



Goodbye  
Miss Mishka!



IC Newsletter  
SUMMER 2017



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## Dear friends,

Greetings one and all, I hope you enjoy the read. This is my third piece for the beloved IC Newsletter. The continuing saga of Alexander MacLachlan and the founding of the school makes it a regular must-read – not something you always get to say about institutional publications!

In the last few months we have been amongst our friends in Saudi, Dubai, Geneva and Paris – very different locations to Boston, Miami and Los Angeles but the same spirit again. The same friendliness, the same celebration, the same recognition of a different kind of education produces a different kind of person. Friendship groups amongst IC alumni are like no other; in intensity of affection and in terms of mutual recognition.

But what I have also recognized is that we as a school could be better at reaching our alumni and working together with them. Whilst Moufid and our colleagues in the Advancement office all enjoy the IC spirit as we encounter it in the many different places we find it (look inside for many pictures of happy celebrating IC Alumni), we think we have to work an awful lot harder to turn that spirit into a flourishing network, benefiting each other and the current students at the school. To that end, we will be in touch in the coming months trying to build stronger chapters, trying to use more modern methods of communication, and establishing a directory of alumni so it is easier for everyone to stay in touch and work together.

Many congratulations to all of those people involved in putting yet another great IC Newsletter together, not least the marvelous Reem Haddad who carries out the lion's share of the work.

Best Regards,



**Christopher A Greenwood, PhD**  
*Vice President & Director for Advancement*

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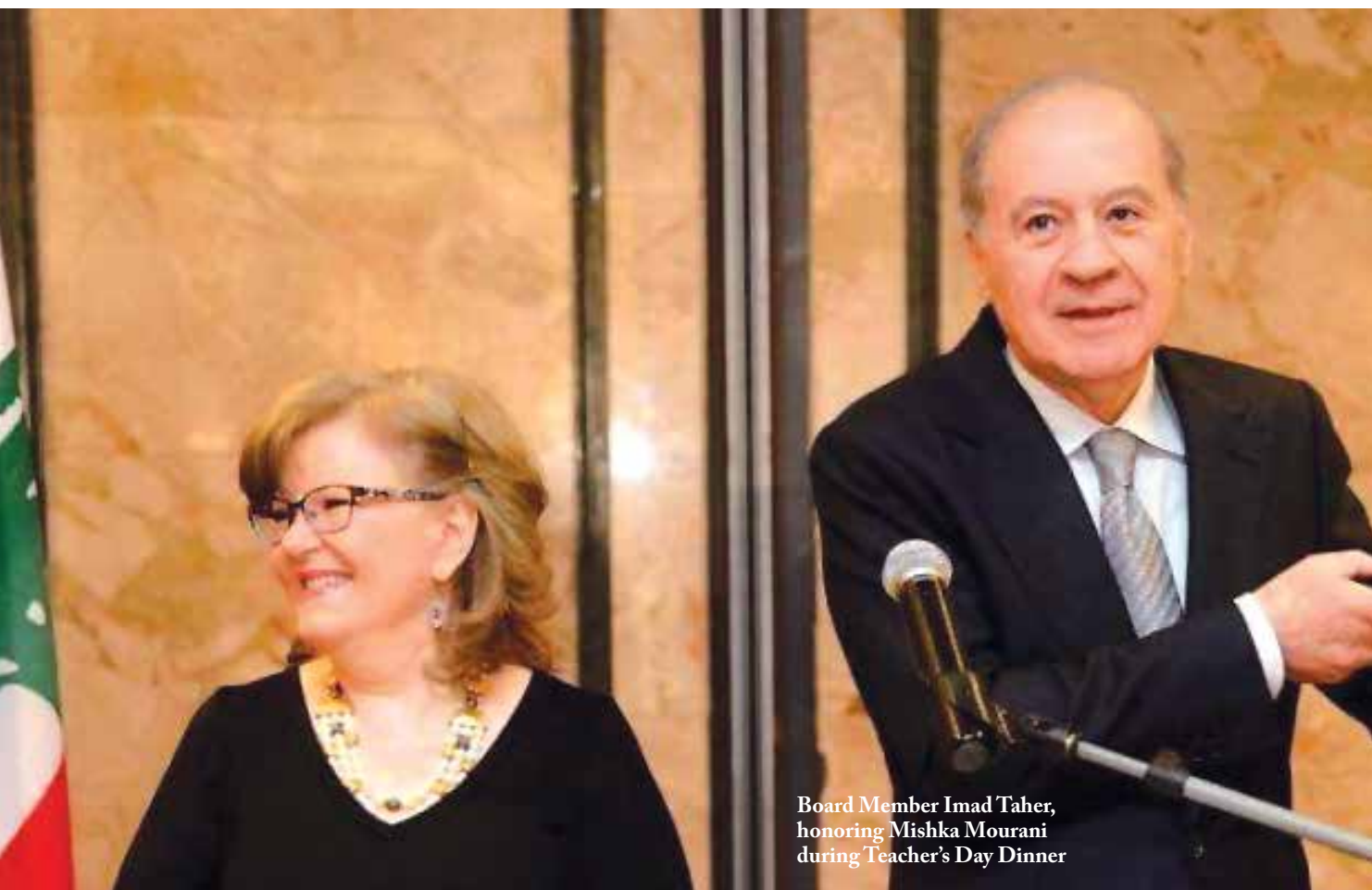
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### THE IC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES THE ELECTIONS ITS NEW COUNCIL:

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**THE ELECTED COUNCIL BOARD WILL SERVE  
FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR.**



**Board Member Imad Taher, honoring Mishka Mourani during Teacher's Day Dinner**

## "Miss Mishka" retires

Sit down graduates of the 70s and 80s and brace yourselves: Miskha Mojabber is retiring. Yes, the loveable blond hair English teacher "Miss Mishka" is leaving IC.

How can that be? Wasn't it just yesterday that the junior from AUB arrived to campus?

Actually, that was in 1975. The civil war had just started. Many newly hired foreign English teachers cancelled their move to Lebanon. In desperation, IC turned to the AUB English department who sent a young moppet of a girl – barely older than the students she was to teach. But Mojabber-Mourani (since 1993) already had five languages under her belt. She was after all, studying to be an interpreter. She had moved to Lebanon only two years before from Australia – her adolescent home – and was planning to move on to Geneva after earning a BA in English Literature.

Edmond Tohmé, then Middle School Director, hired her on the spot. Little did anyone know that this inexperienced teacher would end up leading the school and playing an instrumental role in keeping it open during the country's

vicious 15-year civil war.

Of course, she had to deal with some problems at the beginning: convincing colleagues that she was indeed a teacher and not a student. In one famous story during her early days, she was barred from entering Rockefeller Hall during recess. Not only that, but she was scolded for her bold claim of being a teacher. It was finally her Department Chairman, Thomas Weaver, who vouched for her.

Fortunately, she had a keen sense of humor and quickly became one of the all-time favorite teachers in the school with a long line of admirers in tow.

Soon enough, 'Miss Mishka' became synonymous with 'IC'.

Meanwhile, Mourani seems to have forgotten her dream of becoming an interpreter. "Teaching became my passion," she said.

Despite a heavy teaching schedule, she managed to obtain her Bachelor's with distinction, a Master's in Literature and a Diploma in Administration.

Still, the war continued and Mourani often found herself unable to go home.



During an especially long battle in 1976, she spent three weeks sleeping in a little storage room at the top floor of Sage Hall.

In the late seventies her parents moved to Athens. Mourani chose to remain in Beirut. She was attached to the school.

"The kids would spend the night at a shelter or study by candlelight but come anyway," she said. "If they could come, so could we. It was not up for negotiation. It was a tacit contract."

IC had to survive. While the war raged outside its doors under the guise of religious fervors between 18 different sectarian dominations, inside there was nothing but tolerance.

"IC offered an oasis of peace for us," she said. "There were some real horror stories outside, some real tragedies. But here, we were all attached and committed to our students, to the mission of IC, to providing an exemplary education."

By all accounts, IC should have closed. The risk was just too high. But dedicated personnel kept it going. Day

after day. Year after year.

Mourani's Australian passport – her way out – was kept tucked away. "I wasn't leaving," she said. "I refused. I was committed to my life here."

In 1991, the war ended. IC had survived. But it was a somewhat different IC. "The commitment of the people who kept it open became a large part of the identity of the school," said Mourani. Moreover, the school flourished. "Never did I feel we were stagnating. Not only did we survive, we grew."

(In fact, today's mission statement is a series of beliefs which were directly derived from IC administrators' personal lessons learned from the Lebanese civil war).

Meanwhile and despite the raging war, Mourani threw herself into her career. In 1978, the Educational Resource Center (ERC) asked for her help in launching the Sultan School in Oman as part of a team. She travelled to Muscat to teach with four other colleagues.

It was a turning point. Mourani became a consultant for the ERC. She had discovered her second passion: teaching teachers.

