

ignite

alumni magazine



S I N C E 1 9 8 1

A I S G

American International School of Guangzhou



S I N C E 1 9 8 1
A I S G
American International School of Guangzhou

published by:
American International School of Guangzhou
Science Park Campus
19, Kexiang Road, Luogang District,
Science Park, Guangzhou,
PR China, 510663

art direction + production:
Lou O'Brien

ignite
alumni magazine

contents

- 002** message from the director
- 003** AISG facts
- 004** AISG story & timeline
- 006** graduating class of 2018

- spotlight**
- 008** heart strings – betty lin
- 013** alumni: gloria huang
- 014** a dive into world percussion – brandon bott
- 018** brave – nina schneider
- 023** alumni: nikhil budhdev
- 027** alumni: helen liao
- 031** alumni: michael wu

- memories**
- 024** a look back at the early days of *habitat for humanity*
- 028** it's ok to be different
- 032** the early years
- 036** alumni catch-up

- faculty + students**
- 038** student: santiago villar
- 040** student: maria elena
- 042** student: blythe kendall
- 044** faculty: will tragert
- 045** 10+ years of service: faculty
- 046** faculty: erica liu
- 047** 10+ years of service: staff & teaching assistants

- 048** acknowledgments
- 050** alumni office FAQ

message from the director



Dear Former RAMS,

Welcome to AISG's very first edition of *Ignite*, our alumni magazine. It gives me great pleasure to repeat the well-loved phrase, "Once a RAM, Always a RAM!" I hope those of you who left AISG when the tradition was in place still have the t-shirt that displays the phrase, and that you can fondly recall the farewell event that sent you on your way to your next adventure. It may have been tearful, but I trust it was memorable, too. Regardless of whether you have been a student, parent, faculty member, or staff member, if you have been part of the AISG community, you are proudly considered alumni of AISG. Whether you were here a year ago, fifteen years ago, or thirty-five years ago, you're still part of our valued alumni network. Whether you were here for one year, five years, or the whole twelve or more years of your schooling, you're an equally valued member of the group.

We are proud to be connected to our alumni community throughout the world. Our hope is that this and subsequent issues of *Ignite* will bring AISG alumni together. Our hope is that we will remain connected with each other, with AISG, and with Guangzhou. Additionally, with your help, our hope is that we can keep expanding our world-wide alumni community, connecting with even more people who have called the AISG community "home" at some point in their lives.

With our mission to "nurture future-ready individuals to aspire, achieve, and contribute," we are eager to hear of the ways our student alumni feel that AISG has prepared them for where they are today. Ghanaian author Lailah Gifty Akita maintains that "The future builds on the foundation of the past." We are proud of the role that AISG has played in your past and trust that your experiences with our community have provided a solid foundation on which you will continue to build, bringing your desired future to life for yourself.

We are also eager to learn of the aspirations, achievements, and contributions which our alumni have made since leaving AISG. We look forward to supporting you in your goals, desires, and dreams. We'd love to share the joy of your accomplishments, successes, and triumphs. And we will delight in learning of the impact your involvement, input, and support has created.

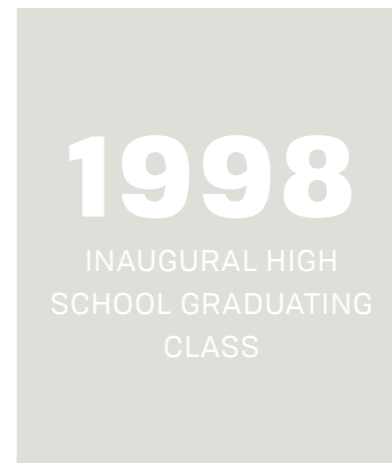
Enjoy reading this magazine and rekindling within yourself the spirit of the great RAM nation as you read!

Warmest regards,
Director and Chief RAM

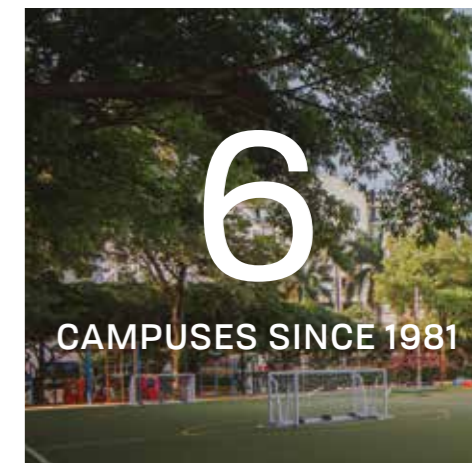
DR. BERNADETTE P. CARMODY



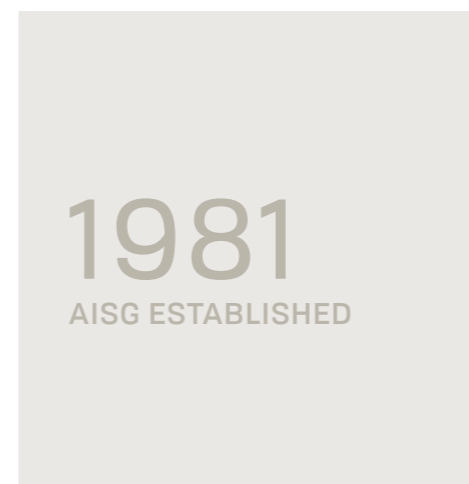
50+
nationalities



1998
INAUGURAL HIGH
SCHOOL GRADUATING
CLASS



6
CAMPUSES SINCE 1981



1981
AISG ESTABLISHED



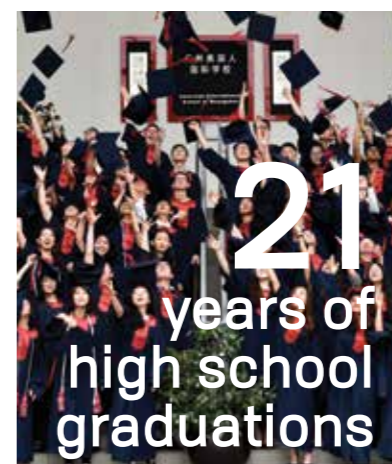
10
facts
about
AISG



208
faculty
& staff



75
students
in class of
2018



753
FAMILIES



21
years of
high school
graduations



39,705m²
total size
of Ersha &
Science Park
campuses

the AISG story & timeline



The American International School of Guangzhou began in 1981 as the American School of Guangzhou. The first pages in the history of AISG began with 7 students in a room at the Dong Fang Hotel.

1981

ASG was reorganized legally as a non-profit corporation in the USA and registered as school entity in China. As part of this process, the school changed its name to the American International School of Guangzhou (AISG).

ASG was accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) to provide instruction in kindergarten through grade 8.

1987

AISG celebrated its very first high school graduating class. Three students graduated, with one student attending Stanford University, one attending UC Berkeley and one attending New York University.

1998



AISG moved to a new site on Ersha Island. The facility housed all grade levels until 2007.

2002



The Middle and High School divisions moved to a new purpose-built campus located in Science Park. The Early Childhood Center, for preschool students from age 3 to 5, was then added to the Ersha campus.

2007

AISG is a vibrant learning community of over 1,000 students from 50 nations and a strong alumni community across the globe. AISG and education have changed significantly during our 37 years in Guangzhou, but our commitment to providing the best and most innovative learning opportunities for our students has remained steadfast.

2018

1985

ASG moved to larger facilities in the Garden Hotel to accommodate the additional demand and eventually enrolled students from other nations. The community set about creating a home away from home.



1994

ASG moved to its first purpose-built space in the Greenery. In the same year, enrollment grew to 102 students from 21 nations.



2004

AISG received authorization from the International Baccalaureate Office to offer the Primary Years Program and IB Diploma.



ib Primary Years Programme

ib Diploma Programme

2016

This year was one of tribute and festivities as we celebrated our school's 35th anniversary. AISG is proud of its heritage as the longest-established and only not-for-profit international school in Guangzhou and the recognized leader of education in South China.





