



LEYSIN AMERICAN SCHOOL IN SWITZERLAND

2020 EDITION

panorama

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS





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Contents

- 6 The Times We've Lived Through
Letter from Head of School
Dr. Marc-Frédéric Ott
- 8 The Lessons We've Learned
Letter from Head of Operations
Dr. Christoph Ott
- 10 LAS Responds to the COVID-19 Pandemic
Anthony Leutenegger

At the start of the pandemic it was apparent that the LAS family would spring into action and do their part to help heal the world.



Maja and Kera, two of our newest LAS alumnas.

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Christoph Ott
Managing Director, Head of Operations

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- 17 The Class of 2020
Michelle Starke
- 24 LAS Faculty and Staff
Rise to the Occasion
Paul Fomalont
- 26 Diversity, Equity, and
Inclusion
C. Ryan Joyce
- 30 Sarah Wilson '09
Anthony Leutenegger



2020 Edition

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The opinions expressed in articles do not necessarily reflect those of LAS.

Parents of LAS Alumni:

If this magazine is addressed to your son or daughter who no longer maintains a permanent address at your home, please notify the LAS Advancement Office. Thank you.

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26

"As an institution that brings people together who would otherwise be separated by oceans and continents, we have an opportunity to not only appreciate each other's diversity but also fight for an environment off the Magic Mountain where these differences are celebrated rather than ignored. This is how each one of us will leave a lasting impact in our future endeavors in honor of our time spent at LAS." Alicia Serena Shamji '16

What do our abbreviations mean?

Our guide below explains the shorthand you'll see throughout the Panorama.

LAS Leysin American School

LASER LAS Educational Research

ALPS Accelerated Learning Program in Switzerland

BEC Belle Époque Campus

MMAC Magic Mountain Athletic Center

TILE Talks in Innovation, Leadership, and Entrepreneurship

JOHN SMITH '98

John's graduation year from LAS was 1998.

JOHN SMITH S '98, '99, '00

John attended summer camp at LAS in 1998, 1999, and 2000.

JOHN SMITH P '14, '16

John has two children who attended LAS and their graduation years were 2014 and 2016.

32 LAS edge Program
Paul Magnuson P '21

35 LAS Leads the Way
Paul Magnuson P '21

36 Johan Larsen '91
Anthony Leutenegger

40 Alpine Adventure
John Harlin III P '14

42 Drawdown at Globe Day
John Harlin III P '14

46 How LAS Faculty Families Were Created
Doris and Steven Ott

50 A Going Away Speech
Mark Fryer

52 A Year Like No Other
James McKenna

56 You Make the Difference
C. Ryan Joyce

59 Honor Roll of Donors 2019/20

60 Global Signature Event Series: A Success!

66 Remembering Dr. Thomas Haldi

68 Homecoming!
Letter from Chairwoman of LAS Board
Stefanie Ott P '18

The Times We've Lived Through

By Dr. Marc-Frédéric Ott, Managing Director, Head of School



The 2019/20 school year will be unforgettable for everyone. The pandemic reminds me of the fateful incident on September 11, 2001, living in the Northeastern part of the United States, and I am sure for those old enough, remembering the attacks on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The world suddenly changed and we did not have time to emotionally and rationally process what it meant. Although these types of catastrophic events cause shock, it is important to reflect on how we as a community respond and adapt. The speed and severity of the pandemic has challenged our world and certainly our school and I can only say how proud I am of everyone in the LAS community as we have navigated through these difficult and ambiguous times.

The 2019/20 school year started very positively. After three years of planning, we rolled out our new assessment policy, shifting from a traditional grading system to standards-based grading. We introduced the LAS edge Program, allowing students to combine electives and extracurricular activities in a more coherent way and we added additional flexibility in class scheduling, allowing more course options for gifted and talented students. The fall of 2019 was no doubt a time when everyone felt LAS was moving forward in the right direction and swiftly. We were on a roll!