She eventually served on the professional development advisory board of NESA (Near East and South Asia Council of Overseas Schools) where she helped set the program of speakers and workshops of the four annual events – conferences and institutes – attended by up to 1500 people from 40 international schools – geared towards heads of schools, leadership cadres and educators.

Following her service as Director of the Elementary, Middle, and Secondary schools, in 1998, Mourani was appointed as the school's Senior Vice President. Twice during her career, she found herself serving two posts simultaneously: Director of the Elementary and Middle schools in the early nineties, and later, Director of the Secondary School and Senior Vice President. During that period, IC was accredited for the first time by both



NEASC and ECIS.

In the 1990s, IC participated in the revision of the Lebanese National Curriculum. The following decade also saw the introduction of the IB Diploma at the Secondary School and PYP (Primary Years Program) in the preschool and elementary levels. Mourani also focused on the French Baccalaureate and IC regained its official AEFÉ status of "établissement homologué". The school was reaccredited by NEASC & ECIS in 2008.

"The success of IC has always been a community effort, and I am so blessed to have been a part of this community for the past 42 years," she said. "IC has been a constant in my life. I am very much part of the fabric of the school and the school is very much part of the fabric of who I am."

One thing is for sure: The 'Miss Torch' and 'Miss IC' of the past and coming years will come and go. But no one will ever forget the actual 'Miss' of them all: Mishka Mojabber Mourani.

Thank you and Happy Retirement Miss Mishka.



# The Adventures of Alexander MacLachlan:

Rev. Alexander MacLachlan



Doors at IC remained open during WWI

Courtesy of levantineheritage.com

*As the Ottoman Empire's largest Mediterranean port, Smyrna's harbor came under attack from Allied Forces. The intention was to prevent it being used as a submarine base. Smyrna, itself, was defended by a battery of guns plus minefields that were protected by light guns and searchlights.*

*In response, Turkish Minister of War, Enver Pasha, ordered the commander of the 4th Army Corps in Smyrna to arrest foreign residents for use as human shields. Police rounded up French, English, Belgian, Montenegrin, and Serb civilians. Out to protect his beloved citizens and yet forced to comply, Smyrna governor, Rahmi Bey, shrewdly made a show of "arresting" all foreign nationals*

*only to quietly release them 48 hours later.*

*Meanwhile, thousands of Muslim refugees from the Balkans came to Smyrna from Constantinople, bringing with them diseases like typhus and cholera....*

Still, International College opened its doors, a few days late, but it opened. The exact number enrolled were 146 day students and 60 boarders from 11 nationalities: Greeks, Armenians, Turks, English, Arabs, Austrians, Americans, Dutch, Albanians, and Poles. Ten of the students were citizens of nations currently at war with Turkey. A skeleton of a faculty was still on campus. Many had returned to their home countries and some were called in for military service. It was up to the few remaining missionaries to teach all the classes.

But, just when MacLachlan thought that the school was up and running, another blow came his way: Turkish authorities forbade all staff who were citizens of countries at war with Turkey to teach. Another six members, including himself, drastically cut down the size of the already dwindling faculty. Basically, the school now depended on five teachers.

MacLachlan with some staff members



# Smyrna

## (Part XV)

MacLachlan rearranged his classes.

Then came another blow: Turkish authorities called on all male citizens of the Ottoman empire – regardless of age – to arms. Two more of IC's faculty, over 61 years of age, left for military service.

Only three faculty members now remained (one of whom was a British subject but was fortunately overlooked by the Turkish educational authorities).

Still, MacLachlan managed to get the last laugh: foreseeing such a measure, he had his students take their final exams earlier in the year. At least this year was saved.

As for the coming years, Smyrna's governor and loyal protector of foreign nationals, secretly gave MacLachlan the most absolute assurance that IC may continue to rely on his support and protection against any such interferences with the school in the future.

But, despite these assurances, it was getting increasingly difficult to pretend that all was normal. MacLachlan found himself trying to run a school to the accompaniment of "the heavy boom of heavy guns on the sea front, the hum of aircraft overhead, and the bursting of their destructive shells within a quarter of mile of our campus," he writes in the 1916 annual report to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, adding that an aerial battle almost immediately over the college campus brought four airmen down, one on either side of the campus. Two of the airmen were reportedly blown to pieces.

The campus itself was often strewn with shrapnel fired towards the enemy aircrafts above. The windows of some buildings were occasionally shattered by the bursting of heaving shells. Military tents now extended close along the southern wall of the campus, some within a few feet of the auditorium and "yet in spite of multiplied distractions and calamities we were able to report a year of successful achievement," he reported.

Meanwhile, pestilence was slowly



**The British Naval bombardment of the defenses of Smyrna, the Illustrated War News, Mar 17, 1915**

gripping the cosmopolitan picturesque city. Epidemics of typhus, and Asiatic cholera were the biggest threats.

IC's own physician, a member of the Scotch mission in Smyrna, died of typhus while caring for Turkish soldiers in the hospital. MacLachlan reported the death of many of his friends and "we have to thank God that it has not come nigh in our dwellings," he reported to the Board.

Famine was equally a huge threat. With the prices of all commodities increasing drastically, MacLachlan was urgently searching for food to keep his charges fed.

"Life is getting more and more difficult; all food stuff is an enormous price. No luxuries to be had. We have no sweets for months now. Cholera has started. Potatoes are now very scarce and awfully dear, in fact little by little we can see famine creeping upon us," wrote Grace Williamson in her diary. She was one of the remaining British Levantine residents who chose to remain in Smyrna and ran a nursing and maternity home. "I met a desperate Mr. MacLachlan this morning. He has been trying for three weeks to get ten bags of flour and although he has all the papers and permits from the Vali, can get us nothing."

It appears that MacLachlan was not just caring for his students but also for unannounced visitors to the campus. According to the minutes to the Board, up to 2,500 destitute visitors daily flocked to the campus begging

for food. Despite his best efforts in running the campus with as little expense as possible (e.g. no electric lights), he finally transferred his self-imposed relief work to the large government soup kitchen in the city.

In the midst of all this, MacLachlan's daughter, Rosalind, married Cass Reed, the school's Dean in a small ceremony held at the campus. "Such a 'kroio' (cold)", comments Williamson in her diary, "but I suppose they are happy."

Despite the wartime measures, the newlyweds managed to go Bairakly (still under Ottoman rule) for their honeymoon. Upon their return, they moved to a house within the College complex.

But the trials of the MacLachlan family and IC itself were still at the beginning as the war raged on with no ending in sight.

*To be continued....*

*Historical information based on: an interview with Dr. Howard Reed (summer 2011); and Potpourri of Sidelights and Shadows from Turkey, by Alexander MacLachlan, 1937, Grade Williamson Diary of Life during WWI Smyrna, The One Hundred and Sixth Annual Report of the American Board of Commissioner for Foreign Missions, October 24 1916, The Fourteenth Annual President's Report 1916-1917 by Rev. Alexander MacLachlan.*

# THE FOURTH FOUNDERS' DAY REUNION:

Our founders would surely have been proud for, again, their “descendants” have held their 4th reunion. This time it was right here at IC.

Four schools from Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria met in May to brainstorm ways to keep our ‘sister’ schools connected.

The founding father of the schools was the American Board Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), Protestant missionaries who established schools and universities throughout the region in the 1800s.

But the Ottoman Empire’s demise led for a struggle for Turkish self-determination and schools were subjected to heavy restrictions. The role of ABCFM and its missionaries dwindled considerably. With the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and the US depression in 1929, some of the Board’s schools eventually either shut down permanently or relocated to other countries. Some, however, remained.

As the years passed and as they adapted to their new environments, the schools lost touch with one another. In IC’s case, after it accepted an invitation by then AUB President Dr. Bayard Dodge to come to Beirut and take over the Preparatory School, it severed all ties with Turkey. IC became a Lebanese entity completely.

It took 76 years for IC’s sister school, the American Collegiate Institute, to reconnect with IC. In 2012, IC received a surprise letter asking for a reunion in Izmir (Smyrna), Turkey – IC’s original birthplace.

It was a meeting like no other, for IC had brought along some of its students. A special permit allowed them inside IC’s old school grounds – still intact since it shut down in 1934. It had been turned into a NATO army

base and great efforts had obviously been taken to keep it as it was. The ten IC students had become the center of attention and even more so when they climbed on to the stage and sang IC’s Alma Mater. It was the same theatrical stage that had witnessed choirs, lectures, performances and prayers. Many onlookers cried.

“You’re back,” had cried one woman.

IC and its sister schools had apparently had many joint activities together. But, out of the 15 schools that were originally established by the Board, only seven schools survive

today: International College (Beirut), American Collegiate Institute (Izmir), Anatolia College (Greece), Pierce (The American College of Greece), Tarsus American College, Uskudar American Academy (Turkey) and the American College of Sofia.