The AISG Class of 2018 is composed of 75 scholars, making it the largest graduating class in AISG's history.

class of 2018

congratulations!

You have all worked so hard to get to this point and we are very proud of each and every one of you! 75 graduates from the Class of 2018 received diplomas on May 23rd with their loved ones cheering them on in the packed AISG Theater. Inspiring words were given, memories were shared and joyful tears were shed as these graduates became AISG's newest alumni. It is time to start a new journey!



CLASS OF 2017



CLASS OF 2016



CLASS OF 2015



CLASS OF 2014



CLASS OF 2013

heart strings

betty lin

head of visual and performing arts, music teacher





“Family” is a recurring theme when the head of the Visual and Performing Arts department Betty Lin reflects on her teaching career.

“My first impression was that all the students, staff and teachers were very friendly,” she says, recalling her first visit to AISG for her interview. “It had a family atmosphere.” Betty knows from personal experience how important it is for a school to feel like family, as her own schooling took her away from her family. “I was a boarder in Melbourne,

Australia, and only came home to my family in Hong Kong once a year,” she remembers, “so my teachers were like surrogate parents. They were all different but all showed their care for me.”

The exceptional care her teachers expressed for her affected her future career decision. She remembers passion for their subjects. “One of my favorites was my music teacher. She inspired me to be like her.” And so Betty became a music teacher and joined the AISG family.

The importance of family carries over to Betty’s

teaching. Asked to share an unforgettable moment at AISG, she remembers a relationship with one particular student: “One precocious young man in Grade 6 showed the potential to be a talented musician but didn’t have the necessary self-discipline. He did not feel like he needed to work at his skills, as he saw himself as the best student in the class already. With that attitude, he did not always contribute positively. We had meetings, we drew up behavior expectation plans, we had heated discussions about why abilities and responsibilities must go hand in hand. At one stage, he asked me why his achievement, behavior, and work ethic were so important to me, because after all he was happy he could play ‘good enough!’ I replied that he was not doing himself justice by just being ‘good enough.’ I told him if I thought he couldn’t do it, I would not be pushing him for more! As this student moved through middle school and into high school,

“AISG is an environment where teachers are encouraged to try new things and students are receptive to learning! It’s the perfect combination, and it motivates me to come to school each day.”

– Betty Lin



"Be a lifelong learner, do not be scared of failure, and be open to new ideas! Teaching is both an art and a skill."

— Betty Lin

he surprised himself with what he could achieve. I saw him mature and take on a leadership role. We began to talk of other things, like his taste in music and his aspirations after graduation. Four years after he graduated, I received an invitation to his university graduation with a note thanking me for seeing the person he could be before he did. He said my passion for music rubbed off on him and he is now a skilled musician who plays with joy."

Besides her care for individual students, this story also reveals that Betty is a veteran teacher who still enjoys teaching. She started her career at AISG the first year of the Ersha Campus and is now at the Science Park campus. She says, "there have been so many changes over the years! We started the second campus at Science Park and most recently added the world class performance theater. We have expanded from a school of fewer than 500 to a school of over 1,000 students. There are so many more opportunities for our students, with many more course offerings in all areas." In addition, she has seen "program expansion and the creation of professional learning communities where teachers discuss, create and hone their lesson planning in common learning units across year levels."

In spite of the changes, Betty feels that AISG has kept the family feeling. What excites her about AISG is, she says, "an environment where teachers are encouraged to try new things and students are receptive to learning! It's the perfect combination, and it motivates me to come to school each day."

It fits perfectly with her idea of the most important attributes of a good teacher: "Be a lifelong learner, do not be scared of failure, and be open to new ideas! Teaching is both an art and a skill. The art lies in knowing what may work with a group of students. The skill lies in trying new techniques, engaging students in different ways, or merging what works with something untested."

Betty's final thoughts? "I believe all students can participate in and enjoy making music. Music is an intelligence in its own right and is not necessarily dependent on successes in other subjects." To be Betty's student is to be welcomed into her family, a family that enjoys making music and learning together! ■



gloria

class of 2017, 7 years at AISG
student at New York University

"I never liked acting," says Gloria Huang. "In fact, I even once swore to myself that I would never become an actor, as the thought of saying anything on stage in front of people terrified me." So what degree will Gloria pursue at university? A drama degree at New York University! How did Gloria do a 180 degree turn on her career choice?

AISG was instrumental in that change of perspective, Gloria reflects. "AISG provided me with numerous performance opportunities, such as performing at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, participating in APAC strings, and acting in APAC Theater." But her most significant experience took place at the DCINY Festival at Lincoln Center in New York City. She remembers it as a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity I will never forget. This experience made me suddenly realize my hidden passion for theater. The trip to Lincoln Center and New York City caused me to give acting and theater another chance." Gloria says that AISG "made me into an independent person and learner." Her talents in orchestra and theater have been demonstrated by her accomplishments. Stage fright is a thing of Gloria's past, as she now considers that all the world is her stage.



a dive
into world
music
percussion

brandon bott
class of 2015, 6 years at AISG

"My father taught me all I know. Rather than discouraging me from becoming a musician, he encouraged me to do whatever made me happy."

— Brandon Bott



ASIS alum Brandon Bott's passion for music began in childhood when he saw his father Tony Bott, who has worked at AISG as a music teacher for nine years, playing music and drumming at home. "My father taught me all I know. Rather than discouraging me from becoming a musician, he encouraged me to do whatever made me happy," Brandon says with a smile. Tony ignited the fire which continues to make Brandon a lifelong learner in music. "I basically taught myself how to play drums, guitar, and bass by listening to recordings and copying what the professionals did. Music is all about using your ears, listening to musicians, and imitating them. Especially in jazz, improvisation is important when you interact with other musicians. I come with that mindset. That's how it started," Brandon explains.

Brandon had chances to practice and perform with different student groups while studying at AISG, and this fueled his passion. In high school, he also played with his father at local gigs. If you ever waited outside a well-known live house or jazz pub in Guangzhou, you might have seen Brandon carrying a large conga on his back. "What kept my fire lit was the outside gigs. Meeting different people, meeting new musicians, that really kept me going," he reminisced.

Brandon is particularly motivated by a deep desire to learn about different cultures through music. As a Eurasian, born in Japan, who studied at a public Japanese school until Grade 6, both the Japanese and American cultures influenced him. But after his family moved to Guangzhou and Brandon joined

AISG as a middle schooler in 2009, he learned about Chinese culture in an international environment. Being a world citizen helps Brandon to create a relationship with diverse cultures: "I've learned about different types of music, like Spanish flamenco, Indian drumming, Cuban drumming, Brazilian and African drumming. I try to incorporate different cultures and traditions with jazz."

Now a junior in college, Brandon performs with various groups in Chicago. For his first two years there, he focused on jazz, while this year he's digging more into world music. He plays in a flamenco trio called "Pendiente" ("unresolved" in Spanish) with another percussionist and a flamenco guitarist. The group uses flamenco as the basis for their music but adds Indian and Middle Eastern percussion influences. Brandon also plays in a group he formed with the director of Jazz Study at Northern Illinois University. "The Director, Reggie Thomas, is the pianist of Count Basie Orchestra. I play drums and he plays the organ, and there is a guitarist in the group as well. Our music is sometimes played on the radio," Brandon explains, adding, "I am also trying to form a salsa Cuban music group." Brandon is also in the steel pan group at the university, which has been playing all over Chicago and

recently played at the Chicago Symphony Center.

Putting together a puzzle with pieces from different cultures, Brandon is creating his own distinct musical life. In his third year at college, he switched his major from Music Performance to Contract Major, giving him full control of his studies. The Contract Major allows highly motivated students to follow a course of study outside the boundaries of established majors. Students may draw from a wealth of courses to develop a major that corresponds with their particular interests and goals. "I can now choose the classes I want to take and who I want to study with, making for myself a very specialized program: world percussion," he explains.

