



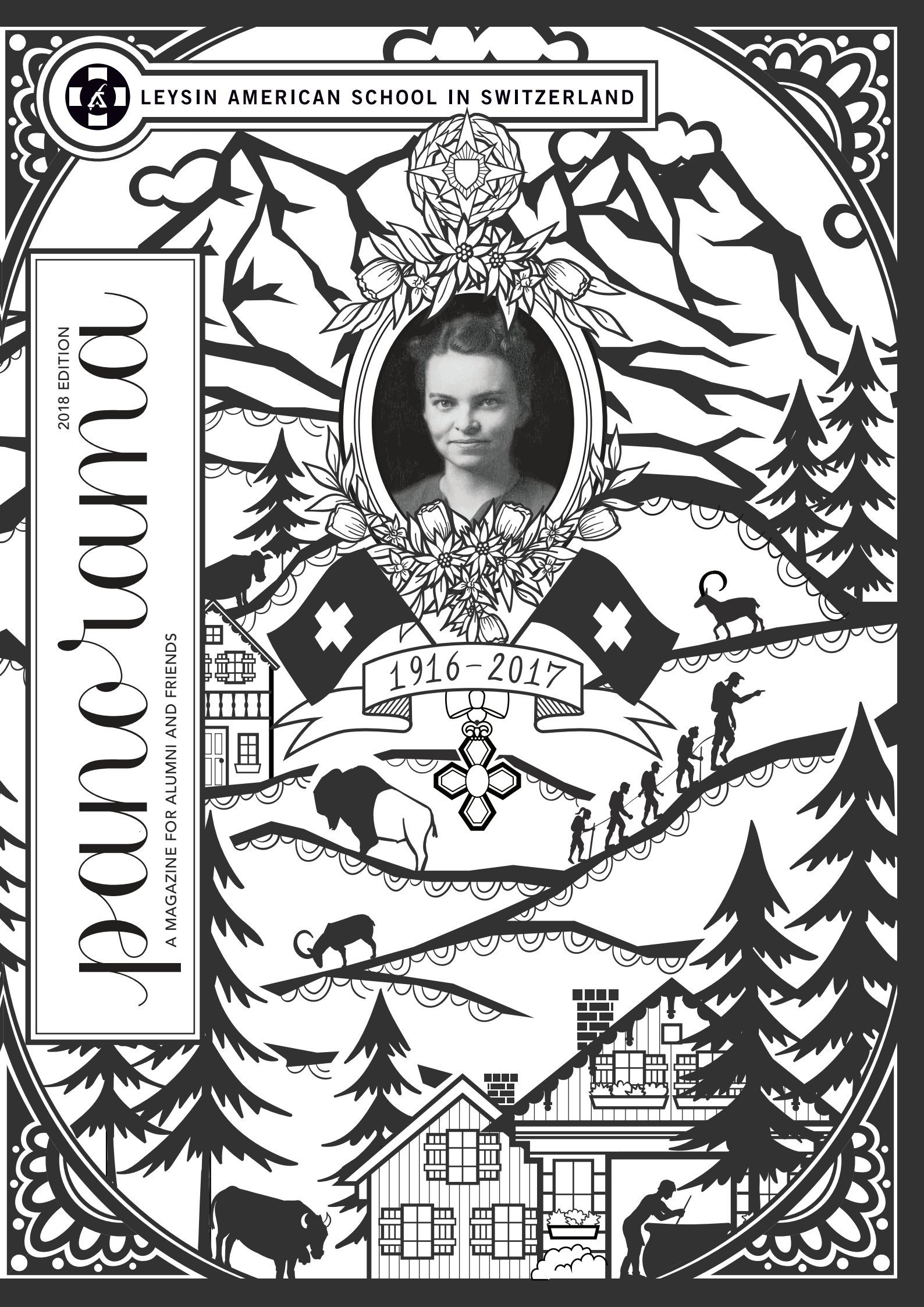
LEYSIN AMERICAN SCHOOL IN SWITZERLAND

2018 EDITION

Roundabout

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

1916-2017





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wherever you are in the world. That's
what our Swiss hospitality stands for.

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Dents du Midi

Iconic mountain beloved by all who
have spent time in Leysin.

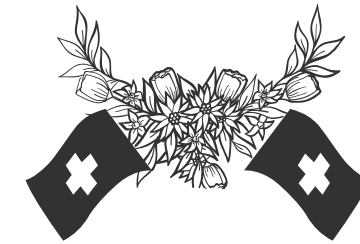


Ranger Camps

Precursor to LAS and
LAS summer founded
in 1949 by Sigrid Ott.

Edelweiss

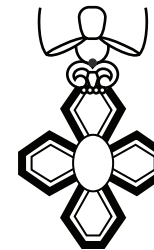
National flower
of Switzerland.



Swiss Flags

One for each of
our founders.

Découpage Decoded



The Icelandic Order of the Falcon Medal

The highest honor that the
Icelandic state can bestow
on an individual. Received
by Sigrid in 1987.



Bison

A symbol of North
Dakota, Sigrid's
home state.



Swiss Chalet

Representing Sigrid's
years in Leysin.

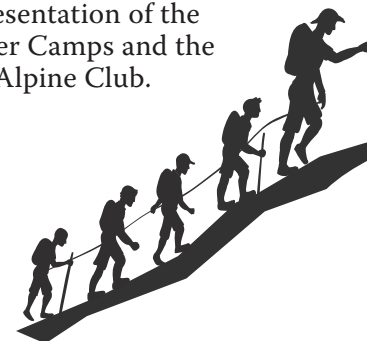


Royal Danish Medal of Honor

Received by Sigrid in 1969 for
her work promoting Danish
tourism. Denmark was the original
home of the Ranger Camps.

Guide with Children

Representation of the
Ranger Camps and the
LAS Alpine Club.



Frontier Cottage

Representing Sigrid's
childhood in North Dakota.



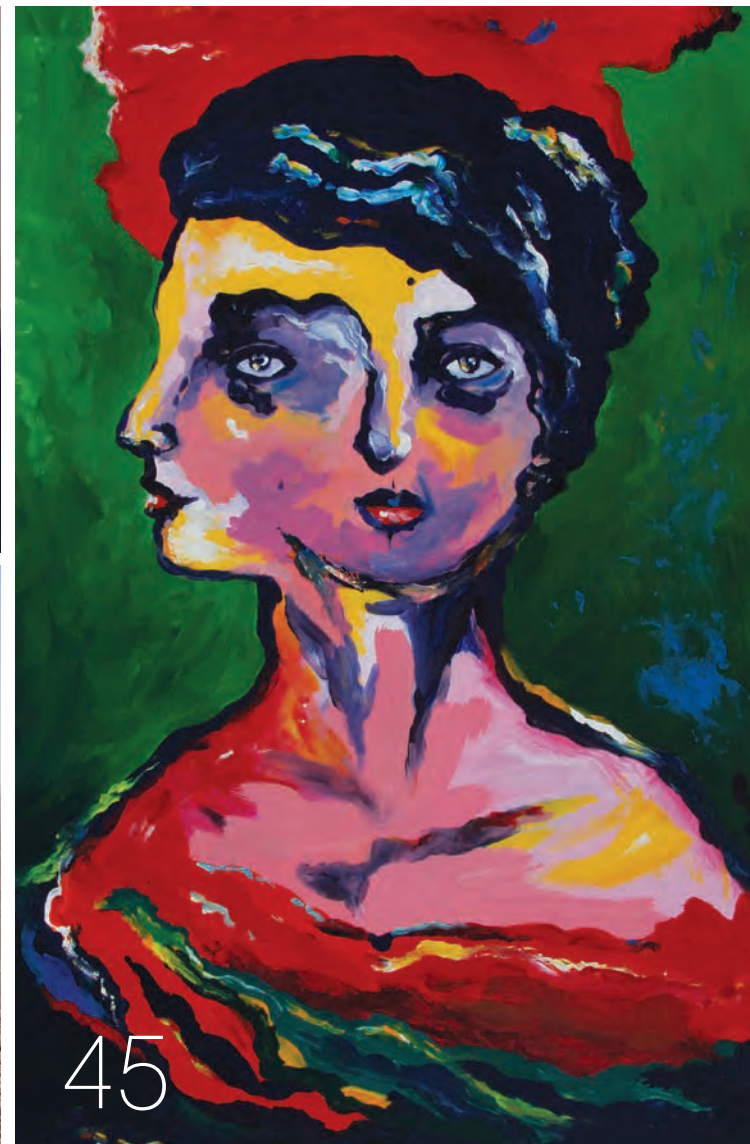


Table of Contents

03 Découpage
Explanation

06 Transitions
Dr. Marc-Frédéric Ott

08 A Family Album: 9
Years of Faculty Family
Weekends
Paul Fomalont

12 Global Politics
Sabina Schwedtmann-Lynch

14 In Your Corner: College
Counseling at LAS
Brad Jackson '19P, '22P

16 Frillstyle
Anthony Leutenegger

20 Global Futurizer
Dr. Paul Magnuson '21P

24 Made in Mongolia: Land
of the Blue Sky
Benjamin Smith

30 The Skyline Challenge
John Harlin III '14P

32 Living the Science Life
Benjamin Smith

34 Assessing Assessment
Dr. Paul Magnuson '21P

36 Gazing Upwards
Carl Gehrig

38 LAS Golden
Anniversaries
Benjamin Smith

40 The Saudi Experience
Mark Fryer

42 Compassion: LAS
Students Respond
to Tragic Mexican
Earthquake
Benjamin Smith

44 Honor Roll of Donors

45 Creative Arts
The LAS Arts Team

48 "Be Brave. Be Fierce."
Anthony Leutenegger

54 An Ibex Earns its Stripes
Mike Brinkmeyer

56 Small Country,
Big Summer
Mark Gordon

58 My Epilogue to the Book
Saga: How One Family
Made a World of Difference
Through Education
Dr. K. Steven Ott

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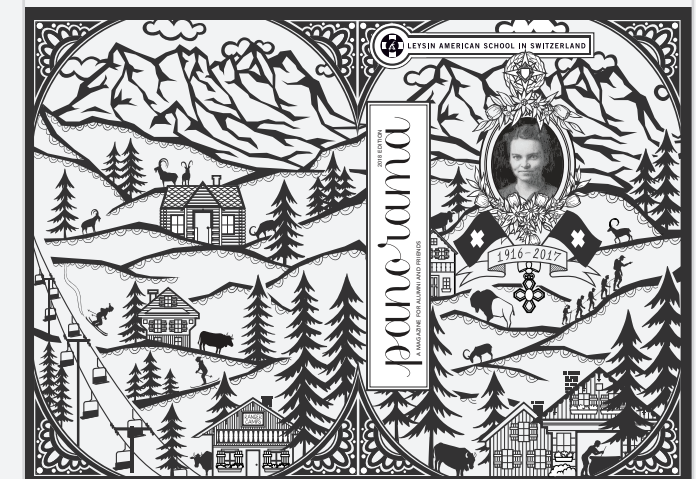
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2018 Edition

On the Cover: The Life of Sigrid Ott Découpage
illustrated and designed by Breanne McCallum.



Transitions

By: Dr. Marc-Frédéric Ott
Head of School

Dear Alumni, Parents, & Friends,

The past and coming year are marked by transitions at LAS: the passing of Sigrid B. Ott, co-founder of LAS, the continued transition at board level from the second to the third generation of the founding family, and the ongoing development of the school.

At the time of her passing, my grandmother Sigrid was very proud of what LAS had become in the decades since she and my grandfather Fred founded the school. It was one of many adventures in her life that also included: growing up on a pioneer farm in North Dakota, traveling with her two young children to Europe just after WWII to reunite the family with my grandfather, founding the International Ranger Camps (precursor to LAS), and finally enjoying a well-deserved retirement while still providing much care, guidance, and love to her family and LAS.



