

WINTER 2020

RISSUE

ROTTERDAM INTERNATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOL MAGAZINE NR. 1

**Our
first
RISSUE**

**Mr. Marshall:
A Wild Journey**

9 questions:
Glomanu Bernardino
Pereira de Pina

**STRESS, TEENS
and more stress**



ROTTERDAM
INTERNATIONAL
SECONDARY
SCHOOL



ROTTERDAM
INTERNATIONAL
SECONDARY
SCHOOL



First RISSUE

Dear all,

It brings me great pleasure to present to you Rotterdam International Secondary School's first-ever RISSUE magazine. It has been an exciting few months of hard work – by the students in collaboration with teachers and staff of the school, as well as the external publishers – to bring this magazine together. We are very proud of all the astonishing contributions that are featured in this first edition.

Our vision and aim for this magazine is to bring a new and innovative magazine that represents the RISS in a nutshell. We have worked with the school's core values and mission statement to bring together articles that reflect these values. Together with the passionate young writers that have had the constant drive and commitment to writing their exceptional articles, we can say that we have achieved this.

The magazine has given us the opportunity to work with professionals in producing this, while also providing an opportunity for students in the community to share their creativity – whether that be written pieces, poetry or art. The making of this magazine has brought the community closer together.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who was part of this magazine. A special thank you to all the writers and supervising teachers, as well as to all the students who have participated and helped make this come together. A huge thank you to our Principal and Wolfert Board, who have given us the financial support to make this happen. This, of course, would not have been possible without the professional expertise of the publishers, XPat Media.

I would lastly like to thank the whole school community for their contributions and support. I look forward to the next edition of the RISSUE magazine.

*Geoffrey Antonio Mathias,
Student Editor-in-Chief*

Message from the Principal:

“Rather than seeing school as one long process of working, we live by our stated mission that our students should ‘enjoy their youth’”

By Dr. Gilbert-Sáez



Rotterdam International Secondary School (RISS) is a remarkable school indeed and has earned its place as Rotterdam’s international school.

Starting as a small department within the Wolfert Bilingual School over 30 years ago, it has grown to become an emblem of Rotterdam’s growth, international importance and multicultural awareness.

An ambitious internationally-minded city needs to attract world-class talent - new venturers and risk-taking migrants from all walks of life and from across the globe. For this to happen, it needs to provide an education that celebrates diverse cultures and languages and yet is also fully embedded in the local community. This is what RISS is all about.

Values

We are a school that now fully engages with its identity and purpose as a truly international school and we are committed to being a high-quality provider of education that is academically successful, value-driven and genuinely internationally-minded, with both staff and students from over 40 different countries... and counting.

We seek to embed our values – courage, respect, responsibility and relationships – in all we do as we pursue our overall vision, which we have proudly declared to be educating for self-awareness, curiosity and integrity in a changing world. Yet that is not enough.

We have also made a public declaration that we want all children and young people to enjoy being just that, children and young people. Rather than simply seeing school as one long process of working towards external exams, university and beyond, we need to make sure we live by our stated mission that all our students should ‘enjoy their youth’. It is in their early teens that young people should have the opportunity to explore the world around them, develop and practise the skills they need to work with other members of the communities they are part of, develop a sense of mission and service to something bigger than they are and, most importantly, learn about themselves through a wide range of opportunities and challenges.

This is the promise we have made to the students who come to RISS and to the families that entrust their children to us each day and it is at the heart of the many recent developments in our journey.

“RISS is reinventing itself via its seeking out of new scenarios with which to enrich the lives of all of those who wish to engage with us”

Innovations

Over the past two years in particular, there has been a great deal of change as a result of a deep rethinking of what we do and how we do it, and we are proud of the progress we have made in all areas of our school life. In particular, we have learned, as a school community, that we can and should come together to seek innovation, change and new opportunities, to create a school we continue to be genuinely proud of.

A quick glance of some highlights of recent innovations shows how far we have come in such a short time:

- A new timetable to help us deliver our existing subject areas in a way that brings a better balance to the school day
- A reformed pastoral care system to ensure all our students are fully supported throughout their time at RISS
- A new leadership team structure to bring us in line with other top schools worldwide
- The appointment of Curriculum Leaders who act as curators of learning schoolwide
- A new approach to developing leadership skills across the student body
- A new focus on opportunities for our school to work on projects in the wider Rotterdam community
- A revamped RISS ‘look’ across the whole school, combined with a brand-new website and social media presence that clearly reveals our values, mission and vision
- A new Senior Campus with academic, pastoral and HE services that support students but also allows them to become independent in preparation for life beyond RISS
- Many new and robust policy implementations
- A new focus on professional training that is based on collaboration and joint development amongst staff.

Of course, no school can ever stand still and there is still plenty more to do as we review our curriculum, our policies and our overall strategies, all with the aim of improving what goes on in and outside of the classroom.

New Teaching and Learning Policy

And perhaps a special mention for our new Teaching and Learning Policy. This exciting new commitment was drawn up in collaboration with stakeholders from every area of our school life – teachers, leaders, parents and students. In black and white, it makes clear our definition of, and commitment to, the highest international standards in teaching and learning, making it easy to promote, support and recognise outstanding practice across our school. It is this policy – values-focused and aspirational in its content – that will be leading our core educational business this year.

It is clear, as both student and staff numbers grow steadily, that RISS is reinventing itself via the opportunities it is creating for all, via a renewed belief in the capacity of its staff to deliver world-class teaching, via its commitment to childhood and youth as an important period of time in and of itself and via its constant seeking out of new scenarios with which to enrich the lives of all of those who wish to engage with us and be part of our community.

The resilience and determination to build and rebuild combined with the creativity, bravery, confidence and vision to do so in a way that is innovative and world-class is what makes Rotterdam the great city it is.

And RISS is proud to be playing an increasingly important part in this wonderful city’s success and does so in a way that truly makes us Rotterdam’s international school.



