



Championing Mercy Values



VOL. V

December 2024 Edition

A MERCY CENTER OF
EXCELLENCE &
INNOVATION



COMPELLED
BY MERCY



PRINCIPLED
LEADERSHIP



INSPIRED BY
FAITH



EDUCATIONAL
COURAGE



A VOICE FOR
DIGNITY AND
RESPECT



SCA NEWSLETTER

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[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SCAHIGHSCHOOLBELIZE/](https://www.facebook.com/SCAHIGHSCHOOLBELIZE/)



ANNUAL TEA PARTY

PARENT SUPPORT GROUP



AKASHA MOLINA

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BY MERCY



SCA'S ANNUAL TEA PARTY



WRITTEN BY: AARUSHI HARJANI



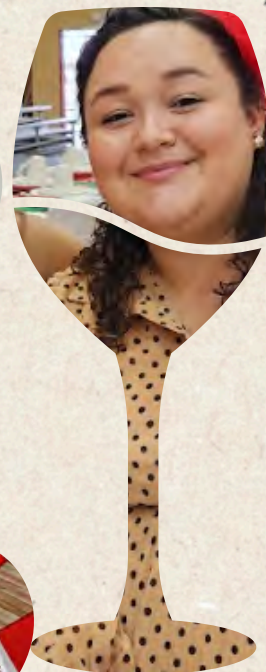
Purpose:

Each year, the Parents Support Group (PSG) assists the SCA community in an area of need. This year, they helped fundraise for the "Unplugged" steel pan band and for the installation of a new fan above the stage in SCA's Auditorium.



This event is not only a fundraiser; it also brings people together in a joyful atmosphere to celebrate Christmas traditions over a nice cup of tea. The gathering creates lasting memories and strengthens connections within the Saint Catherine Academy family, all while embracing the true spirit of Christmas.

SCA'S ANNUAL TEA PARTY





SCA'S ANNUAL TEA PARTY

Coordination:

WRITTEN BY: REBECCA STETHEMI

The PSG is a dedicated team of parents who consistently contribute to school events. Their primary focus is to foster a supportive environment for both students and staff, ensure smooth event operations, and create lasting memories. The PSG members are always eager to lend a hand, demonstrating their unwavering commitment to the school community through their time and effort.

Playing a pivotal role in the recent tea party, the PSG members tirelessly planned and set up the venue. They transformed the space into a warm and inviting atmosphere, meticulously arranging beautiful decorations, organizing seating arrangements, and ensuring every detail was flawlessly executed. Their dedication created the perfect ambiance for the Sisters of Mercy, honored guests, and all attendees to enjoy a delightful afternoon of conversation and entertainment.

"It was much work, but a great team was behind the event. It really would not have been able to happen without Ms. Dawn, Sister Rose, Dr. Tillett, and several other people. As trite as it sounds, teamwork does make the dream work."

- Ms. Claudia Lopez
(President of PSG)



SCA'S ANNUAL TEA PARTY



BY: ISABELLA WALDMAN

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BY MERCY

Booths:

This year, the tea party also showcased many different items for sale made by both S.C.A. alumni and Sister Rose! The items for sale ranged from jewelry to baked goods, embroidery, and even handmade crocheted items. The S.C.A. alumni consisted of Ashlee's baked creations, Little Farmhouse Soap, "Elda loves Crochet", The Spice Rack, and Zest Handcrafted.



Sister Rose also contributed greatly towards the selling of items for the tea party and sold many of her embroidered and hand made pillows, table runners, tapestries and also made her mango chutney! Sister Rose's items is a great example of mercy values at work and has worked very hard to create the items she would sell at the tea party. Through these booths S.C.A. alumni and Sister Rose demonstrated true mercy values by working hard, contributing to the success of the tea party, and spreading joy with their products.



A “SOARING” ROARING ACHIEVEMENT



CLEMSON UNIVERSITY: ENGINEERING!