In addition to her adventurous spirit, many of us knew Sigrid for her compassion and intellect. She may be best remembered, however, for her unique gift of making anyone she spoke to feel special and, despite all of the challenges life presents, always making the best of difficult situations with a smile. Sigrid B. Ott passed away on April 23, 2017 in her Leysin home surrounded by family. Sigrid will be remembered fondly by the thousands of young people who passed through the doors of the International Ranger Camps and Leysin American School.

My father, Steven, will retire later this year after serving as Chairman of the LAS Board since 1982. My sister, Stefanie, who lives and works in Zurich, has been elected as the next Chairman. Stefanie knows the school very well: not only did she grow up around LAS, but her oldest daughter graduates this June. My mother, Doris, will remain President of the Foundation for a few more years. As we continue the generational transition at the governance level, the school will continue to be led by members of the founding family and operate as a not-for-profit. This transition is important and takes into consideration the long-term best interest of the school and our students.

The LAS Board and Foundation, with your generosity and guidance, continues to support the long-term development of the school. Several capital improvement projects are underway across campus. Two highlights are the renovation and modernization of the Esplanade dorm and the Savoy library. The Esplanade will become the home of our youngest female students. The Savoy library has been modernized to better serve our Middle School (grades 7 & 8) and Preparatory Years (grades 9 & 10) students with an age-appropriate collection and the latest technology. In addition to capital developments, we continue to support the professional growth of our faculty. Thanks to the creation of the LAS Educational Research (LASER) center, a growing number of faculty members are conducting research and curriculum work to develop their teaching skills and to help them become more effective in working with our students. At LAS, we recognize that education is foremost about people and investing in the ongoing professional growth of our faculty and staff is a top priority.

As you have read, you can be proud of LAS—your school. As you continue to share your LAS story with friends, relatives, and future potential LAS students, please communicate your ideas and thoughts on the future with us. When the time is right for you, please also support our fundraising efforts, which help us to provide the best educational experience to the leaders of tomorrow who will contribute to the betterment of the world.

Thank you for your trust in and support of LAS. I hope to welcome you back to your school soon. I wish you all the best for 2018!

Dr. Marc-Frédéric Ott



Bart van Straten
General Manager,
Van Straten Medical
Alumnus 1996



Viktor Göhlin
Founder,
Nokadi
Alumnus 2006

Emilija Petrova
Managing Director,
Trade Resource GmbH
Alumna 2002

*At EU Business School,
you don't just learn from
entrepreneurs, you become one!*



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A Family Album:

9 Years of Faculty Family Weekends

By: Paul Fomalont

Dean of Students



Occasionally you'll be walking through the halls of the Savoy building and hear a yell directed at you: "Mom!" or "Dad!" The unsettling feeling that you are certain you have no children sinks in, yet this call is being directed at you. You turn and in an instant the feeling washes away as you realize the child calling you by this name is in fact a student. At LAS there has been a long-standing history of what we call "Faculty Family." In fact, it has been a part of LAS since 1974. The concept has been adapted and used in many boarding schools around the globe and is intended to instill a sense of community amongst the faculty and student body. It is also used to give students an extra support system of staff and students whom they may not otherwise interact with on a daily basis.

Both schools I worked at prior to LAS had their own systems. At The Blue Ridge School in Virginia, USA, we had an advisor-advisee group. I met with 6 boys every morning to help them with their homework and assignments, or to just talk about how they were doing. Once per year we were invited to the headmaster's house for a steak dinner. The headmaster was a Vietnam veteran and after dinner he would bring out his gun collection to show the boys. It was tough to decide which they looked forward to more, the steak or the guns, but either way it was a highlight of the year for our group.

At The Putney School, the next boarding school I worked at in Vermont, USA, we had a similar

advisory group system. We met every two weeks and could usually be seen sprinting to the school vans. We would drive down to the local bakery and order various pastries for a mid-morning snack. Each pastry came with a garnish of onion on the side and, after eating our desserts and chatting about life, we would collect all the onion pieces onto a single plate. We would then have a rock-paper-scissors tournament, the loser of which would have to eat the entire pile of onions. In my six years of participating in this tradition I ended up having to eat the pile twice. I guess I was good at rock-paper-scissors.

When I arrived in Leysin I was excited to learn that instead of advisory groups we had Faculty Families. From my previous experiences I knew that these programs did an unparalleled job at creating strong relationships amongst staff and students. The LAS program was created in homage to the school's founders and the continued family ownership we see today, now in the third generation of Otts.

I have nine years worth of memories from my time as a faculty parent at LAS, most of which focus around our big Faculty Family Weekend which happens around the third week of school. We cancel Friday classes and families spend the next two days together. We are given a budget of 130 CHF per person and are only limited by the confines of the Swiss border. The sky's the limit!

I arrived at LAS and was placed into a family with a fellow first year teacher and a group of completely new students. The blind leading the blind. We decided to ask the students what they wanted to do. They had heard legendary stories of Geneva, the number one destination for travel weekends, and it won nearly unanimously. So on Friday we got on a school bus and rode for two hours to Geneva. It turns out that unless you are a high school student on a travel weekend, Geneva is incredibly boring. We walked around the town, visited the Red Cross Museum, and took a boat ride. While it was warm and sunny on land, it was freezing on the boat. I remember two of my Mexican daughters shivering from the cold as we cruised along. Luckily the captain felt bad for them and allowed them to sit in the warm cabin. We had several students from Mexico that year and they wanted to go to a Mexican restaurant. We eventually found one and it was there that I had the worst and most expensive Mexican meal in my life. 0 - 1 for my first Faculty Family Weekend. Down but not out, I had ideas for next year.

My recollection of year 2 revolves around stomach aches and a visit to the famous Cailler chocolate factory in Gruyère—Maison Cailler. A right of passage, Maison Cailler offers a less-than-exciting tour with one saving grace at the end—free samples of their chocolate collection. I estimated there were at least 30 different kinds available and challenged my family to try each one. I can't remember if we succeeded or not, but I do remember trying, hence

the stomach aches. 0 - 2, I vowed to carry on. Next year I promised myself we would have an active family weekend.

Years 3 and 4 were my most memorable for all the right reasons—we were active, had fun, and had several new experiences. 2 - 2? At least in my opinion! Canyoning is this crazy Swiss sport where you throw on a wetsuit and jump, swim, rappel, and basically float your way down a cold raging river in a deep, slotted canyon. While my two Russian sons loved it, my poor Korean daughter was terrified. I remember standing beside her on a 10 meter cliff we were meant to jump off into a pool of water. She was too scared to move; our lovely Swiss guide approached her with a helpful smile and then proceeded to push her off, sending her screaming down into the pool. I don't think she ever forgave me for that. The following year we spent a night and two days in Interlaken. We rented 2 big rooms in a youth hostel, went kayaking, canyoning again, and spent some time in town. On our tight budget we bought some food from the store and cooked it. It was there I learned that my Bulgarian daughter assumed that making rice was the same as pasta. You just put it in boiling water for 10 minutes and strain it, no? It was the crunchiest rice I have ever eaten and it still makes me laugh to this day.

Years 5 through 8 consisted of a myriad of new adventures. We visited thermal baths in Leukerbad and rocketed down water slides in a human line. A



mutiny almost occurred when we visited Europe’s longest glacier, the Aletsch Glacier, and I tried to trick my family into going hiking. Instead we ended up playing video games, pool, bowling, and laser tag at the fun center in the town of Fribourg. We even planned a trip to go rope swinging, zip-lining, and riding down a mountain coaster, but were thwarted by a huge storm. We went to an escape room instead, where you are locked in a room for an hour with various clues and puzzles and must complete them to make your way out. There was a lot of mist and horror movie music and we found a secret key that unlocked a door to a dark room. My family was so terrified, they huddled behind me as

I walked in. It was very cute, other than the fact that I was just as afraid as they were!

I have always attempted to try something new with my family and continued the tradition last fall—year 9. I love riding bikes and had discovered that you can rent bikes at the train station. I was sure that this would lead to another family revolt, thinking that biking and hiking were too similar. I promised, without really knowing, that the ride would be totally flat with no hills. So we went to Montreux, picked up the bikes and cycled to Villeneuve along Lake Geneva. It was a beautiful day and the path along the lake was indeed flat. While most bikers

wear spandex or athletic clothing, we were decked out in the latest Gucci fashion. My Kazakh daughter got her scarf caught in her wheel, almost sending her tumbling to the ground. Aside from a few other small mishaps, we made it safely. There was another fun center nearby which had go-karts. Zooming around the track, I desperately tried to avoid being run off the road by my Polish son, who apparently had learned to drive from countless hours playing *Grand Theft Auto*.

I’ve lost count of the successes and failures of my 9 years leading Faculty Family Weekend trips, although I have come to the conclusion that as long as everyone returns safe, it is almost always a win.

The Faculty Family Weekend is designed to bond families together. It has been successfully building relationships and support systems for students and staff alike for over 40 years. For me it has achieved that purpose and given me much more. I look back on all of my trips and the fun or not so much fun that we had. Sometimes my children loved me and we had a great time together. Other times they were miserable and upset and refused to speak to me. It is truly like a real family and I look forward to many more years with them. As for the stories, they are “to be continued.”



Global Politics

By: Sabina Schwedtmann-Lynch

Dean of the Belle Époque Campus

One of the new IB course offerings at the Belle Époque campus this year is Global Politics. This is a class that I am co-teaching in addition to my role as Dean of the Belle Époque Campus and as a result it is close to my heart.

The Global Politics course explores concepts such as power, equality, sustainability, and peace. It allows students to develop an understanding of the local, national, and global dimensions of political activity, while giving them the opportunity to explore the political issues that both interest them and directly impact their lives. It helps students to understand abstract political concepts by using real world examples and encourages them to build a transnational perspective. At a school like ours, where every member of the class can be from a different country and have a unique cultural viewpoint, students are able to develop an accurate view of the world.

Both LAS and the IB Diploma Programme maintain the importance of developing internationally aware students. LAS holds as its mission: “Developing innovative, compassionate, and responsible citizens of the world.” I firmly believe that the IB Global Politics course allows the mission of LAS to be lived and understood not only in the microcosm that is life at LAS but life following graduation as well. We achieve this by developing an understanding of the political and humanitarian forces that impact our world.

In our internationally diverse class of twelve students, each has their own viewpoints, values, and beliefs. We challenge their ideals on a daily basis as we discuss and process the political events that are prevalent in our world today. Talking about these issues, some of which are controversial, has allowed our students to learn about each other's viewpoints, help decrease misconceptions, and formulate evidence-based opinions.

This is how some of our students feel about the issues and challenges they face in IB Global Politics:

“This class has helped me to better understand complications in the world. It helped me realize that not all information can be trusted, and that we should be careful coming to conclusions without evidence.”

- Maria V. '19

“The IB Global Politics class has challenged my personal political perspective as it has forced me to look beyond my own personal opinion and see the world through an international lens.”

- Hulya S. '19

“When we discussed the refugee crisis in class, I realized that some people have very strong views against refugees, while I don't. This has opened my eyes to people's extreme views, since I have grown up in a environment with different ideals.”

- Nichi J. '19

“Global Politics class has changed my worldview, due to the fact that all the students in our class have differing opinions. It challenges me to think outside the box and research more in order to understand everyone's point of view.”

- Kornelia G. '19

“Global Politics class has challenged me to discover more about the global political climate by making me research various issues and current events. It has helped me to develop a worldview.”

- Edgaras V. '19

“*Girl Frisking Soldier*” →

One of a group of pieces from 2007 in Bethlehem created by famous street artist and activist Banksy. The innocent little girl is seen frisking an armed soldier in a stark reversal of roles.

Banksy's images are held as an honest expression of political activism in support of the advancement of human rights—an important subject highlighted in the Global Politics class.