**ROTTERDAM
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SECONDARY
SCHOOL**



1 - 3

INTRODUCTION

First RISSUE
Message from the Principal



20 - 21

PSYCHOLOGY

How Exercise and Sports
Help Cope with Stress



6 - 9

INTERVIEW

Mr. Marshall
A Wild Journey



22 - 25

PSYCHOLOGY

How Experiences Shape
Who We Are



10-11

INTERVIEW

Nine Questions to
Glomanu Bernardino Pereira



26 - 27

FIELD TRIP

The Visit to
Tyne Cot Cemetery



12-13

INTERVIEW

Spotlight on...
A New Member of
the RISS Community



28 - 31

CULTURE

Beauty Has No Race ...
and Art Is Everywhere



14 - 17

ACTIVITIES

MUNRO [Model United
Nations Rotterdam]



32 - 33

PSYCHOLOGY

International Language



18 - 19

PSYCHOLOGY

Stress, Teens,
and More Stress



34 - 36

CULTURE

The City of
Rotterdam



COLOPHON

RISSUE

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STUDENT EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Geoffrey Antonio Mathias

STUDENT CO-EDITORS

Tom Brattinga
Josquin Fromange
Aarushi Ganguli
Mas Klein
Jelle Koopmans
Liam McCarthy
Sania Nisar
Anna Sakurada
Rozalia Semen
Lamia Tumkaya
Sijbe van Weerden

STAFF SUPPORT TEAM

Yvonne Ricketts
Timothy Mottram
Paul Cullen
Sarah Beecham
Charline Lugtigheid
Cinzia Maffazioli

PHOTOGRAPHY

Hannah Anthonyysz,
Geoffrey Antonio Mathias, Lucia Vrancken

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Schat! Grafisch ontwerp
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The Netherlands

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Photo by Geoffrey Antonio Mathias

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INTERVIEW

By Tom Brattinga

Mr. Marshall A Wild Journey

Mr Marshall has been a teacher at RISS for the past five years. But his journey here has been rather wild. He was born on the coast of Australia. As his family always loved doing sports, it didn't take long for Mr Marshall to start with sports too. He was four years old when he started sailing and ever since, he has always tried to be as active as possible, joining the school's football team, rugby team or, as he states, "I joined anything I could get my hands on".

During his entire childhood, Mr Marshall stayed in Australia, and when it was time for him to go to university, he went to Sydney. After working there for a few years upon graduation, he decided he needed a change in his life. He packed his bags, sold everything he owned and decided to move to the United Kingdom. There he lived in London for three years, starting his career as a teacher. During his stay in London he also met his lovely wife, with whom he decided to move to the Netherlands, and that's how he ended up at RISS.

Mr Marshall's teaching career wasn't his only focus, and besides family and work, he continued to do sports. He participated in the Olympics for the Australian sailing team and took part in many competitions, competing against some of the best in the world. Throughout his sporting career, he has been very successful, but has also had a lot of struggles. One of his toughest challenges so far was his cardiac arrest, a few years ago. It made him realise that life will keep on pushing you to your edges and will keep on beating you to the ground, but that you have to get back up. Since his cardiac arrest, Mr Marshall has kept on pushing to get back in shape, and won't give up. In short, Mr Marshall's worldwide journey has both pushed him to his limits, yet also shown the wonders of succeeding through pushing these limits. But how was his journey from sailing at the most elite levels to working at RISS? We asked him for some details – and this is 'Mr Marshall's sail to RISS'

How did your cardiac arrest change your views on sports?

Well everyone always talks about the positive sides of doing sports, physically but also mentally. But no one ever talks about the negative side effects of sports. And as I had been doing top-end sports from an extremely young age, I started to become aware of the negative effects. All the cardiologists also later linked the cardiac arrest and my heart condition to the levels of sport I had been doing nearly my whole life. It was very frustrating, because sports have of course played a major part in my life. And it gets you thinking "How can something you love doing so much hurt you?".

What sports did you do in high school? Did those change afterwards?

Any sport I could get my hands on, I did. I was very fortunate in that I went to an extremely sports-focused school, with big football fields, large gyms, you name it. Back then, there were around 1,200 students, and even in our state we were known for going to extremes when it came to sports. I was mostly part of the football team, hockey team, rugby team and the cricket team, but my main goal was just to be active. Outside of school, I think I was around four or five when I started sailing. Winter time was always for football and summer time for sailing and cycling. After a while, I started focusing mainly on sailing and football, and when I discovered I had talent for sailing, that became my main focus.



What big competitions have you taken part in? What was it like to be part of them?

As I said, I started sailing when I was four, and started to sail competitively when I was seven. I then started national level competitions when I was eight and progressed to my first world championships when I was 12. Competition is in my blood; from my father to my brothers, all we talked about at home was sailing – it became my whole life. So when I reached the senior levels, it just felt like a natural progression, as if I had earned my rights to be there. Eventually however, it felt like nothing I had ever experienced before; I was a 17-year-old, competing against adults with much more experience than me. From world champions, Olympic medallists, they were all there. I'd go home and research them and the list of all their medals would just pop up and it was weird to imagine that I was part of them, and that I was able to compete with them. It was an experience I'll never forget, a truly unique feeling.

“Competition is in my blood; from my father to my brothers, all we talked about at home was sailing”

How did you end up as a teacher in RISS?

Because of my sports talents, I was offered a scholarship to go to a university in Australia, similar to my brother. I'd always been interested in coaching and helping younger people, and due to my scholarship – which I obviously couldn't say no to – I also got more into teaching others. I loved it, as they supported me both academically and with competing in sports. Afterwards, I decided it was time for me to leave everything I had in Australia and to move to the United Kingdom. This is where I started teaching in primary school and also started creating my own family. After living in the UK for several years, my wife and I decided the Netherlands would be a good base to live with our family, and to settle there for a while. Not long after moving to the Netherlands, I joined RISS and I have been a teacher here since. Throughout the process I have seen some unbelievable changes, including in my personal development, as I have grown as a person and also hopefully helped others to do so too. These past years, I have built up some wonderful friendships with both teachers and students, and I hope that that can continue.

What do you think is unique about RISS?

The community, most definitely. Some schools I've gone to just felt like schools. You'd go there, do your job, and then go back home. But here, it feels like much more than that, and one key factor that helps contribute to that is the community. There is such a close community in this school because of its size; it's like you know almost everyone here. You can really connect with them, compared to much bigger schools where you might not even know 20% of who's there. The strong bonds between staff here are also very pleasant. We come together very often, whether inside or outside school, we support each other, help each other. It's very different from most of what I've experienced in other, much larger schools I have taught at.