It was five of those who met at IC in May – each determined that now they had found each other, they would stay together. A special presentation by guest speaker Dr. Reverend Habib Badr, an American-educated Senior Pastor of the National Evangelical Church of Beirut, traced the roots of





# ONCE TOGETHER, ALWAYS TOGETHER

the missionary schools and how they evolved throughout the years.

The one-day meeting consisted of intensive brainstorming sessions to find ways to keep the schools connected. Joint choirs, theatre productions, films, and athletic competitions are in the pipelines. Efforts are currently underway to produce a joint logo and possibly a joint school song.



Dr. Richard Ewing (President of the American College of Sofia), Claudia Carydis (Vice President, Public Affairs) and Olga Julius (Principal from the American College in Greece), Gunseli Yuksel, (Principal of the Tarsus American College), Didem Erpulat (Principal of the American Collegiate Institute in Izmir)



Front row: L to R: Dr. Habib Badr '69, Moufid Beydoun '64, Reem Haddad '87, Olga Julius, Mishka Mourani, Didem Erpulat, Sana Yamout, Gunseli Yuksel  
Back row: Claudia Carydis, Dr. Richard Ewing



## BRINGING HISTORY ALIVE IN THE CLASSROOM

Imagine a history teacher standing at the top of the class giving her power point presentation. Imagine students dutifully copying the words – one by one – silently groaning at the very mere idea of memorizing all these terms and dates in time for the upcoming test.

Sounds familiar?

This, unfortunately, is what most history classes look like across the country today.

Now imagine, a teacher engaging students in debates about a history topic. Imagine her or him questioning their ideas and thoughts. Imagine students linking historical events to current ones. Imagine students themselves challenging their peers and teachers to debates.

Just imagine history coming alive in the classroom.

This is the future of a history classroom and the aim of **Nayla Hamadeh '84** when she launched the Lebanese Association for History (LAH) six years ago.

“Our teaching methodology is all wrong,” she said. “A history class shouldn’t just be about terms and dates. The past has to be linked to the present or else why are we teaching history?”

Hamadeh herself was a history teacher, right here at IC, when she found herself becoming increasingly frustrated with the teaching methods – especially in the Lebanese program. And yes, while she

did try to get her lessons to be more lively and interactive with the additions of texts, pictures, videos and historical maps and basically “nurtured thinking,” she said, it just wasn’t enough.

Still, she wasn’t quite sure how to ease her increasing frustrations until 2011, when IC sent her to attend a conference for educators. With a pleasant shock, she discovered that other attending Lebanese teachers from other schools and university professors, shared her frustrations. Would they be willing to form a team and spearhead efforts to change things?

In 2012, together, with university professors Bassel Akar, Maha Shuayb and school teachers Khalil Makar and Youssef About Antoun, they held their first meeting at a local café. Thus, the birth of the LAH.

In 2013, the LAH organized a conference to introduce a disciplinary approach to history pedagogy in Lebanon. History teachers across the country were invited to attend.

The response was overwhelming. But more overwhelming was the arrival of several former militiamen on the day of the conference.

“We would also like to discuss the civil war,” they said simply.

At first, Hamadeh was taken aback but soon the discussion ran so deep



that another day was added to the supposedly one-day conference.

"We were really listening to each other's perspective," she said.

The problem of teaching history in Lebanon is two-fold. One, the teaching of history is still painfully – well – primitive. And two, the Lebanese government has yet to concur about a common textbook on the country's history.

Help came from three sources: Finland, Cyprus and the UK.

As luck would have it, a group of Finnish history teachers were taking a cultural tour of Lebanon and Syria in an effort to learn about their histories. Finland's school system has consistently come at the top for the international rankings for education systems. They had especially devised an innovative way to teach their own 1918 civil war. Yes, they would be more than happy to share their innovative way of teaching history – especially about the civil war – with their Lebanese counterparts.

Soon after, the LAH team heard of an exceptional move in Cyprus: an association (AHDR - Association For Historical Dialogue and Research)

located in the UN Buffer Zone separating the Greek and Turkish parts of the island, was bringing teachers from both sides and equipping them with the latest techniques in sensitive history teaching.

The AHDR soon arrived to Beirut to demonstrate activities they use with their own instructors to teach about the highly controversial Ottoman times.

Slowly but surely, Hamadeh was finding her way. "We were getting empowered," she said. "We were gaining expertise on how to tackle the subject of history, civil war or other."

Finally, the greatest breakthrough: the Historical Thinking Project – a UK created framework designed to foster a new approach to history education

It revolves around the idea that historical thinking — much like science or math — is central to teaching history and that students should become more competent as historical thinkers as they progress through their schooling. This 'historical thinking', revolves heavily on critical thinking skills and 'historical literacy'.

At the end of the school years, historical literate students can assess

and debate almost any historical subject. They will be able to see many sides of an event, its cause, and effect and decipher fact from opinion.

In 2014, LAH launched a one-year program to train middle and secondary school teacher in the Historical Thinking Approach. Their training took them across the country to Nabatieh, Tripoli and Chouf.

"At the beginning it was like teaching Chinese to the Lebanese, really," said Hamadeh. "Teachers couldn't understand. History is one narrative. You come and you teach. You want to make interactive ok you bring in documents. But what do you mean historical concepts?"

In 2016 and partnering with major universities, LAH launched a two-year training program. The idea is that teachers become trainers in their own schools and LAH continues to "mentor" them.

"This is not just about curriculum and content, but more about livening up the teaching methodology for any subject in history," said Hamadeh. "If you can't bring history alive and link it to our reality, then we would be missing a lot."



Nayla Hamadeh at a workshop

## THE YOUNG COMPOSER



At 8, Shaun Augustine heard his first melody. He remembers the moment well. He was going over his daily piano practice in the living room, when suddenly a tune popped into his head and he found himself playing it on the piano.

His astounded family gathered around the piano. When done, the boy looked up at his parents. "I wrote that myself," he said.

That was just the beginning. Since then, melodies have just kept popping in to his head at all times – and, unfortunately, at the most inopportune times. Like during Arabic or math class.

"I really want to go home to my piano but I have to wait until class is over," said Shaun, now a ninth grader at IC Ain Aar. "Sometimes I can catch the melody again but sometimes I lose it."

When he does 'catch' it again, he rushes home and goes straight to the piano – and there he would stay for several hours until the piece has been written down. Almost always, his mother would be listening nearby. And Shaun would play for her.

"She likes my music a lot," said Shaun. "She is usually always near me when I practice."

At the age of 3, Shaun began taking piano lessons. He would hear his older brother and sister taking lessons and feel the pull of the piano. Finally, he demanded lessons. Surprised, the parents indulged their preschooler and hired a teacher.

But their indulgence soon turned into pure surprise as their little boy began to show every sign of being a musical prodigy. The piano and the boy were practically inseparable. And then began the compositions.

"There is music everywhere," he said. "The birds are music. I hear them. I can see the notes."

Meanwhile, word was going around about young Shaun and his compositions.

At the age of 10, he was invited to Dubai to perform his compositions at the concert of Edward Kunz, one of the leading pianists in the world. As Shaun took his place at the piano, he looked up and rested his eyes on his





parents' table – purposely placed just across the piano.

"Play for me Shaun," said his mother.

Shaun did. The audience loved him. More compositions. More concerts. He was hailed as the next Beethoven.

At the age of 12, Shaun's music took him to London where he played his latest compositions in the Natural History's Museum.

"That was cool because there was a dinosaur just behind me," he said.

And in front of him as always was his mother, Paola. "Play for me Shaun," she would say as always.

This time he really did, with a composition especially made for her: "Letters to my Mom".

In fact, that same year, he recorded his first CD dedicated to his mother.

Still more compositions and more concerts followed. Both local and international ones.

In 2016, the young composer was invited to speak at a TEDx talk held at LAU.

That is when he learned about IC Alumni, **Sara Khatib '10** and her famous "Four Lessons While Battling Cancer" speech - four tips on how to live a happy life - that she had given at the LAU TEDx talk two years earlier. She passed away two weeks after her talk.

Shaun walked on stage and gave the performance of his young life: a composition made up of four parts



Shaun and his mother Paola

– each one representing a lesson from Sara's speech. At the end of the performance, Sara's tearful family went on stage and hugged the boy.

Other concerts followed including one in Brazil, at the Lebanese National Museum, and last January, at the Presidential Palace in Baabda. In March, Shaun presented a piano concert entitled "Annonciation" on the occasion of the feast of the Annunciations, and in celebration of the 6th anniversary of the election of his Beatitude Cardinal Patriarch Bechara Al Rai. At only 14, Shaun received the "Bkerke Medal" – becoming the youngest person in Bkerke history to receive the award.

Meanwhile, Shaun released four CDs (another one is on the way) – three of which were recorded in Abbey Road studios in London "where The Beatles recorded their albums," Shaun said. "That was really cool."

However, once back from London, Brazil, Bkerke and the glamour of it all, Shaun is back at his IC school desk figuring out an intricate geometrical problem or cramming for the latest test.