In Your Corner: College Counseling at LAS

By: Brad Jackson '19P, '22P
Director of College Counseling

Our vision in Leysin American School's College Counseling Department is to give students a better understanding of themselves and the world they will soon be joining. Rather than being a stressful part of high school, the process of going through college counseling should be an integrated part of the wider school program, sharing in its values and overall mission.

College counseling supports each student in the process of finding and gaining entry into programs of further study. This includes offering students the opportunities, skills, and environment that can enable them to reach the goals they aspire to achieve.

We do this through careful questioning, the use of assessments and interest surveys, and an iterative process designed to help students gain a better understanding of themselves, their strengths, and the academic and social qualities they need to thrive. It is a process of self discovery for the student which allows them to design a personal plan for the future. Our student-focused approach recognizes the distinctive qualities and strengths of each student and supports them in a unique manner using specific tools. To us, understanding and treating each student as an individual and unique learner is a vital part of college counseling today.

We are now in an era where a small, highly desirable group of universities is accepting less than 10% of

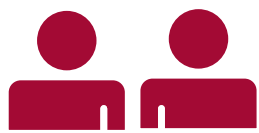
applicants. Students are driven in increasing numbers to apply to these few institutions because they are ranked as the top schools. Oddly, however, one of the most important factors in deciding this rank is their acceptance rate. This focus on just a few institutions confuses the college selection process because it assumes there is one path that is right for every student. Harvard has recognized this problem with their report, *Turning the Tide: Inspiring Concern For Others And The Common Good Through College Admissions*, and similar responses have come from over one hundred of the most selective universities, including Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In these reports the universities explain that they do not want students to choose a course or activity, or gain a perfect score because they think it will help them gain admittance, because it will not. They talk instead about students becoming better community members and passionate thinkers. They highlight these things because success, happiness, and self-awareness creates students who do great things. We couldn't agree more.

Today with our cultural trips, International Award, and programs including: the Creativity, Arts, and Service (CAS) program, LETS Day, Global Futurizer, Globe Day, and THIMUN, we give students the opportunity to immerse themselves in their areas of interest. Offering these extracurricular programs as well as leadership training allows us to create students who are excited about being involved in their communities—the kind of global citizens universities want.

As our faculty members continue to innovate and improve these programs and students dedicate their intellect, skills, and passion to these endeavours, we in the College Counseling Department help students market these experiences to universities. At the same time, we work with students to help them see through the noise surrounding the college selection process and flip it on its head. Using the critical thinking skills they have learned, they ask the question, "What does my perfect university look like?" Through this method they take back control of the process. Instead of having a university tell them what they need to look like to gain acceptance, they ask themselves, "What does a university need to offer me so I can continue to grow, learn, and reach my full potential?" By focusing on their personal goals and strengths, they change the narrative and find the programs that are the best fit for them.

With thousands of strong universities in dozens of countries, students' options have broadened greatly in the last 30 years. In the United States alone there are over 2,800 undergraduate institutions, 800 of which are highly respected and might offer the perfect program for an LAS student. Why, then, do some people claim there are only 50 acceptable universities on a ranking list? Some might say it is outcomes; however, when you look at the top 10 Fortune 500 CEO's, only one of those 10 went to an Ivy League school.

The new college counseling program at LAS will see students enter into the application process with a deeper understanding of themselves and their options. Our goal is for each student to receive multiple acceptances into programs where they can thrive. This will include a range of schools from the most selective and popular, to schools with outstanding programs that only people in that field may have heard of. In the end, we have the same goals most parents do—we want our students to be happy, find success, and feel good about themselves. We are looking forward to partnering with each student and parent to help make the university application process as successful and stress reduced as possible.



2 Experienced
Counselors

100+

Universities visit LAS from
all over the world

8

Average number of
universities each student
applies to

99% acceptance rate of
LAS students in universities
world-wide including:

- 40% US
- 30% UK
- 17% Europe
- 6% Canada
- 6% Other

ALUMNI

SPOTLIGHT

'94

Mitch Young

CHIEF PROVOCATEUR

Frillstyle

By: Anthony Leutenegger

Development Associate

Frill: /fril/ (n) an unnecessary feature of embellishment
ESSENTIAL

Mitch Young '94's business card doesn't read Chief Operating Officer or Founder, it reads: "Chief Provocateur." His goal? To provoke what he calls "Frill Seekers," people who want the most out of life, to achieve their goals, reach new heights, and make the greatest memories from unforgettable experiences. How does he do this? By catapulting them with his expertise and connections into a "Frillstyle" life. One where you follow your dreams, just like he has. Mitch is a travel and lifestyle consultant. "I do experiences," is what he told me. His story, however, started like many others and "changed forever" when he came to LAS for his senior year in 1993.

Mitch was born and raised in Montreal, Canada but spent much of his life in the Middle East. He has lived in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Dubai. He earned his MBA in Australia and currently resides in one of the most beautiful places on earth: Banff, Canada. A global citizen, as we like to say, like many other LAS graduates that came before and after him.

He came to Leysin skeptical of boarding schools, but quickly found that LAS exceeded his expectations. "My grades went up and I built relationships like I never have before. Having certain teachers on a first name basis is what LAS was all about at that time." He talked about how the bond between teacher and student was different,

and the teacher-student interactions left a lasting impression. Mitch recounts a story where his and his roommate's parents were unable to attend graduation. "Mr. Sharp pulled us aside and said not to worry; 'you're my kids for the day.'" "I felt more comfortable as a student and most importantly as an individual." The level of camaraderie between students was something he had never experienced before and to this day he is still in touch with many of his classmates.

Mitch likes to consider himself an entrepreneur. He noticed a missing gap and fundamental shift in the travel market. There are old style travel agents and new online platforms, but few individuals have been able to harness the power of personal relationships to offer unforgettable experiences while at the same time minimizing costs. Frillstyle is a travel and lifestyle management group, the purpose of which is to work closely with clients to design the best adventures and unique experiences with all the "frills." A trip could include an exotic destination, a spa treatment, a heli-ride, and tickets to some of the most incredible shows and parties in the world. Although much of this you could find on your own, packaging it together using his connections and providing full customer support is what his company offers. Paired with competitive rates and all the extras high level clients expect and bang, you are living the Frillstyle life. [Continued on page 19]

Q&A

with Mitch '94 & Anthony

Q: Every company faces challenges, whether it's competition from another company, or a lack of time, resources, or money. We asked Mitch for his opinion about a similar firm, Quintessentially, in the market:

A: I'm much smaller and niche. I try and create a fit with my clients, and when they interview me, I am as much interviewing them. My goal is to meet and go beyond your expectations, and I need to gel with you to attain this. My experience is personal. This is actually why I try not to look at Quintessentially as a competitor. I'm willing to build and learn with them to grow the market.



Q: I asked Mitch about what trend he is noticing on the market:

A: Out of the ordinary, and doing something other people rarely do. Those trips that are off the beaten path. All you have to do is log on to Instagram to see humans pushing the boundaries of how far they go, how fast, how high, and how crazy of a selfie can be taken.

Q: As for the internet and search engines, how has that changed the travel and concierge industry?:

A: People love control and that is fulfilled online. But there is no personal touch nor any support when issues arise. For those individuals too busy to do their own research, I am there. I as much help as I do educate and I make you a priority, which the internet can't do. Our service is start to finish, not just the click of a button, and if there are problems we are there to help you along the way and make it right. It is a client's necessitation of customer service that helps Mitch identify who he wants to work with.

Q: What does the future hold for Mitch Young and Frillstyle?:

A: I want to provide more services, expand, and make dreams come true.

Provide a visual through photography and cinematography to get people excited about what's out there and then help get them there!

“Mainly, to enjoy life and encourage people to do the same! The world is too serious and there is so much more to life than what's on CNN or Fox News.”



Mitch and clients Frillstyling at Momofuku Milk Bar with celebrity chef, co-founder, and owner Christina Tosi (center right). Tosi is the subject of episode one of this year's Chef's Table on Netflix.

Mitch Young's philosophy and business are intertwined, his "follow your dreams" approach may seem naive to some, but has merit. Have you ever heard some of the most important and fulfilled people on earth preach otherwise? The combination of happiness, passion, and hard work often guarantees success. Mitch Young attributes his success to his decision to create a job that matches his personality and provides him with fulfillment and joy. As we discussed his future goals, several things he was looking

to add to his portfolio aligned with his personal goals as well: video making and photography to bolster his marketing, and another flight class on stalls and spins. He looked a bit nervous yet excited to learn how to push an aircraft to its limits. Not bad for a day at work? Living the Frillstyle life and continuously Frillseeking.

📍 Banff, Alberta, Canada

🌐 thefrillstyle.com



GLOBAL FUTURIZER

By: Dr. Paul Magnuson '21P
Director of Research & the Middle School

One hundred and twenty students, twenty faculty, ten consultants, and four companies, generating ideas, rearranging sticky notes, and huddling around posters and tables. The upbeat music matches the voices as students and faculty members attempt to solve real world problems.

Representatives of four companies have arrived with questions they are working on, problems that need solving. Logitech wants to be a leader in voice controlled technology. Swiss Learning wants to make Switzerland THE destination for international education. This is not pretend.

“Today we’ll do a lot of brainstorming to get new ideas, to create an idea, a model” Emma explains. “People will choose the best ideas and they will create something that can be visualized” adds Katja. Two of the many consultants here to engage our students.

Students start with Crazy Idea Generation, getting as many ideas on sticky notes as they can. “One idea per sticky note” a faculty member reminds them, moving across the room from group to group. “We’re getting ideas down to find solutions to the company problem” says Ana, the lead consultant.

And why so many sticky notes? Nikki explains, “I’m trying to come up with the most ideas to give a big overview of the problem. If I get lots of ideas out, maybe one of them will be used.”

At another table, Matthew explains, “The problem isn’t generating ideas but simplifying and expressing ideas. I believe there is always a shortcut, always an easy solution. But humans tend to think complicated even when there is a simple way.”

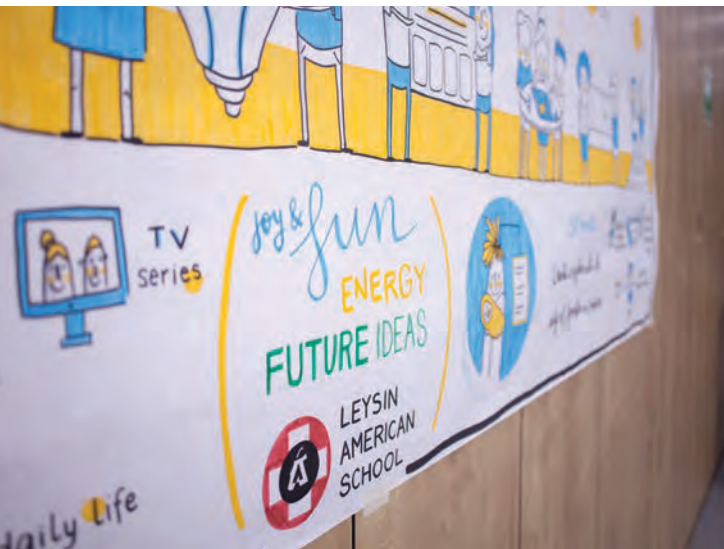
Ana rings the large bell, signaling that it is time to move to the next stage. Posters are covered in

yellow and pink sticky notes. But now students eliminate the less promising ideas and agree on ideas that have the most potential to lead to a solution. Kera says, “We have school ideas, tech ideas, data ideas...” They are working on a problem presented by Sethule—officially identifying all babies born in Zimbabwe so they get government services, particularly education. We noted the need for “biological identification and DNA tests if they don’t have documents,” Katherine elaborates. “They need to be able to prove they are a person. Maybe eye recognition, face recognition?”