Mr Marshall has kept on pushing to get back in shape, and won't give up. His worldwide journey has pushed him to his limits, yet also shown the wonders of succeeding through pushing these limits.



INTERVIEW

Glomanu Bernardino Pereira de Pina

By Rozalia Semen

NINE QUESTIONS...

What is your name?

My full name is Glomanu Bernardino Pereira de Pina.

Where are you from?

I was born in the Netherlands but both of my parents were born in Cape Verde.

Have you lived outside the Netherlands ?

Yes, the first place I lived in was East Timor. I lived there for six years with my mother. Then I lived in Portugal for six months, after which I moved to Cape Verde and then came to the Netherlands.

What are your hobbies?

I play basketball and I used to play the piano.

What was your previous school like before you came to RISS?

My previous school was huge, compared to RISS, since it was in Africa. I'm not used to the labs and computers that they have here at RISS, but the school did enough to provide us with an education and improve our chances of succeeding.

How are you finding the IB?

It wasn't what I expected and since the last school that I came from wasn't really set up to provide the IB program, the beginning was a bit hard for me – but I'm slowly getting used to it.

In what ways has it shaped you as a person?

I've become more of a hard worker than before and I've become more dedicated to my school work.

What are your thoughts on RISS?

It is an amazing school, I can see how it would help me in the future, as well as get me into a better university and help shape me into the man I want to become in the future.

How do you find the environment, the people, the classes and the teachers here at RISS?

I am grateful for the teachers; they help a lot with the learning compared to my previous school. I feel I have a connection with my teachers and they're always there if I don't understand the work, which I'm thankful for.

*“I have a connection
with my teachers
and they’re always
there if I don’t
understand
the work”*

Spotlight On... A New Mem

As a dynamic and growing school, RISS takes in new students from around the globe every year. Each student brings their own stories and experiences, which help make this such an interesting and unique community.

This month in RISSUE, we catch up with Veronica Feije from Grade 9, who shares her insights into her new school and reflects on her journey.

So, welcome to the school and thanks for agreeing to speak with us. Moving schools can be quite a challenge, but throw in a move across the world and things can be a little scary. What do you make of RISS so far?

Well, so far I think it is quite an interesting school. It offers a lot of different types of programs. For example, I signed up for an international award for young people, which is something I would not have been able to do in my old school because they didn't offer as many things there.

Where were you before you arrived at RISS?

My previous school was in Singapore; the German European School of Singapore. I am half Singaporean and half Dutch.

What would you say the other differences are between RISS and your old school?

I have seen quite a lot of differences in the sorts of people I have met here, and my old school was a lot less strict. The children in my old school did whatever they wanted because the teachers let them.

Yes, it certainly makes a difference when the teachers don't have a handle on things! But now, on to you. In three words, how would you describe yourself?

That's a tough question: I would say funny, not very outgoing and hard-working.

The Netherlands is famous for its sports and extracurricular activities. What do you like to do outside of school?

Not much, but I like sports. I recently signed up for tennis. I also enjoy skateboarding and gaming.

You sound very outgoing!

Oh, just with people I am not very outgoing. I like doing things.

Well, thanks for taking the time to talk to us. Before you go, we have one last question for you. If you could give a new RISS students some advice, what would it be?

Really, what I would advise all new students is to take all the remarks at the beginning of the year seriously and to not brush them off as an attempt to scare the students coming into grade 9 to do their work. What Mr. Roberts and other teachers say is actually true – if you don't study, don't pay attention in class and only monkey around, you won't get the grades you want. So whenever a teacher gives you advice, you should really take it into consideration.

Good advice indeed! Well, thanks for chatting with us, RISSUE.

ber of the RISS Community

“I think this is an interesting school; I have seen quite a lot of differences in the sorts of people I have met here”





MUNRO

[Model United Nations Rotterdam]

MUNRO 2019 originated as an ambitious CAS project idea presented by three best friends. Doubts lingered in their heads, as this was a largescale event and they wondered if the project would work out. After numerous sleepless nights and emails, they were able to gather equipment and a trusted crew, taking a step forward towards making this event a professional MUN conference. As winter was approaching and the days got shorter, the conference kept coming closer. To make it a success, they needed applicants – but, to their dismay, there was no visible increase in the applications. Giving up now seemed like the easiest option, yet they kept working hard, and to their surprise, the applications tripled. The entries raised, but so did their nerves. Their hopes became reality; the MUN was finally happening.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

By Lamia Tumkaya and Sania Nisar

With determination and amazing support from the RISS teachers, the MUNRO crew was able to achieve their dream. This two-day event is a beautiful example of how the IB curriculum taught at the school creates risk-takers. Something that was extremely special about this was the simulation – it was serious yet fun at the same time. Intriguing, isn't it?

Engagement and Enlightenment

Simulations are one of the best ways to engage, learn and enlighten yourself about things you want to broaden your mind about. Model United Nations is one such simulation that stimulates thoughts concerning the well-being of the world we live in. It not only gets your brain working but also works on improving the way you construct your arguments, structure your amendments and create a stage presence. Not only does it provide you with a sense of accomplishment, it also makes you realize how one reaction has enough force to bring about change.

Model United Nations was first held in the year 1921 at Oxford University and, since then, has evolved immensely. This simulation encourages students to showcase skills when it comes to teamwork and diplomacy, as they create resolutions to struggles faced by their countries. The participants in this activity are referred to as delegates and are required to perform certain tasks. These tasks can begin once the delegates are assigned their council and countries. The tasks mentioned above can include taking positions, constructing policies, making amendments and debating the problems at hand.

MUN 2019

On the weekend of November 28, 2019, Rotterdam International Secondary School proudly presented its first Model United Nations, organized by none other than its own students. Pupils from across Holland joined us. MUNRO was lucky to host participants from Belgium as well. Over 100 delegates were present at the event and were later joined by



guest speakers. With more than 30 nationalities present, this event can be considered one of the most international conferences in the history of MUN. With four different committees – namely, UNHRC, ECOSOC, Crisis Committee and the Security Council – it was ensured that everyone would have a committee that could fit their interests and experiences.

