



Jenny Pham | Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Jenny Pham found VES all on her own. Read about the breadth of her experiences and engagement as a student and the impact VES had in preparing her for success in college and beyond.

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Transitioning to VES from Vietnam

Coming to VES was definitely an adjustment from living in Vietnam, but it was easy because people were open to learn about me and my culture. I had a pretty smooth transition thanks to the teachers and my classmates who were always available for help inside and outside class.

Enhanced Learning in Small Classes

I liked that the classes were small; I learned better because I could be more involved in the classroom through dialogue and working collaboratively, which also provided another powerful way for me to bond with my classmates.

Introducing New Interests

I came to VES with art as my passion and expected to fully concentrate on honing my skills in this area. What was so wonderful about VES is how the school helped me broaden my interests. It was really refreshing to find new things that I like doing. In this way, VES helped me pursue one passion, while discovering new ones.

Self-Exploration Through Advanced Studies

In my senior year, I pursued an independent study of art through the VES Advanced Studies program. I focused on self-exploration that can be translated



through different forms of art; in a way, my works were all an abstract version of a self-portrait. I concentrated on the theme of fears and, even though these fears are very personal, I wanted them to apply to my audience as well. Advanced Studies provided the opportunity for me to experiment. I didn't limit myself to just 2D art; I ventured into different forms and media that I've never tried before and it made for a great growth experience.

At the completion of the program, students present their work to the school community. Art is something that's very personal for me, which is one of the reasons why I love it so much, so sharing it and talking about it was harder for me. Presenting at the Student Expo was definitely a valuable experience because it helped me with public speaking. It also was interesting as an artist to find out what people thought of my art and how differently people interpreted it. In that aspect, it taught me to keep my audience in mind while making art as well because as much as art is for the artist, it's also for the audience.

Meaningful Connections for a Lifetime

My favorite thing about VES has to be the people and the community. It's where I met my best friends—Sophie from North Carolina, Onyi from Nigeria, Mae from Virginia, Alev from Turkey and Lindsay from West Virginia—and formed great relationships with teachers who I will continue to learn from beyond my experience at VES.

Life Lessons Learned at VES

VES taught me many things. The time structure at VES has taught me to put time aside for work, which is really helpful in college. Perhaps most important, through the social aspects of the school, I was able to find myself and know who I am as a person.

Off to College

Jenny is enrolled at George Washington University where she continues to explore new interests and opportunities.

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