

# THE URGE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AT STAGS

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> of February

*Molly Lewis, Maddie Howlett, Eva Warwick 8H, Caitlin Wheeler and Amelie Winsor-Williams.*

Throughout January and February, students at St Albans Girls' School wrote letters for Write for Rights, a project ran by Amnesty International every year. This project aims to support the fight for people's human rights and the freedom of innocent people whose rights are being attacked. As a community, we have worked to support this campaign for many years.

Year 8 student, Maddie Howlett stated that, "at our school we want to help everyone and make a difference to the lives of others".

As promoted in assemblies by sixth formers this term, Amnesty International's tagline "Write a Letter. Change a Life" inspires students to write letters in the hope that the agreement of many people can "make a difference".

Miss Brock, Curriculum Leader of REP (Religion, Ethics and Philosophy), revealed why STAGS shows commitment to this campaign: "Write for Rights campaign initially started in Core REP Year 11 lessons focusing on the topic of Human Rights; since then, students have worked hard to make it a successful whole school event. Last year, students wrote letters for Annie Alfred to show support for Malawi people with albinism whose lives are in danger. In contrast, this year students had a choice of who to support."

Across the school, students chose to focus on four causes: Azza Soliman, Sakris Kupila, Ni Yulan and the Istanbul 10: Azza Soliman, a lawyer, who faces imprisonment, after dedicating her life to defending victims of crimes such as domestic abuse, and rape; Sakris Kupila, a 21 year old medical student, fights for new laws regarding gender recognition; Ni Yulan, an ex-lawyer, fights for housing rights after her house was demolished; and the Istanbul 10, ten people who defend human rights of dissenting voices, and are now under investigation of terrorism related crimes.

When asked to comment on the reasons why this campaign is important Miss Brock stated that: "Write for Rights gives young people a voice. Students can stand up for rights which they hold dear to them. In addition, they can gain an insight into the world in which we live. We are privileged to live in a country where we have laws to protect us from discrimination; unfortunately, that is not the case for everyone."

In reaction to this campaign, a form of year 8 students were inspired to focus on Azza Soliman in a year assembly focusing on different cultures and inspirational women. Laksia Prathepan, 8S, explained why the class came to this decision:

“As a class we decided to do our assembly on Azza Soliman because we wanted to tell everyone who she is and what she does in Egypt. She supports women in Egypt because they are being abused, tortured and raped. She is a lawyer who is fighting to stop these crimes. However, she has been falsely accused and therefore could be imprisoned for 25 years as the authorities think that she is ruining Egypt’s reputation. Although she is putting her life in danger, she is proud to defend women. We realised about Azza from Write for Rights and wanted to remind everyone about her and how she is a proud feminist”.

We also asked some other students to comment on why they think writing for people’s rights is important to the students at STAGS:

“Write for rights can change people’s lives” - Ella Morris.

“Your words can make a difference” - Georgia Bader.

“It is something that everyone can get behind and make a difference that really matters”- Izzi Brannen.

If you would like to get involved with this campaign, please follow the link below, where you can write a letter to help free someone from undeserving chains.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/write-for-rights/>