



OLD RAFFLESIANS' ASSOCIATION

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023

ORA ANNUAL REPORT

Year In Review 2023

1. MEMBERSHIP

	2023	2022
Ordinary Members (Life)	3,370	3,329
Associate	109	240
	<u>3,479</u>	<u>3,512</u>

2. ORA DINNER – RI200 & ORA100

2023 marks an exciting year for ORA as it celebrates its centennial anniversary alongside Raffles Institution's (RI) bicentennial milestone. The annual ORA Dinner witnessed an impressive turnout, with over 1,800 esteemed guests in attendance. Among the highlights of the evening was the presentation of the prestigious Gryphon Award to Professor S Jayakumar by special guest Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, recognising his outstanding contributions.

The remarkable dinner attendance witnessed a diverse crowd of Rafflesians spanning across different age groups, filling the three ballrooms of the Fairmont Hotel with their presence. It also serves as a strong testament to the unwavering support and deep engagement of Rafflesians with the School; and reflects the strong sense of community and camaraderie among alumni as all come together in celebration of the shared heritage and values instilled by the School.

All dinner guests thoroughly enjoyed and immersed themselves in the celebrative and nostalgic atmosphere. This also sparked a surge in membership uptake rate, as guests were inspired by the vibrant community spirit and shared passion for the School, motivating them to become active participants in the Rafflesian network. This reflects the enduring impact of such gatherings in fostering a strong and united Rafflesian community, dedicated to supporting and advancing the legacy of the Rafflesian spirit.

Building on the success of the RI200 & ORA100 Dinner, the Council is steadfast in its commitment to sustaining the momentum and expanding the Rafflesian network in the coming year.

3. ORA GOLF

In celebration with the RI Bicentennial and ORA Centennial, the ORA Reunion Golf 2023 was successfully held on 11 October, Wednesday at Tanah Merah Country Club (TMCC), Tampines Course. The newly minted Gryphon Award recipient Professor Jayakumar

graced as the guest of honour while Mr Ng Kee Choe, Chairman of TMCC, was the special guest for the event.

All 36 flights were fully sold, thanks to the ardent supporters of the Rafflesian community. The Organising Committee led by Chairperson, Ms Cheong Yoke Keng, would like to express its sincere gratitude and appreciation to all sponsors, participants and all who contributed to the success of this event; without which the event would not be able to conclude fruitfully, achieving a surplus of \$33,798.

Special thanks also go to the dedicated Organising Committee Members, including Dr Chan Peng Mun, Jeffrey Chua, Kelvin Tan and Leong Yan Yoong, as well as ORA Council Members, Elena Chua, Debby Lim, Melissa Ong and Monica Tung for helping out on the event day.

4. ORA INTEREST GROUPS

A. RAFFLES ROVERS

The Raffles Rovers Scout Crew (Raffles Rovers) continued with their community service efforts and the support of Scouting activities in 2023.

For community service, Raffles Rovers carried on with their monthly befriending walks reaching out to rough sleepers in the Crawford area. For their efforts in the befriending of Rough Sleepers, Raffles Rovers were recognised by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) with the President's Certificate of Commendation (COVID-19) and the Friends of MSF Award.

The weekly homework guidance programme continued from February to October 2023 under the umbrella of the Community Link (ComLink) programme; a day camping activity was also organised at the Sarimbun Scout Camp for the ComLink students from the homework guidance programme.

All the service initiatives involved mostly current and former Scouts and/or students of Raffles Institution together with some Scouts and Leaders from other Scout Groups under the leadership of the Raffles Rovers. The premise being young people helping other young people under the guidance of experienced adults.

Leaders and Rover Scouts from Raffles Rovers also supported various Scouting activities and programmes at the national and area levels as well as at the group level for the 01 Raffles, 02 Raffles and Colugo Scout Groups.

B. MUSIC INTEREST GROUPS

i. RAFFLES WINDS

Raffles Winds had a successful 15th installation of its annual concert series, Coda, themed 'Revelry'. The concert was held on 1 September 2023 which coincided with Singapore's Presidential Election. The concert committee and band members adapted well to the unforeseen challenges and presented a beautiful concert evening to a packed concert hall. The symphonic band would like to express its gratitude towards the school, teachers-in-charge, alumni office, and security staff for their assistance and support.

Raffles Winds was also delighted to be a part of The Art Faculty's Christmas festivities at the Enabling Village once again in December 2023, where they partnered with the Authentico Wind Ensemble to bring festive musical joy to the shoppers, in support of differently abled artists.

