

Workshops aim to help teachers hone their skills and teaching strategies while extending quality training

Little Thinking Minds makes learning Arabic more fun

By Michelle Fe Santiago
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 12: The Little Thinking Minds LTD in collaboration with the Dasman Bilingual School held for the first time on Saturday the Arabic Literacy Conference with the theme "Inspiring Creativity Through Reading."

The conference was attended by Arabic teachers and school owners from both private and public schools who participated in five simultaneous workshops. The topics ranged from how to encourage immersive and innovative reading practices, difficulties in reading and how to overcome them to engaging children through drama. Through these workshops, Little Thinking Minds aimed to help teachers hone their skills and teaching strategies while extending quality training.

"This conference comes from the school's belief in the centrality of reading in the educational system, to stimulate critical thinking, and empower the students with the skills of the 21st century. We also believe that the Arabic language specialists should receive quality training that develops their skills, and we're happy to partner with Little Thinking Minds," said Samar Dizmen, Dasman Bilingual School Superintendent as she pointed out that the conference was very timely as many Gulf countries are moving to a knowledge-based economy, bringing together top speakers from Jordan, Kuwait and Egypt.

The Little Thinking Minds founded in 2005 by Rama Kayyali and Lamia Tabbaa is a growing team of passionate educators, programmers, designers, artists and literacy experts. The company has offices in Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.



From right to left: Adel Al Sane – Dasman Bilingual School CEO, Samar Dizmen – Dasman Bilingual School Superintendent, Dr Khalil Abu Afifi – Arabic Division Principal, Dasman Bilingual School, Dr Ghadeer Hatabah – Head Education Advisor and Curriculum Consultant and DIALA Ramahi – Little Thinking Minds Regional Relationship Director.

"In addition to the suite of high-quality literacy programs we offer to school, we at Little Thinking Minds have always believed in professional development as a central tenant to engaging teachers and by extension students. It is essential to complement ICT tools with elevating skill sets. We're very excited about this conference and to be entering the Kuwaiti Market," stated Lamia Tabbaa, Co-Founder and head of Communication and Engagement at Little Thinking Minds LTD.

Five literacy experts spearheaded the intensive workshops for Arabic teachers all over Kuwait.

"Our team in partnership with Dasman Bilingual School is here to impart the right training skill sets and programs among teachers of the Arabic

language, on Arabic literacy, the importance of reading, the importance of critical thinking and how you can encourage other higher skills, workshop on how teachers can use drama skills within the Arabic classroom to make it more engaging and have children learn the language. We're also trying to focus on the core importance of Arabic literacy," explained Little Thinking Minds Marketing and Sales Director Supriya Dominica who was with the delegation.

Little Thinking Minds is an Education Technology company that creates educational products and resources for school-aged children (4-12 years of age) with the aim of improving learning outcomes, advancing skills and increasing social and cultural connect-

edness in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Their products are being used in over 200 public and private schools across the MENA region, as well in select school systems in Australia, Canada, and North America. To date, LTM products have reached over 100,000 students globally.

"We are an educational company and the main mission of our company is to improve learning outcomes. The age bracket that we cater to is from pre-K (kindergarten) to the age of 14, 15 and most of our programs are individualized. They are built around the knowledge and needs of students and we provide individualized learning solutions. With our programs, every student has his or her own log-in information and they can access the program be-



Some of the Arabic teachers

it at school or at home and they have this continued enrichment," pointed out Dominica.

She highlighted that the Little Thinking Minds encourages students to learn Arabic language and literature in a more fun and engaging manner.

"We use modern standard Arabic across all the Arab countries. We have taken very interesting children's story books and different contents, some are fictional some are non-fictional and we have digitized them on the program. We have at the moment 650 books on our core advanced program. Most of our contents are from Arab winning authors," she outlined.

In this digital era, educational learning is made easy and accessible to everyone as the Little Thinking Minds team continues to work with a team of literacy experts to align its programs

with school curriculum.

"Our programs suit the needs of everybody, be they non-native or native students, we have something to offer to everyone to help them learn Arabic in a more fun and engaging manner. We have created videos. There are a lot of contents. There are work sheets. Teachers can use these to flip the classroom. It's bringing the digital era into the Arabic classroom. In some places, like some of our programs especially the non-native program "I Start Arabic," it's aligned with curriculum so we have a team of literacy experts that we work with. They study the curriculum and they study the Arabic Children's literature that's published and what's on the market. What we basically do is we try and align common literature to the curriculum goals and learning objectives," beamed Dominica.

Dr Seemant Raizada claims trophy in Division B

Adnan Assaf wins Toyo Golf tourney

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 12: Toyo Golf Tournament was organized last Friday 8th Feb, 2019 at the Sahara Golf Club. It was the 36th year of this prestigious event, which started in 1983 and since then has been held each year with the exception of 1991. The trophy is appropriately called the Liberation Cup as the tournament is organized in February for commemorating the National and Liberation Days.

The tournament is quite popular among golf enthusiasts. Being an Open event, the participation is not just limited to Sahara Club members but includes golfers from all over. As always, there was an overwhelming request for participation, and eventually 100 players were shortlisted. To ensure a level playing field, the players were categorized into two divisions based on their handicap levels : Division A (Handicap 0 to 14) and Division B (Handicap 15 to 28).