With one foot in jazz and the other in world music, Brandon is creating a unique style and finding a balance between the two. His time is spent writing pieces, arranging music, practicing instruments, or gigging. Hoping to release an original music album in two years and then tour the world, Brandon is working harder than ever. He believes that self-discipline and motivation walk hand in hand on the road to success. With his passion and talent for music, Brandon is carving out his own place in world percussion. ■



brave
nina schneider

AISG Inaugural Alumni Award Recipient

AISG alum Nina Schneider was announced as the Inaugural AISG Alumni Award Recipient at our 35th Anniversary Gala.

Sustainable Development, Management, and Policy in Modul University Vienna. There, I worked to refine my thesis on empirical predictive modeling of the impact of green growth policies. After graduating with distinction, I was recruited by United Nations-ESCAP to work as a data and policy analyst in service to Asia-Pacific member states.

What is your job now?

As of December 2017, I left United Nations-ESCAP and established 9212 Data, a sustainable development impact assessment consultancy. 9212 Data is a new entrepreneurial venture, but it is already receiving regular clients, and would be open to new challenges in both the public and private sectors!

What do you see yourself doing in the near future?

I am working to establish legal and professional residency in New York, USA, with my fiancé, and I am also gaining new experiences through 9212 Data. I am hoping to rejoin the United Nations system as an expert in data applied to sustainable development, particularly related to the environment.

AISG MEMORIES

What was your first impression of AISG? What is your favorite memory from your time at AISG?

Because I was five when I first enrolled in AISG, I no longer recall my first impressions. However, I have two favorite memories of my time there. The first is the vastness of the Science Park campus.

As a former IB student, with management roles in several high school clubs, alone time to process homework was highly valued. I could always count on the ground floor classrooms to empty out fully by 3:30 p.m., so I could hide away and work diligently for an hour before returning home. Silence encouraged focus and I credit the many empty rooms for my strong graduating GPA and mental health.

Secondly, I've spoken about this at length, but AISG's teachers, faculty, and administration provided the encouraging environment needed to nurture my interests. Many people don't realize this, but the reason AISG has IB Psychology now is because in 2007, a small team of high-achieving students and I petitioned for its inclusion in the curriculum. We formalized a proposal and asked to be heard on this. In 2008, I submitted an application to establish the Crossroads Club, intended back then to become an NGO providing disaster relief and resilience efforts across China by collecting year-end extra production, housing it, and redirecting it to stricken regions. On both petitions, AISG listened and carved

GUANGZHOU MEMORIES

Where are you from?

I was born in Taiwan but grew up in Guangzhou, China, until I was 18. My mother, Kris (Liu Min) Schneider, is Taiwanese, and my father, Thomas Klaus Schneider, is German. Genetically, I am Eurasian, but I consider my cultural lineage to include Germany, China, and United States. In fact, I have AISG to thank for bringing out the latter and exemplifying the socially welcoming and intellectually stimulating nature of the American condition.

How long did you attend AISG?

I attended AISG starting at age five, staying a grand total of 13 years. Back when its preschool was located in the Garden Hotel, I remember having a wonderful sausage roll from the hotel bakery every day for snack time.

How did your family move to Guangzhou and enroll at AISG, and what challenges did you face as a third culture kid here?

In 1993, my parents started a leather-finishing factory in Wang Gang Village, Guangzhou, capitalizing on my father's leather specialization. The company has since grown to embrace ecological protection and sustainable supply chain management, and it now has

international locations in China, Vietnam, USA, and Italy.

When my family arrived in China, we were advised that with my German passport, I was eligible only to enroll in an international school. My parents were impressed with AISG's international instruction, which would put me on the path to global citizenship. I was enrolled in 1996.

As a third-culture kid (TCK), I found that the greatest challenge was having to prove my inclusion in different groups. Even though I speak fluent Chinese with a minor Taiwanese accent, nobody in Guangzhou believed that I belonged. People thought I was Uyghur from Xinjiang province, Russian from Heilongjiang, or simply an American who had studied for so long in China that I was fluent. Over the years, it became frustrating to be so close to my Chinese family, yet always denied entry because I was "other." At the same time, because I never lived in Germany, my accent-free German lacked basic colloquialism and casual "slang." As a result, even with my fellow German students and their families, I was regarded suspiciously. To feel at home, I adopted the American way, and specifically the New Yorker's mentality that different facets of one's identity are beautiful, like cuts on a diamond, because it makes one more unique, more unusual, more valuable. If I was to think about it deeply, AISG saved me by stressing that expatriate purity is not the only way. I could be beautiful

because my personality and character cross gender, national, and linguistic lines.

What do you miss most about Guangzhou?

It has been nearly ten years since my graduation from AISG, and since then, I've lived long-term in the United States, Austria, and Thailand, and visited more than 50 countries. What I miss most about Guangzhou is its predictability. Even though there are always new restaurants, entertainment venues, and institutions popping up, I miss visiting the same RBT café across Aayushi's home, the McDonalds across from Novotel where Calder and I spent his birthday dinner feasting on chicken nuggets, and the stretch of Pearl River along which Karel, Romesh, and I enjoyed the view over wine spritzers. These have become childhood landmarks for me, places I can mentally revisit while recalling all the amazing things that happened. The concept of "home" is so variable, so while Guangzhou is no longer my home, I did leave a piece of my heart back in the city.

What are some of the biggest differences between life in Guangzhou and your current life?

Currently, I am engaged to a wonderful man, and in a couple of months, I will be moving back to Vienna and then onwards to New York to pursue a life with my partner, as well as ambitions with the United Nations headquarters. I would say the biggest difference between my life in Guangzhou and now is the speed and variability of daily schedules, and the reliance on calendar apps to keep me on task!

What did you study in college?

After AISG, I attended New York University for a Bachelor of Science in Applied Psychology and Social Entrepreneurship. Having had a taste of the magic of data science applied for development, I left New York to pursue a Master of Science in

Nina was the head of the AISG community service group Crossroads which celebrates its 10th year anniversary at AISG in the 2017-2018 school year.



out space for us to pursue these goals. For this, I will always have the utmost respect and love for this academic institution.

What were some intangibles you learned during your time at AISG that made you who you are today?

At AISG, the teachers, friends, and culture encouraged us all to be naïve, reckless, and overconfident, giving us free reign to pursue change as long as it was socially and environmentally beneficial. Without the confidence of the administration, I would never have thought it possible to start an NGO within the school's walls. I was and still am arrogant. In a world of 7.6 billion, it is arrogant to believe that you have the power to make a difference, yet this is what AISG did for me. They encouraged me to believe in my vision of a better world – and that, along with so many factors, has led me to the UN and beyond.

Describe the course at AISG that has had the greatest impact on your thinking.

I have numerical dyslexia, which was diagnosed long after I graduated from AISG, so IB Economics HL with Ken Turner had the greatest impact on my thinking. I knew that I wanted to assist on the frontlines of policymaking to benefit our social and ecological environments, yet to do this using our current societal infrastructure, we must use existing tools to reform the issue. Which is to say, I needed to learn the valuation of micro- and macro-economics and seek hidden pockets of opportunity to contribute to the welfare of the lower- and middle-socioeconomic classes. Numerical dyslexia is the inability to process abstract numeracy because numbers are often misinterpreted or their corresponding units just don't make logical sense. I struggled for far longer than anyone else my age, but I knew economics was critical for my future, so every morning and lunch break, I brought my questions to Ken, asking him to explain to me yet again why currency fluctuations could plunge a nation into debt or why diminishing marginal gains still incentivize companies to operate past their rational end-point. I completed that course with a 6 out of 7, which was my greatest academic achievement at that time. In fact, I cried when I learned my score – Ken and I had put so much work into straightening out the numerical chaos in my brain. Ultimately, IB Economics HL sparked my lifelong

love of statistical operators via data. Even though I still struggle with dyslexia today, I have safeguards in place to ensure it doesn't bias my results.