KRISTY BOWEN



ACCEPTED

CLEMSON
UNIVERSITY



December 12, 2024

Dear Kristy,

Congratulations! We are pleased to inform you that you have been admitted to Clemson University beginning Fall 2025 in Engineering

We are excited to welcome you to the Clemson Family and look forward to the important contributions you will make to our campus community of causes and interests, and determined to achieve success both inside and outside the classroom. We are confident that you will be a

A “SOARING” ROARING ACHIEVEMENT



ANÁHUAC MAYAB: ARCHITECTURE



JESLIN MORAN



ACCEPTED

40% off tuition





PRINCIPLED
LEADERSHIP

Miss Winter Gala



Alexandria Young
2nd runner up



Maressa Briceño
Miss Winter Gala



Jaycee Usher
1st Runner up

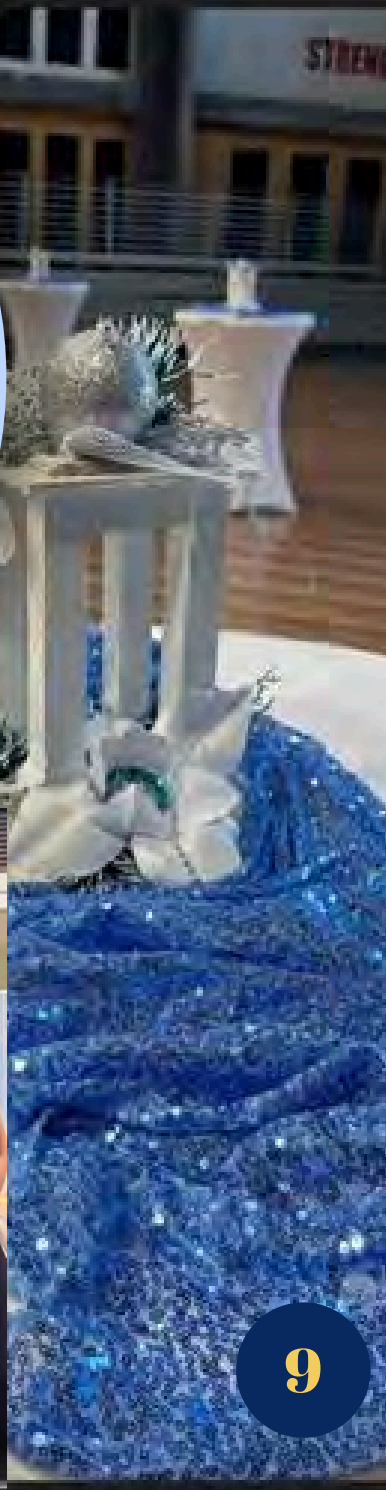
The gala combines a fun night with a unique way for SCA students to show school spirit. This is achieved through the "Miss Winter Gala" competition, where each Class has one or more representatives who raise funds for the school. The individual who raises the most money will be crowned Miss Winter Gala. This year, the Class of 1RR's representative, Maressa Briceño, was crowned Miss Winter Gala 2024. A special shout-out goes to the first and second runners-up, Jaycee Usher and Alexandria Young, for their dedication to promoting school spirit!



Winter Gala

PHOTO SHOWCASE

Done by: Kimaya Charley



Youth Panel Discussion on Gender Based Violence

By Kalaya Molina



EDUCATIONAL
COURAGE

The junior peer helpers went to a youth panel discussion on gender-based violence, violence against women, and human trafficking on Wednesday, December 4. Young people between the ages of 15 and 22 spoke on this panel about significant issues that do impact young people. It was crucial to attend this panel because it covered issues that are real and occurring in our society but are rarely taught to teenagers in schools. The knowledge discussed stuck because this panel included entertaining interactive activities like “Jeopardy”.



As youths, we have a voice, so we must use it!

Each panelist shared their thoughts on questions about each topic. It was said that small actions could assist in preventing human trafficking, violence against women, and gender-based violence. For instance, creating flyers, holding school panels, and launching campaigns. For the world, one tiny step toward peace is a huge step.

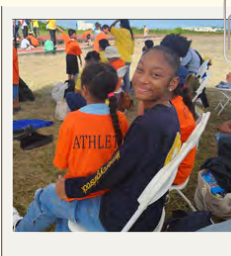




National Games for Special Olympics



EDUCATIONAL
COURAGE



Done by: Brinyce Richardson

On Friday, December 6th, ten junior peer helpers proudly assisted at the National Games for Special Olympics at the Marion Jones Sports Complex. This inspiring event brought together students with disabilities from schools countywide, showcasing their determination and athletic talents. We celebrated ability and inclusion for everyone.