"It is tough but I am managing," said Shaun. "I can never let go of my music. I can never stop composing. That is my life."

*Shaun Augustine's latest CD will be released on Amazon.*

**ANDREW BISMAR**

Accepted at  
McGill, Toronto  
University, and  
British Columbia

My 'thing' is effective time management. I do sailing, tennis, ping pong and swimming as hobbies as well as scouts. I am on the IC Badminton team and am also the class representative. I also volunteer with an NGO that cares for disabled children.

**MAHER ABDEL SAMAD**

Accepted at UPenn, Columbia and Johns Hopkins

My 'thing' is my ambition and energy. I love to be a leader. I was a class representative for two years. I also helped organize and headed the MUN trip to India, where my team won the best delegation and I received a trophy. I am also the Vice-Captain of the IC Varsity Rugby team. I teach English and SAT to underprivileged kids and teenagers. In my spare time, I help out the guidance counseling office here at IC. I like to help other kids find their passion. On the side of all this, I am also a professional DJ. I trained to be a DJ at a music school and earn my own pocket money by being a DJ at parties.

**THE 'THING':**

## How to Get Into Top Universities

**M**arie Assir, Head of Admissions and Career Guidance, put it very well. "Universities are looking for the 'thing'."

What thing?

"The thing that makes you different," she said. "Your passion."

With up to 80,000 applications a year raining down on top universities, grades and SAT scores just aren't enough.

Thus, the 'thing'.

And that could be almost anything. Well, as long as it is special. It could be a virtuoso violinist, a philanthropic initiative, a committed volunteer, an inspiring artist, a tennis champion or maybe a twirling ballerina.

"Universities are looking for students who go beyond the grades and SAT scores," she said. "Everyone who is applying to top universities has high grades and top SAT scores."

So, basically it comes down to: What are you doing outside the classroom?

Or, as IC's President Dr. Don Bergman put it, "what do you bring to a university community?"

Unlike Lebanese universities, most US students have left home and are living in the university compound. Over the years, these microcosm compounds have become more or less self-sustaining. Naturally, universities look for students who can bring an 'added value' to these compounds.

"They are looking for a diverse group of community participants," said Dr. Bergman. "They don't just want all-star athletes, engineers or doctors or architects. They want what reflects the society as a whole. They want different passions."

It came as a shock to many IC



students in the fall, when Bergman and Assir accompanied seven students on a US university tour. Their peers – and competitors – offered so much more than just good grades. “The kids we were meeting were so interesting,” recalled Assir. “They were horseback riding, they were playing music, they were into drama, into chess. They were just fascinating people. And this is what got them into their universities.”

By the end of the trip, IC students came back resolved to get more involved in extracurricular activities and fine tune their passion or ‘thing’ – something they should have started in their Middle school years.

But, ultimately, they are not to blame. Truth be said, a heavy Lebanese government imposed academic curriculum, coupled with a wide parental belief in an academics-only schedule, is actually inhibiting many students from getting accepted in top US universities.

A fact that has not gone unnoticed by IC’s President. In fact, it was the first thing he noticed when he took office three years ago. It has been his ultimate challenge to find a healthy balance between an unnecessarily heavy academic schedule and extracurricular activities.

“We need to change the paradigm of thinking,” he said. “100% pass rates on Brevet and Baccalaureate exams is admirable, but we have to value and intentionally support many other factors to optimize our students’ opportunity for happiness and success in life. I ask myself, “how much collateral damage do we leave behind in our relentless pursuit of academics? For how many kids do we not provide sufficient support and encouragement or contribute to unnecessary stress and anxiety? We have many bright and talented kids who don’t neatly fit into the narrow profile that is part of both the Lebanese and IC culture. The message we are giving students is that their unique interests, talents and passions are not as important as the traditional cultural and institutional ones.”

But there is good news. Many IC students have been able to do both: excel at academics and pursue their passions. They are, as Assir says, “unique”.

“So, go ahead, and find your passion,” she said.

After all, it is ultimately those passions – and not the degree – that leads to a happy life.



## KAREN ABDALLAH Accepted at Cambridge University (Law)

My ‘thing’ is that I am not afraid to speak my mind. I can take the pressure and fight back. I think I got this by participating in MUN for three years. One time, I had to defend something I don’t even believe in. But that is the way it is going to be when I become a lawyer. Cambridge knew this and I think liked this part of me. I am also involved with the CISV, an NGO which aims to spread local peace through youth. At the same time, I managed to keep up my piano and violin practices.

## EVA MALIK Accepted at Notre Dame University, USA

My “thing” is that I have been in the choir since grade one. I learned to manage my studies and choir rehearsals as well as performing arts. I also participated in several AMIS concerts. I am also part of the environment club.



# THE PLAY

When Milia Ayache '05 returned to Beirut after finishing graduate school, she found herself back at IC talking to her old drama teacher, Riad Chirazi. The two had hit it off instantly since the day when Ayache, still in Middle school then, lied about her age and class to get into Chirazi's theatre club reserved for seniors only. Now, she had a proposal: to take IB students to Russia and to take part in workshops at the prestigious Moscow Art Theatre. She had, herself, spent a semester there as part of her Master's Theatre program at Harvard University. Ayache could make the necessary contacts.

In 2015, the first eight IC students travelled to Moscow. It has since become a yearly event.

Soon after the inaugural trip, her attention was drawn to the Lebanese theatrical scene. She was approached by the Masrah Ensemble, a Beirut-based theatre company, to participate in a double bill production of both a children's play, "Ti-Jean and His Brothers," and an adult play, "Family Stories", which centers around post-war Serbian children.

"They were two shows that have this thread connecting them," said Ayache. "Of leaving home, growing up. Being a child. Not being a child."

The deal was that the actors from "Family Stories" train the children of the "Ti-Jean" production. It was the children which attracted Ayache the most. They were poor Syrian refugees residing in the Shatila camp.

And thus came her first trip to the Shatila camp – the scene of a gruesome massacre in 1982 and a maze of narrow,

pollution-ridden streets, overbuilt with graying and decaying buildings and home to an estimated 20,000 Palestinian refugees. Waves of Syrian refugees, beginning in 2011, have significantly increased the camp's population.

This is the world into which Ayache stepped. It was, to say the least, a fairly miserable world.

Ayache and her fellow actors headed to the Basmeh and Zeitooneh center, an NGO which had opened a school for Syrian children. Seven youngsters, aged 11 to 14, were selected. The caged roof of the center was to be their rehearsal room.

Over the din of the camp, actors and students struggled to make themselves heard. It soon became a routine. In the morning, they would rehearse in the camps with the teenage actors, and, in the afternoon, the adult actors would rush across town to rehearse their own play.

Each adult actor was assigned two young charges. Ayache was mentor to Ali, 12, and Imane, 14.

"It is through these exercises that we got to know them well," said Ayache.

Ali, for one, had a gangly appearance and was the subject of many jokes among his peers. Despite the family's desperate need for Ali to work after school, his mother wanted him to be part of this play.

Imane was Ayache's Arabic language coach and Ayache adopted her northern Syrian dialect for her character in the adult play. With both parents sick, it was Imane's responsibility to cook and clean for her many siblings.

Ayache knew that participating in the play was probably the youngsters' last act of childhood.

The children's stories are very much like those of other refugees. Once they had a home, a life. Now, they have nothing. Future: unclear.

Behind-the-scenes personnel were recruited from the camp – even a cook who provided meals to the entire cast.

Alaa Mohamed, 25, came on board as the show's production manager. He, himself, was a Syrian refugee and loved theatre. He quickly became an older brother figure who kept the cast in fits of laughter.

Rehearsals continued despite occasional shootouts in the camp. Finally, it was May. Adults and students were ready. They had been rehearsing, on and off, for the past eight months. Five performances would take place in public spaces across the city.

The first two shows took place in Shatila

Open dress rehearsal  
at The Basma and  
Zeitounneh roof



Photo by Jad Safar





Milia Ayache on the guitar

and were a hit. The audience clapped and cheered the performers.

Thrilled with the success of the performances, Ayache rushed across town to the camp.

As soon as she walked into the center, she saw them. The children were crying. She stood staring. Finally, between sobs, they told her: Alaa died.

It seemed that he went swimming that day off the coast of Jbeil and drowned. Just like that. Alaa, their surrogate big brother, was gone.

Ayache looked at the sobbing children. It was like all the hope had gone out of them. The sobs eventually gave way to an uncomfortable silence. The pre-show meal arrived. No one budged. The heavy silence continued. The show was to be in one hour. Obviously, it had to be cancelled.

And then a small voice piped up: "My mother says the body dies but the soul never dies."

Everyone turned to stare at the 12-year-old actor. That was a line in the play. His line actually.

Suddenly, everyone started laughing. Sobbing laughter. Nervous laughter. They slowly started looking and talking to each other. They began to eat.