Tell us about your extracurricular activities during your time at AISG.

While at AISG, I was the founder of Crossroads Club, the Poetry Editor-In-Chief for the literary magazine, and one of more active members of Habitat for Humanity.

What advice would you give to underclassmen at AISG to help them to be successful in college?

The world beyond high school is magnificent, incomprehensible, and full of potential – but only if you have the courage to make the difficult decisions. I have two pieces of advice, which can be distilled into the following: you need to be brave.

1. Do everything: Reflect and know who you are. Have a good understanding of the skills you are good at (e.g. research, solving puzzles) and the thematic areas they can be applied in (e.g. IT, psychology, design). When you get into college, specialize as fast as you can. Pursue multiple, meaningful internships, volunteer your time to professors to publish new ideas, find a group of like-minded people and throw around concepts – hint: that's how companies get started. Right now, you are a jagged piece of organic carbon, and your goal in the next four years is to learn fast, fail hard, dust yourself off, and discard the useless. Set hundreds of goals, rework or demolish them, and solidify your path. If you do it right, when you graduate, you will be polished and confident,

empowered with a strong resume, and ready to contribute to a better, more beautiful society.

2. Dream big but educate yourself: Find someone you want to emulate. Do you want to advise the senate or be the next Elon Musk? If you don't want to lead, there is no shame in admitting this. How about fighting for human rights at the grassroots level? Being a financial economist helping to change the banking sector? The second part is to educate yourself. It's fine to set lofty goals, but be realistic about your time frame. In order to be the next UN Secretary-General by age 45 and have a family, what do you need to do today? Within the next year and the next five? Set concrete targets and be unafraid to adjust them. Beware of relying on the much-publicized Perfect Storm, i.e. when your skills perfectly align with an opportunity dropped from the heavens. Statistically, this is just rare. Nobody is reserving a career just for you. Be accountable for your own life so that your achievements are yours alone.

SELF

What have you accomplished that you are most proud of?

I am proudest of stepping away from the United Nations at this point in my life. No matter how much you love and respect an institution, sometimes to make the biggest impact, you must step away and improve yourself so when you return, you'll be more effective. When I left United Nations-ESCAP in December 2017, I understood that it was my time.



I could no longer provide the value they deserved without being much, much better myself. I had no idea how to accomplish this self-improvement but I found I could pursue incremental improvement by plunging myself into impact assessment for sustainable development, doing it on my own with no safety net. This was the inspiration behind 9212 Data.

I believe in the United Nations because I've seen how it can guide member states' sustainable development policies, and encourage poverty reduction and knowledge transfers to protect the lives of future generations. I want to return to them. But I can't do that until I am stronger and better.

If you could do something to change the world for the better, what would it be?

I dedicate my life, career, family and spare time entirely to the service of my fellow man. Bettering the world is not a matter of deploying taxes on cigarettes or mandating universal primary education, it is the mentality of sustainable development. Optimum balance means economic growth that is simultaneously politically feasible, environmentally responsible, and financially viable. If I could change one thing, I would adjust the true valuation of all the products we consume. For example, a cell phone is cheaply produced, but what if we include the carbon dioxide emitted during the production of each of its elements and the life-cycle degradation and toxic

disposal of its end-of-life parts? What if we pay its manufacturing workers a living wage and consider the ecological cost of extracting the minerals and materials for its components? What if we truly quantified every single ingredient and reflected this cost into the final consumer price? This cell phone's price would now skyrocket and I guarantee that cell phone companies would do everything in their power to make phones cheaper by using fewer materials at every stage. If we did this, our growth would not come at the cost of our children's health and our environment's ability to renew itself. If I could change the valuation of our consumption patterns, the world would be a better place.

What are you passionate about?

I'm interested in sustainable development because it prioritizes equally economic prosperity, environmental integrity, and social benefits. This should be the benchmark of global activity and even our own career pursuits. Where and what you choose to work on must be beneficial to all of these dimensions; otherwise, you might be considered part of a systemic problem. Even though I am not a vegetarian or a zero-waste contributor, I value environmental protection and reducing climate change's impact because of ecological economics. The public doesn't realize that our economy is an artificial, man-made system, 100% supported by the environment. We obtain natural resources from the environment, sell and consume them, and discard them right back out into the environment. Recycling is not a solution, because the energy we use to recycle material must come from new sources.

The public is already using too much, and so quickly we are plummeting to a point of no return, according to the anthropogenic climate change temperature rise. If the average global temperature increases beyond two degrees Celsius, the earth will fail to renew itself. When it does, the economy and our society will as well. You can't eat money and you can't breathe coins. I am interested in these challenges because, for the sake of my family and friends, for my future children, for our neighbors near and far, and for those who have no voice, we have to be part of the solution.

What ignited your passion?

My passion is ecological and social minimalism and efficiency. Use less, in every sense of the word. As a global citizen constrained by immigration and legal requirements, I have moved homes approximately twelve times in the last ten years. Over time, I've had to learn what was considered irreplaceable, and what I take with me in my suitcases when asked to move again. I can't tell you how many times I've had to leave behind or discard working furniture and appliances because I couldn't donate or sell them in time. My own carbon footprint as a young woman is terrifying, but I am working now to better it. Imagine millions just like me, and now our world's environmental problems start to make sense. I had to do something different for my own life, and hopefully change government policies so others will act more conscientiously. ■

"AISG encouraged me to believe in my vision of a better world – and that, along with so many factors, has led me to the UN and beyond."

– Nina Schneider



nikhil

*class of 2017, 2 years at AISG
student at University of British Columbia*

Nikhil Budhdev came to AISG in 10th grade and remembers it as "a hard time for me because I had switched from a Canadian to an American curriculum. It took a month to get adjusted to the style of teaching and the use of MacBooks in class. After that, it was a challenging and enriching experience." Though the curriculum was time-consuming and took up even his free time, Nikhil says that in the past three years AISG has made him a better person and student. The best part about AISG? Nikhil answers, "The teachers!" They "fueled a type of passion for the subject that was missing before I came to AISG." He offers the example of his physics teacher, who not only thoroughly discussed his Extended Essay with him but also "talked about concepts that were way beyond the scope of the course. All this because he had the passion for the subject and he was passing that passion on to me. That is what I love about the teachers here and that is what has made me ready for my future endeavors."

What future endeavors is Nikhil looking forward to? He is studying at UBC for a five year course in Applied Sciences with a concentration in Mechanical Engineering. He certainly overcame that "hard time" adjusting to AISG, and after taking full advantage of the opportunities here, he is setting forth on a very rewarding future!

a look back at the early days of

habitat for humanity

at AISG



by Donna Spisso,
English teacher, 2003-2009

Habitat for Humanity began at AISG in 2004. It was an auspicious moment, as HFH had just begun to expand its operation from Yunnan province to Guangdong and other areas. As the club's principal sponsor, it was my privilege to work closely with dozens of passionate, idealistic, hardworking students over its first five years. With HFH, we extended a "hand up" to qualifying Chinese partners in need of decent, affordable housing.

The builds that stand out most to me are those we did in three different leprosy rehabilitation villages. In the 1950s, these villages were established deep in China's countryside as a way to isolate people afflicted with leprosy (Hansen's Disease) from the rest of the population. Although the disease was under control by 1982 and effectively eliminated in China, recovered leprosy patients and their family members were and still are stigmatized. Our first build was in one such village in Yunnan province. Unlike the typical HFH build, the villagers could not help in the construction process. They were elderly and physically impaired due to the ravages of the disease. However, they watched avidly as our team prepared the building site, moved tons of bricks (literally!) in a "chain," mixed cement and built walls. Before the five-day build was over, we had almost reached roof level of what

Habitat for Humanity began at AISG in 2004. Since then, our passionate and hardworking students have stepped into areas in need of decent, affordable housing around China.



would become a new community center. We were not simply building a structure—we were building relationships and a deeper understanding of how HFH impacted lives. An integral part of any build was the reflection process. After dinner back at the hotel, we would gather in a circle. Each of us described a special moment about the day. Later in the week, I asked students to pair up and interview the residents. Despite difficulty understanding the dialect, Chinese speakers could glean enough to share some insights about the hard lives of these people.