The atmosphere was exciting as these spirited athletes took to the track, participating in events such as the running and fast-walk races. Their performances demonstrated their physical capabilities and their unwavering spirit to overcome challenges.

Beyond the competition, the event also featured an educational health panel discussion to raise awareness about various health complications that individuals with disabilities may face. The panel highlighted important topics, including strategies to support individuals in healthy, fulfilling lives. This educational session was eye-opening, emphasizing the importance of inclusion and proper health education.



As the day progressed, the athletes were continually encouraged with the Special Olympics' powerful and inspiring chant:

"LET ME WIN, BUT IF I CANNOT WIN, LET ME BE BRAVE IN THE ATTEMPT."



SCA's annual Christmas Spectacular was held on December 12, 2024, featuring a variety of Christmas-themed entertainment. From exciting dances to meaningful skit performances, various drinks and food were on sale to add flavor to the cheerful night. This event offers families a memorable night to enjoy a Christmas spirit-filled atmosphere and a sense of understanding the true meaning of Christmas, the coming of Jesus Christ, and the remembrance of faith, hope, love, and joy.



The Nativity



The seniors reminded us of the humble circumstances of His birth in a simple manger, emphasizing God's love and the hope that His Son brought to the world. Their depiction of the Holy Family highlighted the themes of faith, humility, and redemption.



The performance beautifully captured the profound message of Jesus' arrival as the Savior, bringing peace, goodwill, and salvation to everyone. The blend of humor and reverence created an unforgettable experience, reminding us of the joy and love that Christ's birth represents.



This year's Nativity play, led by our senior class, brought joy, laughter, and holiday spirit to our school community. The seniors delivered a fantastic performance that blended humor, creativity, and a heartfelt message. They honored the true meaning of Christmas by beautifully portraying the story of Jesus' birth, which is the real reason we celebrate Christmas.



SCA WATER WALKERS

Christmas Art Sale

Water Walkers is a dedicated nonprofit organization focused on serving and supporting the homeless, single mothers, and children in our community. At SCA, students have taken the initiative to create a club that extends Water Walkers' mission. They aim to raise funds and awareness through their efforts, directly impacting the lives of those in need.

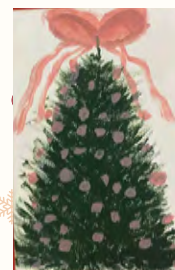


The SCA Water Walkers Club, co-founded by Ayana Stuart and Brielle Parham, hosted their second annual Christmas Art Sale during the SCA Christmas Spectacular on December 12, 2024. Club members showcased their creativity by presenting various beautiful paintings, all inspired by the joy and spirit of Christmas.

Thank you to everyone who supported this worthy cause and helped make the event successful!



Paintings are available for sale from Ayana Stuart 675-8485 or Brielle Parham 625-4003.





2ND FORM DOOR DECORATION PROJECT



Undoubtedly, the Christmas season is one of the most cherished seasons in the Catholic church, as it marks the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. During this time of reflection and appreciation for our Lord, Christians worldwide typically decorate their homes with a nativity scene as a visual reminder of the reason for the season. The nativity scene is a symbolic visual representation of the birth of Jesus Christ, usually displaying the baby Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and Joseph surrounded by animals in a manger. Some scenes even include the shepherds, angels, and the three Wise Men, who visited the newborn Savior, which symbolizes the unity of heaven and earth. This practice can be dated back to St. Francis of Assisi in the year 1223 when he created the very first nativity scene to help people better understand and connect with the birth of Jesus Christ.



According to Catholic Traditions, the history behind the nativity scene begins with Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem following an order from the Roman emperor that a census be taken in their hometown. After several days of traveling while pregnant on a donkey, Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, where they were informed that all the inns were full. Realizing that Mary would give birth at any moment, the owner of an inn informed Joseph they could stay in his stable. It was here in this stable that the baby Jesus was born. This story remains in the hearts and minds of Christians worldwide, especially during Christmas.