Raffles Winds looks forward to another fulfilling year in 2024, with Coda XVI on 24th August at the Victoria Concert Hall, as well as other musical projects to give back to the community.

ii. RAFFLES SINGERS

Raffles Singers was founded in 2000 by the alumni of Raffles Chorale after winning **Choir of the Year** at the 1999 SYF Choral Competition under the directorship of Mr Toh Ban Sheng. Since then, Raffles Singers has flown the Singapore flag high, garnering numerous top awards in European choral competitions and receiving invitation to present concerts at the 11th World Symposium on Choral Music.

In 2023, Raffles Singers presented two full-length concerts. **RE:miniscence** featured challenging repertoire with pieces spanning cultures and time, while its annual Christmas concert **Prelude to Advent** presented an array of secular and sacred Christmas music, including the world premiere of Singaporean composer Kenneth Tay's *It came upon a Midnight Clear*.

June 2023 saw Raffles Singers bag double Gold Awards and a *Category Champion* in the *International Choir Competition and Festival SOUND WAVES Linz*, Austria – a first for Singapore choir post-covid.

To uplift lives and achieve social bridging, Raffles Singers also held four community outreach events at the Science Centre, Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and NTUC Health Nursing Home (Jurong Spring) and was also invited to sing in the Raffles Hotel Grand Lobby at Christmas.

iii. Raffles Alumni Chinese Orchestra (RACO)

In 2023, following a 3-year hiatus, RACO successfully organised its first concert since the Covid pandemic. Titled “Dream” 《望》, the concert showcased the aspirations and vigour of a renewed RACO with many new faces. The concert was a resounding success: the orchestra performed to a full house at the renowned SCO Concert Hall, and it garnered many positive reviews from the audience.

With the experiences gained in 2023, RACO is well-poised to scale even greater heights in 2024 and beyond.

C. SPORTS INTEREST GROUPS

i. Hockey

The Old Rafflesians' Association (ORA) Hockey Club celebrated a remarkable year in 2023, marking numerous achievements that highlight the club's dedication to the sport's growth and its commitment to creating an inclusive environment. It expanded its competitive engagements over the previous year, taking part in a diverse array of leagues and tournaments.

In addition to its regular competitions, the ORA Hockey team made its debut in the Men's Hockey League (MHL) 2, Youth Liga, Veterans Liga, and forayed into the National Junior League (NJL) girls' division, illustrating its commitment to nurturing talent across all age groups.

Its young athletes were particularly triumphant in 2023, securing three championships and three runner-up titles across various events.

The adult teams also had their share of successes. Its respective men's teams notably finished as first runners-up in both MHL1 and MHL2. The women's team made impressive strides, climbing to 6th place in the Women's Liga, a significant leap from the 10th position in the previous year.

Moving into 2024, ORA Hockey Club is poised to reach new milestones. It remains steadfast in its mission to foster inclusivity, nurture a sense of community, and provide opportunities for development at all levels of field hockey. ORA Hockey Club is excited to build on its achievements and continue promoting the values that make it a beacon for Raffles Hockey.

ii. Softball

Established in 2006, ORA Gryphons Softball has been the most active Softball club in Singapore over the past decade. Today, it has about 250 active alumni players and continue to boast a network of more than 600 members.

As ORA Gryphons Softball resumed its trainings, it hosted a Fastpitch tournament in May 2023, a Slowpitch (invite-only) amongst 6 local teams, its signature ORA Slowpitch Carnival (Internal-family day) in June and hosted a 14-team Slowpitch tournament in Oct 2024.

After donating \$3,000 to the *1823 Trees: Rooting for a Greener Campaign*, about 30 members with their family members joined the Tree Planting activity on 25 Feb 2023. ORA Gryphons Softballers, both Men and Women's, have represented ORA in tournaments locally and internationally. Many of them have also represented Singapore National Teams internationally - such as at the SEA games (most notably the Gold for Men's and 4th for Women in 2019), Asian Men's Softball Championships (Bronze - 2018 and 2022) and the World Men's Softball Championship (2019).

2023 was a "revenge year" with many international tournaments:

- May 2023, 2 of its members represented the inaugural Co-Ed Slowpitch Tournament in Pattaya, Thailand;
- June 2023, 6 of its Men's represented Singapore at Asia Cup (World Qualifiers) in Japan and finishing 2nd in the tournament and qualifying for the Men's Softball World Cup to be held in July 2024 (Canada).
- Most notably, in Sept 2023, 8 Rafflesians represented Singapore at the 19th Asian Games held in Hangzhou, China as Coaches and Players of the Women's Softball and Men's Baseball.