The second term also got off to an excellent start: the ski conditions were great and Leysin was one of the main hosts for the Winter Youth Olympics. It was fantastic for our students to see these rising young stars. It was also around this time, however, that the world started learning about the mysterious Coronavirus in China. By the end of February the virus began its global spread and we knew it was time to act decisively. We formed our LAS Rapid Response Team and started planning for every possible outcome.

In early March the virus hit Europe, starting with Italy, and on the afternoon of Wednesday, March 11, the World Health Organization declared it a pandemic. It was then we decided to send all of our students home as soon as possible. The Swiss government invoked national emergency law on March 13, which included the closing of all schools. By Monday, March 16, almost all of our students had departed and faculty began preparing to teach the academic program remotely starting on April 6, after Spring Break.

Our parents were very supportive of our decision, as one parent wrote to me after his son had returned home: "Thank you for making the decision of closing the school. The unexpected and rapid departure of all students was as smooth as a Swiss clock! My son has been home for only two days and he is already counting the days to return to his Swiss home. Please let the students back to LAS as soon as possible!"

Our first priority was the safety and security of our LAS community.

- 1. We had to finish the school year remotely, including end-of-year celebrations.**
- 2. We needed to begin a comprehensive plan for the 2020/21 school year.**
- 3. All alumni events were to be postponed.**
- 4. Staff and faculty needed to work remotely and social distancing policies needed to be enforced.**

This list was a gargantuan effort to fulfill by all those involved. Our typical operations were turned upside down and I cannot thank our staff and faculty enough as they rose to the occasion in teaching and supporting students from afar.

I also have to extend a thank you to our many parents who supported us and their children during the remote learning process. I know it was not easy! After several weeks of lockdown in Moscow, the same Russian parent who wrote me earlier jokingly sent me another email: "Please take my son back: I am ready to send him to a Soviet Camp in North Siberia." Luckily for his son, he will be with us at the start of the new year this August!

The end-of-year celebrations are always bittersweet at LAS. We typically say goodbye to a wonderful graduating class and at the same time celebrate the completion of another wonderful year on the Magic Mountain. The 2019/20 graduation and class will always be a special one. Our Commencement Speakers, Daiva and Paul Majauskas P '14, 16, 20, emphasized the

importance of learning from others regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, or religious background. Marija and Oliwia, our co-valedictorians, gave speeches that were also very inspiring, valuing the friendships made at LAS and how privileged they are to belong to such a strong, supportive, and powerful network of people around the world. The unexpected interruption of the senior year created an even stronger bond among the LAS students and graduates of 2019/20. These remarkable students will always have each other and their shared experiences, and we hope they draw strength from it.

By the time you read this, we will have hopefully welcomed students back on campus for the school year. We could not be more excited! The 2020/21 school year will be marked by LAS's 60th Anniversary Celebration! We are hoping to host alumni reunions around the world during the school year (pandemic pending) and will plan the wonderful 60th Anniversary Celebration on campus the weekend of June 19-21, 2021. We are also hoping to plan a ceremony honoring the class of 2020 along with these events. Given the uncertainty due to the pandemic, we will make the final announcement regarding these events by December 1, 2020.

LAS will emerge a stronger and more caring school thanks to changes we are putting into place. We are all a part of this LAS family, which is strong, supportive, and has demonstrated the ability to navigate ambiguity with the highest level of professionalism. As we look to the future, we need to continue to highlight our identity as a school through our values. We need to make strong changes and continue to progress in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion—my brother Christoph elaborates on this in his letter, and you can read more about the progress we are making on (pages 8-9). We need to continue to share stories embodying the values of the school as it was brought up so eloquently during the speeches at the graduation ceremony and we need to remind ourselves and everyone it is nice "being caught doing good."

Thank you for your trust and support in LAS. I hope to welcome you back to YOUR school before or at the 60th Anniversary Celebrations. I wish you all the best!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc-Frédéric Ott".