As mentioned before, the MUN conference starts by providing its delegates time for research. They are encouraged to come up with draft resolutions based on their countries and committees. Once this is achieved, the debate begins. The delegates form a group and present their policy statements. These statements are then debated. The delegates are given a stage to convince their listeners to either support or cancel the given policy, based on their perspective. The resolution presented now contains new amendments and existing statements which have been reconstructed and debated on. The conference then proceeds with the voting procedures. Once the resolution has been passed, the UN adopts and implements its policies.



Skills and Open-Mindedness

During the conference, various things are considered and learned. Students meet with different delegates from around the globe and this pushes them to develop social skills. Participating in a MUN provides students with various skills that they will benefit from throughout their lives, such as public speaking, diplomacy skills and leadership skills. Students that join a MUN acquire extensive knowledge, considering the fact that – during the conference – examples of issues explored include ‘Promoting the strategic role of South-South and triangular cooperation to achieve the 2030 Agenda’, ‘The issue of Yemen’ and ‘The issue of Myanmar’. These extended topics, even for adults, are often challenging. When students engage with issues that have global significance, their conceptual understanding increases exponentially. Participants of MUN possess the ability to express themselves confidently and creatively. While lobbying, students make sure to listen to each other carefully and disagree with each other in a respectful manner. Being open-minded is another significant trait participants acquire, since delegates are from all around the globe and have different perspectives and ideologies. While writing resolutions, delegates have to exercise initiative in making reasonable and ethical decisions. Adding to that, while discussing consequential issues, they have to act with compassion and empathy – necessary to create a positive difference in the world around them and to benefit the lives of others. Last but not least, another trait MUN participants retain, is being principled. While accepting resolutions or submitting amendments, the delegates act with justice and integrity. The students carry responsibility and honesty wherever they travel.

“Simulations are one of the best ways to engage, learn and enlighten yourself about things you want to broaden your mind about”



“Being open-minded is another significant trait, since delegates are from all around the globe and have different perspectives and ideologies”

Guest Speaker

Concluding this event, most MUNs welcome guest speakers and so did MUNRO 2019. Our honorable speaker came from India and he told students about his water projects which were being implemented in developing countries. Adding to this, he elucidated on why he had started this project and talked about the importance of water. He also spoke about his personal experience of growing up in rural areas in India and how inequality had affected his life. This topic was also touched on in the closing ceremony, when the Chair of the Security Council discussed the topic of Yemen, relating this to our guest speaker's topic by explaining the significance of this issue.



Stress, Teens, and More Stress

You are not alone. Everyone undergoes that feeling of being stressed every so often – adults, teens, and even kids. Stress is a word that is commonly thrown around in your day-to-day vocabulary, but do we really understand what ‘stress’ is?

What Actually Is Stress

Scientifically, “stress is the body’s reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response” – clevelandclinic.org, 02/05/2015. These bodily reactions could be physical, mental, or emotional responses. Whilst different, these responses have one thing in common. They are normal and healthy. Stress is simply a reaction that happens in your body, it’s how you deal with it that might give this reaction a negative connotation. In fact, there is a word for ‘negative stress’, which is ‘distress’. Distress is stress that continues without relief. Ways for relief will be listed later.

The ‘Teenager’ Problem

As teenagers, we are in a strange time of our lives. Our heads are full of ideas and contradictions. We are always being told to do things, but we strive for independence. We may claim to be ‘experts’ in stress, but deep down we know that the iceberg is much larger under the water.

A 2013 survey by the APA (American Psychological Association) found that stress is extremely common among teenagers. According to the poll, school is the number one source of stress for teens. Getting into a good college or deciding what to do after high school is the second-most prominent source of pressure.

Fortunately, RISS has been very adamant about providing early insight into universities and jobs – and providing first-hand opportunities for us to experience them. But school stress is school stress – and there’s really no way around it. Of course, there are tactics to combat it.

Positives and Negatives

We’ve all heard the blaring warning signs of too much stress. Dizziness, headaches, problems sleeping, indigestion, weight gain or loss, and the like. And yes, too much stress – distress – is a problem. Don’t be afraid to seek help, talk about it, or visit the school counsellors. Distress is unhealthy.

A controversial opinion among the cynical; but stress has benefits too. Scientifically, there is something called ‘good stress’, or ‘eustress’ as psychologists say. It’s what keeps us alive and excited about life. Your pulse quickens. Hormones swell. You may recognise these feelings when riding a rollercoaster, competing for a race, or on a first date.


Good stress is a great way to combat bad stress. Revolutionary, I know. But transferring the same reactions in your body to ‘good stress’ is a great way to let it out and provide relief.

Oftentimes, we feel overwhelmed – and that creates stress. All these things that we need to do, have to do, are perceived as threats. Perceiving these threats as challenges turns dread into anticipation and excitement.

As you apply acknowledging threats as challenges more frequently, it becomes more natural, and you experience more good stress and less bad stress. As a student, good stress is what keeps me on top of my work.

One of the most important ways of dealing with stress is to find hobbies you enjoy, such as skateboarding, exercising, drawing, etc. These help you to have your mindset focused on something else, rather than being stressed for your next task or test. For exercise and sports, see the anecdote below; A RISS Student Recount: How Exercise and Sports Help Cope with Stress.

- Take breaks from stressful situations that you encounter. You could do this by listening to music, reading, watching a movie, talking or hanging out with friends, etc.
- Learn to feel good about doing a competent or 'good enough' job rather than demanding perfection from yourself and others. This helps you to accept yourself as a person and have better connections with other people.
- Always get at least eight hours of sleep in order to be fresh the next morning, instead of being tired all the time. Your sleeping quality will start to increase if you are less stressed.
- Try to stay organised with your planning and work. If you struggle with that, your parents or tutors can help you.
- Talk to people you trust about your problems, feelings or struggles.
- Finally, change your mindset. My tutor taught the class a specific rule to make anything, however unappealing or mundane, seem much more desirable. It is to replace "I have to..." with "I get to...". Here's an example: I have to write an article for the school magazine; or I get to write an article for the school magazine.



*It's all about opportunity.
The 'getting to' adds a pinch
of optimism. It makes you
feel glad to be who you are.
Why stress over the
opportunities in life?*

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A RISS Student Recount:

How Exercise and Sports Help Cope with Stress

Many students around the world and at RISS are experiencing heavy stress due to the pressures of getting top grades, heavy workloads and homework. Sometimes, this causes students to not have enough down time, making it hard for them to release their stress and have time for themselves. As mentioned earlier, stress can have many negative impacts on a person's quality of life, such as, decreased sleep quality, anger and depression, bad grades, etc.