ORA Gryphons Softball continue to support its members in their bid for national glory - working hard in their own ways for the Men's Softball World Cup (July 2024), SEA Games (2025) and Asian Games (2026). ORA Gryphons Softball also look forward to further developing its teams with overseas trips before the end of the year!

iii. Gryphons Basketball

2023 has been a busy year for Gryphon Basketball. Basketball, a popular school sports saw many schools taking part in the National School Games (NSG). Many alumni supported the B Div boys throughout the NSG. Gryphon Basketball boys, the underdogs without any DSA beating many illustrious schools to emerge with the South Zone title.

To develop young talents, Gryphon Basketball supported its U14 and U17 boys' participation in the BAS Youth Cup and Tungsan Cup competitions. As Gryphon Basketball continue having its weekly Saturday scrimmage at the two RI basketball courts, it has also arranged a monthly friendly for a team of 45 years old and above against its traditional rival from Hwa Chong Alumni in 2024. Gryphon Basketball hopes to expand this further, where possible.

The highlight for 2023 was the Annual Gryphons Cup held over three and a half days in conjunction with Gryphon Recall. A record 20 teams between the ages of 14 – 64 took part in the Cup and Plate events and another 12 lady teams between the ages of 15 – 38

participated in the 3-on-3 event on the final day. Over the 3.5 days, a record total of 300+ past and present Raffles basketballers and their family members attended this event.

D. CULTURAL INTEREST GROUPS

Indian Language and Cultural Community (ILCC)

The Indian Language and Cultural Community (ILCC) was formed in 2022 and was active in championing the Indian language and culture. Well received workshops and learning journeys were conducted for students since their formation.

The ILCC continued their partnership with the School on the ongoing coffee table book project which was published and placed in the RI200 time capsule on 14 Oct 2023.

Unfortunately, due to low membership numbers, ILCC decided to keep the group dormant and shall reactivate this group when there is sufficient interest and support.

5. BICENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES

Leading to RI's 200th Founder's Day celebration slated on 28 May 2023, several events have been planned towards the countdown to the RI Bicentennial. In particular, 2023 saw the following achievements:

14 January 2023 – Launch of the RI200 Literary Anthology – Some Dreams From Now: 135 Years of Rafflesian Writing to celebrate the school's rich history, heritage and literary legacy.

25 January 2023 – Alumni Tree Planting Day, an 1823 Trees tree planting event at Yishun Park.

9 – 11 March 2023 – Festival of Ideas, three evenings worth of talks, debates and performances by pioneering minds and captivating personalities.

28 April 2023 – Release of RI200 Anniversary Stamp, featuring four of RI's campuses throughout the school's history

29 April 2023 – RI Open House & Carnival, a bazaar with food stalls, game booths and merchandise stands.

6 May 2023 – Launch of Chinese Language Publication "Our StoRies", a special publication by the Year 1-4 Mother Tongue Languages department (Chinese Language unit) to mark the Bicentennial of RI

16 May 2023 – RI Bicentennial Lecture where Minister for Education, Chan Chun Sing shared on how schools and students could play a key role in creating relevance for Singapore, and in securing a more sustainable SG100/RI300.

28 May 2023 – 200 Founder's Day where students, teachers, staff and distinguished alumni came together to celebrate RI's bicentennial.

22 July 2023 – Gryphon Recall, RI200 Edition saw over 15 CCAs hosting their reunion.

29 April 2023 – RI Open House & Carnival, a bazaar with food stalls, game booths and merchandise stands.

19 Aug 2023 – RI200 & ORA100 Gala Dinner, with over 1,800 guests spanning across 3 ballrooms

28 Sep 2023 – RI200 Fireside Chat with Minister for Home Affairs and Law, Mr K Shanmugam

14 Oct 2023 – RI200 Time Capsule Launch, where a collection of 200 curated artefacts were placed into the time capsule. The RI200 Mosaic Mural, a tapestry containing 4,500 photographs of students and staff of RI in 2023, was also unveiled at the event.

6. SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS 2023

ORA presented awards to 10 students of the Raffles schools for academic excellence, leadership and community service:

ORA SCHOLARSHIP AWARD	
NAME	SCHOOL
Master Lin Jiarui	Raffles Institution (Year 1-4)
Master Jeremy Chua Jun Jie	Raffles Institution (Year 5-6)
Miss Noh Sangeun	Raffles Institution (Year 5-6)
Miss Kim Jisoo	Raffles Girls' School

ORA CHARACTER AWARD	
Master Raoul Abay Gunalan	Raffles Institution (Year 1-4)
Miss Wang Yining, Marianne	Raffles Institution (Year 5-6)
Miss Shin Suyeon	Raffles Girls' School

ORA COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD	
Master Lai Jun Ru	Raffles Institution (Year 1-4)
Miss Tan Min En	Raffles Institution (Year 5-6)
Miss Nieve Toh Jia Yi	Raffles Girls' School