Dr. Marc-Frédéric Ott
Managing Director, Head of School

The Lessons We've Learned

By Dr. Christoph Ott, Managing Director, Head of Operations

What a year it has been for humanity and for LAS. Many lessons have been learned during this pandemic and there have been many positives for us as a school and for me as an individual.

First of all, there is nothing like a crisis to bring people together and work toward a common goal. The Leadership Team met virtually every day for three months to deal with multi-faceted challenges, make decisions with limited information, and communicate

to members of the community in as clear a manner as possible. One of the most important lessons for all of us was the amount of time it takes to appropriately and clearly communicate during these uncertain times. I am proud to say that the level of preparedness of LAS for future challenges and crises has greatly increased as the Leadership Team has developed a shared purpose and become trusting, constructive, and highly responsive. We have grown into more than a group of colleagues working together, we have become a great team.



Secondly, we, as individuals, have learned lessons in humility and courage. Humility, as this crisis has shown all of us, is choosing the right reaction when you do not control a situation. LAS is a complex organization that requires lots of effort in guiding the community towards desired outcomes. This approach was not applicable during the COVID-19 pandemic since decisions critical for the school were often imposed by government authorities in Switzerland and elsewhere. Courage was also indispensable since we had to make exacting decisions to prepare for worst-case scenarios. In very short time intervals, we had to adapt a brand-new Remote Learning program, replace LAS Summer in Switzerland programs with the online LAS @home program, and much more.

Thirdly, the sudden disconnectedness from students and staff while working from home was a challenge. Isolation and endless virtual meetings took their toll on everyone. In my case, this was compounded by juggling LAS work and the homeschooling of my own two children, Jonas (10) and Alek (9), with my wife Gosia. Nevertheless, working remotely brought many gifts: I have been able to take the time to explore all the biking trails around Leysin with my boys, watch the live streaming of the National Theater in London every Thursday with my family, and reconnect with my high school friends on Zoom. I have even taken the time to practice mindfulness every day to reconnect with myself. All in all, I am very thankful as this crisis has given me a chance to reflect on my lifestyle and my life choices. I am grateful for the chance that this time provided me to focus without distractions on my priorities, my values and my relationships.

Just as we began emerging from COVID-19 to a new normal, our alumni began underlining how LAS

needs to be more proactive and engaged with issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). While this has been embedded into our value system and mission statement since the school's founding days, we began to realize that we needed to do a better job at teaching and living these values on a day-to-day basis. This new focus has been at the center of many Leadership Team discussions and we are actively working with alumni, staff and students to develop programs to increase awareness, understanding, and safety of minorities in our community.

This latest challenge is most meaningful since the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed to us how much inequality exists: inequality based on age, race, religion, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender, and age. The Coronavirus has affected people differently depending on age, country of residence, or ethnicity. It has revealed deep-set discrimination and profound fears. Nevertheless, today's crisis has taught us that we are humans and all are vulnerable in the face of an invisible enemy, be it a virus or discrimination. As Bill Gates said "this pandemic is like a world war, except we are all on the same side." As fellow humans, independent of gender, skin color, nationality, or sexual orientation, we need to be together to win this war. And the LAS community needs to again endorse our mission statement of "developing innovative, compassionate, and responsible citizens of the world."

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Ott".

Dr. Christoph Ott
Managing Director, Head of Operations

LAS Responds to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Our global community of alumni steps up in heroic ways

By Anthony Leutenegger, Associate Director of Advancement

In early March, the LAS Advancement Team (C. Ryan Joyce and Anthony Leutenegger) were in India reconnecting with alumni and parents when they got the call from Head of School, Marc-Frédéric Ott: "It's time to come home." Switzerland had just announced that they would be closing the borders and Ryan and Anthony quickly cancelled the remainder of their travels and headed back to Leysin. Not wanting to lose contact with the alumni community during such a tumultuous time, the Advancement Team began reaching out to graduates from around the globe who were working on the front line. In many instances, these were alumni who shifted their professions to become first responders. The Advancement Team heard from so many alumni and is honored to share a few of these stories. Thank you for your incredible service.