However, studies have shown there are many ways of decreasing stress rates, such as exercising and participating in a sport.

First of all, sports and exercise increase your physical health and well-being. The main principles that sports help you with when coping with stress are: improved moods, improved concentration, improved sleeping habits – boosting your self-confidence – while sports have even been credited with being linked to leadership traits.

At RISS, students have access to sports clubs that could help reduce stress rates. These clubs are for Football/Soccer, Tennis, Volleyball, Dodgeball, Boxing and Running. The sports clubs provide students with good quality materials/equipment and teaching, in order for them to have an enjoyable and safe experience. RISS has created these sports clubs as a way for students to have fun and increase their physical and mental skills at the same time.

RISS sports clubs are open the entire school year, with one lesson per week. Most of the sports students can choose from at RISS are team sports, which are known to increase our students' social skills. These skills can improve your performances during group work and classes.

As a RISS student myself, I have experienced that participating in physical activity has helped me a lot during study periods before important exams such as the IGCSE. It has made me a lot more effective in my work and I haven't suffered from any stress or laziness during study time. This has helped, and will help, for the rest of my life when facing challenging moments.



“Sports and exercise increase your physical health and well-being and help you cope with stress”





How Experiences Shape Who We Are

By Aarushi Ganguli

The Leadership of Our Hearts

About two years ago, my family and I visited the Dachau concentration camp in Germany. Having never seen a place like that before, it was an eye-opening experience for me. I had read about the horrors of the Holocaust and had even visited places such as Anne Frank's house. However, I had never actually seen what happened to the Jews after being taken away by the Nazi soldiers.

Everything is an experience. When we wake up in the morning – that is an experience. We wake up in a different way with a different thought every day. Our daily lives, even if we do the same thing on a regular basis, is an experience.

Perspective

At the Dachau concentration camp, I saw the documentation of horrors that would make anybody scream and of things people in this day and age don't know exist or existed. The vast empty space gave me a chill as I looked on and saw, in my mind's eye, several thousand Jews lined up, being treated worse than animals. This trip gave me a perspective on life and how we should be grateful for everything we have, not knowing when or where something drastic might occur and how we should always remember that as bad as we feel, there is someone out there suffering much more.

Experiences like these are what shape who we are as a person today. We tend to judge someone on their personality and interactions, among others, right now. However, we don't realize that we must consider their experiences and what they have been through their entire lives.

We also must understand that what most people show on the outside hides their real feelings. The prettiest smiles hide the deepest secrets, the prettiest eyes have cried the most tears and the kindest hearts have felt the most pain. These experi-

ences have been formed because of the amalgamation of experiences that each person has gone through up till now.

Experiences

We form our opinions around each experience we face and conquer. All the bad and good experiences shape our stereotypes or how we see certain people. But these also make us stronger if we come out the other end emotionally and physically healthy.

I have seen other places like this concentration camp and other testimonies of horrors from – and similar to – the Holocaust. But being there and visiting these locations first-hand gave me a sense of what people can take on.

The human capacity for anything physical and emotional, be that pain, love, happiness or any other emotion, can all be traced back to the experiences we had growing up.

I learnt to feel happiness when I was smiling and laughing with my friends in elementary school. I learnt to be humble when an opportunity that was very prestigious came upon my path and everyone was talking about it. All these experiences have shaped who I am today. Many people have experiences that teach them certain lessons. We, as humans, have a tendency to think that we are always right. We are not. However, we cannot accept this without life teaching us a few things.

“This trip gave me a perspective on life: as bad as we feel, there is someone out there suffering much more”

Rights

I learnt from my visit to the concentration camp that to living in a place where we have our own rights and we get to make our own decisions and are, for the most part, not discriminated due to race, religion, language or gender is something we should not take for granted.

What scares me the most was that Hitler and World War II took place not that long ago; it hasn't yet been a century, and the fear that something that inhumane might happen again leaves me with a sense of dread for what may happen in the future. The emotion of fear can make us go down paths that we later wish we hadn't. However, fear is a powerful emotion – and the only thing that can defeat it is a sense of hope. These emotions can make us experience very different circumstances in the same way or the same circumstances in a very different way.

Mindset

Mindset is everything. It usually shows us each person's worldview, and if it is growing or fixed. But how we perceive the world is all based on our experiences. We say people with a fixed worldview are very narrow-minded and are not at all open to new opportunities and experiences. We, however, never stop to think that that person has might have had some experience that has stopped them from seeing the world as it is.

Mindsets, we say, are related to our personality and sometimes our emotions at the time. This is most likely untrue. Mindsets are a culmination of all the experiences we have had. Bad experiences tend to generate a negative mindset and good experiences tend to generate positive mindsets. However, experiences can be both good and bad. Bad experiences can make a person see things in a way that makes them hurt people. It makes them 'see red' and they need someone to tell them that what they are doing is not right.

We think different things every day and those thoughts lead us to have very different lives from each other. If we all had the same thoughts, we would all be having the same experience. This will not happen anytime soon, as we each have individual thoughts that make us different.

Appreciation

Experiences shape who we are today. They are also a culmination of everything we have been through in life. We take everything for granted and we should make sure we appreciate the things around us more often. So the next time you experience something, remember that the person you are today is shaped by the experiences in your past and one of these can change your perspective on life. Next time you are anywhere worthwhile, put down your technology and experience it wholeheartedly, because you never know if an experience will change you.



The Leadership
of our Hearts

“We tend to think we are always right. We are not. However, we cannot accept this without life teaching us a few things”

CEUX QUI • EURENT • EXTERMINI
RE • QUE • LES • VIVANTS • S'UNISSENT
• ET • LE • RESPECT • DE • LA • PERSONN
• THOSE • WHO • WERE • EXTERMI
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• ИТ • ЖИВЫХ • В • БОРЬБЕ • ЗА • М
• ЧЕЛОВЕЧЕСКОЙ • ЛИЧ





The Visit to Tyne Cot Cemetery

The sky was cloudless and the air was balmy as we strolled to the entrance of Tyne Cot Cemetery. We (Grade Nine students and teachers) had already visited the Flanders Field Museum and the Trench Museum that morning. Our teacher told us that Tyne Cot Cemetery was the final resting place of approximately 300,000 soldiers from the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. “Please show your utmost respect,” he said.