We were keen to build in another recovered leprosy village and were pleased to be assigned to Chagen in Guangdong province, 360 km from Guangzhou. Our third trip there was right around Autumn Festival in 2007. By that time, the people had come to know us very well. As we approached the village on foot, we could see two lines of villagers along the sides of the dirt road. They cheered in welcome as we filed past them. At lunchtime, they had a surprise for us. As a gesture of their appreciation, they “threw us a party” with special locally made cakes. Considering how little income they had at their disposal, this was indeed a grand

gesture. To show our thanks, HFH officers cut up the cakes and served them to the villagers. I will never forget that sight; it was very touching to see our students affirm the dignity of these severely disabled people living in such humble conditions.

When we weren't building, we were raising money and awareness. Typically, there were two to three builds per year for students, one of which was a China trip open to anyone. In time, a “faculty build” for adult members of the AISG community was added, due to popular demand! We also had many fundraisers. One of our favorites was selling crafts made by leprosy survivors supported by HANDA Rehabilitation and Welfare Association (Guangzhou). Another was our annual “buy-a-brick” campaign, in which we would sell 100 paper “bricks” for 100 RMB, and “windows,” the “door” and the “roof” for several thousand each, to total about 25,000 RMB. We displayed our “house” in a prominent place on campus. All the money we raised went straight to HFH's China Program. Building houses with HFH China is one of the most fulfilling experiences anyone can have. I am happy to know that HFH at AISG continues to thrive! ■



helen

class of 2017, 7 years at AISG
student at Hong Kong University of Science & Technology

Sometimes Helen would just like to...“take a nap”! At least she counts “napping” as one of her favorite hobbies, saying she can occasionally “sleep for up to 16 hours.” But there is more to Helen than napping. She plans to pursue a degree in the medical field as a physician or biomedical researcher. The diagnosis of her father with type 2 Diabetes “awakened” her to the importance of health to a happy life. She says, “If you have your health, anything is possible.” Helen appreciates that her AISG science teachers built up her science foundation, which made studying science at a higher level possible. When Helen reflects on AISG's concept of being “future-ready,” she feels it means having “self-discipline and self-motivation.”

Those qualities are evident in her four years of service on the Student Council, an experience that taught her leadership skills. Though her path in the IB program was time-consuming and at times stressful, she says that “AISG taught me that there is always a solution to a problem, it's just that the solution is not as easy as we had hoped.” Studying for the IB program, leading on Student Council, and prepping for university means that Helen has certainly earned the right to indulge occasionally in that favorite hobby—napping—but it won't be very often.

AISG alumni reunion at
Central Park, New York.



it's ok to be different

by Amy Lai, class of 2002, 4 years at AISG

One of the best lessons I've learned from AISG is that it's OK to be different. We all came from such different backgrounds that, unlike in more culturally homogeneous schools, there was no social standard to conform or aspire to. It was impossible not to be different from everyone else in some way. As a result, we expected and embraced differences among ourselves. That sounds like it should be obvious, but it turns out to be a lesson I've needed to re-learn well beyond AISG.

As a high-achieving student, I expected my grades to forecast professional success. Teenaged me might have been surprised to learn that many of my classmates ended up attaining more education than I did, making more money than I do, and being more influential than I am. I hope to hear about them in this magazine! I didn't truly appreciate it at the time, but there are many paths to success; excelling in class is a good one, but your grades don't determine the rest of your life.

Good grades helped get me into Princeton University, but they didn't help me figure out what to do with my life. I majored in Chemistry by default, because I had to choose and I hadn't found anything I

liked better. After short stints working at a perfumery and returning to China to teach English, I landed a job at Bristol-Myers Squibb, working on new drug discovery.

There are a lot of very smart people doing important work in pharmaceutical research, but for whatever reason, I was never very good at or invested in my job there. After a few years, I was bitterly disappointed in myself for not doing "better" in my life, in contrast to both my peers' trajectories and my expectations. I was going nowhere, and I was envious of my friends who had concrete goals and were advancing steadily toward them. Ten years after graduating from high school, I still didn't know what I



Amy Lai graduated from AISG in 2002.

wanted to do with my life, and maybe I never would.

After lots of self-pity, I encountered a few bits of good luck by chance. One day I watched an online computer science lecture video, and was immediately hooked on the puzzle-solving fun of programming. Then I found out a company called Dev Bootcamp had just launched a three-month training program to turn people without computer science experience into entry-level programmers. It was a big risk giving up my good job to attend this, with no guarantee of employment on the other side, but having my Princeton diploma to fall back on gave me the courage to make the leap.

Luckily, I found a job at GeneDx, a company that diagnoses rare genetic diseases, writing software to help scientists manage data. This is also meaningful work, and I am ten times better at and more interested in the work than I was before. I stopped stagnating and forged a path forward.

One of the unexpected benefits of having made a career switch is that I've realized it wasn't just me. There are a lot of people who feel stuck working jobs they don't love. Suddenly, I became an inspirational story to them, and someone to ask for advice. I could never have been that person if I

had had the simple, steady career progression I had envisioned. Being stuck felt terrible at the time, but it gave me an experience that I can now draw on to empathize with and help others in the same boat.

The funny thing is, I still wouldn't call programming my "calling." Switching careers wasn't freeing because I had found the one thing I wanted to do; it was freeing because it showed me I don't have to do just one thing. I've loved programming enough to do it for six years and counting, but I also know that choosing it doesn't close off opportunities to do other things with my life.

Which brings me back to what I should have learned earlier: there's no single path to success or metric by which to judge ourselves. I can be proud of what I do, what I've learned, and what I've been able to pass on. That feels pretty darn successful to me.

There are still times I start to feel stagnant. The difference is that now, instead of making me feel like a failure, it's a gentle reminder not to take too long of a detour before finding a path forward again. Not every path is a straight one, and not every step has to be a step forward. Expect and embrace our differences. ■



michael

*class of 2015, 9 years at AISG
Student at University of New South Wales*

The advice from 2015 AISG graduate Michael Wu for present high school students is to "find your passion and make a career out of it, and you'll always enjoy your work. That's what you want, to enjoy your work, to take pride in it, so don't force yourself to do something you don't love." That's very challenging and welcome advice from someone who has already achieved a great deal. How is he doing on his own advice? Michael's favorite teacher at AISG was Mr. Navis, in IT. "I enjoyed working with computers and new technology and these still are two of my passions, but outside of that I also enjoyed after-school activities like robotics, science club, and media crew." And now Michael is at the University of New South Wales pursuing a Bachelor of Computational Design degree. Looks like he is following his own advice!

AISG had a significant impact on building Michael's interests and skills in the area of computers. When Michael reflects on what AISG means to him, he says, "Connecting individuals with their passions." What does Michael envision as his future field? Being able to shape the future in a very tangible way, in the environment, but also on a small scale, working with products and designs that we can physically hold. Michael's advice to "find your passion" is not just words but his way of life—and an inspiration for us all.

the early years

1981-2002

ON TOP OF THE TUNG FANG
by American School of Guangzhou

1

On top of the Tung Fang in 802
We ordered some jaudz and wei-gwo-rou too.
The jaudz was greasy, the service was slow
We asked for some pizza, Shao Gau said "meiyou".

We walked through the courtyard to see the new sights
The trees are of concrete, the grapes--they aren't ripe.
Though the fish are of porcelain and the rams are of stone
We'll just make the best of it 'cause Tung Fang's our home.