Together, they decided that Alaa would have wanted them to perform. This show was to be for him. Two actors went on stage: "This show", they told the subdued audience, "is dedicated to their friend, Alaa Mohamed."

The performance began.

Everything went as it should.



Photo by Christine Youakim

It was their best performance yet.

A few months later, Ayache went looking for Imane and Ali to return their notebooks from their rehearsal period. Sadly, Ali had dropped out of the school and was working in a supermarket bagging groceries. Imane had transferred to another school. Her whereabouts remain unknown.

To read more about Masrah Ensemble's theatrical project *Family Ti-Jean*, go to: <http://www.americantheatre.org/2017/02/16/playing-for-time-in-beirut/>

## First TEDx Youth Event at IC



**Lina Mahmassani  
and Dala Mounzer**

If the two Elementary School teachers took on more than they could handle they didn't let on. It seemed very simple to them: hold a TEDx youth event at IC. Why not?

"Yes, why not?" said Dala Mounzer, a fifth grade Arabic teacher.

She was actually responding to newcomer, Lina Mahmassani, also a fifth grade Arabic teacher. Mahmassani herself was a TEDx speaker at her old post at Wellspring Learning Community school two years ago and wanted to emulate the experience at IC.

Would Mounzer help her?

Mounzer didn't need to be asked twice. The mother of two was well known for her passion to new ideas.

"Let's do it," she said.

The two Arabic teachers met only last year when Mahmassani moved to IC. The pair hit it off immediately. With Mahmassani's calm demeanor and Mounzer's rather exuberant flair, the pair hit it off immediately. Plus, they both loved the stage.

And, so it was the TEDx came to IC.

It was a daunting task. Thankfully, neither teacher saw it as such. There were many rules to holding a TEDx

youth event. Even obtaining a license to do so – with an expiration date.

First, speakers had to be found. And these speakers need to talk about a life changing experience. In fact, the theme was: Puzzles of Life. The teachers looked hesitantly at their young charges. Life experiences? 10 and 11 year olds?

Auditions were held. Fifty students showed up – a much larger number than expected. "This was supposed to be an after school activity," said Mounzer.

But, obviously, it promised to be much bigger than that.

The two teachers formed a

committee "to be fair", and finally settled on eight speakers.

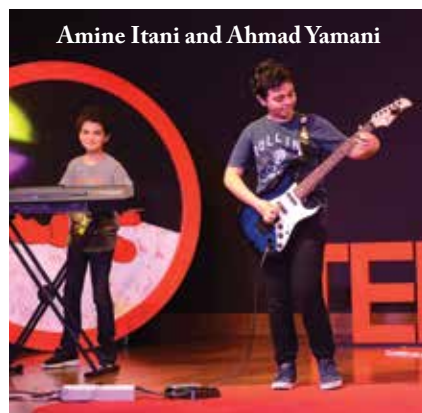
"These kids really had something to say," said Mounzer. "Age didn't really play that big of a role."

No student was turned away. Each and every one of the 50 applicants was assigned a role in the TEDx in some way or another.

"TEDx is not just about speaking," explained Mahmassani, "the non-speakers become volunteers at the social space (outdoor activities), creating logos, printing T-shirts, ushering, art committee, there are really many roles."

Basically, TEDx is a series of short talks, demonstrations or performances that inspire and provoke conversations about a variety of topics. More specifically, a TEDx youth event promotes public speaking at a young age. The idea is that students have a say in organizing and running the entire event – thus the need for the entire 50 IC applicants.

"The kids learned a lot, yes," said Mounzer. "But we learned as well. Most of all, I learned that there is no problem that we cannot overcome. We can do anything if we set our minds to it."





## AYA FAWAZ

Gymnastics was my life but one day, everything went wrong. The next day, I got a back brace. It was huge, ugly and uncomfortable. The worst part of all of this, is that doctors agreed that I should completely give up gymnastics because it was very dangerous for me. Dearest audience, my dream was to become an Olympic gymnastics champion. I missed some of my best friends' birthdays as I was committed to the training. I missed summer vacations with my family for training. I had collected so many medals, gold and silver.

This reality hit me hard. No more gymnastics!!! Does this mean that I should give up on my dream? What else can I do? Am I actually good at something else? But then as my life moved ahead, I came to realize that losing this piece of the puzzle from my life actually gave space for another piece to fall in its place.



## HASSAN EL-HAJJ

My life was a beautiful picture. All the pieces were perfectly fit until one day the unexpected happened. I lost my dad! My dad was an amazing person. He was the dad that every child wished for. My dad suffered from Parkinson disease, which took him away from me. "WHY HIM? WHY?"

During my happy moments, I would ask, "WHY HIM?" On my birthday I asked, "Why wasn't he next to me to blow my 10 candles?"

During my painful moments, I would ask, "WHY HIM?"

I was participating in a swimming competition when I found the answer to that persistent question. Finally, I knew why it was him! I was swimming when I suddenly felt a mysterious power rush in my blood to thrust me forward to make me win.

I knew where that sudden power came from, and it could only come from one source. It is my dad. I knew he is alive and watching over me.

The answer is, "It is God's will and I will never lose my will and my way."



## جون ملحم



أنا جون و خلقت بأمركا أقضيت فيها أول خمس سنين من عمري. جمعنا بيبي هيداك اليوم، وخبّرنا إنو صار الوقت ننتقل لنعيش بـ "سنگابور" بما أنو كل شغلو هونيك. من هيديك اللحظة، انقلبت حياتي رأساً على عقب... وصلنا على "سنگابور" 6 الصبح، برأيكم العالم شو بتتروق؟ مناقيش؟ كيد لا! لبنه؟ طبعاً لا! بيض؟ مزبوط بس يا ريتو مقلي أو مسلوقي! بيض في أي في! بيض في مع حبش، بيض في مع دجاج، بيض في مع بط! بالأول ما تقبلت الموضوع وبقيت آكول علكة بعد كل ترويقة. بس بيوم من الأيام، وبعدما خلصت البيضة النّية، وحطيت العلكة بتمّي وضهرت امشّي، باكتشف إنو

في حوالي الـ 50 شرطيّ مجمعين وراكضين وراي كائي شنة ورح تنفجر. شو عملت يا ترى؟ طلعت القصة كلها بسبب العلكة يلي بتمّي مع أنو كانت كتيير طيبة وطعمة التّعنع تغلّبت على طعمة البيض. ولأنو "سنگابور" بيعتبروا العلكة شغلة مهينة بعاداتن وتقاليدين دقّعوا أهلي غرامة بقيمة 200 \$. بعد سنة، ولما بلشت اتعود على عادات وتقاليدين "سنگابور"، صدمتني أمي بخبريّة إنو نحن نقلين على لبنان. حبيت لبنان كثير وتعودت بسرعة على الحياة فيه، أحلى شي إنو حبيت البيض على الترويقة ومن ورا العلكة على ننع!

## تالا مكاوي

بنت جربي شو حتخسري ما كل شي بالحياة ممكن يتغيّر بلحظة. لما فتت أول يوم على الصف كنت كثير متوترة. قلبي كان حيفضني قد ما دق يقوّة "دم دم دم...." بعدين الكل تجمّع حولي وبلشوا يحكوني. سألت حالي معقول تكون الأمور هلقد سهلة؟؟؟ تعرفت على المعلّمات وحبوني وحبيتن. وهون أنا بدي وصلن لقلول انه مالازم حدا منّا يحكي أو يخاف أو يتردّد قبل ما يجرب ويعيش التجربة.

مين؟ كيف؟ ليش؟ انطرحت فكرة تغيير مدرستي بقبل؟ ما بقبل؟ شو هي بإيدي هالشغلة؟ "ه" شو أنا يلي بقرّر!! صرت حس بالخوف والقلق. يا ترى شو حيصير و شو ناطريني؟! عالم جديد لازم اتعود عليه، تغيير مدرسة شي مش سهل. حسيت كأني عم عيش حياة جديدة. يا ترى رح اقدر أعمل أصحاب جداد؟ رح اقدر ادرس منيح و انجح؟ هون صرت قول: لك يللا يا



## مايليس اسحاق

فرحت كثير وبلشت اسمع شو عم بتقلّي وهي عم تعلّمني شوي شوي بكل صبر كيف اللفظ بالطريقة الصحيحة. إيجا هيداك اليوم يلي ما بنساه بحياتي... كنّا بالسّارة أنا وكلّ عيلتي، وكنت كالعادة عم بتمرن على لفظ "حرف الرّا" من بيتي لبيت ستي "غ غ غ" غز غز غز... رز" ما كان هالشّي سهل لأنو كان في مشكلة بلساني بس كانت إرادتي كثير قويّة وخلّطني كون موضوع سخريّة بين أصحابي وموضوع حديث كل الاجتماعات بين معلّماتي.