Toyo Golf has traditionally followed

the 'Stableford' format, which allows for relatively fast play. Though it has been relatively cold & windy over the past few days, thankfully the weather was quite pleasant on Friday with sunny conditions in the morning and a mild breeze followed by light rains in the afternoon.

The veteran Adnan Assaf came up with a fabulous score of 37 points net (and 69 gross in a par-70 course) so as to win the trophy in Division B. He was followed by Luiz Swarez in the second place with 35 points. In Division B, Dr Seemant Raizada achieved a whopping 44 points to win the prize. Incidentally, this is his second successive win – he was the winner last year also. The second prize in Division B was won by Yahya Bakir at 35 points.

Among other prizes, Nearest to Pin was won by Alison Peterson and Brett King in Ladies and Men's categories respectively. As regards Longest Drive, Fadia Emadi was the winner in Ladies,

whereas in the Men's group, the corresponding prize was won by Scott Dunning. Last but not the least, the coveted Best Gross trophy was won by the experienced Abdulwahab Al-Mussalam, who has always come up with remarkable performances in this tournament, even in the past. Finally, the highlight of the day was an amazing shot by Sisonxay Ngaovongsi, the Ambassador of Laos, who hit a 'Hole-in-One', a rarity in golf, at Hole no. 11, a par-3 hole.

Prize distribution was organized in the afternoon in the gracious presence of Keishi Inoue, General Manager, Toyo Tires Japan who had specially flown in from Osaka for the tournament. Speaking on the occasion, Kuldeep Lamba, Managing Director, Al Maillem Group expressed his satisfaction at the enthusiastic turnout, and complimented Razmic, Richard, Xuxon, Jason, Cameron and other Sahara Club staff for their professional administration of the event.



BSK staff and students

Young Musicians of the Gulf 2019 competition

BSK's La Camerata returns victorious

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 12: Another year and yet another victory, the British School of Kuwait's 'La Camerata' returned from the 2019 Young Musicians of the Gulf (YMOG) competition as winners in the Large Ensemble category. This is the most prestigious music competition of its type held in the Gulf region. Hosted by St Christopher's School in Bahrain, the competition is open to all British Curriculum schools who are members of The British Schools in the Middle East organization. With 101 member schools and 95,000 students in ten member countries around the world, success in the competition is without doubt a great achievement.

2019 saw the running of the twentieth competition and the sixteenth time BSK has participated. Miss Galina Bojilova, the Director of Strings at BSK was instrumental in the preparation of BSK

students, this too being her sixteenth competition. Accompanied to Bahrain by our pianist Miss Emily Jeffcott, Director of Performance Music, BSK students were very well prepared.

Outstanding performances were heard in the duet and trio category, and BSK's newly formed Wieniawski Duet consisting of Vivian Sequeira and Luaidh Williams was no exception. Progressing to the second round, they performed beautifully. Also joining them in the second round were BSK's two solo violinists; Vivian Sequeira and Sarah Aldashti, and on bass trombone Ali Alobaidan. Solo vocalists Mahima Juyal and Naomi Pereira performed wonderfully in the initial rounds and proceeded to the semifinal. Performing songs of their choice; Green Finch and the Linnet Bird and Climb Every Mountain, they made a big impact on the audience but

were not able to make it through to the Grand Final.

The BSK's 'La Camerata', consisting of a pianist, eight violins, bass trombone, trumpet, drums and chimes played a piece especially arranged for them by the renowned Kuwaiti composer Magdi Talaat, 'Al-Aghani Al-Kuwaitiya'. They made their way to the highly competitive semifinal where once again they triumphed, being crowned the YMOG 2019 Large Ensemble winner. La Camerata would now perform in the Grand Final in the Sofitel Hotel, contesting the Overall Ensemble category, returning there after their victory in 2018 as Overall Ensemble winners. La Camerata pulled out all the stops in the Grand Final, receiving a standing ovation.

The next event in BSK for La Camerata will be at BSK's Music Festival Week starting on 10 March.



Group photo of the winners

Inspiring design for a distinct personality

Lexus launches new Lexus RC in Middle East

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 12: With a dedication to high performance and world-class craftsmanship, Lexus launches today the new Lexus RC in the Middle East, offering a smoother ride, as well as a fresh new look and design. The RC Coupe promises drivers a sharper and more graceful experience.

Since its introduction in 2014, the RC has played a significant role in promoting Lexus' commitment to delivering an "emotional driving experience" in every single one of its vehicles. Thanks to its sleek sporty appearance and versatile driving character, the RC has since become a popular choice in the premium luxury coupe marketplace. The fresh new RC retains all the virtues of the current model and then takes them to the outer limits by adopting Lexus' new signature design language and sharpened driving dynamics.