1. A poem about the days at Dongfang Hotel.
2. AISG students at a field trip to the Coca-Cola factory, 1983.
3. AISG's Award Assembly, 1983.
4. AISG's first class, 1981.
5. AISG's music class, 1984.
6. AISG's Thanksgiving Play, 1983.
7. Elementary students posing in the library, 1983.



- 8.** Ersha Campus Dedication Ceremony, 2002.
- 9.** Field trip to the zoo, 1985.
- 10.** Students enjoying recess at the Garden Hotel, 1984.
- 11.** A visit to the Orbis Flying Hospital, 1982.
- 12.** Students on the steps of the Chen Clan Academy, 1990.
- 13.** Sharing a laugh in class, 1985.

what have you been up to?



michael kang

class of 1998 (one of the first AISG high school graduates)

I am Korean and attended AISG from 1996 to 1998. Currently I am in HK working at Westpac as a Director in the Asian DCM and Syndicate team. I am still single. I completed my MS in Global Finance from NYU Stern / HKUST and BS in Economics and Math at Binghamton University, State University of New York.



lidia slawinska

class of 2006

My nationality is Polish. I attended AISG from 2002 to 2006. I currently live close to London. I have three little girls (ages 5, 3, and 1), and I do Communications for a small company in Barcelona (where I used to live, but now I work for them remotely). I am married.



wonjun song

class of 2005

I am from Korea and attended AISG from 2002 to 2005. I spent grade 10, 11 and 12 there. After graduating from AISG, I went to Binghamton University and majored in Political Science. Currently I'm doing a PhD in Political Science at Pennsylvania State University and will soon defend my dissertation in June.



richard sonnet

former AISG teacher

I taught at AISG from 2004 to 2006. Not only did I teach Middle School Social Studies, Middle School Math and High School World History, I also coached Girls' Varsity Basketball. I am now living in Pennsylvania on 50 acres of forest and farm and I am now a Master Gardener.

I spent 35 years overseas teaching in Honduras, Romania, Bangladesh, Malaysia, India, Morocco, China and Venezuela. My wife, Patricia Sonnet, was the librarian at AISG. She is deceased from cancer a few years ago. My daughter, Aliya Sonnet, graduated from AISG in 2006. She was on the AISG soccer team and basketball team.

clarissa skinner

class of 2008

I am from the USA and was at AISG from 2004 to 2008. I now live in London, where I'm doing a Master's in Social Policy (Research) at the London School of Economics. Before that, I lived in the Netherlands for two years. I'm not married, but my boyfriend is Dutch, and I met him through my best friend from AISG, who is also Dutch.



vince flynn

former AISG teacher

My wife, Sydney Flynn, and I taught at AISG for ten years, from 1998 to 2008. We are both from the USA and we now live in Tucson, Arizona. We began when AISG was in the Greenery and later moved to Ersha Island. I taught English and Drama and my wife taught Art. During my years there, I produced a number of student plays with the help of music teachers Betty Lin, Susan Jenkins, and Ms. Linnell. My wife and I are both very active in Tucson community theater and sometimes run into former AISG headmaster David Shawver, who now lives in Tucson too! Small world!



alek slawinski + lishi cheng

class of 2005

My name is Alek Slawinski, I am Polish and graduated in 2005. After graduation, I studied in Aberdeen and London and travelled the world for a bit. Lishi Cheng, my lovely wife, my high school sweetheart, studied in Miami and transferred to London after Hurricane Katrina, as it got a bit too windy for her taste.

While studying, we had a lovely flat on Albert Embankment, with the view of Big Ben. In our free time we interned around the world. Despite graduating university in the midst of the greatest recession in 25 years, life has treated us very well.

We are currently living in Colombia, where we have managed to build our own business and own a couple of properties. As of writing this we have been together 680 Mondays. That's approximately 13 years. We have been married for six years and have a beautiful baby doggy named Lola.

AISG will always hold a special place in my heart. Not only did it give me a Rams P.E. jersey, which I have used as pajamas all these years, but also lasting friendships, great education and most importantly, a little lifelong partner in crime.



christina hinze jørgensen

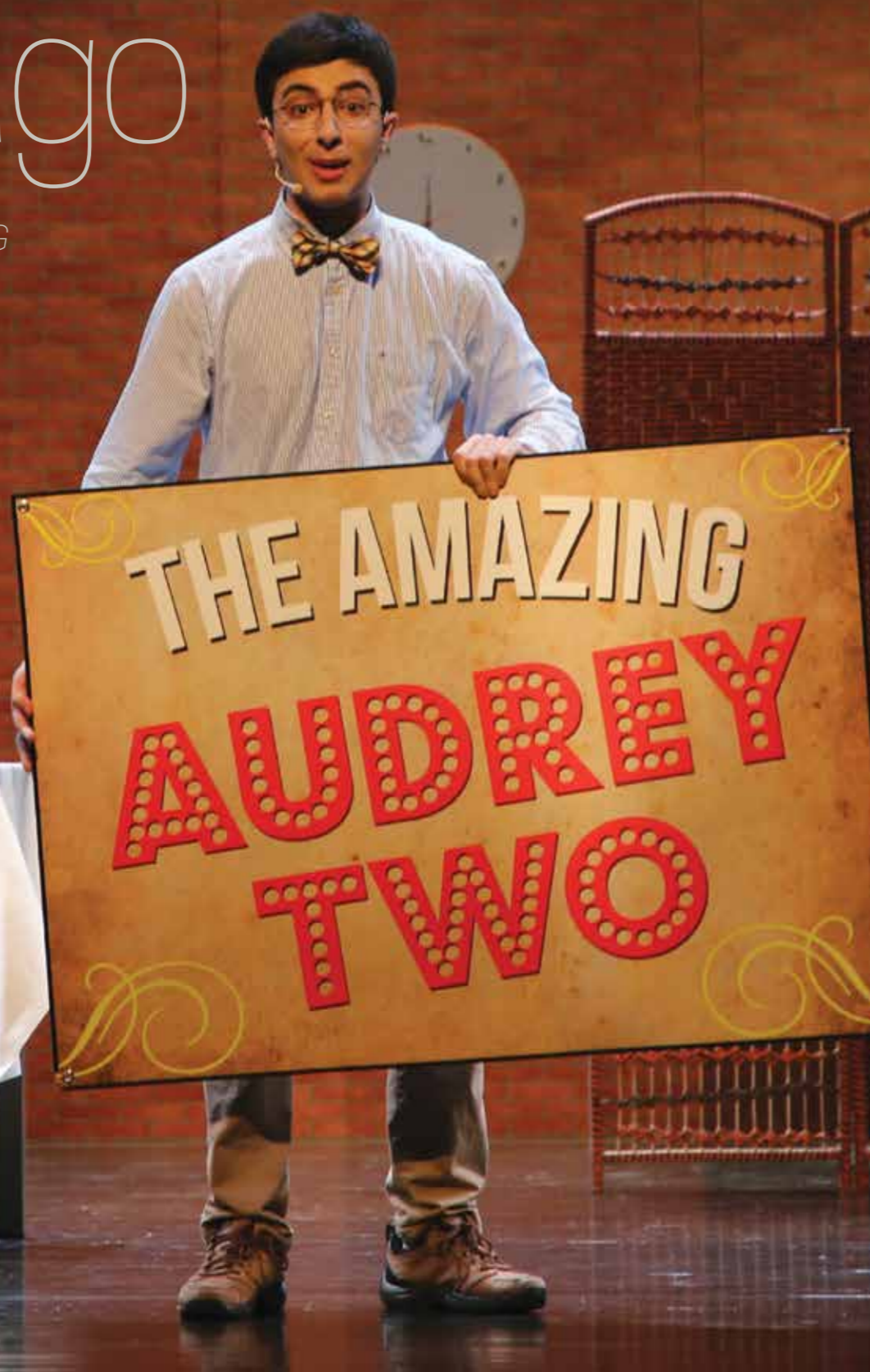
class of 2005

I am Danish and I am living in Denmark again. I attended Drew University in New Jersey for my Bachelor in Economics and did a semester at that university that was partly taught at Wall Street. I did my Master's in Denmark on Globalization and Business. Now I work at a Danish company that produces collaborative robots. It's a super exciting industry with a lot of changes and innovation. I am the Marketing Coordinator for the Northern Europe region. I will be married 4 years next month and I have a little boy who is 1.5 years old.



santiago

AISG grade 12 student,
class of 2018, 7 years at AISG



What was your first impression of AISG?
I was really impressed with how developed the school was. AISG was the first international school I had ever gone to and I thought the campus looked awesome. Not only that, but my teachers and classmates were super friendly and they helped me settle in right away.