Yurter Ozcan '00

Yurter is the Republican People's Party (the main opposition party in Turkey) US representative. His office, alongside the Turkish-American community, have started a campaign to produce and distribute over 100,000 face masks in Turkey to help with the fight against COVID-19.

Thus far there has been a lack of medical masks available to frontline workers and vulnerable people and communities in Turkey.

Their campaign has surpassed its original goal and has been able to produce over 125,000 high quality face masks which are currently being distributed in Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir and they hope to produce even more!



Yurter Ozcan '00 packing and delivering masks.



Sonia Nizamaldin '10

Sonia is a doctor currently completing her residency in ophthalmology. She was recently assigned to a large hospital in Karlsruhe, Germany to directly help battle COVID-19 with her entire team. On the weekend she works alongside her brother who is also an ophthalmologist, as there are still people who require other medical services and treatments.



Besart Copa '16

Besart graduated from LAS in 2016 and is now based in San Francisco where he worked at a cybersecurity company for two years as an operations manager. He is now returning to school at the Georgetown Walsh School of Foreign Service to study Science, Technology, and International Affairs (STIA) with a concentration on data science.

"In March I was planning to take a break and travel to Chile with my former LAS classmate, Ana Clara Martins '16. However, as the COVID-19 situation aggravated, I realized there was no way that was going to happen. One day, I saw a tweet calling for operations people to establish an emergency COVID-19 testing effort in Menlo Park, CA that had just received a \$1 million grant.

I emailed them on Monday, talked with the team on Thursday, and by Friday evening, we were planning on building and releasing some of the earliest COVID-19 testing batches in San Francisco. I joined temporarily as the operations lead for the Menlo Park office, expanding the team to around 4-5 people, working with everything from test kit component logistics, to manufacturing and distribution. The first week was the craziest one—we were getting test kit requests way above capacity so we were all working around the clock. At some point, I even brought my two roommates to help us (much to their parents' dismay)! I remember we manufactured and tested around 10,000 cases, including many for front-line professionals in LA.

There were two key lessons from this experience. Number one was that even though we live in the most scientifically and technologically advanced period in human history, we still fall short when it comes to turning science and technology into tangible and effective policy. Lesson number two is that you shouldn't always depend on "someone taking care of it," be it the government or any other figure of authority. We should take care of it, in any way possible, no matter how small.

Lastly, I am extremely proud and humbled to be part of the LAS community alongside so many alumni fighting this pandemic on the front line. No accolades are sufficient for their heroic work."

"The first week was the craziest one—we were getting test kit requests way above capacity so we were all working around the clock."

Top: Boxes being prepared to house COVID-19 testing kits. Above: Besart Copa '16.

Hannah Keen '12

Hannah has been working in a COVID-19 ICU in Berkeley, CA since late March.

Her team has seen patients of all ages, genders, and sizes. Hannah has taken care of a 32 year-old young man who was otherwise healthy; a 77 year-old woman, who had stayed home since social distancing started and still caught the virus; and a 34 year-old woman, 33 weeks pregnant with a baby boy. All of these patients ended up on ventilators, but have since thankfully recovered and left the ICU. "I can honestly say, the evening I admitted our pregnant patient, it was the most stressful yet rewarding night of my nursing career. Taking care of a pregnant woman in the ICU is uncommon enough, adding COVID-19 to the mix, it was nothing we had ever seen before. The teamwork, planning, and risk that went into keeping this mother and her baby alive and well, were incredible to be a part of. That evening our ICU, OB and Labor and Delivery, and Neonatal ICU Teams, which were made

up of about 20-30 people, were all caring for her. We wanted the baby to stay in for a few more days to allow his lungs to mature, rather than perform an emergency delivery. My job was to keep the mother stable and therefore her baby stable. I spent nearly four hours in the isolation room. Wearing all that PPE for that amount of time was a challenge in and of itself. It's surprisingly hot and cumbersome. Thankfully her baby boy was born a few days later in the OR, and both are now safely at home.

