it was so cold, they didn't take us outside on a tour, so we did a virtual one online. They had other presentations of scholarships and financials, which was our favourite part of course ;) . The President of Burman University came and spoke to us before his Inauguration later that afternoon, which we attended. We were blessed to hear the choir perform at the ceremony, their song was absolutely beautiful. That afternoon, they took us bowling, which was a blast! We came back on campus and went to the gym again for free time. We spent one more night on campus, and then got up early the next morning to catch the bus that took us all to the airport. We boarded the plane in Edmonton and landed in Toronto at 5 pm on October the 3rd.

The Burman University trip was a good experience that revealed a lot to me about what Burman is and what they can offer me. I'm keeping an open mind and keeping it a possibility for the future. Until then, I'll continue to pray that God will lead me and



**BURMAN**  
UNIVERSITY



# EX PER IENCE

ASHLEY  
BOEHNER



show me what His plan for my life is; that I will make the right decision on what to take, and where to take it. For any other seniors, or maybe juniors who are struggling with the same decision, I encourage you to pray as well. God will lead and show you where to go.

“Depend on the Lord in whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.”

# INFLUENCE YOUTH RALLY

KIMBERLY JUNSAY

## DELETE YOUR INSTAGRAM!

This statement was made to the youth of East Central Ontario attending the Youth Rally held on September 29th to 30th, at various locations in Oshawa, Ontario. The weekend of spiritual empowerment started off on Friday with evening vespers at College Park Church, with guest speaker Pastor Jorge Torres from the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Conference. His message focused on the theme of being influenced by others, as well as what is influencing the youth of today; he drew inspiration from the very beginning of the Bible by comparing yourself to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Just like how Adam and

Eve made the decision to eat fruit from the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which resulted in sin, you can choose your own choices and actions -- but you can't choose the consequences.

Pastor Torres addressed the reality of leaving the church and regretting it when the realization occurs that it was better where you were before; he used the example of the Prodigal Son. What is influencing you to make the wrong choices and actions that you end up regretting?

He explained that we let ourselves be influenced by others and get carried away with the crowd. We compare ourselves to other people through the use of social media and we get influenced by what we don't have instead of what God

has given us. This results in the waste of precious time thinking of the unending dissatisfaction of life. Pastor Torres challenged the audience to delete their social media: Instagram, Youtube, Twitter, Facebook, and all the other distractions that influence you to seek something that will not fully satisfy. Many other points were made, but if anything can be taken from his message, it is that God gave you purpose so that you can have dominion over your life -- He has set us up for success.

The same theme of being influenced by God's purpose for your life was carried through to Sabbath morning at Trinity Pentecostal Church, where Pastor Torres connected this theme personally by sharing his life story and journey in becoming a Christian pastor. Many talents were shared during the service, including musical instrument playing, praise singing, and speaking. The service was followed by a meal and fellowship in the lunchroom. After lunch, the young people participating in the community outreach boarded school buses and travelled to various locations around downtown Oshawa. To share the love of Jesus and to simply make a stranger's day better, Globe tracks were handed out and sticky



notes with kind messages were placed on doors and mailboxes. The best activity was walking along the sidewalk holding hand-made signs with the overall message being “Jesus loves you”. Afterwards, all the groups made their way to the Memorial Park in Oshtemo, where a concert was held and again many talents were shared and used to praise God. Despite it being very, very, very cold, it was a true blessing to experience worshipping God in a public park. As

Pastor Torres wrapped up the concert in the park, we were reminded that God gave us the dominion over our life. We remembered that we should be wise and careful about what we let ourselves be influenced by, and be appreciative and grateful for the “Eden” that God has put you in.

Other highlights from the rest of the evening were a pizza dinner at Kingsway’s old gym followed by a teacher vs. student football game. Congratulations to the students for winning

the game, and to both sides for their sportsmanship!

That inspiring weekend would have not been made possible without those who organized this event. Thank yous go to the East Central Ontario Regional Youth Association, as well as the sponsors Adventist Youth Ontario and Kingsway College. Are you being influenced by the world or by God? (Take the challenge and delete your Instagram, it will save you space on your phone.)



# ABOUT THANKSGIVING

SHINE  
SOKI



One thing that we as human beings often fail to do is to be thankful for all the good things that we are surrounded by. We have a habit of making time for the meaningless things in life and ignoring what is most important. Why is it that when it comes to counting our blessings, we for some reason prove to be nothing more than a bunch of preschoolers who do not know how to count? Why is it that we choose one day out of the entire year to acknowledge and practice something that God originally intended for us to do and practice everyday? Thanksgiving

should not be something that is celebrated once a year. It should be an obvious fact that is celebrated every day of our lives, because not a day goes by where God does not show us His infinite mercy.