What is your favorite memory of your time at AISG?

My favorite memory is when I first auditioned for the high school musical in 9th grade. I was EXTREMELY nervous but I was really happy to be there and push my limits.

What are some intangibles you learned during your time at AISG that made you who you are today?

I feel that the biggest concept I've learned at AISG is that the universe is a humongous place and that we're all extremely small fractions of it. Having said that, I realize that life should be enjoyed and that we should take risks rather than hide away in the dark and not be happy.

Tell me about your extracurricular activities at AISG. What do you believe you have gained from these experiences?

In my four years at high school, I always focused on the performing arts. Whether it was the musical, APAC Theater, APAC Choir, or HS Choir, I was always happy performing in front of others. I think that I've learned from these experiences who I am and who I want to become when I grow up.

What advice would you give to younger students at AISG?

Don't feel ashamed because you're different from everyone else. Don't feel ashamed because you're "weird." Don't feel ashamed because you're doing what you love. Life is too short to let others decide what you can and can't do and you

should always strive for greatness and happiness. Especially when others are doubting you!

What are you passionate about?

If there's anything that I'm passionate about, it's acting. I've been passionate about acting since middle school and I'll probably stay that way until my dying days. Not only did my time in high school help me realize that the art of acting is about representing the human spirit, but more importantly, that it's a necessity for humanity. I learned that acting isn't about pretending, but rather, it's about helping others experience new realities through you.

How would your friends characterize you?

I feel that my friends would probably say that I'm outgoing when I love doing something, and I'm not afraid of taking risks or taking on challenges.

What have you accomplished that you are most proud of?

I am proud that I was able to improve myself as a performer and, more importantly, as an individual. I feel that because I went to AISG, I've been able to find out what I want from life.

What is your next step after AISG? What are you looking forward to most after graduation?

After graduating from AISG, I will be leaving to study in New York City at Pace University's International Performance Ensemble. I am really looking forward to starting my classes in New York City and meeting my new classmates!

Where do you see yourself ten years from now?

I see myself working on Broadway or creating something new for Broadway in my apartment in Manhattan.

Do you have any final words to share?

Don't ever give up on what you love doing the most!

Santiago performed in the at AISG high school musical "Little Shop of Horrors" in our brand new theater in 2017.

maria elena

AISG grade 11 student, 11 years at AISG



Maria Elena performed at AISG's 35th Anniversary Gala at the Garden Hotel.

What was your first impression of AISG? When I first came to AISG, I was surprised by how welcoming and warm the community was. It helped my family settle in and feel at home in our new country and school.

What is your favorite memory of your time at AISG?

My favorite memory of AISG has to be from APAC Choir my freshman year. We had the opportunity to go to Kobe, Japan, and sing together. It was so much fun and the group I traveled with was warm and welcoming. They instantly made me feel part of the group, even though I was the only freshman. AISG gives us so many opportunities to meet new people and experience the world outside, and that is truly incredible.

What are some intangibles you have learned during your time at AISG that made you who you are today?

Organization! Organization is the key to getting things done. My teachers and counselors have taught me how to be responsible and efficient not only as a student, but as a person. The things I've learned at school have helped me feel more prepared for college and for life after my schooling. AISG has also taught me to be brave, to not be afraid to stand up for what I believe in, and to be myself. We are encouraged to explore our different passions and to be ambitious. Thanks to AISG, I've had the opportunity to take the initiative in coordinating events such as hunger banquets, rice drives, and participate in groups such as GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance). My teachers have also been extremely supportive of me as I start my music career. I am very thankful for how understanding my teachers are.

What are you passionate about?

My passion is music. I've loved music ever since I could remember. Once I started playing the guitar and writing songs, I knew that I was addicted. I want to have a career in music and do what I love for a living. That, to me, is the most amazing form

of happiness and way of living life to the fullest. If people love what they do every day, they will put their heart and soul into it. When I see other people playing or performing, their creativity inspires me. I went to Nashville last summer to enjoy the music scene and I got to go to the Grand Ole Opry. Country musicians Rascal Flatts and LOCASH performed that night and I had a moment where I realized that I wanted to make music for a living. The amazing support and encouragement I've gotten at AISG motivates me to work hard to achieve my dreams.

What have you accomplished that you are most proud of?

I am very proud of my first EP, which I released last year, and I'm very excited for my new EP, "Mind Space," which will be released in July. Being a student in the IB program is very difficult, and it's sometimes hard to balance my schoolwork with my love for music. Going for what I want and not holding back makes me proud.

Where do you see yourself ten years from now?

In ten years, I would like to have graduated from a good university with bachelor's and master's degrees. I would like to be working in the music industry and collaborating with other songwriters, producers, and singers. It would be amazing to have new music that I'm proud of and have successful albums. I would love to be living in Nashville because it is such a beautiful city. But all in all, I just hope to be happy.

Is there any advice you would give to younger students at AISG?

If you're thinking about taking IB, don't worry about it. There have been thousands of people around the world that have successfully graduated with an IB Diploma. If they can do it, so can you. My advice to you is to be organized, and to work really, really hard. Don't give up on yourself, even when a class or project seems really difficult. But the most important advice I can give to you is to find balance in your life. Make sure you get enough sleep, exercise, and make time for friends, family and yourself. You can do this! I believe in you.



Blythe

AISG grade 1 student

What's your favorite place on campus?
Why?
My favorite place is my sister's class. My sister is in grade 2 and I am in grade 1. I like going to her classroom. I also like the rope bridge.

What's your favorite thing to learn about at school? Why?

Maybe about plants. The whole grade 1 took a field trip to the botanical garden today. We saw a duck, just one duck, but we saw a lot of plants. We are learning the unit called "Sharing the Planet." Plants are part of the planet. I took about 20 pictures of the plants.

What do you like most about the school?

I like AISG because there are a lot of subjects here. We study maybe just a few subjects in New Zealand. I am learning writing, reading, unit of inquiry and plants.

Were you at other schools before coming to AISG? What are the differences?

I didn't go to school before. AISG is my first school. I've been in China for one year.

If you could wake up tomorrow with a superpower, what would it be?

I would like to fly! All of the dragons can fly. I ride my bike to school every day now. If I could fly like a dragon, I could fly to school.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I like reading and drawing. I can draw a dragon.

Who is your favorite story character?

I watch How to Train Your Dragon, Harry Potter and Star Wars. I really like the dragon in How to Train Your Dragon. Its name is Toothless. I like it because it can fly and glow.

What is your favorite thing to do with your friends?

We play games. One of us normally pretends to be the evil person and catches others. The good people have to run away. Games like that.

Which book is your favorite?

I haven't read them all.

"AISG is my first school. I like AISG because there are a lot of subjects here."
- Blythe Kendall

Will

middle school & high school assistant principal, 6 years at AISG

If you want to get to know Assistant Principal of the Science Park Campus Will Tragert, don't go to Spirit Week, Halloween, or teacher orientation days. Why? Because you won't find him, or more likely, you won't recognize him. Instead he is more likely to be a blonde bombshell, a hippie or a man in black, but behind those costumes is Will's familiar smile and his fun-loving nature!

