

A wooden boardwalk winds through a grassy dune landscape under a dark sky. The boardwalk is made of light-colored wooden planks and curves from the foreground towards the background. The grass is tall and green, with some purple flowers scattered throughout. In the distance, there are sand dunes and a line of trees under a dark, overcast sky.

# THE PATH I HAVE TAKEN

Jacob Anton Sta. Ana Pajarillo

# The Early Years

- When I first enrolled in COLF, I was placed in the Toddler (2s and 3s) class even though I was already four years old. That made my mother uneasy. Since I already had a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (I was diagnosed at two), she thought I had to be placed in a special class with “*special children.*” But Teacher Mila gently explained that it did not work that way.
- Midway into my first week at COLF, my yaya who usually accompanied me to school excitedly told my mom that I had been “promoted” to the 3s and 5s class. I owed it to Teacher Mila who had been a keen observer of how I behaved that first week with the toddlers. She must have seen that there was something special in me indeed that despite my “different” ways, I could cope with learning together with regular children of my age group.
- Was Teacher Teena in for a surprise! I was unruly and always made for the door and my classmates were tasked to fetch me and guide me back to the rest of the class. At recess, I would always inspect my classmates’ food and if it was to my liking, I would immediately grab and eat whatever I fancied, much to the dismay of my hungry classmates.
- In time, I would learn to socialize with my classmates in more meaningful ways. I could sit down and participate in class, do classwork and actually learn.







# School is Cool

- By the time I was in Kinder, I was fully adjusted to attending COLF. In my odd way, I was making friends. Shoutout to Ricky Baluyot who has since moved on to another school in Laguna. I remember how I enjoyed our Christmas performances, including our song number in 3s 5s “School is Cool.”

# Middle School Years

- In addition to having the thirst for learning, I also branched out to extracurricular activities. In Grade 4, I developed an interest for basketball as I watched my classmates play. The following year, in Grade 5, I became a member of the basketball varsity team (until Grade 11).
- I graduated Grade 6 with an Academic Award in Social Studies because it was my favorite subject.





# My Academic Award in Social Studies (Grade 6)





# Upper School Years

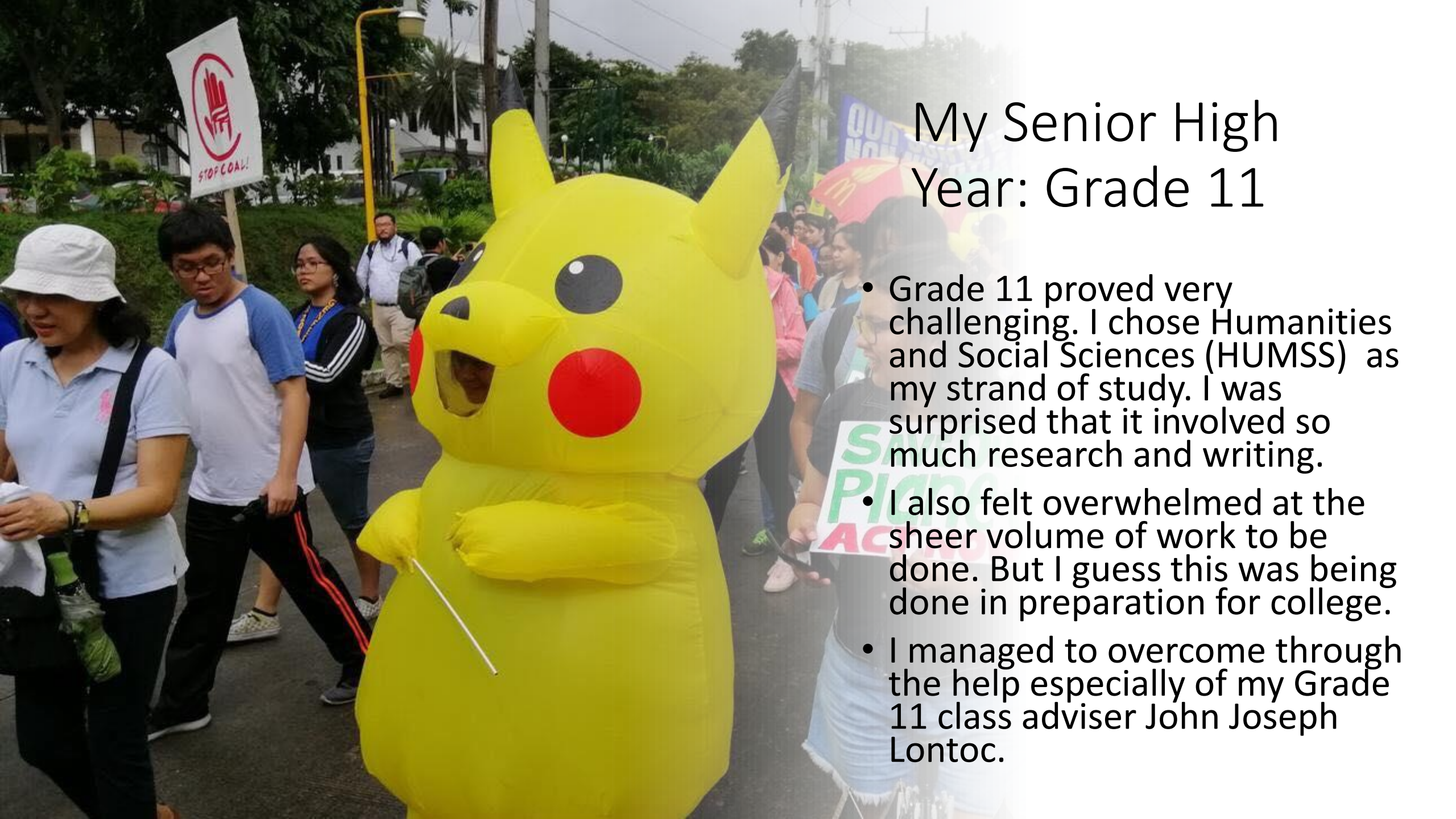
- Beginning in Grade 7, I developed an interest in playing the guitar and in participating in musical performances in school.
- I recall that my first solo performance singing in public was during the yearly Himig festival. I loved the feeling of hearing applause from the crowd. I made it a point to join Himig every year beginning in Grade 8 until Grade 11.
- It was also in Grade 8 that I first joined a band in school. I liked performing with a group and playing good music together.
- I drew inspiration from my Grade 9 class adviser, the late Andrew Villar who was very cool and also from my Grade 10 class adviser, a proven survivor of life Marjorie Salcedo Javier.