As we entered the cemetery, we were astounded by its vastness. The cemetery was immense: numerous rows of white slabs stretched on either side of the path; in the middle there was a war memorial, as a large cask which served as a mass grave; the large marble walls, which were covered with names of deceased soldiers, enclosed the cemetery.

Suffering

As I walked between the slabs, I felt as if I was treading upon bones of deceased soldiers. Flowers, such as lilies, lilacs, roses, daffodils and lavenders had sprung between the graves, tossing their heads in the breeze. They lent considerable beauty to the cemetery, but that did not compensate for the sufferings these soldiers had undergone.

We gathered near the wall. I saw marked changes in my classmates. Some of them wept. Others sat downcast, with sullen eyes and sunken brows. My teachers wore sombre expressions on their faces. A respectable silence.

I was a bit bewildered by the others’ reactions. As a pacifist, I hated wars and the military. At the same time, I felt an infinite sympathy for deceased soldiers. Every summer, especially in August, I am told the stories of the Second World War. I had acquainted myself with the inhumanity of the war, the civilian casualties through air strikes and the atomic bomb, and how these



scathed its victims beyond measure. I am also told about the unfortunate fate of many soldiers: suicide bomber pilots whose job was to charge into enemy vessels; students who were forced to terminate their studies to serve their country; soldiers who battled in tropical frontlines until their troops were decimated. I remembered that the soldiers, whether voluntary or involuntary, had no choice but to enlist in the military. If they did not, their families were labelled 'unpatriotic' and were subjected to relentless insults and taunting. Such things must have been the same in Europe during World War I.

These soldiers, who were resting beneath the soil, chose their loved ones over themselves. The immensity of their sacrifice was startling. "Oh, hapless youths!" I thought. "You weren't born in the right era. You were born in the time when your rights weren't respected, even your right to life."

Words

"Please," our teacher said. "Get into your groups." This meant we had to gather with the students with whom we shared our rooms. The teacher then gave us the task to deliver some words – an oration, a poem, a eulogy, a description of our feelings – to the deceased soldiers.

My group settled on a poem. At first I disagreed, as the poem said that the memory of the war is not entirely bleak. "This poem implies that there are positive sides to wars as well as down-sides," I said. "It's glorifying warfare." My friends disagreed. They argued it was about being strong, even in the face of a predicament. Soon, I gave in.

We stood up. A girl recited the first half of the poem; I took the second half. A loud applause. We sat down. Some of the other groups paid tribute to soldiers, saying, "We want to say thank you for the sacrifice you made for us." Others expressed their commiseration. As our speeches ended, our teacher glanced at us and chose two girls from my group to lay the wreath. We proceeded to an unknown soldier's grave. The two girls laid the wreath there. We began our mourning. A silence ensued.

Bitter Reality of War

The ritual ended. We started back up the path whence we came. We took several photographs and jumped on the bus. Later that day, on Thursday, July 11, 2019, we visited Menin Gate, a memorial with the appearance of a Roman triumphal arch, which bears the name of 55,000 soldiers from Britain and the Commonwealth with no known grave. We listened to the Last Post – music played to honour deceased soldiers – before returning to the hostel.

The Grade Nine field trip to Belgium provided many of us with an invaluable first-hand opportunity to acquaint ourselves with the bitter reality of war. As the older generation who had experienced the war is passing away, it is the obligation of the younger generation to retell the atrocity of wars in order to stop the wars from happening, and to maintain peace. Forgetting the misery of war will create a breeding ground for bloodthirsty dictators and a resurgence of militarism. It is indispensable, therefore, that we share and apply our experiences at the site of previous wars and our knowledge of the devastating effects wars have had on individuals, to prevent future wars from happening.

"As the older generation is passing away, it is up to the younger generation to retell the atrocity of wars in order to stop the wars from happening, and to maintain peace"

BEAUTY HAS
NO RACE



...and Art Is Everywhere

Dutch artists. You've seen their works. You've at least heard of them. Van Gogh. Vermeer. Rembrandt. Escher. Ring a bell? In fact, this metaphorical bell might be ringing for two reasons. You probably recognise these names as the four houses of RISS. RISS incorporates a plethora of house events throughout the year to inspire team spirit and competition between the students.

But why are our houses named after famous Dutch artists? Why not after animals, or flowers, or leaders, or places? Art might have a bigger influence than we think.

Community

As new and international students, and RISS being an international school, we are all part of the same story. We have all come here from different places, cultures, and families – because of some outside force. It could be your parents' job. It could be for education considerations. It could be for political reasons. The fact is, why we are here is beyond our control.

Yet, we have established a strong sense of community and built powerful relationships. From what I said earlier, we should feel a bit alienated. But we don't. Something has brought all of us together, regardless of whether we are aware of this or not.

The Universal Language of Art

As an IB Visual Arts student, and this could potentially be my bias, I am convinced that art is another form of language and communication. Wouldn't living on planet Earth be even greater than it is already if everyone spoke a universal language? Unfortunately, we humans are not very intelligent, but we have art and that comes close.

And this language that is art has sparked the flame in the beginning of our relationships with others. We come from totally different backgrounds, but we all have the capacity for creativity. We have the capacity to express ourselves prolifically through art.

Anything Creative

When I say 'art', I don't mean the paintings and sculptures you pass by in a museum or gallery. I am referring to anything creative. The limit is only one's imagination. All the friends that I have made were because of sharing a creative passion. And RISS is very adamant about allowing the creative minds of their students to bloom into fruition.

You could bond over music, films, fashion, photos, makeup, books, comics, the list goes on – and they are all art in their own unique way. There is something wonderfully serendipitous in sharing something you love with someone else.

Ubiquitous

Furthermore, this is a great way to expand on the global-mindedness of RISS students. Why not take advantage of going to an international school? The ubiquitous nature of art transcends time and space. We can learn from how all these different cultures choose to express themselves creatively and in turn have a greater understanding of the world around us.

On a larger scale, we can even see how this has affected, and is still affecting, the city of Rotterdam. In the modern age, Rotterdam is essentially a conglomerate of businesses and jobs. It's a working person's city. After all, the Port of Rotterdam is the largest port in Europe and one of the busiest in the world. Consequently, the city is populated by people coming from every corner of the globe.