Will has been the assistant principal for five years and he couldn't be having more fun. "I love going to work each day and being able to spend time with our students," he says. "Never have I been so involved with such dynamic, creative, inspirational, and gifted people. I'm amazed every day by the gifts and talents our students have."

Will got into teaching through the inspiration of a ninth grade math teacher who "shifted me from being indifferent about math to truly loving the subject. I don't remember many things that this teacher taught me but I remember exactly how he made me feel and the passion he ignited within me. It was that feeling that made me want to be a teacher." That passion is evident in Will's work with the IB Diploma.

He explains, "I grew to know each of my seniors so well and cared so deeply for their wellbeing. I loved being partners in learning with them and helping them work towards achieving their goals in math. The feeling of pride and accomplishment that I shared with my first group of graduating seniors was an unforgettable experience and one that I still hold dear to my heart." Most days you will find Will hard at work following his passion, but don't be surprised if you don't recognize him...except for the smile.



10+ years of service:

faculty

The AISG faculty is the cornerstone upon which our community of learners thrives. In the world of international education, where people often come and go, a lengthy tenure is a testament to a teacher's commitment to a school and its students. We would like to recognize the following faculty members for their long-standing dedication to the AISG community. Thank you for helping our students ignite their passions!



ROW ONE:
Anne Martin-Bauer
Betty Lin
Simone Lieschke
Eric Little

ROW TWO:
Erica Liu
Erika Olson
David Ma
Glenn Jacobsen

ROW THREE:
Henry Hall
Jean Li
Florence Farm
Kristin Judson

ROW FOUR:
Mark Reimer
Nathan Lieschke
Jenny Su
Robert Bauer

ROW FIVE:
Ruth Volz
Patricia Inayat
Sonia Endara



erica

middle school and high school mandarin teacher, 13 years at AISG

Chinese language teacher Erica Liu's first impression of AISG was at the Greenery campus, and she remembers that the height of the building, with classrooms on different floors and not a single elevator, made her worry about the poor knees of exhausted teachers! Erica's memory reveals some significant things about her and her experiences at AISG. Not many people know about the Greenery campus, which preceded Ersha and Science Park. But Erica does because she is a veteran teacher with a tenure that exceeds most teachers and administrators! Her worry about the knees of exhausted teachers reveals that she knows the work that teachers do, above and beyond their time in the classroom. Teachers plan, prepare, consult and move between classrooms that sometimes are not very convenient. She says that her qualities as a teacher are a sense of humor, fairness, efficiency, organization, and a passion to keep up with the world.

For Erica, that first visit to AISG resulted in a long-term relationship with significant rewards. She says what excites her about AISG is when she get visits from AISG graduates. "This is always the moment I feel proud, joyful, and grateful, as I am remembered. I love to hear about their stories, life, thoughts and learning in the bigger world." To know that her students have excelled at AISG and in university and work is her greatest reward. Erica has taught long enough to experience a new campus with elevators, and her qualities as a teacher take her students to a higher level—we might say she is THEIR elevator!

10+ years of service:

staff & teaching assistants

AISG is a flourishing learning community because of our support staff, who work endlessly to ensure that our programs and systems run smoothly. They are the unsung heroes of our school, working behind the scenes to guarantee that our students, faculty, and other community members benefit from everything AISG has to offer. We thank and congratulate the following staff members and teaching assistants for their boundless contributions to AISG.

staff



ROW ONE:
Angel Cen
Irene Huang
May Hao
Shirley Chan

ROW TWO:
Eva Ho
Jessica Chen
Mina Lao
Tina Li

ROW THREE:
Eve Huang
Mark Lau
Sarah Wang
Zoe Zhou

teaching assistants



LEFT TO RIGHT:
Cherry Oliveros
Grinny Siu
Kitty Feng

class of 2018



The Class of 2018 Graduation Ceremony at AISG Science Park Theater on May 23rd, 2018.

acknowledgments

This volume of *Ignite* marks the first official alumni magazine AISG has ever published in our 37-year history. The completion of this project could not have been accomplished without the support of AISG alumni, students, and faculty—past and present. We'd like to thank everyone who contributed to the creation of this magazine. Your efforts have truly ignited our passion to keep AISG community members connected for years to come.

A sincere thank you to all contributors (in alphabetical order): *Brandon Bott, Nikhil Budhdev, Lishi Cheng, Maria Elena Little, Vince Flynn, Gloria Huang, Christina Hinze Jørgensen, Michael Kang, Blythe Kendall, Amy Lai, Helen Liao, Betty Lin, Erica Liu, Nina Schneider, Clarissa Skinner, Lidia Slawinska, Alek Slawinski, Wonjun Song, Richard Sonnet, Donna Spisso, Will Tragert, Santiago Villar and Michael Wu.*

The connection between the school and our alumni should not end on graduation day. Even though our alumni have moved on, we hope AISG continues to hold a special place in their hearts. We're thrilled that they are pursuing their passions, making the world a better place, and serving as incredible role models for our current Rams.

Alumni, no matter where you are now, we hope you remember your years at AISG fondly. Thank you for helping AISG become a leader in international education and making us so proud.

Once a Ram, always a Ram.

Q: How can I update my information with the Alumni Office?

A: You can update your information in a few ways. You can call the Alumni Office at (+8620) 3213 5555 ext 1168, or e-mail us at alumni@aisgz.org. You may also update your information online by quickly filling out our Keep in Touch form.

Q: I'd like to come back to Guangzhou and visit the campus. Is there any information that will help in my planning?

A: Contact the Alumni Office and we will provide you with the updated transportation information to get back to school. We can also provide a list of hotels that offer the AISG corporate rate for you to choose from. Be sure to stop by the Alumni Office while you're in town!

Q: How do I plan a reunion?

A: To plan a reunion, please contact the Alumni Office via email: alumni@aisgz.org or by calling (+8620) 3213 5555 ext 1168. We can assist you in getting started, planning your reunion and promoting the event on AISG alumni social media channels.

Q: How can I get the information about alumni activities and publications?

A: This information will be sent regularly to each alum's registered email address or via alumni social media channels. If you need to update personal information or contact details, alumni can use the Keep in Touch form on the AISG website to stay connected.

FAQ

Q: How can I get involved?

A: We're always looking for fellow Rams who are passionate about AISG and ready to lead and share. There are countless ways to get involved on campus, in your community and across the globe. Whether your passion drives you to become a mentor or to volunteer for a good cause, please send us an email and the Alumni Office will facilitate your event.

Q: I am searching for friends I went to AISG with. How do I find them?

A: If you are searching for contact information for an alum of AISG, we are happy to forward an email on your behalf if we have current contact information in our database. Please send us an email along with a note containing as much detail information about the person (age, graduation year, etc.) as possible.

Q: How can I let my classmates know what I am doing?

A: AISG shares alumni updates via the alumni newsletter, *Ignite* and social media channels. You can email the Alumni Office at alumni@aisgz.org whenever you make a career change, get a new job, get married, have a baby, or graduate with a new degree or award. All new information is then updated in our alumni database and included in future editions of *Ignite*.

Q: How can I give a gift to AISG?

A: Please visit the Giving page on the AISG website. This outlines the many wonderful contributions you can make to AISG. Thank you in advance!



CONTACT US:

ERSHA CAMPUS
Pre-K-5
No 3 Yan Yu Street South,
Ersha Island,
Guangzhou

SCIENCE PARK CAMPUS
Gr. 6-12
19 Kexiang Road,
Science Park,
Guangzhou

Email: alumni@aisgz.org

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/aisgzalumni 

INSTAGRAM: [@aisgzalumni](https://instagram.com/aisgzalumni) 

WECHAT: [aisgwechat](https://wechat.com/qrcode/aisgwechat) 

S I N C E 1 9 8 1



ERSHA CAMPUS

Pre-K-5
No 3 Yan Yu Street South,
Ersha Island,
Guangzhou

SCIENCE PARK CAMPUS

Gr. 6-12
19 Kexiang Road,
Science Park,
Guangzhou