كنت بصّف الحضانة، وقت بلشت حسّ إنو في شي كل رفقاتي بيعرفو يعملوا إلا أنا. كنت كل ما احكي عربي اسمع رفقاتي عم بضحكوا وما أعرف لي لحتّي اكتشفت إنو بلفظ الرّا غ هيدا هوّي السّبب. ولما صرت بالصفّ الأول ابتدائيّ، بلشوا المعلّمات يتدايقوا من الموضوع لحتّي إجت أمي وفسّرتلون أنو السّبب هوّي لساني يلي كان مربوط وقصير المدى. سألنا الحكيم.... بيوم من الأيام، إجت اختي وقالتي إنو هي رح تعلّمني اللفظ الـ "ر" مثل العالم والناس.



# COURAGE IN PARIS



*What are the odds of so many things going wrong, placing you in the midst of a terror attack? And yet, in a strange twist of events, this is exactly what happened to three IC teachers and their students on a Secondary School trip to Paris.*

*Maybe it was a test of character. Maybe it was by higher design. But, whatever the reason, teachers and students emerged with new found strength. While all 26 students showed bravery and maturity, for the sake of the article length, only two students were interviewed.*

*The following are true events...*

The trip itinerary was an exciting one: a cruise from Genoa to Rome, and on to Corsica and then Marseille. There, they would take the train to Paris. It was a perfect plan. What could go wrong?

The original plan was to go the US. But with the newly placed travelling bans in place, Hussein Said, IC's Secondary School Associate Director, feared that some of the students may be turned back. So he created the cruise itinerary instead.

Wanting to take a last look at Rome, Said stepped on to his room's balcony. He noted a strong wind fiercely hitting the ship and wondered if the cruise would be cancelled. But no word came from the captain so all must be well. He looked at his watch.

7:10pm. In 20 minutes, he was to meet his students at the auditorium.

Jihad Toukan, Secondary School Supervisor, had just stepped on deck when he starred in dismay as the ship banged against the jutting edge of the pier. There was a huge thumping noise. Several chairs and tables fell over.

Rindala Abdel Baki, Head of Student Matters, was in her room getting ready for the Captain's dinner when she felt herself suddenly lose her footing and fall on the floor.

The three teachers rushed to the auditorium where by now their 26 charges were congregated. Ship personnel assured them that there was no danger but nevertheless the ship had to return to the dock to be repaired. Unfortunately, the trip to Corsica had to be cancelled. In an effort to make it up to the disappointed students, ship officials gave them €50 vouchers to spend at the ship stores. Marie Nour Karam, 16, wandered about the shops aimlessly. She had spent almost all her voucher money and



Rindala Abdel Baki, Hussein Said and Jihad Toukan

had only a few euros left by the time she found herself looking closely at a lipstick. Though not one to usually wear make-up, she somehow found herself purchasing the lipstick and tucking it into her bag.

Finally, the ship sailed to Marseille. A whole day had been lost. New train tickets had to be purchased. Still, the group was cheerful. Beautiful Paris awaited them. Upon arrival at the glittering city, the group decided to skip the check-in at the hotel and head directly to Champs Elysée. The teachers gave their 25 charges (one went off with an aunt residing in Paris) one hour and a half to explore the area. The meeting point was pre-arranged at the southern end of the Elysée at the Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) store.

The group cheerfully dispersed to various shops. It was 7:30 pm.

After a quick dinner with her friends, Marie Nour left her friends at the Sephora cosmetic shop and crossed the street to the Nike shop. Her friends were to follow her shortly.

Ismail Rabbat, 16, was in the Sephora store with two friends, Selena Bouri and Ali Soufan. Thinking that Selena looked weighed down carrying her jacket, he offered to take it for her. She accepted.

Said and Abdel Baki entered a pharmacy. Toukan accompanied some students into the Nike shop. They didn't see Marie Nour who was trying out some shirts in the fitting rooms upstairs.

Suddenly, Toukan froze as the distinctive sounds of fire filled the air. He dropped his purchases and ran outside with students in tow. Said and Abdel Baki stepped back onto the street and stopped short. People were running in panic. Suddenly police cars whizzed by. Perhaps a car accident? The teachers uneasily rushed towards their meeting place. Soon enough, heavily armed swat teams arrived. A feeling of dread sank in. The two teachers spotted three students already at the PSG meeting point. Toukan and five other students arrived.

"There's been a shooting," said Toukan, as the rest stared at him in horror.

Unbeknown to them, a gunman had driven up to a police van on Champs Elysées and shot the driver dead with two bullets to the head, and had then opened fire at the police standing on the pavement.

The entire street went into lockdown mode. The IC group, all eleven of them, was made to go in to the PSG shop and down into the store's basement. Ten frightening looking tourists joined them.

The three teachers stared at each other. Where are the rest of the students?

"We have to locate the kids," said Said.

"Who saw whom last?"

And it began. The names of students were quickly drawn on a piece of cardboard. Equipped only with Lebanese phones, IC teachers and students in the shop began sending SMS messages to students outside. Slowly and surely, students began to respond. Those who didn't were traced by other students. At the same time, messages were sent to assure worried parents.

"All of us, teachers, students here and students out there, were working together to locate each other," said Abdel Baki. "We all knew this wasn't a time to panic."

At the Sephora shop, mayhem suddenly erupted. People were flocking to the exit door in panic. Ismail looked up just in time to see Selena and Ali making it out of the exit door. Ismail ran to the door but felt himself being pushed down. He fell to the ground. People were trampling on him and he couldn't get up. He somehow managed to roll to the side, protecting his head but leaving his legs caught in the narrow exit door – still being stomped on.

Marie Nour emerged from the fitting rooms and looked in amazement at customers huddled at the back of the store. Suddenly, she was shepherded along with other frightened customers into a small alley in the back of the store. The gunshots were loud and clear around them (the police were apprehending the terrorist). She kept her nerves calm by messaging other students.

With a sudden adrenalin rush, Ismail freed himself and bolted out the door. On the street, he spotted six girls from his group. He led the girls to a residential building nearby. The teenagers huddled on the stairs. Ismail ventured outside again to look for Ali and Selena but couldn't find them. He was keenly aware of his Syrian ID and knew that he may be a suspect if stopped. He quickly returned to the building. No one in the group had a working phone. Ismail was still clutching Selena's jacket. Suddenly he remembered that she had two phones: one international and one Lebanese. Would the international phone be in the jacket? He rummaged through it and, yes, it was. But it needed a password. The group stared dejected.

"Selena is bound to call her phone," he said. Soon enough, she did and gave him her password. She was back in Sephora with three other girls. Ismail ran out again to reach them, but couldn't enter the Sephora store. They had imposed a lock-down. He returned to the residential building where, by now, neighbors had discovered the teenagers and had provided them with blankets, drinks and snacks.



Notes on cardboard to locate students





Back at the PSG store, teachers and students had tracked everyone down. All were located and accounted for. “Stay safe and follow police procedures. We will come to get you. Give us your full address,” they wrote to everyone.

The original plan was that Toukan would bring the students to the PSG store. But once he ventured outside the back door, he found himself staring right in the face of a machine gun. The heavily armed policeman racked his gun and kept it pointed at Toukan. One wrong move. Just one wrong move.

“No!” Toukan yelled putting his arms in the air. “No!”

The teacher felt himself shoved back in the shop and the door was slammed.

The group stared at each other. They needed a plan B.

More messages: ride it out kids. You will be fine. When given the go ahead, leave by the back door, walk to a side street and grab a taxi to the hotel. This is the address. We will meet you there.

Marie Nour looked frustratingly at the phone battery. It was almost dead. She must write down the address and the phone numbers. She looked around for a pen but couldn't find one. She suddenly remembered the lipstick in her bag. She fished it out and quickly wrote the contacts on a piece of receipt in her bag. Just in time. Her battery went dead. When the police finally arrived at the store, they led the customers to a small pub nearby.

Ismail and the girls were free to go. Heeding the teachers' instructions, he tried to locate a taxi which would accept seven passengers. With only one working phone between them, Ismail had no intention of separating the group. Finally, one of the French residents in the building ordered a special taxi. It wasn't until the students arrived at the hotel that they found out that the resident had also footed their taxi bill.

Marie Nour was let go and she stepped hesitantly out on the street. It was her first time in Paris and she had no idea where she was. And it was well after midnight. Then she saw it: a Lebanese restaurant. In relief, she ran in. The surprised Lebanese owner took the lipstick note from her and immediately contacted the teachers. They had just been let out themselves. Toukan immediately came to the restaurant.

At 2:30 am, IC teachers and students were reunited at the hotel lobby. Their teamwork had paid off. Despite some initial shakiness, all were in good spirits and eager to continue with their next day's itinerary: Disney Land.

*As for the three IC teachers, they still wonder. What if the US trip hadn't been cancelled, what if the ship hadn't hit the pier, what if they had caught the earlier train to Paris, what if they hadn't rescheduled their stop on the Champs Elysée? But they did. But why?*



## Global Smile Foundation Comes to Lebanon

**B**elieve it or not, children born with cleft palates continue to be hidden away from society. Yes, right here in Lebanon. You barely hear of them let alone see them. Even Otolaryngologist and Facial Plastic Surgeon **Usama Hamdan '71** wasn't ready for the shocking statistics: one in every 422 Lebanese births (according to the Ministry of Health) is born with congenital deformities.