Looking around Rotterdam, I couldn't help but notice the amazing architecture when I explored the city for the first time. From the bizarre Cube Houses to the stunning, massive arch of Markthal, the city itself is sprawling with ingenuity, like an art gallery. There is no specific theme or style; it relishes in its architectural diversity.

Museum Park

Rotterdam as a city is one thing, but its art galleries are a whole new beast. We know that New York boasts a Museum Mile, Berlin a Museumsinsel, Vienna a Museum Quarter, and what about Rotterdam? Rotterdam proudly boasts a Museum Park. The city is home to some of the best museums in the Netherlands and exploring them has never been so easy.

A visit to the art museum is also another fantastic way of getting to know people, as well as your city. Art is a great way to ignite a discussion. Whether it be observational, emotional, or pure mockery, getting a reaction is all part of the creative endeavour.

Hence, the art museum could easily become a worthwhile communal experience, a stress reliever, a home away from home, and/or an instrument for creating meaningful connections. Of course, art just doesn't end there. There are music festivals, comic and pop culture conventions, the movie cinema, and more.

It is safe to say that without art, we are truly lost. Thankfully, people, my classmates, my friends, my teachers, and I are trying our best to keep creativity alive.

“This language that is art has sparked the flame in the beginning of our relationships with others”





"Art is a great way to ignite a discussion. Whether it be observational, emotional, or pure mockery, getting a reaction is all part of the creative endeavour"

ART GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS WORTH YOUR WHILE

■ **Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen**

"1930s art museum with collections of Dutch & European masterpieces, from early Middle Ages to today."

■ **Kunsthall, Rotterdam**

"Striking steel & glass museum hosting program of temporary art, design & photography exhibitions."

■ **Chabot Museum**

"Sleek, white 1936 modernist villa housing a collection of expressionist art by Hendrik Chabot."

■ **Het Nieuwe Instituut**

"Arts institute for exhibitions, lectures & research on contemporary architecture & design."

International Language

The RISS is an international school that is proud of the many cultures represented on its grounds. Approximately 20 different languages are spoken on the senior campus, and students have formed an accepting and internationally-minded community between the school walls.

"MI PIACE ESSERE
UNO STUDENTE
IN QUESTA SCUOLA"

(Italian)

"I ENJOY BEING A
STUDENT AT THIS
SCHOOL"

(English)

"IK GENIET ERVAN OM
STUDENT TE ZIJN OP DEZE
SCHOOL"

(Dutch)

"J'AIME ÊTRE
ÉTUDIANT À CETTE
ÉCOLE"

(French)

"我喜歡在這所學校當學生"

(Chinese)

"ICH GENIESSE ES,
SCHÜLER AN DIESER
SCHULE ZU SEIN"

(German)

"Уживам што сам
ученик у овој
школи"

(Serbian)

"DISFRUTO SER
ESTUDIANTE EN ESTA
ESCUELA"

(Spanish)

RISS students have lived on every continent except for Antarctica, and if you group any three of us together, it is very likely that, combined, we can create a list of over 50 countries that we have visited. Everyone is bilingual, most are trilingual, and there are several students among us who speak four or even five languages. What does this mean for the students? What are the benefits of being able to speak several languages?

Benefits

According to a study done by the Language Learning Center, there are nine major benefits of speaking more than one language:

"When you can speak another language, your brain is trained to find subtle hints and nuances in given situations"

“When you speak more than one language, your brain develops the skill of eliminating any distractions”

■ YOU WILL BECOME BETTER AT MAKING DECISIONS:

When you can speak another language, your brain is trained to find subtle hints and nuances in given situations. By having a heightened awareness and appreciation of the situation, you make more rational decisions. People who only speak one language usually base their decisions solely on their emotions.

■ AN IMPROVED MEMORY:

A recent study published in the Journal of Experimental Child Psychology showed that bilingual students perform much better than monolingual students in tests, looking at what is known as ‘working memory’. Working memory is included in the part of the brain that processes and stores information. This is due to the fact that speaking another language trains different parts of the brain, therefore also contributing to an improved memory. Improved memory is a very useful skill that can be applied to education, as it will help you to remember topics and details during tests and quizzes.

■ INCREASED ATTENTION SPAN:

Someone who is bilingual is used to having to switch between the different languages that they speak, and also to deciding which language best fits their current circumstances. This is significant, because it trains the brain to filter important information and to focus. Therefore, concentration is improved, which is another beneficial skill that helps students! The skill of concentration allows students to retain more information, helping them save time and also helping them decide which are the most important and relevant details to study.

■ YOUR ABILITY TO MULTITASK IS IMPROVED:

Multitasking is a very important skill to have as a student at the RISS. There is a tremendous amount of work we need to accomplish, so we need to know how to do our homework while we are on the metro, brushing our teeth, or eating dinner! When you speak more than one language, your brain develops the skill of eliminating any distractions, allowing you to quickly switch between tasks without much difficulty.

■ YOU DEVELOP YOUR WRITING AND SPEAKING SKILLS:

When speaking another language, you learn a new structure of grammar, how to set up sentences, and how to effectively communicate your thoughts with other people. As a result, you improve your linguistic awareness, helping you in both your first language, and the new language.

■ YOU BECOME A MORE EMPATHETIC PERSON:

How do you learn another language? By speaking with, as well as paying attention to the mannerisms of, someone from a country who speaks the language you are hoping to learn. When you interact with this person or these people, you simultaneously learn about their culture. Furthermore, you learn to understand why they do certain things and behave in certain ways. For example, in certain cultures, it is considered disrespectful to shake someone’s hand with your left hand. The left hand is used for dirty work, which is why they are insulted when you do this. An outsider might think that they are being dramatic, but you understand that this is an important part of their culture. You become more empathetic, and you learn to understand and appreciate the differences among people. This is also why new students at international schools integrate much quicker than students at public schools, as the other students understand their situation and do not avoid them because they are different.

Learning a new language is very difficult. It requires motivation, as well as patience and acceptance of the fact that you will make mistakes; however, once you finally speak the language, you will be satisfied with your determination and happy with the fact that your hard work has finally paid off! In addition to this, you will realize all of the amazing benefits that have been discussed in this article. You will feel even more proud to be international.