This year, SCA incorporated this cherished tradition in a new and interactive way to add to the school's Christmas spirit and allow students to further engage in their spirituality. Each 2nd form class was tasked to decorate a door demonstrating the nativity scene and its importance. All five classes showed outstanding efforts and displayed teamwork, creativity, and a deep understanding of their theme, creating beautifully decorated doors that remind us of the true reason for the season. This activity gave each class a chance to showcase their unique understanding and creative abilities while reflecting on the spiritual significance of their doors.



2ND FORM DOOR DECORATION BY CLASS



2CE



2DL



2GL



2LP



2MC

DOOR DECORATION PROJECTS

THEME: CHRISTMAS
DONE BY: AMYRAH WRIGHT

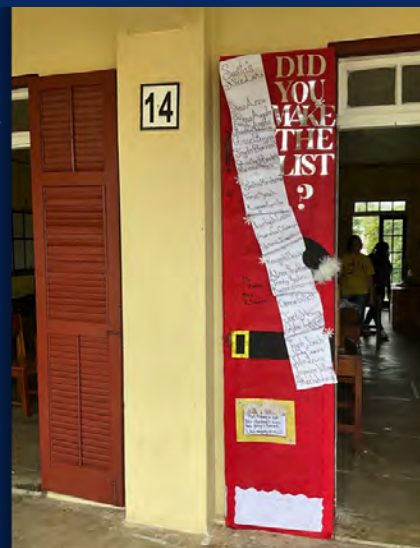
In the Catholic Church, Christmas is observed as one of, if not the most sacred, feast day celebrations. It commemorates the life of Jesus, the birth of God the Father's only Son, something one of a kind. The Nativity story (Matthew 1:18-25, Matthew 2:1-12, Luke 1:26-56, Luke 2:1-20) is a biblical narrative with two recounted perspectives: those of Joseph, Mary's husband, in Matthew, and those of Mary in Luke. The Birth of Jesus is a story representing humility and the love that Jesus Christ brought forth in the world.

While Christmas is not about gift-giving and secular things, it is an amazing opportunity to highlight the things that bring the season to life, like Christmas trees, reindeer, and Christmas quotes. While secular, these things can also help us to embrace this time of Advent in preparation and anticipation for the birth of our Messiah, Jesus Christ!

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Inspired by Faith



4TH FORM CHRISTMAS DOORS

On the night of Jesus' birth, a bright star appeared in the night sky. This star caught the eye of three kings known as "the three wise men." These men followed the star to the stable where Jesus Christ was born. They came bearing gifts of Gold, Frankincense, and myrrh. The three kings worshipped the new king who had come to save the rich and poor. This story shows the three wealthy kings bowing to Jesus, who was born in a manger, recognizing that he is the son of God destined to save us all.





4SC1



4SC2



4B



4BC



Inspired by Faith

Jesse Trees



Definition:

The Jesse Tree is a symbolic representation of Jesus Christ's genealogy, based on the prophecy of Isaiah 11:1: "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit." It is a visual way to depict the lineage of Christ through the stories of the Bible, beginning with creation and tracing through significant figures and events that lead to the birth of Jesus.

Traditionally, a Jesse Tree is decorated with ornaments that represent these biblical stories, each day of Advent focusing on one story and its corresponding symbol.

Purpose:

- **Teach Salvation History:** The Jesse Tree provides a way to reflect on and teach the biblical story of salvation, helping individuals and families connect Old Testament events and figures to the coming of Christ.
- **Prepare for Christmas:** It serves as a spiritual tool to prepare hearts for the celebration of Jesus' birth by emphasizing the fulfillment of God's promises.
- **Create Family Traditions:** The Jesse Tree fosters meaningful Advent traditions, encouraging prayer, scripture reading, and reflection together.

Highlights:

- **Biblical Symbolism:** Each ornament on the Jesse Tree represents a biblical figure or story (e.g., an apple for Adam and Eve, a rainbow for Noah, a ladder for Jacob).
- **Daily Reflection:** During Advent, families read a scripture passage corresponding to the symbol and reflect on its connection to the story of Christ.





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SCA STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH OCEAN ACADEMY

On November 29, a tragic accident shook our community. A van carrying members of Ocean Academy's male basketball team was involved in a severe crash while en route to a basketball tournament in Orange Walk Town. The accident, caused by a tire blowout, left the occupants with serious injuries and rippled through the hearts of many across Belize.