12's/13's

2015-2016 T. Joy Geraldine M. Castel



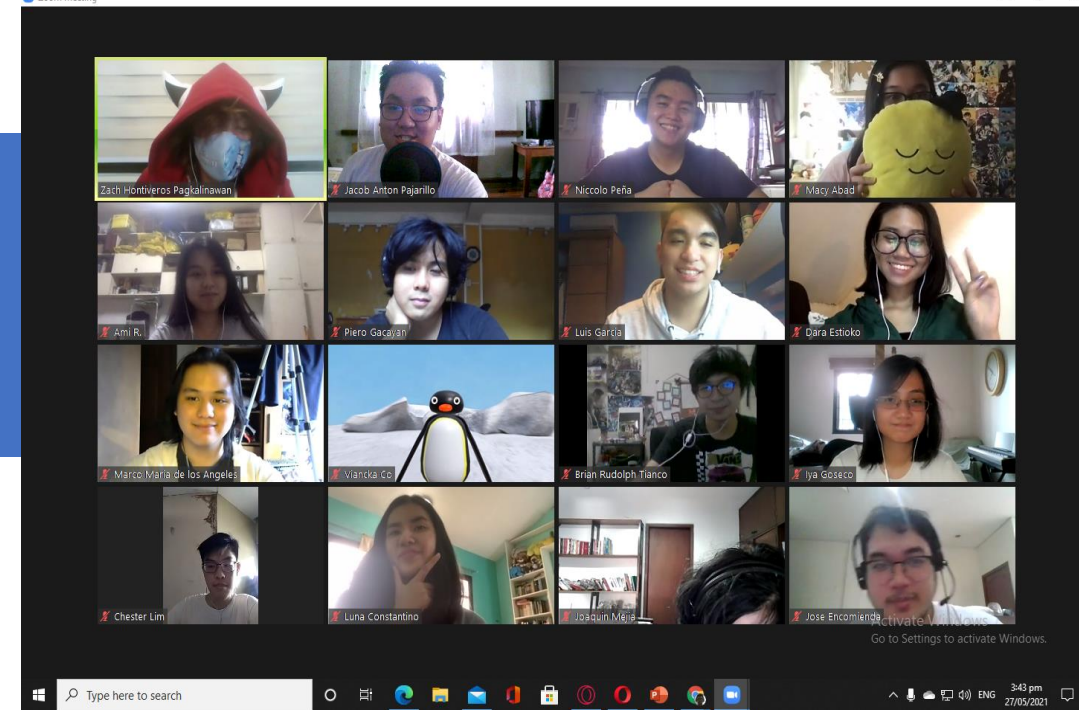


# My Senior High Year: Grade 11

- Grade 11 proved very challenging. I chose Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) as my strand of study. I was surprised that it involved so much research and writing.
- I also felt overwhelmed at the sheer volume of work to be done. But I guess this was being done in preparation for college.
- I managed to overcome through the help especially of my Grade 11 class adviser John Joseph Lontoc.

# Graduating Year: Virtual Grade 12

- Due to the pandemic, my last year in high school was to be spent at home learning remotely via online classes. It was surely a change for all of us. The advantage was I did not have to wake up as early as I did before. I could just wake up a few minutes before I faced the computer to attend to my classes.
- The downside was I could not personally connect with my teachers and classmates. I wished I could meet them in person instead of being holed up in the four corners of my room.
- I gained a lot of weight too due to the lack of exercise and because I only had to go downstairs to grab the nearest snack!





# On to the Next Level: Life after High School

- Another path beckons, perhaps far more difficult than any path I have been on before. It is unfamiliar. It may be uncomfortable and feel uncertain considering that I have been used to attending the same educational institution since I turned four.
- I am referring to college education. I have chosen to major in Music, particularly in guitar performance. Hopefully, my years in COLF have prepared me to face the next level.
- In case I have forgotten, I wish to thank all my classmates and teachers at COLF for making school life interesting all these years.



Grade 10 batch  
at Kathryn's  
18<sup>th</sup> birthday  
party





Grade Six Class Picture

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