I think that Thanksgiving is a beautiful holiday, but to me it’s just another somewhat guilty reminder of how unthankful I actually am, how unthankful we all really are. When I sit and think about just how blessed I am, sometimes I cannot help but feel overwhelmed. We live in a first world country, we have food to eat (unfortunately food that we even throw away sometimes), we have

clothes that take up space in our closets, we have wifi for goodness’ sake, I can walk to a tap and have access to clean water. All of these things I did not do anything to deserve, all of these things I did not work for, yet they are still granted to me. The sad part about our lives is that we are so blessed by God to the point where we don’t even know what to do with it all.

Some people as well as myself often struggle with the concept of: if we are so blessed, why is it that we still suffer from being unhappy? Why is it that we are blessed with so much, yet at times I feel like we

have nothing at all? Questions like these honestly bug me everyday, because I am aware that I am blessed. However, that does not stop me from feeling unhappy from time to time. Frequently I am overcome by guilt because I know that compared to another person my age across the world, I have it way easier. However, the more I think about it, the more I am drawn to the conclusion that maybe gratitude is not about being happy, maybe it is simply about acknowledging and marinating in the fact that we are blessed beyond what we deserve. Whether or not we agree, it is obvious that we have easier lives than most people around the world and for that, we owe our thanks to God. Circumstances could have been completely different and we could have been born in a different country or time. One thing that I am learning is that God did not bless us for no reason. Everything that

God does is intentional. God blessed us so that we can go out and bless other people.

The word “thanksgiving” has two important words embedded in it and those words are “thanks” and “giving”. I feel as though one crucial part that people often neglect throughout the Thanksgiving season is the actual “giving” part of Thanksgiving. People are so caught up in just acknowledging what they are blessed with but are not actually seeking to be a blessing to others. We are so caught up in looking at what we have and don’t have that we forget to give what we can to the people around us. I believe that everything that God does is intentional, and I also believe that God does not just randomly put blessings in our lives for no good reason. I believe that God’s purpose for our given blessings is to go out and bless others. I believe that because we have so much, we

are forever in debt to those who do not have as much as we do. God calls us to be of service and that is exactly what we need to start doing.

We all know the saying that “most people never truly appreciate what they have until they lose it.” Well I say, don’t allow yourself to become a statistic. Start appreciating what you have before it is all gone and you are left with nothing. You don’t have to be happy to be thankful; I mean, look at the world we live in. It is difficult to remain consistently happy and positive about life, however, it is possible to remain consistently grateful because even the very action of having air in your lungs is a miracle. Start thanking God for all the good and bad things in your life. Sometimes God’s greatest blessing to us is hardship, because through hardship we develop thicker skin. Whether or not we want to admit it, we all need to develop an attitude for gratitude.

# THANKFULNESS

KIANA  
KAPINIAK



Once a year, friends and family gather together around a table filled with delicious food and share what they are thankful for. You know what day I’m talking about? Of course, I’m talking about the fall holiday that gives us a blessed long weekend -- Thanksgiving! It’s a wonderful time where we thank God for

all the blessings He’s given us and send appreciation posts to our friends. But why do we push aside our thankfulness except for this one special day? There are 364 other days that we are blessed to be alive and breathing, yet we don’t give it a second thought. I once knew a kid who we played flag football with. One day, as he and his brother were

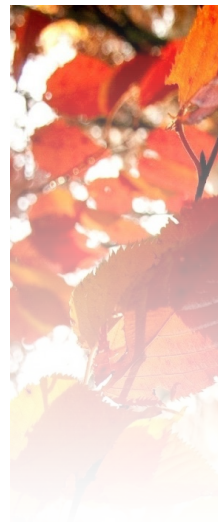
driving home from a youth rally, BAM! -- they got in a car accident, and the teenage boy who thought he still had his whole life in front of him just died. The point is, we may think we have forever, but we really don’t know how much time is left. So we need to give thanks while we can. We wake up each morning, alive and breathing, and that in itself



is something to be thankful for. We get out of bed on our two good legs, get dressed with our two good arms, and get provided daily with a nourishing breakfast. Every day we are privileged to go to school and receive a quality education. We don't live in a war torn country, and our houses haven't been destroyed by a hurricane or an earthquake. We aren't starving, wondering

where our next meal will come from. We have warm, clean beds to sleep in each night. If we just took a minute to think of all the daily blessings we take for granted, we would see how much we have to be thankful for. It's not just thankfulness for all that we have, but also, we have the ability to give others a reason to be thankful as well. There is so much judgment and hate in this

world, and spreading kindness is what we all need. It's not that hard to do something nice and make someone's day, so why not do a kind deed and give someone something to be thankful for? Here are some things that make my day, and I'm thankful for anyone who's ever done one of them for me. Take notes, go out, and give someone something to be thankful for!



## 1. Compliments.

It can be the simplest thing, like "I like your outfit," or "Great job on that presentation," but taking two seconds to acknowledge something positive about a person can put a smile on their face. Sometimes a person may be feeling down, and hearing something kind can really make their day.

## 2. Show appreciation.

Don't wait until their birthday or Thanksgiving to let a person know how much they mean to you. Post an appreciation picture or send them a sweet text to wake up to -- simple things that will let them know they are important to you. We all have friends, but sometimes we forget to show them how much we really care. A little reminder comment, text, or picture of how special they are can really make someone's entire day.