For Saint Catherine Academy, this accident felt especially close to home. Many of our students and staff share direct or indirect connections with the victims—whether as family members or friends. Beyond personal ties, the accident serves as a stark reminder of the shared risks we face as a school that frequently travels with students on buses and vans for various activities.

Every day, our own students commute to SCA using buses, vans, and even boats. In recent weeks, River Valley residents have faced additional challenges, having to rely on a river ferry before transferring to buses or private vehicles to reach school. This shared experience of navigating Belize's roads and waterways underscores the importance of safety and vigilance in our daily lives.

In response to this tragedy and the rising number of traffic accidents, SCA rallied to show support. The school organized a casual day, where students and staff could dress down in exchange for donations. All proceeds from this initiative were contributed to assist the Ocean Academy crash victims.

Through this gesture, SCA not only extended a helping hand but also affirmed its commitment to standing in solidarity with all those affected by this heartbreaking incident. Let us continue to keep the victims, their families, and our broader community in our prayers as we work together to ensure safer journeys for everyone.



OCEAN ACADEMY PRAYER SERVICE



What Happened:



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FAITH

- Several high school students from Ocean Academy High School in Caye Caulker traveled to a basketball tournament while involved in a road traffic accident. Their van flipped and landed on the side of the road. Unfortunately, this tragic incident led to a student losing their life, and some other students and coaches being in critical condition and are still now recovering.

What we did:

- Firstly, we created a flyer with the date and location details and shared it on Microsoft Teams and the PA system. Next, we made a prayer service guide and printed copies so that people in the chapel could follow along while praying with us. We held the prayer service during lunch, and it was wonderful to see students, some teachers, and our principal, Dr. Tillet, joined us in prayer.

Why we did it:

- Prayer is essential because it lets us talk to God and share our wants, needs, and gratitude. It helps us understand our lives and where we need His guidance and support. Through prayer, our relationship with God strengthens, and over time, we start to pray not only for our desires but also for what God wants for us.



More Than Just Cleaning



Ms. Dawn

At Saint Catherine Academy, the work of our janitors goes far beyond cleaning—it forms the backbone of a safe, healthy, and welcoming environment for everyone in our school community. Too often overlooked, their efforts ensure that our campus remains a space where students and staff can thrive. Today, we shine a spotlight on two incredible members of our SCA family: Ms. Dawn and Ms. Natalie.



Ms. Dawn is a cornerstone of the SCA team, known for her cheerful demeanor and willingness to assist anyone in need. Her primary responsibilities include maintaining the cleanliness and sanitation of several key areas, such as the teachers' bathrooms and student bathrooms in the convent building. Thanks to her diligence, these spaces remain spotless and hygienic, safeguarding the health and well-being of our school community.

Ms. Dawn and Ms. Natalie exemplify the spirit of service that defines SCA. Their hard work often happens behind the scenes, yet their impact is felt in every corner of the campus. From sparkling bathrooms to tidy classrooms, they remind us that cleanliness and care are fundamental to a vibrant and thriving school environment.



Similarly, Ms. Natalie is a powerhouse of reliability and dedication, bringing energy and enthusiasm daily to her work. She focuses much of her attention on the Mercy Center and the science building, where her consistent effort ensures that these vital areas remain clean and welcoming. Whether tackling the bathrooms or stepping in to help wherever she's needed, Ms. Natalie continually goes above and beyond her duties.




Kilani Berry




MS. TRESA POLONIO SPOTLIGHT

by Aaliyah Wade



Ms. Tresa Polonio may not be a name everyone immediately recognizes, but her assistance to Saint Catherine Academy is significant and worthy of recognition. Ms. Polonio is the head of the accounting team. She helps keep the school's procedures and finances stable. She sets an example for us as Mercy girls by arriving at school every day with prosperity and tireless devotion, making her an irreplaceable asset to our school. Beyond her professional experience, she symbolizes the Mercy Core Values by incorporating the principles of leadership and dedication!

Ms. Polonio, extremely dedicated to her role at our Mercy institution, makes an effort along with the entire accounting team including Ms. McKay and Mrs. Crawford, to ensure that our school is a welcoming community where students can follow their dreams! Together, they work hard to provide quality education to all of us!



Let us take a moment to appreciate our Accounting Department, specifically Ms. Polonio, for their hard work and contribution!