"I was stunned by the incidence," said Hamdan. "This is three times higher than anywhere in the world."

The founder of the Global Smile Foundation, Hamdan has been waiting for years to bring his team to his home country - Politics and red tape had held him back for many years. Global Smile Foundation-MENA was founded in Lebanon in 2014 to provide pro bono comprehensive cleft care for underserved patients throughout the region.

The Foundation is currently operating on 220 patients per year - most of whom are Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian. No charge. The \$2,500 cost of one operation is strictly covered by donors.

Cleft lip and palate are birth defects where the upper lip or roof of the mouth (palate) does not close during development. It is thought to be caused by a combination of genes, environmental and nutritional factors surrounding the pregnant mother as well as conditions like maternal diabetes.

Awareness of the plight of these babies came to light when, in the summer of 2013, a newborn just a few hours old was found abandoned in a suitcase in the Bekaa. The child, who was taken to a local monastery, had cleft lip and palate - treatable with surgery.

"These children go on to lead normal lives," said Hamdan.

"No one talked about it before but now we have patients that literally come out of the woodworks," he said, adding that Global Smile Foundation-MENA is working to raise awareness among remote and underprivileged areas.

"We are also trying to empower the local hospitals in those areas," said Hamdan "And train local doctors about comprehensive cleft care and advances in surgical repair."

Hamdan's journey began in 1984 when he moved to Massachusetts (where he still resides) and specialized in Otolaryngology and Facial Plastic Surgery. In 1987, he joined a volunteer group headed to Latin America to operate on children and adults born with cleft lip and palate defects. What he saw was shocking. With a high incidence of disfigurements and little access to medical care, people in remote villages could do little with their birth defects. Hamdan and the other doctors set to work. As each disfigurement was turned into normal facial features, a life was renewed. Even Hamdan himself couldn't



get over the change in his patients.

In 1990, he set up his own foundation made up of a team of doctors, nurses and administrators. Every year, the Global Smile Foundation's teams - each of which are made up of between 20 and 45 U.S.-based volunteers - go on six 'missions' to various countries and perform cleft repair operations. It takes about five months of coordination - with local NGO's and local doctors who are pre-screening patients - to set up just one mission. Over 25 huge boxes are packed up every time with everything the team could possibly need from syringes to anesthesia and surgical supplies. Each mission lasts anywhere between seven to 10 days. Up to 60 patients per mission undergo operations. The trips are mostly funded by the team and board members themselves, though donors and sponsors are always welcome.

The Global Smile Foundation volunteers have so far operated in Central and South America, Asia, Africa, the Indian subcontinent, Eastern Europe and now Lebanon.

"I am hoping that the Global Smile Foundation & Global Smile Foundation-MENA will not just have an impact in Lebanon but also in the whole region," he



said "The plan is to grow this Foundation, spread awareness and empower local doctors. This is a blessing and privilege that I was given and want to pass on."

*Dr. Usama Hamdan was a guest speaker at IC in April.*





## Alton Reynolds 2017







Art Festival



IB ART  
EXHIBIT  
2017





## International Day 2017







## Mayfair

Organized by the  
Ras Beirut Parents'  
Committee





# Teachers' Day Dinner

## HONORING PERSONNEL

### Retirees

Mr. Fadi Abou Abdallah - Ain Aar  
 Mr. Iskandar Abou Kasm - Secondary School  
 Mr. Fawzi Abou Khater - Middle School  
 Mrs. Randa Azkoul - Secondary School  
 Mrs. Juliette Bikhazi - Middle School  
 Mr. Hatem Chalak - Secondary School  
 Mrs. Samiha Ghusayni - (25 Years of Service) - Middle School  
 Mr. George Hanna - Middle School  
 Mr. Nabih Lahoud - Secondary School  
 Mrs. Mishka Mojabber Mourani - President's Office  
 Mrs. Suha Salka - Middle School

### 35 Years of Service

1. Miss Nicole Bachour - Preschool

### 25 Years of Service (Mrs. Mourani)

Miss Hania Abou Rihan - Middle School  
 Mrs. Lina Arayssi Noueiry - Preschool  
 Mrs. Myriam Bouzakhm - Ain Aar Middle School  
 Mrs. Wissam Hanna - Ain Aar Middle School  
 Mrs. Marie -Thérèse Jouën - Ain Aar Preschool  
 Mrs. Lina Kaddoura - Elementary School  
 Mrs. Lina Melki - Ain Aar Preschool  
 Mrs. Baria Shawwa - Elementary School  
 Mrs. Sana Sidani Yamout - Alumni & Development Office  
 Mrs. Fatima Taha - Secondary School

## AWARDS

Edmond Tohme Outstanding



Educator Award - Mrs. Mishka Mourani  
 Randa Khoury Innovation in Teaching Award- Mrs. Asma Dibsi  
 George O. Debbas Staff Awards- Mrs. Samar Gerges, Mr. Mohammed Harb  
 For the workers category Mrs. Marcelle Jabre, Mr. Kassem Farhat

Alissar Abi Haidar Award: Mr. Youssef Sayah



Albert Abela Distinguished Teacher Awards- Mrs. Line Abou El Khoudoud, Mrs. Nayla Owayshek, Mrs. Carla Asfour, Miss Maya Chebaro, Mrs. Samar Noueihed, Mr. Iskandar Abou Kasm, Miss Myriam Abou Atmeh, Mrs. Lara Mansour, Mrs. Leila Kobeissi and Ms. Mimosa Arawi







## Ras Beirut Parents' Committee Dinner

*Held at IC's Football Field on May 18th 2017*



PM Saad Hariri arriving to the dinner



Dr Don Bergman, Abeer Oweini '98, Ramzi Oweini '98



On the right: Dr Ali Ghandour '50, Imad Taher '58



Paula Mufarrij, Wadad Hoss '77, Mona Bawarshi '67, Fouad Bawarchi '67





## Get-together Class of 1964

Standing: Nabil Fares, Joseph Shikhani, Mohamed Itani, Azmi Arab, Milhem Samara, Tony Atallah, Mazin Irani, Moufid Beydoun, Ghassan Saghir, Abdel Kader Bashir, Nadim Fallaha, Kamal Sheikh El Ard, Raja Shaffa

Seated: Hassan Rifai, Rizkallah Zeidan, Misbah Alamudine, Nabil Watfa, Fares Daoud, Ramzi Talih



## Donor Reception



# Dinners & Events

## Riyadh

The VP for Alumni and Development, **Moufid Beydoun '64** visited Riyadh in April where Mr. **Bassam Badran '76** hosted a lunch for a group of alumni.

Mr. Beydoun also attended a gathering at the residence of **H.E. Turki al Sudairi '58**. He also had a meeting with Dr. **Ghassan Al-Sulaiman '74**, Governor of General Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises.



Moufid Beydoun '64, H.E. Dr. Ghassan Al-Sulaiman '74, Bassam Badran '76



H.E. Turki al Sudairi '58 with Moufid Beydoun '64.



1st row: Yasser Kaaki '88, Fadi Moumneh '81, Moufid Beydoun '64, Samir Kreidieh '65, Mu'taz Sawaf '69, Omar Adra '51, Ziad Atallala '90, Mohamad Zameli '81, Nadim Nahas '13

## Jeddah

Vice President of Alumni & Development **Moufid Beydoun '64** visited Jeddah where he met with a group of Alumni and friends over a dinner organized by Mr. **Mohamad Zameli '81** and hosted by Board member Mr. **Mu'taz Sawwaf '69**.







Akram Miknas '63, Lina El Alaili '79



1st row : Lina El Alaili '79, Moufid Beydoun'64, Hiba Chamout, Nadine Akkaoui, Fadi Khater '98. 2nd row: Karim Ghandour '89, Houssam Rinno '83, Chris Greenwood  
3rd row: Nadi Fakhoury '83

## Dubai

Over 150 alumni, IC friends  
and their families gathered  
for a brunch at The Play  
Restaurant in Dubai on April  
29th.







Suzanne Anderson, Don Bergman, Chris Greenwood



Maria Sabella, Sana Al Habal '83, Zina Saniora '97, Nadine Akkaoui, Lily Spiridon '00, Lyn Khalidi '86, Moufid Beydoun '64

## Geneva

The IC Office of Alumni & Development organized a cocktail dinner in Geneva on May 9th for alumni and friends at Bottle Brothers.

The event was attended by Board member John McCarthy, Jr. and members of the IC administrators and was an opportunity for IC President, Dr. Don Bergman, to give a quick update about the school's latest projects in its Partnership for Excellence Campaign.



