



## Joseph Hwang | Seoul, Korea

VES has set Joseph up for success in business and life. Joseph fully lived into the Portrait of a VES Graduate—a bright young man who is:

- A curious, innovative thinker and producer
- A mindful leader who serves with courage and compassion
- Self-aware
- Focused on community
- Ready to navigate and continue his personal growth in our dynamic world

In his four years at VES, Joseph was a respected leader among his peers. Through his active engagement in our VES community he built lasting friendships with students and faculty from the US and around the world. He worked relentlessly to become a fluent writer and speaker of English. He demonstrated courage, energy and joy in his athletics. Now as a student at New York University, Joseph is pursuing his college studies at the Stern School of Business. Joseph continues his journey Toward Full Stature.



### How it all started

When Joseph finished 4<sup>th</sup> grade, he spent two months at summer camp in Canada. “I thought it was cool, and it made me start to think about studying abroad. In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I first talked to my parents about wanting

to study in the US, but they believed I was too young. I continued the conversation and finally brought my mom around. Dad was harder to convince.” Joseph applied to several US schools, but it was a personal connection at VES that led him to the school. “I was told that ‘the VES community would be a great fit for you, especially with your love of sports.’ Once I arrived on campus, I realized VES was even more of a fit than I could have imagined.”

Joseph shares his thoughts on why VES has been tailor-made for him:

### Leadership

I want to run a business, to be a CEO. At VES, I have served as a counselor, a member of the Honor Committee, a Junior RA and captain of the varsity soccer team. Over the years, Korean students at VES have held leadership positions and they go on to great colleges.





### Hands-on learning

Teachers give students lots of freedom—we do have boundaries, but lots of room within them. In Korea, our learning is theoretical; here, we learn in many ways, including hands on experiments in science labs and making a foreign language Oscar movie where we have to write, direct and edit the movie in our language of study.

### Friendship and the VES community

The students and teachers at VES have naturally kind hearts. Living on campus in such close proximity, you get to know each other really well and we respect each other. They help you grow as a person, a thinker, a student. We listen to and learn from other perspectives.

### Communication Skills

I always wanted to be a strong writer. I discovered a book in Mr. Knebel's English class — "Speak, Memory" by Vladimir Nabokov. I was amazed at how descriptive and beautiful the story is. I thought 'This is how you write a book!' and now I try to emulate that style. In class, we also had to write a letter. I wrote mine to my Grandma, and when I got an A+ on the letter, I knew I had achieved something significant.

### Sports as a Classroom

On the playing field, I was able to learn the importance of teamwork as well as develop a competitive spirit—crucial skills for business. At VES, I have had the opportunity to play three sports—soccer, basketball and lacrosse. As a freshman, the varsity basketball team mesmerized me. I learned how serious varsity-level sports are and how much work goes into it. Sports have allowed me to combine the physical and the mental, and it's great to have a community of coaches and teammates who will always have my back.

### Becoming my best self

VES set me up for success. I am more creative, passionate about things I do, and more competitive, thanks to my four years at VES. I am more empathetic and understanding of others' feelings.

*I have become the best version of myself  
—physically, academically, socially.*

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