

Reflection on Pulau Semakau on 11th May 2019 by James Tan (1G)

On 11th May, my father and I embarked on a trip to Singapore's landfill, but this was no ordinary landfill...it was like our nation, unique in every way.

In the 1960's, Singapore's waste management system was like every other nation's ; a place on the country's land itself which housed the nation waste. The landfills at Choa Chu Kang and Lorong Halus could not cope with the waste generated daily and with space in the landfills running out, the government had to look to alternative ways of managing the country's waste. The biggest problem was finding land we could spare to build this new landfill, in the end, we decided on joining two separate islands, Pulau Semakau and Pulau Sekeng to make the present day Pulau Semakau.

After leaving the boat, we were warmly greeted by a tour guide. He shared with us invaluable information about the various wildlife found on the island and the infrastructure built to make sure none of the toxic waste ever goes out to sea and pollutes the sea around the island and the activities carried out around the island.

We were impressed by a scenic view of phase two of the landfill. Surrounding us at that place on the landfill were plants that produced fruits which were 30% biodiesel. If we are able to succeed to produce it in large quantity, Singapore can one day be self-sufficient in energy.

After the trip around the island, the guide brought us to a briefing room in the visitor centre where we learnt more about the history of Pulau Semakau, how waste deposited in the landfill is incinerated which gets rid of 90% of the original amount of waste as well as the safety measures provided to make sure the landfill does not pollute the environment outside the island.

Overall, this visit to Pulau Semakau, which was planned to make Father-child bond stronger was truly a wonderful and enriching experience. My relationship with my father has definitely become stronger.

I would definitely recommend this trip to other families if given the chance. I would like to take this moment to thank the GESS PTA for organising this very interesting learning experience.