Don Bergman, Sana Al Habal '83, Lina Zamili '83, Said Osseiran '08, Layal Ammar '99, Carla Gebran '97, Carli Abraham '15, Walid Fawaz '12, Paula Moutran '13



Mary and John McCarthy, Lina Zamili '83, Aya Nehme '14, Paola Moutran '16, Nadine Akkaoui, Laura Rabbath '12, Walid Fawaz '12, Carli Abraham '15





## Paris

More than 25 alumni and friends gathered at a dinner in Paris at Janna Restaurant on May 12th organized by the IC Paris Chapter, **Charles Simon Thomas '75** and **Rafic Abou Fadel '93**. IC President, Dr. Don Bergman, explained about the school's latest projects and its Partnership for Excellence Campaign.



Left row: Mona El Hussein '79, Gregoire Audi '75,  
Right row: Charles Simon Thomas '75, Michel Chaoul '75, Claude Audi, Chris Greenwood



Left: Moufid Beydoun '64, Farid El Azem, Chris Greenwood  
Right: Jocelyn Mermoux '70, Don Bergman, Nadine Akkaoui,  
Samir Kabbara, May Traboulsi '72, Gregoire Audi '75



Left : Samar Diab, Najib Diab '90, Alexandre Toubia '11,  
Georges Owayshek '11  
Right: Lyn Farah '02, Diala Ashar '95, Rafic Abou Fadel '93,  
Nour Abou Jawde '01, Elsa Rahal '10

# Updates

‘51

**Munir E Nassar** writes the following. “I thoroughly enjoyed reading the Newsletter and I want to thank you for including my name in the Updates. I would like to take this opportunity to explain in a few words the title of my second book is “A Physician’s Odyssey And Clinical Experience” It includes my early education and up to my medical B,SC, and M.D.degrees: at A.U.B and my specialization at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston Texas and at Columbia University, NY, NY. Furthermore, I received the highest award for public service from the Buffalo VA Medical Center, in Western NY for my clinical work as Chief Medical Officer. My first published medical work is titled “Clinical Medicine Research Experience At The America University Of Beirut Faculty of Medicine 1920-1974. It relates the founding of the S.P.C. and later A.U.B. by Presbyterian Missionaries and also the publications of its Faculty Of Medicine with my own analysis of important publications and their impact on Clinical Medicine practice. Both books may be acquired from the author.”

‘57

**Issam Sami Jabara** writes that “IC is my second home since I enrolled very young age 13. I was a boarder in Sage Hall, 3rd floor with a private room facing the Mediterranean and AUB swimming pool. At the time, ACS was an only American girl school and IC was an only boys’ school. Students were from multi nationalities. They came from the Far East, US and Europe. We were about 1200 students in all. The standard of education was high. It was a liberal education and included many activities from music club, Arabic club and all kinds of athletic activities such as football, basketball, volleyball and gymnastics. We also had theater, music, and a great library. IC made men who can work directly after graduation or continue their university

studies. IssamJabara@gmail.com

‘61

**Kamal Kronful** writes that “today was a remarkable day. I telephoned to International college – IC. They reminded me that I entered IC on Nov 1954 and graduated in 1961. I asked about my teachers I remembered. Mr. Yacoub Haddad, my Physics teacher had passes away. My Chemistry teacher, Mr. Sadek Omar is still alive and I was very pleased to talk to him. I did enjoy his chemistry classes. They could not tell me anything about my Arabic teacher Miss Boksmati from Tripoli. I am now 74 years , a retired architect, I worked for 35 years with Dar Al Handasah Consultanta, and I am happy to remember my experience at IC and also very happy to know that some of my teachers are still alive. I will be very glad to re connect with my old friends.”

‘65

**Marwan Stambuli** announces that a new IC 1965 Class website was launched at [www.IC1965.com](http://www.IC1965.com) and |we invite all our colleagues to check and enjoy the great memories,” he writes. “Also we have an IC 1965 WhatsApp group and the mobile number is 0041 79 259 88 11 so our classmates are invited to send me a message so I can add them to the group.” [ww.stambuli.com](http://ww.stambuli.com)

‘84

**Imad Rubeiz** graduated with a BA in Psychology from AUB in 1988, followed by the MA in 1995. He then obtained a BD in Theology (that’s Bachelor of Divinity) from UOB in 2000. Currently working towards a PhD at the Institute of Theology at UOB. Since 1995, he has been a part-time instructor at several private universities in Lebanon – courses in education, psychology, and educational psychology. From 2006 to 2010, he was a school principal, first in KSA, then in

UAE; in both major accomplishment was to obtain a full accreditation. Since 2000, he worked on part-time basis as a career guidance officer, going to several schools over Lebanon, and presenting a program of 5 to 12 sessions to students from Grade 9 to 12 on how to choose their career path, and accordingly their most suitable studies. Since 2012, he came back to Lebanon and became a full-time lecturer at UOB (courses in education, psychology, and theology) and the Assistant Accreditation Officer of the University. Major accomplishment: obtaining for UOB an unconditional Institutional Accreditation from the ACQUIN – a German-based European accreditation body. He is married with one child (boy)

‘87

**Raed Mounzer** writes: “If I may say, from all the merits found in this magnificent school, I am dazed with this magical virtue the school plants in its students during their education trip; the virtue of belonging. The belonging to this cozy small home called IC, and ultimately to the bigger home called Lebanon. I thank IC for all what it has given to me and what is now giving to my children.”



‘88

**Sam Khodr** reports the successful handing over of phase I at Jabal Omar prestigious Mecca project P.I.S. His company has secured the PHASE III and IV for more than 1 500 000 SQM of wall covering from [www.Koroseal.com](http://www.Koroseal.com).



# Updates

com made in USA wall covering and carpet from ULSTER made in UK. P.I.S had been assigned as exclusive distributor for the whole Middle East region. He also reports the successful completion of the renovation work of the Phoenicia, Four seasons and the new Kempeski and le gray Hotels extension in Beirut.

## '95

**Peter Chamlian** spent four years in Beirut as Chairman & GM of CA Indosuez Switzerland (Lebanon) SAL and after completing an Executive Program at Harvard Business School. He returned to the headquarters of the Bank in Geneva as Head of Levant desk together with his family, Tamar, Stella and Joe.

## '96

**Dr Ahmad Saad** completed his Bachelor of Science (BS) in Biology and his Doctorate of Medicine (MD) at the American University of Beirut (AUB). He then traveled to the United States for his post-doctoral training. He completed his General Surgery training at Yale University followed by his Plastic Surgery training at the University of California - San Diego (UCSD). Dr Saad is a Plastic surgeon, certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, and currently practicing in San Diego, California. In addition to his private practice, Dr Saad is a Professor of plastic surgery at the University of California- San Diego (UCSD). He is considered one of the pioneers of migraine surgery, and he performed the first procedure in southern California. Dr Saad, his wife Veronica, and their two children (Sofia and Lionel) are moving to Barcelona this summer. Dr Saad will practicing in both Barcelona and Beirut (at the



Clemenceau Medical Center).

## '98

**Khaled Itani** and wife, Darine Okla, are proud to announce the birth of their new baby son: Taha Ibrahim Itani. The baby was born on March 31, 2017 in San Francisco, California in great health. Taha was welcomed by his two older brothers: Yousef and Ziad.



## '01

**Ayman Jawhar** has lived in Dubai, Singapore, Paris and most recently London. He worked in consulting and financial services before transitioning to the tech and startup world where he

worked with Paypal, Skype and Uber. His latest gig is leading the product team at Prodigy finance which helps international students get MBA loans. "I recall my art teacher at IC," he writes. "That is the main reason why I paint a lot these days, yoga, salsa and avoid drowning while surfing. I owe you a lot IC!"

## '03

**Karma Husseiki** is working as a judge in Lebanon and is continuing her doctorate in law. "I am so happy to stay in touch with everything related to this amazing school," she writes. "I hope that our kids will have a place in it one day."

## '07

**Hadi Ramadan** completed his MD degree at AUB. After that he worked for one year in AUBMC then started his research in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Chicago in Chicago. Starting this June, he will be starting his residency and training in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Eastern Virginia Medical School. "Hopefully, I'll be able to come to Lebanon for the 10-year reunion," he writes. "Looking forward to it!"

We regret to inform you that our father **Usamah Farah '58**, born 8th March 1940, has passed away on 29th April 2017 in Paris, France. His funeral was held in Versailles on 4th May 2017 and we are holding a memorial service followed by condolences on Saturday 20th May 2017 from 13:30pm at the Greek Orthodox church in Makhoul Street, Hamra area in Beirut. Our father was a fond admirer of the IC, proudly recalling stories from his time there until his late years. Thank you in advance. Wissam Farah

We regret to inform you that **Nazih Bissat '52** passed away in May 2017. IC staff and faculty send their deepest condolences to the Bissat family.



We regret to inform you that **David Hald '64** passed away in May 2017. IC staff and faculty send their deepest condolences to the Hald family.





## YOUR MONEY AT WORK



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