## 3. Gifts.

It doesn't have to be some grand and expensive gift, but everyone likes to receive unexpected presents. It can be giving a friend something you bought that reminded you of them, or just offering to pay the next time you guys go out for food. It could even be a homemade bracelet, some cookies... honestly, anything unexpected and thoughtful will work in making a person feel loved.

## 4. Be thoughtful and show you care.

If your friend tells you their cat just died, make sure you don't just brush it off because it isn't a big deal to you. It could be very hard on them and you need to be there to offer support or a hug. If you know your friend is going through a rough time at home or in a relationship, etc., make sure you are there for them. You might feel like you don't know what to say to help, but don't use that as an excuse to distance yourself! Even your presence and knowing someone cares can be helping more than you know.

---

*There are a million more little things you can do to spread kindness, but I will end my list there. Just remember, you can be the one responsible for making a person's day go from terrible to amazing. You never know what's going on inside of someone's head, so always be kind. Let's try to give people something to be thankful for every single day. And never forget, there are 365 days in a year to be thankful -- let's not limit ourselves to acknowledging God's blessings only on Thanksgiving.*

# A COLOURFUL LIFE: LIVING WITH

# SYNESTHESIA

ALANNAH  
TJHATRA



I recently had the opportunity to interview our Kingsway choir director for this year, Mr. Eduardo Sola. It was really interesting talking with him, as he told me about his experience having synesthesia. I found out that this is a “perceptual condition in which the stimulation of one sense triggers an automatic, involuntary experience in another sense.” I discovered that Mr. Sola experiences things very differently from a person without synesthesia, and I was able to gain some insight on the condition. He gave me some really good answers, so here they are.

**QUESTION 1:**  
*What exactly is synesthesia?*

“To understand synesthesia, you need to understand brain development.

As babies, all areas of the brain haven’t really been educated. As babies we don’t know what sense we are perceiving, we don’t know what sense is responsible for what.

In normal development, the areas of the brain that are responsible for different senses gradually begin to get more separated. (EX. eyes are for seeing, ears are for hearing, etc.) All senses have connections, of course.

In synesthetes, the mechanisms that cause the brain to have separate areas for different senses would not develop properly. They would kind of get mashed together. For example -- if a person without synesthesia sees the number 2 in black ink, it would simply be a number 2 in black ink and nothing else.

For me, a number 2 is the colour red. I know it’s not *actually* red, I can see that it’s black, but I strongly associate “2” with the colour red. If I see a number 2 in green

ink, it looks very wrong to me. It might bother me quite a bit.”

**QUESTION 2:**  
*Are there different forms of this condition?*

“Synesthesia was first documented in 1812. In the scientific community, “Synesthesia” means “a union of the senses.”

The fact that it is “a union of the senses” can vary from person to person. For example, I have auditory>visual synesthesia. That means that when I hear something, I’ll associate a colour with it.

Some other forms also include auditory>tactile (when the person hears something, it evokes a certain feeling), visual>auditory (when a person sees something, it evokes a certain sound), and so on.”

**QUESTION 3:**  
*How long have you had it, and when did you find out about this condition?*

“I have developmental synesthesia, which means that I’ve always had it. For example, since I learned the number 2 as

a child, something happened in my brain that connected it to the colour red.

At some point, when I was learning letters, the letters began being associated with a colour. So now, when I see the number 2, I also see red.

I found out about it when I was 18, when my sister and I started arguing about what colour number 2 was. I said it was red, while my sister said it was green. When we asked our parents what they thought, they looked at us like, “What are you thinking? Numbers don’t have colours.”

#### QUESTION 4:

*Is synesthesia hereditary, and who does it generally affect?*

“Synesthesia is hereditary; there is a genetic component. BUT, the associations that my brain made at some point are *environmental*. For example, maybe the number 2 was made red because when I saw the number 2 for the first time, it was in red ink.

Although it’s pretty random, it happens to be that a lot of artists and musicians have synesthesia.”

#### QUESTION 5:

*What impact does synesthesia have on your everyday life?*

“It’s basically just a part of my perception. If the colours were to go away, that

would be really weird for me. If I’m in a room full of talking people, it can be overwhelming to see so many colours with so many pitches. (When I hear sounds, it evokes colours.) It’s very firework-y sometimes. It affects my life quite a bit.”

#### QUESTION 6:

*Would you consider this condition an advantage or a disadvantage?*

“I think it’s a good thing. It can delay behaviour response, but it can also be advantageous.

Sometimes, I see many notes on one page, and there’s so many different colours, so it can be very overwhelming.

But I can easily memorize pieces of music because I remember the colours of the chords, the tones, the keys, etc. I can play by ear really easily, too.

It also helps with my memory. I was in a building with lots of rooms one time, with lots of numbers on the door. I didn’t remember the specific number of the door I needed to enter, but I remembered what colour the last number was. Because of that, I was able to find the room.”

▼ *How Mr. Sola, or any other synesthete, might see notes on a page.*