Denis helps his group sort ideas into two categories on a four-by-four grid. “We’re splitting ideas into original and not. Then we’re splitting them into hard or not. It helps us make a good choice.” What they are looking for are original ideas that are implementable. That’s the sweet spot.

All 20 groups of students are able to identify three main ideas, and in a further step, one idea they choose to prototype. The consultants arrive at each table with Play-Doh, felt, sticks, glue, tape, scissors, and balloons. It’s time to build a visual model of the idea that has risen to the top from the dozens of ideas represented on all the sticky notes.

Soon structures and drawings start appearing on the tables. Mikhael builds the tower of a ski chairlift to connect two mountains made of crumpled construction paper. He says, “I feel like I’m in kindergarten.” Perhaps he’s being as creative as we used to be back then? The chairlift will remind Swiss Learning to focus on the natural beauty of the country. Another group has an app for Switzerland with links to cities, culture, and schools. Yet another is using virtual reality to highlight the best features of the country.



Working on the insurance company problem, Vanessa says, “This is the best idea you’ll ever see.” She unrolls toilet paper that she has found herself containing advertisements and QR codes for Generali. It might be a crowd favorite during the presentations, but toilet paper? She can’t be swayed. For her, it is a great idea. The group next to her is showing how Logitech can use voice activation to help people with disabilities. They have made a wheelchair out of Play-Doh, on which a person is sitting, with wheels made from the plastic caps of the Play-Doh containers.

The consultants have brought in artists who are depicting the event as it unfolds. As they apply color to their drawing, students finish up their prototypes. There are small cities, spaceships made of bottles and balloons, rooms with sound receptors, a bike racer whose bike has been stolen by a thief. There is a virtual reality headset, multiple screens of apps, and a scene of a presentation to parents. Another group has built a syringe connected to a computer, downloading DNA to a database. Santiago makes a model of DNA to drive home the image.

After a break for lunch the groups come back together to put their ideas, represented by their physical prototypes, into a business model using the Business Model Compass. While the consultants warn that this will be the most difficult step of the process, Tati says, “We know our product so that made it easy.” In another group, Montse thinks the Compass was worth the work because “it’s helpful to plan anything out. You need to think of all the aspects.”

Students develop and practice their pitches next. Students are counseled that they will only have three minutes per group and should be sure to have a compelling, interest-grabbing statement.

They delivered.

And suddenly the day is over. Our young entrepreneurs head out into the sun and their weekend. The tables are strewn with crumpled sticky notes and the leftover materials from the work on prototypes. The consultants collapse in the empty chairs. And the companies each have five solutions to the problem they presented. All the solutions were built on numerous ideas. Not all were equally helpful. But somewhere in the mix might be that idea that opens a new way of thinking, that solves, for the moment, a real need.

Have you ever considered this: Might microrobots be capable of spreading through your body to monitor your health? Enter the code found on the pill to your phone app and see how your body is doing.

LAS students have.



A Swiss Insurance Company:

“Insurance is a headache. We made it simple and quick. All this can be done with your thumb. Download our app.”

“What two things do you always have when you go to the bathroom? Your phone and toilet paper, right?”

“We cover stupid. Watch as I pull this tablecloth off the table and everything breaks.”

The Tech Company:

“Guess what. What if I told you that by taking this pill, you’d never go to the doctor again. Inside it has little tiny robots, called microrobots.”

“Logitech, turn on the light.”

“LITA has voice receptors that can save your life.”

An Organization in Zimbabwe that Provides Care and Education to Orphans:

“You take a picture of the eye, the hand, the face ... with this app. And the child can be registered.”

ALUMNI

SPOTLIGHT

'05

Khulan Davaadorj

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Made in Mongolia: Land of the Blue Sky

By: Benjamin Smith

Director of Development

In this day and age, many people fancy themselves as entrepreneurial, risk taking, and trend setting. In reality, very few are. Imagine you are the youngest female CEO of a state-owned company in your home country. Imagine you have a good income and the stability in your life you dreamt of after spending years living abroad. Now, imagine walking away from it all with a vision to create a product centered around concepts and a market that does not yet exist in your home country. Do you still think you have what it takes?

Meet Khulan Davaadorj '05 of Mongolia, who did just that. The popularity of her products, rapid expansion of her business, and the international recognition she has received as a social entrepreneur are proof that she has what it takes.

Khulan came to Leysin in 2003 as an ESL student wanting to get more international exposure than she was being offered in Germany. Like many students, a family friend recommended LAS and her parents agreed to enroll her. Khulan embraced all that LAS had to offer and graduated with an IB Diploma, an impressive list of accomplishments, and a global network of friends.

After graduation, Khulan continued to study hard in hopes of securing a stable corporate career, never thinking of starting her own business. She returned to Germany, where her father was a diplomat, and earned a bachelor's degree at SRH Hochschule. Then,

she moved to the US to study at Columbia University. There she earned a Master's in Public Administration focusing on renewable energy and sustainability management. After completing her studies, she returned to Mongolia and secured a series of the corporate jobs she had dreamt about. However, it turned out that the safety of corporate life was to be short lived and not aligned with her destiny.

Not long after returning to Mongolia, Khulan developed skin problems due to the severe cold, extremely dry air, and pollution from the extensive use of coal as a fuel source. Khulan's doctor advised her to switch to organic skincare products; a fortuitous recommendation. Khulan began to learn the value of organic products through her use. She also quickly learned that no such products existed in Mongolia and getting them from outside the country was expensive. After realizing her condition was widespread among the men, women, and children of Mongolia, she decided to develop her own line of products.

In 2014, in the midst of an economic crisis in Mongolia, Khulan left her job and started developing and handcrafting organic products on her own. At the start of 2015, she received organic accreditation from the Mongolian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, becoming Mongolia's first organic skincare brand. Recognition quickly followed and by the end of the year she had been named Mongolia's Leading Entrepreneur.



If creating her products alone was not a big enough challenge, Khulan decided to source all her ingredients from local producers, be a zero waste producer, and to educate her customers, and the Mongolian people, about the importance of environmentally conscious living and social responsibility. Khulan says, “this approach established a trust between my customers and producers. Our very first customers have grown with us like a family. They understand that the investment into these products is long lasting for them as individuals, for the [Mongolian] society as a whole, and for the environment.” It is no surprise that the brand name she chose for her skincare products is connected to her family. LHAMOUR is a combination of her niece’s name, Lhamo, and the French word for love, amour. Her love for Lhamo inspires her to leave a better world behind. “We’ve got to love ourselves and take care of our health, love others, and especially for our future generations, love the environment.”

Khulan’s message is being heard. In addition to being recognized as Mongolia’s Leading Entrepreneur, she has been named Most Responsible SME of Asia (2016), and featured in numerous articles, online videos, and television news channels. Last year, she visited the US and the White House as one of 21 female entrepreneurs participating in the 12th annual Fortune/US State Department Global Women’s Mentoring Partnership. All of the recognition provides validation to Khulan and proof to show other Mongolian businesses that they they too can adopt her practices and be successful.

In addition, Khulan’s business is lifting up other Mongolians. Her recycled only packaging comes from a Mongolian start-up. Her need for increased hand-production is met by hiring and



training more local woman. As she expands her collection of products, she also sources more local materials from farmers and herdsman.

Further abroad, Khulan's philosophy is not only fueling her international expansion but it is helping others. In Korea, home to her two LAS roommates Mina '06 and Ji-Young '05, one of Khulan's customers used her products to treat the fast aging and dry skin of her brother with Down syndrome. She was so happy with the product and impressed by Khulan's philosophy that she quit her corporate job to become a representative and helped open a LHAMOUR storefront.

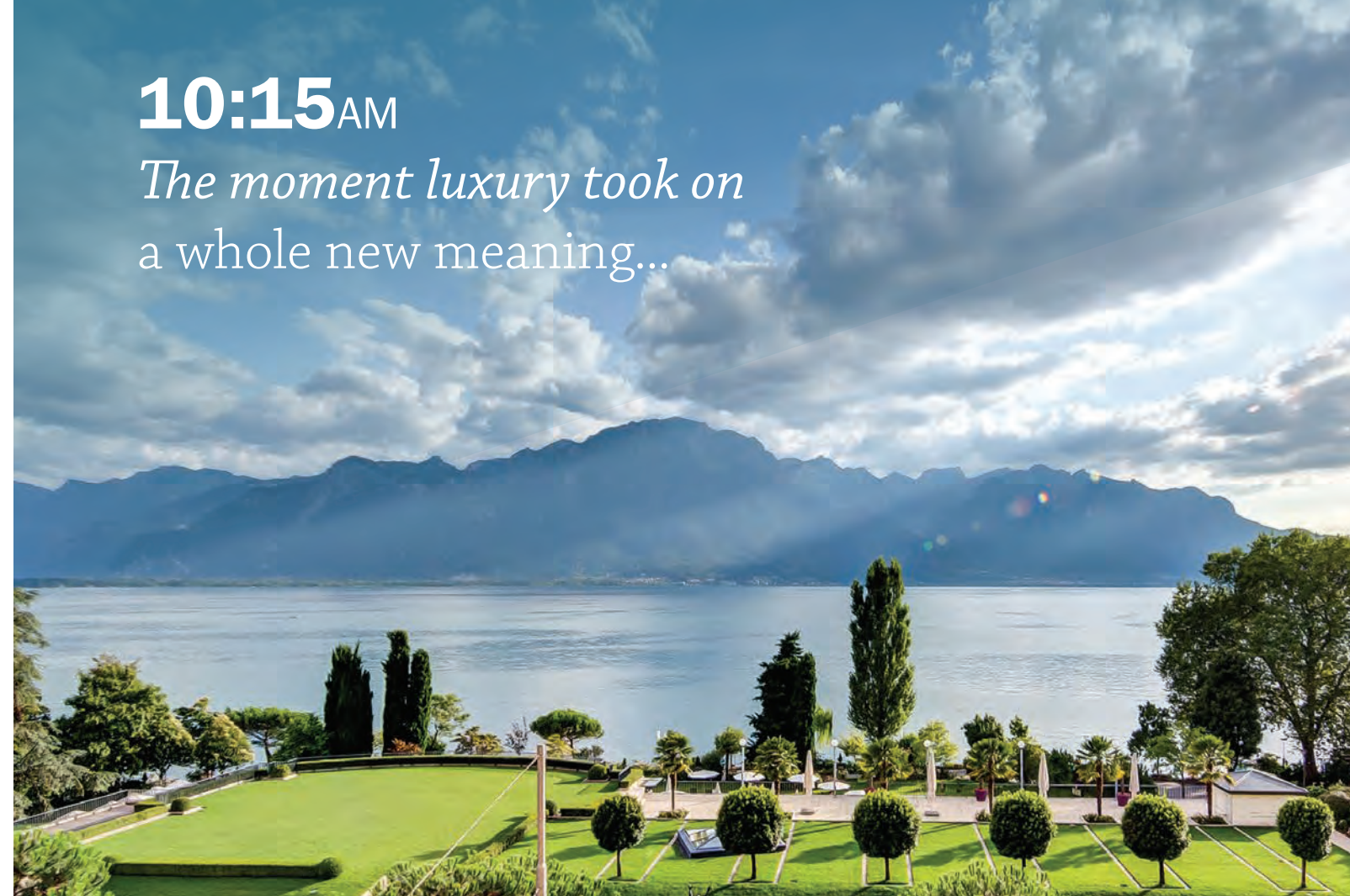
As Khulan looks to the future, she plans to continue to develop new products, expand more internationally, and promote healthy living and sustainability through that expansion. She also still wants to prove to her customers and Mongolian businesses that sustainability should be enacted from the start of the establishment of a company. Someday, Khulan even hopes to "create an eco-farm in Mongolia that will be a world leader in sustainable farming."