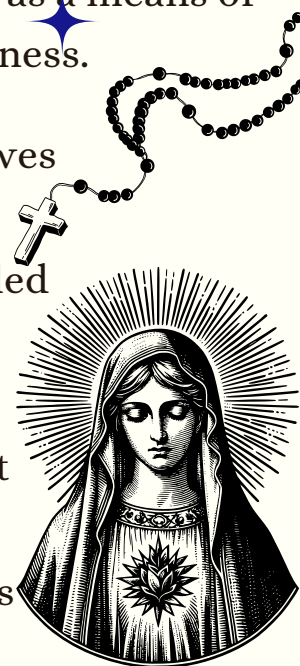
Our Lady of Guadalupe Feast Day



Devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe is organized through prayers, novenas, and acts of immense reverence. Religious gatherings and devotions in honor of her legacy evoke a sense of commitment and identity with our Lady of Guadalupe as she represents us and our ancestors. Participating in meaningful endeavors honoring our Virgin Mother is an inherent reminder of the motherly, all-loving and forgiving figure she undoubtedly symbolizes.

December 12th is the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. On this day, members of the Catholic Church worldwide collectively commemorate our Virgin of Guadalupe, who is of divine origin and was declared queen of Mexico and Patron of the Americas. After the memorable encounter with Juan Diego, which would completely shift the landscape of faith, the Virgin Mary was named the Lady of Guadalupe. The image left on Saint Juan Diego's tilma is the only true picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe and has remained intact for 475 years. Thus, the detailed accounts of the apparitions further reaffirm the sacredness and divinity she possesses. However, she is not to be regarded as God but rather as a means of strengthening our devotion to His holiness.

Historically, the Lady of Guadalupe serves as a symbolic reminder that from the moment of conception, we are each called to be one in Christ. She is a form of guidance for every child of God who is meant to embody ideals and values that permit us to reunite with him for all eternity. Thus, our sacred mother offers her good graces to us; entrusting ourselves to her ignites our soul-binding commitment to facilitate our path toward serving and loving Christ.



SCA INTERACT CLUB



visits Queen Street Baptist Primary School

On December 12th, the SCA Interact Club visited Queen Street Baptist Primary School on Eve Street and Queen Street, Belize City. A group of 13 devoted students, accompanied by Ms. Shari Smith, planned a fun visit for the Infant 1 students. All members were involved by their donations, behind-the-scenes work, or service.



An hour was spent with the students, during which games were played, treats were distributed, and songs were sung. The trip was meant to bring joy to the students during this holiday season. It was a reminder of how small acts of kindness can make a significant impact. The visit was an inspiring way to strengthen our connection with the community and serve purposefully.



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2024 Love FM Christmas Parade



On December 14, 2024, Saint Catherine Academy (SCA) brought festive cheer to the streets of Belize City by participating in the annual Love FM Christmas Parade. This beloved event, organized by Love FM, has been a highlight of the holiday season, uniting the community in celebration. SCA's float was a vibrant showcase of talent and holiday spirit. "Unplugged," our renowned Steel Pan Band, delighted the crowd by performing Christmas songs throughout the four-hour parade, infusing the air with rhythmic melodies that had spectators dancing along.



Dr. Tillett brightened the festivities as Mrs. Claus, accompanied by the elegant Winter Gala Queens. Mercy the Sea Hawk charmed the crowd, spreading holiday joy with sweets and greetings that brought waves of excitement from families and friends gathered for the Love FM Christmas Parade. Our students also marched along with the Belize Red Cross float. This beloved Belizean tradition showcased creativity and togetherness, with participants from various organizations celebrating the spirit of the season. We're proud of our students and staff from SCA for their dedication to making this event a success. A big thank you to Love FM for organizing such a delightful parade! For those who missed it, a recording is available online.

A LOOK HEAD

BY: BRIANA CUELLAR



BE PREPARED FOR JANUARY:

- SCHOOL REOPENS:
JANUARY 6TH
- END OF FIRST SEMESTER:
JANUARY 14TH
- NATIONAL GEORGE PRICE DAY:
JANUARY 15TH
- FOUNDATION DAY:
JANUARY 20TH
- HEALTHY LIVING WEEK:
JANUARY 20 - JANUARY 24TH