CULTURE

By Sijbe van Weerden

The City of Rotterdam



Rotterdam is the second largest city in the Netherlands, despite being nearly destroyed in World War II by a German attack in 1940. Rotterdam has the biggest port in Europe, and was in fact the busiest port in the world from 1962 to 2004. The city is known for its rich history, but and also for its modern architecture, which has won multiple awards. On many of the city's sidewalks you will find red lights with a fire logo. These show the outline of the raging fire that decimated the city center.

The attack itself however could have been avoided. On the morning of May 14, 1940, the Dutch government received an ultimatum from the Germans forcing the Dutch to surrender; if these commands were not followed up, the Germans would start their attack on Rotterdam. The Dutch accepted this surrender under one condition; that a German soldier would come and sign the notice, with their name and rank.

Due to the slowness of communication, the city was ordered to be destroyed before this could be settled. While the order to abort the bombing was underway, flares were fired to communicate that the bombing should not take place, creating a red smoke. The first three bombers coming from the south did not see this smoke on time, and dropped their payload on the city, but the rest of the 24 planes turned westward. However, the squadron arriving from the north, with a force of 60 planes, failed to notice the smoke and unleashed a fury of bombardment, devastating the city.

THREE Places to Enjoy a Meal in Rotterdam

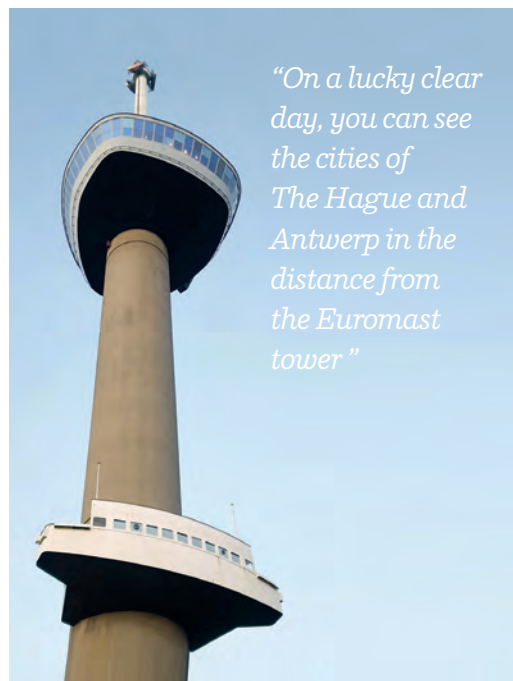
The first well-known restaurant in Rotterdam is called **Konak**. This can be found at the back of the central station, requiring a two-minute walk from any place within the station. Konak serves quick and cheap Turkish food for on-the-go. A great place for value for your money, plus a great range of delicious foods, ranging from Turkish pizza to wraps.

The next choice is called **Mangiare**. Mangiare is an Italian restaurant at an easy six-minute walk from Rotterdam Central Station. Walk out of the front of central station and continue straight. You will need to make a left turn at Van Oldenbarneveltstraat. Mangiare serves a wonderful choice of Italian cuisine, has great customer service and a very nicely-styled Italian interior, complementing your stay.

Our third restaurant is **Restaurant de Jong**. This is one of the best reviewed restaurants in Rotterdam city, with a score of 4.7 out of 5 stars with 165 google reviews. At 14 minutes, it is the furthest walk from Rotterdam Central Station, located at Raampoortstraat 38. The restaurant serves different choices of fixed courses and is more of a classy restaurant, that you go to for that one special meal. Each bite has many exquisite flavors, as befits fresh, high-quality Dutch food.

THREE Things to Do in Rotterdam

The first place I would visit is **Euromast tower**, which has a staggering height of 185 meters. This place shows a 360-degree view of the entire skyline. The building was created in 1960 by H.A. Maaskant and J.P. van Eesteren. On a lucky clear day, you can see the cities of The Hague and Antwerp in the distance.



"On a lucky clear day, you can see the cities of The Hague and Antwerp in the distance from the Euromast tower"

The second place I recommend visiting is the **Blijdorp Zoo**. It showcases a large variety of animals; over 180 species. The original zoo was destroyed in World War II and the new one was rebuilt in 1940. This zoo has over 64.25 acres of space, including the Oceanium expansion, which was opened in 2001. Experience the wonderful natural atmosphere with wooden sidewalks across glass enclosures showing various extraordinary animals.

The final experience I would recommend checking out is the Rotterdam **Harbour cruise**, which allows you to witness the scale of the Rotterdam port. With this 75-minute cruise, you can see the glory of the Rotterdam skyline from the water. With an English-language guide recounting different historical events throughout the city, and views of the impressive ship yards within the port, it is well worth your while.



THREE Places to Admire in Rotterdam

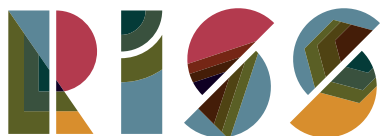
The first place to admire are the iconic **cube houses**. These houses are shaped like a cube, which are tilted at a 45-degree angle. They were designed by a Dutch architect named Piet Blom to make the most of their space. The idea was for each house to represent an abstract forest, each roof top representing a tree top.

The next place I would visit is a historical piece of architecture called the **Witte Huis**. This building sits on the harbor, was built in 1898 and was once the tallest office building, with a height of 43 meters. It's one of the few buildings that survived the Rotterdam bombing during World War II. The design of the building includes a beautiful white polished brick façade. The area where the building sits is a place that contains the old style of Rotterdam, but also has modern touches.

The final place that I recommend admiring in Rotterdam is a ship that has been turned into a museum, restaurant, venue and also a hotel – **the SS Rotterdam**. It was a former ocean liner made for crossing the Atlantic Ocean. The ship was launched on September 13, 1958, by Queen Juliana and was mainly used for passengers who wanted to visit America from Europe. It was retired on September 21, 2000. I would recommend visiting either the museum or checking out the 228-meter long vessel. If you are not a fan of museums, visiting the ship is still a wonderful experience. From its top deck, you have a beautiful view over the Rotterdam skyline and the Erasmus bridge.

*“The cube houses
represent an
abstract forest,
each roof top
representing
a tree top”*





ROTTERDAM
INTERNATIONAL
SECONDARY
SCHOOL