If Khulan's current success is an indicator, Mongolia will soon be a world leader in sustainable farming.

- 📍 Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
- 🌐 lhamour.mn
- 🌐 For US Sales: givalry.com/collections/lhamour

10:15AM

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The Skyline Challenge:

The hills are alive with the clink of crampons



By: John Harlin III '14P
Director of the LAS Alpine Institute

What does the Leysin skyline share with cut-paper art, locally known as découpage (as seen on the cover)? To most LAS students, the Swiss landscape and the quintessentially Swiss artform have all too much in common. The horizon might as well be a silhouette cut from paper, an outline of

distant geology. Snow levels rise and fall, clouds come and go, but the changing view out the window stays abstract, untouchable. The dorm windows become another screen, a giant iPad on the wall set to The Weather Channel.

Not so for those engaged in the Skyline Challenge. For us, each bump on the horizon is a visceral memory. We've kicked our cramponed feet into its flank, swung axes against its ice, stomped for hours or days

with heavy packs along its trails. We remember the sweat, awe, and wonder we felt as we gasped on these summits. From there we gazed back to our home village of Leysin—if, that is, the clouds permitted a view. And from Leysin now, each time we look out at the sharply cut silhouette, we feel a part of it. For us, the hills are alive with hard-earned memories.

We'd like you to share in these experiences. Here's how: the panoramic photos you see here were taken

from above the Belle Époque Campus. Make them interactive by visiting www.alpineinstitute-las.org/panorama, where you can click on the symbol and be taken to a photo gallery of stills and videos from the LAS Alpine Club, International Award, and occasionally staff-only adventures. Watch the skyline come alive! There's no better way to connect with your neighborhood, except with boots on your own two feet.

ALUMNI

SPOTLIGHT

96

Shannon Greco

SCIENCE EDUCATOR

Living the Science Life

By: Benjamin Smith

Director of Development

Like many first time returning alumni, Shannon was impressed by what she saw as she toured the LAS campus. Even though it had been twenty-two years, she pointed out the location in the Savoy dining hall where she ate her meals. She talked about her faculty family, the Fiedlers, and her favorite teacher still on campus, Mr. Skove. When the tour reached the Belle Époque campus, or “the off limits college,” as she remembered, we walked past the science laboratories and she lit up. A series of questions and stories later, and it was clear that labs were where she had found her calling.

Shannon didn’t plan to become a science educator, it happened serendipitously. After being exposed to the international community at LAS and graduating, she studied International Relations at the University of Arizona. This led to a semester abroad in Mali, several years of post-university travel, and frequent stays on her mother’s couch taking temporary employment at Princeton University to fund the ongoing adventure.

As often happens in life, Shannon eventually settled into a routine, met her husband, Scott, started a family, and before long had spent 11 years as the Education Outreach Coordinator of the Princeton Center for Complex Materials, a National Science Foundation supported research center at the university. Shannon loved everything about it and educating people about science had become her passion.

With the encouragement of her supervisor, Shannon got her master’s in science education and eventually secured another science education position at the university. This time she began working at the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory (“PPPL”), managed by the US Department of Energy. Shannon brought a unique perspective to the position and, as a “non-scientist” and parent, she was able to present advanced concepts in a fun and approachable way to help her audience understand them.

Shannon enjoys the science life so much she has taken her programs to the local community. She has started two girls’ Lego robotics teams at the YMCA Princeton, an internship program with Northstar Academy in Newark, and an energy camp for Trenton High School. Her enthusiasm and hard work were recognized in 2015 when YMCA Princeton named her one of their “women of excellence.”

As our tour wound to a close, I knew one thing for sure: next time I’m in Princeton I’m visiting Shannon at the PPPL. If you are in the neighborhood, I suggest you do the same.

📍 Princeton, New Jersey, USA

🌐 www.pppl.gov

Assessing Assessment

By: Dr. Paul Magnuson '21P

Director of Research & the Middle School

Each year we select a focus topic for schoolwide reflection, professional development, and improvement. Based on needs we have identified in the self-study of the accreditation process, the topic of the 2017-2018 academic year is assessment.

On the surface, assessment at school seems simple. After a stretch of teaching, the teacher gives a quiz or test. The students then receive a grade so they know how they did and their parents perhaps see the grade as well. At the end of the semester the grades are put together to create a final grade, which represents how well the students learned the subject matter. Easy! But if you dig below the surface, things become trickier. When is the right time to give a quiz or a test? What form should assessments take? Should it be the same for all students? What if students do poorly—to what degree is their result the teacher's responsibility, or their own? Should students be able to take the test again and improve? How would retesting affect student motivation? How does not retesting affect how students approach learning? Are they learning to please the teacher in order to pass the test? To what degree is learning to do well on a test a different skill from learning to learn well? Should quiz and test results be mixed with homework, attendance, and class participation in the final grade? If so, does the final grade reflect student ability in the subject area correctly? How can we answer all these questions?

We invited Ken O'Connor, a former social studies teacher from Canada, to share his work with us during a professional development day. These

days are critical for our staff to upgrade their knowledge base and to continue to learn and add new techniques to their repertoire. Based on his experiences as a teacher and as a father, Ken began a second career writing for and speaking to teachers and administrators about assessment. Among other concerns, he emphasizes the need to ensure grades reflect what the student actually knows about the subject matter, and that individuals looking at the grades (most importantly the students themselves) can tell what the grade is measuring. Along the way, Ken explores some of the questions above, investigating the effects of assessment on student motivation and ultimately student learning.

As we revise our assessment policy and practices, we start with the premise that we want to provide the best possible opportunity for student learning, supported by helpful, fair, and motivating assessments which are understandable to students, parents, and college admissions offices. There is a lot to unpack in that sentence. As teachers, we will have a number of opinions, built on experiences in a number of different schools representing numerous traditions and cultures. In other words, we have our work cut out for us. But it is work we have agreed we need to do and we look forward to transforming assessment at LAS to better serve our students. Stay tuned!

For more information about Ken O'Connor, visit his website at <https://www.oconnorgrading.com/>.



Gazing Upwards

By: Carl Gehriger

Chemistry/Astronomy Teacher

“ We had the sky up there, all speckled with stars, and we used to lay on our backs and look up at them, and discuss about whether they was made or only just happened. Jim he allowed they was made, but I allowed they happened; I judged it would have took too long to make so many. Jim said the moon could a laid them; well, that looked kind of reasonable, so I didn't say nothing against it, because I've seen a frog lay most as many, so of course it could be done.”

– *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain

The night sky is the fountainhead of everything—literally everything. But for the purposes of a high school teacher, it is the fountainhead of curiosity. Nothing generates far-reaching questions quite like the night sky. In trying to answer these questions students are lured into the study of science and math. It seems we are lost without the stars. Ever busy, we are too often caught up in the minutiae of daily life: emails, headlines, sports scores, and homework. We forget to consider the unbelievable reality that we are rotating on a spheroid, whizzing through orbit about a star.

The stars not only move students forward, they move all of us forward. Galileo had to topple 1800 years of Aristotle, and Newton's counterpart, Leibniz, had to go off on a tangent to create calculus. All of this was a direct response to the messages the stars and planets had to offer us. Before our students know what has happened to them, they are lead into a world of non-Euclidian

geometry, Einstein's relativity, nuclear reactions, and the very attractive physics of black holes. Of course, our secret desire is for them to be drawn in by the gravitational allure of science for the rest of their lives. All of this begins with simply turning our gaze upwards to the night sky.

Of course, a telescope helps. The bigger the better. The LAS observatory was many years in the planning: optics from America, a mount and clock drive from Germany, and a dome from Australia. When the dome was placed on top of the telescope by a helicopter, on order from Dr. K. Steven Ott, to protect it from the elements, an observatory was born.

In addition to the helicopter, half the project was sponsored by our late co-founder, Sigrid Ott. The other half was an anonymous donation from the grandparents of a current student. We thank you, whomever you are! There were also some gifts donated a few years back before the observatory was built that have been put to good use through the purchasing of astronomical software. We thank both Clayton Gentry '93 and Mr. Yushkovskyy '11P, in honor of Artem '11, for their most welcomed contributions. As a result of such wonderful gifts, LAS immediately revitalized its Astronomy Club.

LAS then applied for IB accreditation for an astronomy course, which we received. We taught our first cohort in May 2016, joining an exclusive group of just six schools worldwide.



The observatory houses a 14" Schmidt Cassegrain telescope with a German equatorial mount, located inside a Sirius Dome.

The course covers four main topics. The Stars: their birth, life, and spectacular supernova death as a black hole. The Planets: their origin, evolution, and environments with the intriguing question about the possibility of extraterrestrial life. Galaxies: a mind-blowing tour of the “billions and billions” of other Milky Ways out there. Finally, Cosmology: the study of the Big Bang origin, structure, and final fate of the universe as a whole.

At the end of the course, our students will not be able to definitively know if the stars “was made or only just happened.” They will not know why our universe contains a whole lot of something, instead of nothing. But at least for a brief moment in their young lives, and hopefully for much longer, they will focus their attention on trying to find out. Last year, our IB students' internal assessment projects involved some wonderful science. Here is a quick snapshot of what they did:

The photometry of atmospheric extinction, which measures how the atmosphere of the Earth dims the

brightness of a star when it is low on the horizon, just as it does for our sun when it sets.

The determination of the orbital period of an eclipsing binary star system, which investigates a very common occurrence in our universe where a solar system has two suns rather than one and how the properties of that system can be discovered by looking at the regular eclipses that occur between those two stars.

Data processing of electronic noise in a CCD imaging system, which looks into the details of how a digital camera works. The camera in your cell phone is a CCD and was invented by astronomers to do science. So please thank astronomy the next time you take a selfie. An excellent example of the unintended consequences of scientific innovation.

Recently, IB has moved this course online and I hope it becomes mainstream as more schools follow. Let's get the whole IB community looking up!

LAS Golden Anniversaries

By: Benjamin Smith

Director of Development

Life in a school is measured in marking periods, semesters, and years. Life as an alumnus is measured in years and decades. On the rare occasion, a school gets to measure and celebrate the life of its alumni in half centuries.

50'ish Reunion—Classes of the 1960s & early 1970s

This year, we were lucky enough to have two such celebrations. The first, a year in planning, took place over Memorial Day weekend at the home of Carol and Charly Fallon '67 in Virginia, USA. Dubbed the 50'ish Reunion by the organizers, Bruce Bordett '66, Carol, and Charly, the event celebrated the relationships established in the 1960s and early 1970s and maintained over a lifetime. When the group came to Leysin the school was in its infancy.

There were no coach buses from Geneva Airport, no organized cultural trips each semester, and no daily communication with their families. Leysin was an outpost where something magical was blossoming.

With a strong supporting cast of alumni, spouses, and assistance from the LAS Development Office, the weekend events came together and the RSVP list grew. In the end, the Classes of 1960-1971 were represented. Davey Agnew came from Wyoming to represent the faculty, Benjamin Smith came from Leysin to represent the school, and notably, Gordy Shanor came from Stavanger, Norway to win the alumni distance traveled award.

The bonds were established 50'ish years ago in Leysin but were rekindled on the banks of the Potomac River with the help of a little Aigle wine, some fondue, and lots of shared memories of the Magic Mountain. Many thanks to the organizers and everyone who attended.



50 Years of Educational Partnership

The second golden anniversary celebrated this year was in recognition of fifty years of educational partnership between LAS and Saudi Arabia. The school has had a relationship with Saudi Arabia since its founding, however, in 1968 Salem Basamh became the first Saudi Arabian to graduate. Like the majority of LAS graduates, Salem learned of the school through a personal recommendation—Nestlé. The Basamh family was the sponsor for Nestlé in the Kingdom and when Salem was looking for a school to bridge his way to a US university, he landed in our “quiet little village on top of a mountain” for “one of the best experiences of his life.” Fifty years later, Salem still has vivid memories of his time in Leysin—from taking photos for the yearbook to school trips to Austria, Germany, and Italy.