We healthcare professionals have been labeled "heroes" during this pandemic, which is nice but also confusing. To us, we are just doing our jobs. We do this everyday, whether it's in a pandemic or not. We show up and care for people in their most vulnerable moments. We, as nurses, love, support, care, and offer a hand to hold to our patients everyday we go to work. I love being a nurse, and I am proud to care for our COVID-19 patients.

"We healthcare professionals have been labeled "heroes" during this pandemic, which is nice but also confusing. To us, we are just doing our jobs. We do this everyday, whether it's in a pandemic or not."

Below: Hanah Keen '12 caring for COVID-19 patients in Berkeley, CA.





From left: Michaela Riordan '06; X-Rays of a COVID-19 patient; Michaela and a fellow nurse on the front line.

Michaela Riordan '06

Michaela is a physician assistant in the ICU at Christiana Care—the largest hospital in Delaware near Philadelphia. Her unit has recently converted into a COVID-only unit where they manage patients with COVID-19 who require significant support. Standard of care in the ICU for these patients includes deep sedation, chemical paralytic, prone positioning (placing patients on their stomachs while on the ventilator) and different modes of ventilation while protecting the lungs. As a physician assistant in the ICU, Michaela evaluates, diagnoses, formulates, and executes a plan

of care alongside the rest of the ICU team including pulmonary intensivists, respiratory therapists, nurses, and specialists. She performs procedures including intubation, central and arterial line placement, and thoracentesis. Her team has worked tirelessly to ensure the safety of the providers and patients during this uncertain time. "It is humbling to have the skills necessary in order to work in this setting and be able to provide care to the sickest population in this scary and uncertain time." Stay safe, Michaela, and thank you for all that you do!



Johan Larsen '91

Johan Larsen '91

Johan is a Danish LAS alum who attended LAS from 88-90, during what he describes as some of the best years of his life.

Johan is a pragmatic social entrepreneur working on implementing systemic change in the US healthcare industry together with partners from health care companies, government, and various agencies impacting poverty and food insecurity (social determinants of health). His company Catapult 4D, focuses on technology projects with a preference for social entrepreneurial ventures. Their projects Field & Yield, Truck2Table, GroceryVIP, 2Food, and Synergasia Health Tech, work through the supply chain and healthcare system to help at-risk individuals by sourcing and delivering affordable food and medically tailored meals, while also educating, and studying health outcomes. The goal? To break the pattern in population health!

Johan and his company, like many others, are having to adapt to current times. With supply chains disrupted, further economic insecurity growing, and social distancing imperative, Johan's team pivoted and leveraged their existing infrastructure (warehousing, kitchens, staff, vehicles, and software) and has given away approximately 40,264 free meals around Knoxville to needy families and low-income individuals over the last month.

You can read more about Johan on page 36.



Above: Guillem Mitats-Forcada '13 delivering prepared meals from his restaurants.

Guillem Mitats-Forcada '13

Guillem, as many of you know, has deep roots in the gastronomy scene in Barcelona. Grupo Esencia, managed by Guillem, is making a difference every day in the battle against COVID-19 and its economic impact on Spain.

Food For Good Bcn is an initiative with the aim of cooking and processing healthy, rich, and balanced meals for the most disadvantaged people in Barcelona. Two of Guillem's restaurants are functioning as headquarters: Tierra and Agua. Both restaurants

have opened their kitchens to supply the NGO "Nutrition Without Borders" with cooked meals for them to distribute.

The restaurants and supply chain have to maintain strict sanitary protocols for personnel, food handling, and distribution of dishes that guarantee the quality and safety of the entire process, from the moment ingredients enter the door until the food is delivered. The goal is to serve 1,000 meals a day for those who need it the most during these difficult times.



A makeshift medical facility for COVID-19 in the Canton of Vaud. Below left: Kavi Ponnuthurai '11 in his Swiss Army uniform.