Furthermore, enhancements have been made to the RC's aerodynamics, tires, suspension, in addition to improvements to engine response and steering feel, all of which result in a sharper and more refined drive introduced by the LC. The new RC is more stable than ever, with a wider stance and lower center of gravity reflecting a high ability to maintain its grip under a variety of road conditions. This provides a high level of driver confidence and a reassuringly flat ride quality, making it the ideal grand tourer, whether they are challenging a twisty mountain road or simply taking a long-distance commute on the open highway.

"We are excited to announce the launch of the new Lexus RC, presenting our customers in the Middle East with a premium luxury coupe that offers a truly distinct and engaging driving experience," commented Yugo Miyamoto, Chief Representative, Middle East and North Africa Representative ☐Office,

Toyota Motor Corporation. He added: "With its modern design and sharpened driving dynamics, the new RC delivers on our promise to push the limits of creativity and craftsmanship to develop vehicles that create amazing experiences. I would like to thank our customers for their continued support that fuels our journey to excellence and I am confident that the new coupe will quickly find favor with them."

Lexus designers sought to maintain the RC's dynamic coupe proportions, while adding a high level of elegance to the exterior. This was done, in particular, through the addition of distinctive design elements, such as a new front bumper corner that flows down from the headlamps, and a grille mesh pattern whose shapes gradually transform from top to bottom. Also, vertically arranged extra-small triple LED headlamps and new L-shaped LED clearance lamps add to the car's new, more classy appearance.

Air ducts have been added to the corner of the RC's rear bumpers, resulting in better handling stability and enhanced overall driving response. Also, the rear combination lamps now house more pronounced L-shaped lenses that serve as a new signature design feature for Lexus vehicles.

The RC F Sport is distinguished by its exclusive F Sport styling features inside and out, including the front Spindle Grille with new F Sport mesh pattern, steering wheel, single central 8-inch meter with a G-force monitor, and sports front seats. Additional performance features available on the RC F sport include an Adaptive Variable Suspension (AVS), Torsen Limited Slip Differential, drive mode select with five levels including Sport S+, and a custom mode that enables drivers to customize the powertrain settings, as well as air conditioning to suit their mood and driving style, among many others.

Complementing the new Lexus RC's progressive design is a thrilling drive personality imbued by two powertrain options. The RC 350 is powered by a sophisticated 3.5-liter V6 Atkinson cycle engine that produces 311 hp and 380 Nm of torque. The engine integrates advanced technologies, such as a D-4S fuel injection system and Dual VVT-i, to deliver a balance of exhilarating power and superb environmental performance. Meanwhile, the RC 300 is powered by a 2.0-liter turbocharged inline-four-cylinder engine that combines a compact high-efficiency twin-scroll turbocharger with an Atkinson Cycle engine with Dual VVT-i, producing 241 hp and 350 Nm of torque. The two powertrains are mated to an eight-speed sport direct-shift automatic transmission that delivers a smooth shift feeling and superb drivability, together with excellent fuel efficiency and outstanding quietness even at high speed.

Completing the new Lexus RC's distinct personality is its exquisite interior that invites the driver and passenger to enjoy a range of advanced features offering a refined cabin experience. These include an enhanced in-vehicle 10.3-inch multimedia display, a 4.2-inch color multi-information display (MID), Lexus Climate Concierge with a 2-zone independent temperature control system, 17-speaker Mark Levinson sound system, Auto Location-Tire Pressure Warning System (AL-TPWS), 3-position memory switches for the driver's seat, 8-way adjustable power and ventilated front seats with one-touch walk-in function, as well as ample luggage space with room for two full-set golf bags thanks to the 60:40 split folding rear seats.

Highlighting Lexus' unrelenting focus on safety, the new vehicle ensures complete peace of mind with Lexus Safety System+, an advanced safety

technology package that includes Pre-Collision System (PCS) with pedestrian detection during daylight and certain low-light condition, all-speed range Dynamic Radar Cruise Control (DRCC), Lane Departure Alert (LDA) with steering control alert, and Adaptive High Beam System (AHS). Adding to a host of safety features, a pop-up hood system has been adopted to create a space to absorb the impact force in the event of a frontal pedestrian collision, helping enhance their protection. In addition, the new Lexus RC features a comprehensive array of safety features to protect its occupants, such as 8 SRS airbags, Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Traction Control (TRC), Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD), Brake Assist (BA), Blind Spot Monitor (BSM), Rear Cross-Traffic Alert (RCTA), and Hill-start Assist Control (HAC), among many others.

Available in 11 distinctive exterior colors, the new Lexus RC allows customers to express their individuality with four exclusive colors for the F Sport variant, including White Nova Glass Flake, Lava Orange Crystal Shine, Naples Yellow Contrast Layering, and Heat Blue Contrast layering, truly conveying the RC's sporty nature. On the other hand, the interior comes in a total of seven colors, with three exclusive colors for the F Sport - Mustard Yellow, Flare Red, and White. There are also five available ornamentations depending on the grade, along with two exclusive designs for the F Sport - Naguri-style Aluminum and Hairline. Furthermore, the new model has been reared with three wheels designs; an 18-inch wheel and two 19-inch wheels - with one aggressively-styled exclusive for the F Sport inspired by those on the LS and LC.



Interior design of the new Lexus RC



The all-new Lexus RC Coupe