Fast forward fifty years and almost two hundred students later. The celebration weekend had arrived. For those who have experienced the hospitality of Saudi Arabia, you know what was in store. For those who have not yet had the opportunity, it was an experience to rival any in the world. The Al-Othaim family (Abdullah '06, Khalid '06, and Mohammed '06) rolled out the proverbial red carpet for three generations of the Ott family, ESL teacher Mark Fryer, and Director of Development Benjamin Smith. They arranged cultural tours in and around Riyadh, traditional meals, and a desert safari. The reunion

featured the same level of hospitality. Traditional greetings for all guests, Arabic coffee, dates, and specially made cupcakes by Munch Bakery featuring the LAS logo and the Saudi Arabian flag, courtesy of Nasir Alshemimry '07.

Dr. K. Steven Ott and Dr. Marc-Frédéric Ott gave speeches about the positive growth of LAS, the future of education, and how the two complement each other. Benjamin Smith provided the thanks to the alumni, hosts, and guests of honor. He also shared the ways in which the graduates could support their school in the future. Salem had the honor of speaking last. He shared his LAS journey, discussed how the school made a significant impact on his life, and how important the experience was to him, even fifty years later.

After the formal program, a wonderful dinner combining traditional Arabic and western food was enjoyed by all. The evening wound down with tea served outdoors by an open fire. It was clear that friendships were strengthened and the connection to Leysin had been renewed as plans to gather again and visit Leysin were made.

If you would like to organize a class, decade, or regional reunion, please contact development@las.ch. We would be happy to help.

The Saudi Experience

By: Mark Fryer
ESL Teacher

During this year's Winter Break I had the unique opportunity to visit the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Having never visited before, I was honored to be invited to attend an event celebrating the first LAS graduate from there (1968) and the 50 years of educational partnership between the country and LAS that have followed.

While there, in addition to experiencing the cultural baptism of visiting an exotic country and being treated royally as a guest of the Al-Othaim family (with a desert safari, a trip to the Edge of the World, and amazing traditional dinners), several important lessons about my role as an LAS teacher and community member were brought to the forefront of my mind:

At LAS, we are all relationship builders. The school, past, present, and future, exists because of the positive energy created between people.

In his position as Director of Development, Mr. Benjamin Smith is in charge of maintaining and enhancing long-term relationships with our former students. He travels the world meeting with them, reminding them of their time at their alma mater, and encouraging them to remain in contact with

each other and the school. To see first hand Ben at work was an inspiration. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of the students, their families, and their home countries. He engages with genuine interest and attention. In his efforts to build relationships he works alongside the Ott family to keep our alumni network vibrant and active.

At the event in Riyadh, about fifty former students and their family members were in attendance. I knew a group of them. My former student Abdulaziz Al-Hokair '17 was there, but the majority I'd only known from activities, the dorm, or just being around them when they were here. Ibrahim Al-Zamil '05, Fahad El Seif '07, Al Walid Al-Awaji '07, Nasir Alshemimry '07, Nayef Al-Rajhi '08, Mohammad Al-Mutlaq '10, and the Al-Othaim brothers—Khaled '06, Abdullah '06, and Mohammad '06—were all delighted to have me help them stir their memories of LAS and Leysin.

With smiles on their faces they eagerly asked about their former teachers: Mr. Skove, Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. Hitchcock, Ms. Steward, Mr. Deupree, Mrs. Deupree (to them Ms. Bailey), Mrs. Cooper, Mr. Sharp, Mr. Lentz, Mr. Kuskovski, and Mr. Brisance. They wanted to know about Vinnie, the Croissanterie, and reminisced about the other restaurants, the taxi drivers in town, and so much more.

Fellow faculty members and staff, your former students remember their time here. LAS is still alive for them.

Over the last few years, as part of my professional development, I've undertaken a study of relationships in the classroom. I've sought to discover what makes an enjoyable and significant classroom experience for LAS students. While many people believe that it all comes down to the charisma and character of the teacher, I believe that it's more about what the teacher does. This implies that all teachers can create positive and memorable rapport by adopting certain strategies.

The data I collected from students emphasised the importance of teacher knowledge and expertise in the subject area. It also, however, stressed the use of student names, being positive, playing games, and telling stories amongst other things. At LAS, teachers can do this in a variety of settings. We have the unique opportunity to create positive relationships with our students inside and outside of the classroom.

The connections we make with students endure. The school is remembered and the efforts we make are cherished.

My mother was a teacher in the United States in the 1960s. Fifty years on, she still receives a Christmas present each year from one of her students. This student credits my mother's giving her a minor role as the judge in a production of Toad of Toad Hall as being a pivotal moment in her life. She is now a highly successful entrepreneur and business owner.

From my discussions with our Saudi alumni in Riyadh, the relationships built with teachers at LAS do endure. The work of the Development Office begins with what happens here at LAS. Benjamin Smith, then, goes out into the world to carry on what we have begun.

LAS is a place of relationships; that spirit is something students, alumni, administration, and teachers should always remember. We are an LAS family. While LAS is relatively small as a school community, it is far wider and more expansive if one considers the 50 plus years of its existence.

And to finish, as Saudi Arabia opens up its tourism industry I heartily recommend it as a destination for your next winter holiday. Don't look any further than Ajwaad for an unforgettable tourist experience.



Compassion:

LAS Students Respond to Tragic Mexican Earthquake

By: Paul Dyer '06P, '16P

Director of Admissions Americas & Corporate

When an earthquake struck Mexico City on September 17, 2017, Antonio C. '19 was studying in his room. Like many, his first feeling was one of helplessness—not because the ground was shaking beneath him but because he was thousands of miles away. What could he do from

Leysin? His thoughts immediately turned to his family and friends. Were they okay? After a number of stressful hours, he discovered that thankfully the people he knew had survived.

The next day Antonio and his Mexican compatriots at LAS talked about the earthquake. They watched videos of the collapsed buildings and saw the devastation in their home city. Though shocked and saddened, what impressed them was the spirit and unity of their countrymen: the rescuers digging carefully through the rubble, the human chain removing the debris bucket by bucket, and students their age directing traffic and delivering food.

Antonio thought about the mission statement of LAS: “developing innovative, compassionate, and responsible citizens of the world.” He decided that his prayers were not enough. He texted the Mexican group at Leysin: “Our friends are moving rocks while we are enjoying beautiful Switzerland. We need to move rocks too.”

The Mexican students reached out to the Development Office and began taking action. They started a fundraising campaign; asking for donations in each dormitory, selling drinks and snacks at sports events, and making personal appeals to other students when they received their weekly pocket money. In the meantime, Benjamin Smith, Director of Development, and Paul Dyer '06P, '16P, Director of Admissions Americas & Corporate, were working behind the scenes to identify where was best to send the funds and how they could get them there.



“Our school has students from more than 60 countries,” says Paul, a frequent visitor to Mexico. “Though incredibly diverse, we are a big family that supports each other, especially in times of need. LAS is a school with heart.”

And the response of the LAS community to “Fuerza Mexico”? Overwhelming—4,000 CHF were raised by this passionate group of Mexican students whose pride in country energized their fellow students. The LAS Foundation donated an additional 2,000 CHF to the cause bringing the total to 6,000 CHF. In coordination with a former parent, the money was donated to the Carlos Slim Foundation in Mexico which offered a 5 x 1 match, increasing the LAS donation to 30,000 CHF or almost 600,000 pesos!

When it mattered most, the Mexicans and their classmates lived the school’s mission statement. The lesson? Everyone can make a difference!

Iran-Iraq Earthquake

Almost two months to the day later, another earthquake devastated the home country of a large LAS population; Iran. Fortunately for the LAS community the earthquake took place in a region not inhabited by any current or former students.

Like their Mexican classmates, the Iranian population took action and received overwhelming support from the LAS community. At the same time, the reality of economic sanctions and the political situation in their home country made it impossible to identify an organization to direct the support. The decision was made to direct the funds to the Red Cross in Switzerland, which had received special exemption from the UN to provide non-monetary aid.



Honor Roll of Donors

January 2017 through Spring 2018

Leysin American School greatly appreciates the generous support we have received from our alumni, family, and friends. This support has allowed us to continually increase the quality of our programs and facilities while supporting our students as they strive to become innovative, compassionate, and responsible citizens of the world.

This year our donors have generously supported academic program enhancement, arts & athletics programs, LASER, LAS Alpine Institute, the LAS library, Mexico Relief support, scholarship programs, the Sethule Orphans Trust, the Ted Groom Memorial Scholarship, Terry Fox Foundation, and provided their unrestricted support.

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Creative Arts

By: The LAS Arts Team

Changing of the guards in the LAS Arts program has occurred. With the departure of long-standing Arts Department Head, Dr. L. Ira Bigelow '12P, '13P, '15P, Ms. Jen Beighton has taken over the role after one year at LAS. Others to leave include Ms. Kelly Deklinski and Ms. Amor Cabato. Prior to joining LAS, Ms. Beighton spent 18 years teaching Art and Design in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and more recently South Korea. Ms. Beighton holds a Bachelor's Degree in Design, a Postgraduate Teaching Diploma, and a Master's Degree in Graphic Communication. In addition to this, some fantastic new staff have joined the team including Ms. Elizabeth Bowie, Ms. Katherine Enoch, and Ms. Hamin Lee.

Changes were set in motion last year with the introduction of a two-year Integrated Arts program for Middle School students. Students are now being given further opportunities to explore photography

and digital imaging in addition to the arts subjects normally offered.

The Preparatory Years program allows students to follow a progression through the full range of Art, Design, Theater, and Music classes. This helps them to build on skills introduced in the Middle School Integrated Arts program. Our aim in developing this curriculum is for students to leave our Savoy campus equipped with the skills required to succeed at IB or High School Diploma level Arts.

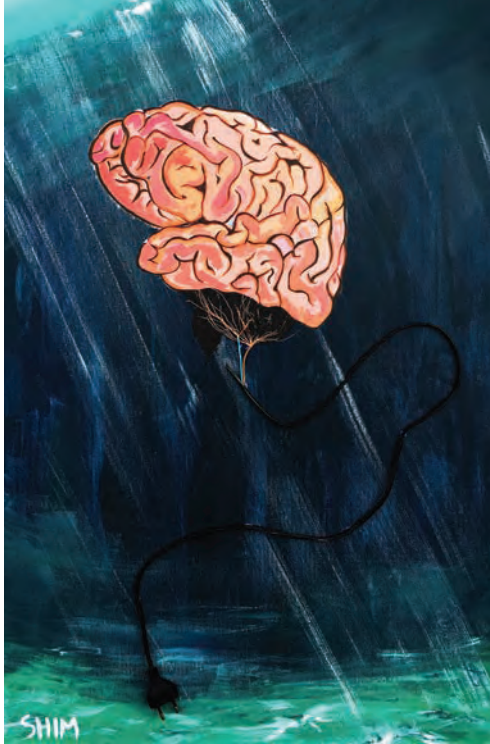
In the Diploma Years program a new course, Design, allows students to progress from the Design and Photography courses offered earlier in their education and opens doors to more modern forms of art. We are very happy to have also added IB Music this year to complete this progression within our Music curriculum and hope to be able to introduce Theater to our BEC curriculum in the not too distant future.

WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

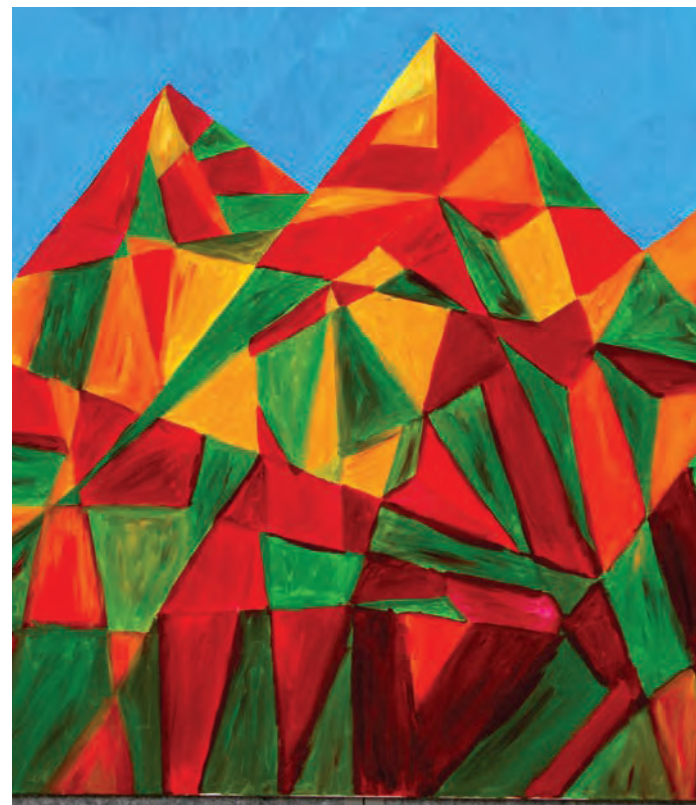
BY INCLUDING LAS IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING, you can leave a legacy that will last generations. From scholarships for future students to professional development for our faculty to designated capital improvements, you can choose the area of impact most meaningful to you.

To learn how, please contact the Director of Development, Benjamin Smith at bsmith@las.ch





This is a compilation of work from Student Body President and IB Diploma candidate Bora S. '18.



Visual Arts

The Visual Arts program at LAS is broad and all encompassing. Students work through their Middle School and Preparatory Years classes which help them to prepare for the rigors of IB Visual Arts and Studio Arts. The 2-year IB Visual Arts program requires students to make critical analyses in a visual arts journal, while developing a large personal portfolio of creative artworks. There is also a written component and each artist must curate their own exhibition at the end of the program. Along with a focus on visual and traditional art, courses in design, photography, and digital media are provided at all grade levels.

An example of the 2017/2018 Visual Arts activities:

- A regular showcase of student artwork in the display area at BEC
- An IB Diploma Programme exhibition
- A visit to the Cézanne exhibition at the Gianadda Museum in Martigny
- The arts cultural trip to Rome (with studies of Michelangelo's ceiling in the Sistine Chapel, plus the Roman mosaics at Santa Maria, Trastevere)

Theater

The Theater Arts program at LAS is designed to introduce students to the world of performing arts both on and off the stage. Students will learn how theater allows people to express their different cultures and perspectives using traditional and nontraditional approaches.

Many students who participate in the Theater Arts course also choose to become members of the LAS Theater Group. This group meets four days a week to prepare for two school-wide performances during the Fall and Spring terms. Students participating as cast members rehearse their chosen work, while crew members create the needed stages and sets, and run the day-to-day operations.



Music

The Music program at LAS consists of both Preparatory and Diploma Years classes, as well as an extracurricular Music program. The latter is designed to offer students a unique opportunity to perform at school-wide events.

Preparatory Years program: A creative music class that allows students to explore different ways of making music. Students learn to play, perform, compose, and develop different skills through practice with a variety of traditional and modern instruments.

Diploma Years program: Split into two sections, these classes are for self-motivated students. The first section is for those students who are interested in a general, well-rounded music education including music history and culture, composition, and performance. The second section immerses students in the creative process of making music including focusing on composition assignments using different music technologies.



ALUMNI

SPOTLIGHT

'90S

Ashley Bekton

ENTREPRENEUR, MANAGER, ACTIVIST

“Be Brave. Be Fierce.”

By: Anthony Leutenegger

Development Associate

I strolled into Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc in Antibes, France wide-eyed and excited to meet a very impressive woman and LAS alumna, Ashley Bekton '90S. Only a few hours ago I was winding down the mountain from Leysin to Aigle on my way to the airport. From the Swiss Alps to the French Riviera in hours, how awesome is that? As I passed through the marbled lobby and into the restaurant I was greeted by several employees in sailor's uniforms and ushered out to the pool to one of the most beautiful hotel views you could imagine. Rows of white beach chairs lined the rocky tiers, to the left a perfectly manicured french garden, and to the right an infinity pool cascading into the Mediterranean Sea. Maybe LAS could have a second campus here? I walked out into the blazing sun and immediately saw whom I was looking for.

Ashley has a disarming and honest smile. Formalities are less important with her and this could easily be attributed to her New York City upbringing. Her daughter, India (7), who could give the energizer bunny a run for his money, bolted over panting, scooped up her goggles, and chased her big brother, George (13), to the sea. George, strongly built for his age, is a rower, has Ashley's smile, and is all too happy to please. It isn't hard to see how excellent of a mother Ashley is. Her kids are polite, kind hearted, and insatiably curious. I was thrilled, with her blessing, to dive head first into the cool mediterranean water and spend some time playing with them.

We sat down on an adjacent deck for lunch and over an appetizer of fresh veggies gazed out over the bay; the conversation started with what was most obvious. The absolutely gigantic private yacht just off the coast. Apparently some workers had spilled the beans and it was Chelsea Football Club owner, Roman Abramovich's. A few Google images later and we agreed it was a possibility.

Ashley and I had met a few weeks ago during her first visit back to LAS since her departure in 1990. She was on a month-long trip through Europe with her kids and was excited to show them where some of her formative years were spent. She dove into stories of a weekend trip from Leysin to Berlin to witness the tearing down of the Berlin wall, and a Spring Break trip almost gone wrong when they were in the heart of Moscow during the riots brought on by Boris Yeltsin's ousting of Mikhail Gorbachev. "What a time to be in Europe," she described. "Only looking back now do I truly comprehend the significance of what I witnessed and was a part of, and I never would have been able to experience many of these things at school in the United States."

Ashley's father was based in Zurich in her teenage years and his knowledge of LAS is what catalyzed her admission. She attended for her junior year before graduating from a high school in the US. She noted how the contrast of the two systems was startling. LAS was a small, incredibly international school, with much closer and more intimate relationships. Spending 24 hours a day with the same people builds very close

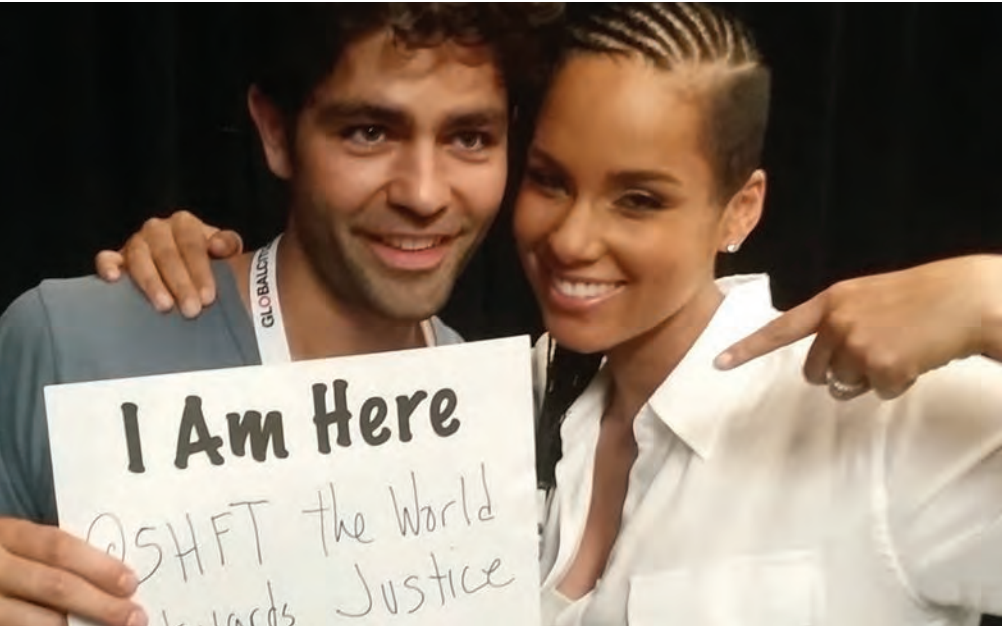
connections, and to this day Ashley is still in touch with classmates from her time here, even though they are strewn all over the world.

Upon graduating from high school, Ashley attended the The George Washington University to study international relations. By this point a theme of international curiosity had become apparent in both her personal and educational life, and was soon to be incorporated into her professional life. Once she had graduated she spent the better part of the next 15 years in marketing, public relations, and branding. Some of her clients included Coca-Cola, American Express, LEGO, Unilever, the United States Army, and Hasbro.

One day after a long business trip Ashley realized she wanted to branch out. She described to me her work schedule at the time, “36 hours in the air and 24 hours on the ground, on a regular basis, in places like Singapore, was exciting but exhausting and just wasn’t the life for me.” With a 5-year-old son and a baby girl on the way Ashley set out to start her own company. Her philosophy was to create brands around people and celebrities, “why shouldn’t a person be branded just like a company in order to make a profit using their skill set and rapport?”

Today, Ashley is the founder and CEO of Bekton Media Group, a talent management, branding, and business development company. She has managed business development and career strategy for several high-profile “living brands,” as well as talent and technology companies. She also plays an active role as an investor and mentor for a variety of start-up and growth-stage companies.

Her first client was the global sensation, Shakira. Other past and current clients include Sophia Bush from One Tree Hill, Adrian Grenier from Entourage, and pop stars Justin Timberlake and Alicia Keys. She also works with of one of the hottest bands on tour, The Chainsmokers, whom she visited on their “Memories... Do Not Open” tour in Tel Aviv shortly after our lunch in Antibes. The glitz and glam of hollywood is far from Ashley’s only interest. She has a wealth of connections and friendships; from the founders of Airbnb to Richard Branson, there are few individuals Ashley can’t get in touch with. Her goal professionally is to continue to grow, not only geographically through the creation of business opportunities in the Middle East, but also in the breadth of her client list by commencing work with financial companies and hedge funds. At LAS we have recently been emphasizing the importance of entrepreneurial thinking to our students. Where there is risk, there is reward. Ashley’s decision to branch out, especially during the early years of parenthood, is an inspiring example of what can be achieved through bravery, focus, and above all, hard work.



LIFE ON THE ROAD



Q&A

with Ashley '90S & Anthony

As I sat under the sprawling blue and white umbrellas of Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc, jotting down notes of our conversation, I thought about some questions our current and past students may have for someone like Ashley. The following Q&A section may shed some light on her time at LAS and into her mind:

Q: *What is one particular moment in time, when you attended LAS, that brings back the sweetest memory of your time spent here?*

A: Wow, there are so many, it's hard to drill it down to one single moment. My lifelong friendships have to top the list. My experiences would be meaningless without having the relationships to share them with. The time I would spend with my LAS friends in our dorm, skiing on Tuesdays and Thursdays, our fun télécabine rides, LAS family dinners, and of course our weekend trips we took so very often to Paris, Montreux, Geneva, Munich, Florence, Basel, Warsaw, Moscow, and so many more. The memories of all of these are still so fresh in my mind, I cherish them deeply. I still keep in touch with a few friends from my LAS days and it's so wonderful when we reminisce. We laugh so hard and have such fond memories of our time at LAS and hope one day we can send our children to LAS to experience their teenage years the way we did.

Q: *If you had to give one piece of advice to a graduating LAS student who wanted to enter the music industry, what would it be?*

A: Be brave, be fierce, and build up your skin to the thickest it can possibly be because this is one of the most wonderful industries but also one of the hardest. Keep your head down, stay focused, keep going, and never give up. People will come along and try to distract you or dissuade you. Stay focused and don't give up. Tell yourself that daily. And of

course call me, I will run some daily scenarios by you and if you think you still want it after what I tell you, then go for it.

Q: *You have a vast amount of connections from tech industry leaders to musical artists. Who is the most interesting and fascinating person you have met?*

A: Yikes, one person? Can't I pick one person in five different fields? I don't think I can name one most interesting person. Elon Musk is certainly up there, as is Jeff Bezos, Mike Ovitz, and Michelle and Barack Obama. A client and I were traveling Africa with the Prime Minister of Norway, Erna Solberg, on a UN mission and our trip began in Johannesburg, South Africa with a meeting with Graça Machel, the widow of Nelson Mandela on her first day out of mourning. Her grace, intelligence, humility, kindness, and desire for the world to truly come together as one, was something I will never forget. However, until I get to have a meeting with Christian von Koenigsegg, I will never be cool in my kids' eyes.

Q: *You are undoubtedly a music lover. Who's your favorite up-and-coming artist/band that we should keep an eye out for?*

A: I have a wide range of music I love from classical to hip-hop and everything in between. So it's hard to choose. You can tell narrowing down is not my forte, but this one I think I can get down to two. I would say two different groups have been on repeat on my Spotify playlists and neither are my clients (though I wish they were). I would say out of America, the Boston new pop/funk band called RIPE; I love their song "Goon Squad." My whole family rocks out to the ENTIRE album actually.



Typical evening on the French Riviera

I would also check out IBEYI, two sisters raised between Paris and Havana; their sound is dope. Their father was in the famed Buena Vista Social Club so, you know, pepper in that Buena Vista Social Club vibe with modern day hip-hop and soul and it's everything right now for me. I really like Me Voy. Oh yeah and of course Kanye West's new album. I don't think we can consider Kanye up and coming—but keep your eye on it.

Q: *You have two beautiful children. If you could choose a path for them to follow, professionally or as a lifestyle, what would it be, and where would it lead them? What is one piece of advice you would want them to carry in their pocket along the way?*

A: I would never choose their professional path for them but instead support and help them on their chosen paths. I try to open their eyes to all the world has to offer. I want them to be children of the world and I hope, as a parent, I am able to instill in them the work ethic, drive, and ambition to conquer their dreams, whatever they may be. I do have one rule for them, even today and that is whatever they

do, they must have an element that gives back to a community to help make our world better. The one piece of advice I want them to carry in their pockets along the way would be never listen to the people who tell you you can't, shouldn't, couldn't, don't, or won't because ANYTHING is possible and ANYTHING can be, they just have to want it bad enough to find a way to make it happen.

Q: *What do you hope the future looks like for Ashley Bekton?*

A: I hope the future for me looks healthy, happy, and prosperous. I hope to travel more, expose my children to parts of the world they have never been to, and to expand my business into Russia, Asia, and the Middle East. They are incredibly interesting parts of the world to me and have an incredible amount of opportunity for business, especially in entertainment.

✦ New York, New York, USA

An Ibex Earns its Stripes



By: Mike Brinkmeyer

Athletics Director

Anyone who has attended boarding school knows how busy it can be. The calendar is packed and the daily schedule often starts before the sun has risen and continues long after the sun has set. Current student Pepper K. '18's schedule is just as busy, and then some. Along with the demands of being in the full IB Diploma Programme and acting as the president of the Habitat for Humanity club, Pepper is a successful three-sport athlete. She trains almost every morning and afternoon.

Over the past two years Pepper has been a member of the LAS cross country running, swim, and rowing teams. She has been a very strong contributor to all three. At the recent SGIS swim meet she swam to a first

place finish in all three individual events she entered, which comes as no surprise considering both her parents, current faculty members at LAS, were strong university swimmers themselves.

As if her swimming accomplishments weren't enough, Pepper just recently signed her National Letter of Intent committing to the Women's Rowing Team at Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina, USA. An NCAA National Letter of Intent is an agreement communicating a student athlete's intent to play a sport at an institution in exchange for an athletic scholarship. LAS could not be more proud of her and we look forward to seeing her racing on the Tigers' team next year!



Q&A

with Pepper '18 & Mike

Q: How did you first get into competitive sports?

A: I started swimming at a young age. Both my parents were swimmers in university so that might have had something to do with my choice. As I got older, I picked up lacrosse, cross country, and rowing. My sister was also a rower in university and so I was always expected to be an athlete.

Q: You came to Switzerland from the United States two years ago. How has the transition from a US high school to LAS been for you?

A: I really like the fact that my life is much more varied here. In the States, I concentrated primarily on swimming, but here at LAS I can participate on three sports teams, ski in the winter, travel on weekends, and enjoy all that the LAS experience offers. When I was recruited by universities in the US they would ask if I participated in sports other than rowing. Being an athlete at LAS has allowed me to answer "yes" to that question, which I think really impressed them.

Q: Is it hard to train as a rower living on a mountain?

A: I actually really like the change of pace. It's nice to get off the mountain and get down to the lake where I can leave my schoolwork behind and concentrate on sport in such a beautiful setting.

Q: You participate in both team and individual sports. Which do you prefer?

A: The thing I like about individual sports is that it is all up to me. If I train and work hard, it will almost always lead to success and strong performances. If I don't, I know it's my own fault. Rowing is an interesting team sport, in that when you are in a



quad or an 8-person boat you have to be in sync with the other girls in the boat, which can be a lot of pressure. Having said that, I am looking forward to the challenge of rowing in larger boats and with a team as I have mainly competed alone at LAS.

Q: How does participating in sports help you stay focused academically?

A: Being a student athlete has definitely helped me develop good time management skills. Having to balance training and schoolwork and fit everything into each day has made me very efficient with completing my homework.

Q: How do you feel about the upcoming transition from LAS to Clemson University? What do you hope to accomplish as a college athlete?

A: It will definitely be a change going from a small school, where everyone knows each other, to a large university like Clemson. I will definitely miss life on the mountain, but I am excited for the next chapter of my life. Athletically I hope to make the varsity 8, "the fast boat," for Clemson.



Small Country, Big Summer

By: Mark Gordon

Director of Summer Program Development

It is with great pleasure that we unveil our revamped LAS summer program.

LAS Summer in Switzerland has been redesigned and fine-tuned to create an unforgettable experience that taps into the very best of our geography and core values. LAS has been successfully running summer programs since 1949 - pre-dating the founding of the school by eleven years. We have used our experience to continuously evolve and adapt in order to deliver the highest quality programs for learning and self-discovery.

LAS Summer in Switzerland 2018 has been split into two streams: LAS *summer* and LAS *edge*®, both have been designed to cater to the goals and aspirations of prospective summer students.

LAS *summer*

A key aspect in redesigning this part of the program was allowing students the flexibility to shape their experience within our newly designed structure. This added structure has been created by allowing students to pre-select their program and the courses within it. They will have a wide variety of stimulating core morning classes and afternoon clubs to choose from, all of which help develop their skills and knowledge throughout the session. By providing them with options, students can make informed choices to tailor their summer to match their ambitions. However, within this structure we wanted to retain the spontaneity of the activities

which SIS was successful at providing in the past, so there are still a variety of dynamic clubs students can choose from.

The evenings will be a time for discovery, play, celebration, or relaxation, with students reuniting with their friends after the day's events. Weekend activities will include excursions to popular Swiss destinations such as Lausanne, Geneva, and Bern, as well as invigorating activities such as parapenting, white water rafting, mountain biking, and paddle boarding.

LAS *edge*®

Another exciting development is the creation of LAS *edge*®, a three-week exclusive program for students aged 13 and over. Aimed at highly motivated students, *edge* has been sensibly created to provide a platform for increasing self-awareness and confidence. Each week of the program places a focus on one of the three main values of *edge*: innovation, compassion, and responsibility.

The program includes visits to organizations such as CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research) and the United Nations Office in Geneva. Students will have the opportunity to hear from well-known guest speakers including Randall Zindler (former CEO of a disaster relief agency called Medair) and Jamie Andrew (a famous Scottish mountaineer and quadruple amputee). The activities offered are designed to push students' limits and include coaching in meditation, emotional intelligence, and positive psychology, as well as many of the sports offered in our *summer* program.

We are dedicated to providing a unique and engaging experience for each student and sincerely look forward to welcoming new and returning students in 2018. Should you have any questions, comments, or wish to discuss any of the above, please don't hesitate to contact us.

www.las.ch/summer/



My Epilogue to the Book Saga:

How One Family Made A World of Difference Through Education

By: Dr. K. Steven Ott
Chairman of the Board

The book, *Saga*, is really about my mother, Sigrid. She dictated or told most of the stories contained in the book that ultimately comforted her in her last days. From having first established the globally recognized philosophy of international understanding through the education of young people in her summer camps, to her last days sharing her soul with the LAS community, LAS was a major part of her life. I dedicate this article to her memory.

We had started 2017 in good spirits. Amma, as we all called her, enjoyed the visits of friends and family, delighted in seeing her great-grandchildren grow up, and cherished being a part of the school that she and my father had founded so many years ago. In February, during LAS Family Winter Week, she gave her last message to our community and inspired all with her aura of love. She brought tears to many of those in attendance. They must have felt that her one hundred years of life were beginning to result in the frailty of old age—this, despite her strong voice and coherent message.

By early April, the pre-edition of *Saga* was finally printed. I began reading it to my mother, page by page, letting her relive life and reminisce on days of the past. From the memories of growing up on the prairies, to our momentous trip to Europe in 1947, to the founding and development of the International Ranger Camps, and, finally, to the opening of LAS. She chuckled at the many happy moments, shed a few tears at the memories of long-departed friends, and realized that she had lived a fulfilled and meaningful life.

In mid-April my sister, Aldis, stopped by and the two spent a wonderful afternoon remembering happy times. Throughout the following days, all of my mother's grandchildren and great-grandchildren visited for their last goodbyes. Then on Tuesday, April 18th, even with help she was no longer able to walk up the steps from

her garden floor apartment to join Doris and me for the day. On Wednesday, her good friend Jakob Möller called her and the two spent an afternoon conversing in Icelandic.

Friday, April 21st, Sigrid asked me if all was fine and whether I was ok—in a sense she was asking me whether she could leave. Together we listened to her favorite song, “Im Abendrot” (“At Sunset”) the last of Richard Strauss’ “Four Last Songs” with words by Joseph von Eichendorff. The last verse brought tears to my eyes as I realized that my beloved mother’s life was coming to a close:

*“O vast, tranquil peace,
so deep in the sunset!
How weary we are of wandering—
Is this perhaps death?”*

The following afternoon my mother raised her arms and said, “L’univers est merveilleux. Je dois maintenant partir et dire adieu” (“The universe is marvelous. Now I have to leave and say goodbye”). She continued in English, “I am blessed, amen.” Then, she slept quietly and peacefully, and without a struggle she left on her last voyage at one o’clock in the afternoon on Sunday, April 23rd.

As was her wish, all celebrated her life. On May 1st in the presence of two of her North Dakota nieces, her good friends the Fabbris, and our family, her urn was placed beside her husband’s in the Leysin cemetery with its beautiful panoramic view of the Southern Alps overlooking the Rhone Valley. Two memorial services were held: one for the general public and the other for the LAS community.

Sigrid remains with us in our thoughts, hearts, and sometimes in the deep of the night we imagine hearing her voice—a source of happiness and strength to meet the challenges of the coming day.



MORNING PROGRAMS

AFTERNOON CLUBS

AFTERNOON ACTIVITES

EVENING SOCIALS

WEEKEND EXCURSIONS

WEEK ONE:
INNOVATION

WEEK TWO:
COMPASSION

WEEK THREE:
RESPONSIBILITY

For more information
visit www.las.ch/summer/