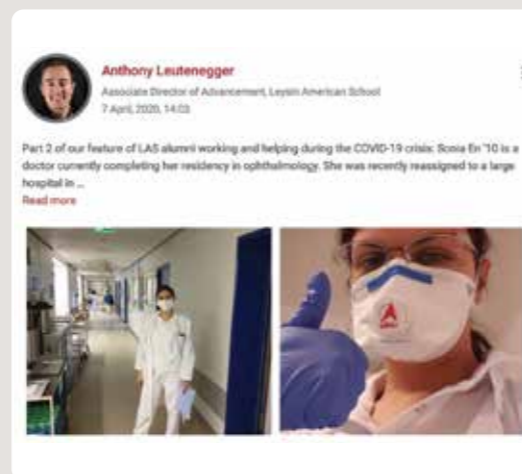


Kavi Ponnuthurai '11

Kavi has volunteered as a Sub-Officer to Health Battalion 9 in Bern. They, along with 4,000 Swiss troops, have been called to help during the current crisis. This particular battalion focuses on logistics and food. They are helping hospitals in the cantons of Vaud, Geneva, and Bern by installing army medical beds and tents, and providing supplies. They are also collecting foreign aid and personal protective equipment at the airports and then distributing them amongst the hospitals.

Showcasing Humanitarian Achievements

To read more stories about how our alumni community continues to rise to the occasion, please go to our website: <https://www.las.ch/advancement/alumni-voices> or follow us on our alumni Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/leysinamericanschoolalumni>. If you'd like to share your story, please email our Advancement Team: advancement@las.ch



2020

The Innovators. The Advocates. The Powerful. The Class of 2020

Their school year did not end as planned. But this class is an impressive group of well-rounded students who came in as young kids and left as innovative, compassionate, and responsible citizens of the world.

By Michelle Starke, Public Relations & Marketing Manager

The Class of 2020 holds a special place in my heart. We arrived together at LAS during their freshman year in 2016 and I'm now leaving with them in 2020. They are motivated. They are kind. They are rambunctious. They have so much spirit and are fearless—they did, after all, win most of the LAS school competitions. This is a group of students who welcomed me into the LAS family after arriving in the middle of the school year.



Above and below: Faculty Family Weekend outings.

I watched these students grow every single day—especially during my time working in the Beau Site dormitory. Some people would say working in a dorm is their worst nightmare. Living with 60 girls between the ages of 15 and 17 sounds intimidating. However, for me, it has been the best experience I could have asked for. Being able to walk out of your apartment and have 60 neighbors ready to chat and say hello is an amazing experience. We had sleepovers in the Valley View room, emotional moments that resulted in hours of tears and pep talks, TV show marathons in the lounge, dance parties with popcorn and hot chocolate, and countless other special moments.

I will truly miss the relationships I have built with individuals in the class of 2020. My first true connection was with my faculty daughters Sarah Amekour '20 and Nicky Berner '20. These girls have so much energy and love for LAS. They've continually amazed me with their maturity by taking younger students under their wing and breaking cultural barriers. They are seen as role models at LAS and set the bar high for all future students.

"We must never settle but rather persevere into pursuit of our dreams."

Olivia Stecko '20, Poland



■ THE CLASS OF 2020

Some of my favorite memories at LAS were during the Faculty Family Weekends at the beginning of the year. We got to spend time together, cook meals, attempt to get out of an escape room, watch movies until the wee hours of the morning, toilet paper another Faculty Family's car (sparking a family "war" that lasted throughout the year!), road tripping, and of course our "We Are Family" dance party in the parking lot of BEC. These are unforgettable memories that would not have happened without Nicky and Sarah.

Of course, I also can't forget meeting with Maja Długosz '20 for coffee chats; watching Benoit DuBosson '20 and Laura Mpfou '20 shine while giving talks at our TEDx event, and likewise seeing Nick Torres '20 as the event MC; having daily pep talks with Mirismoil Mirakhmadov '20, my faculty son, to make sure he was supported in every way possible; working with Oliwia Stecko '20 and Marija Simjanoska '20 on their virtual valedictorian speeches; working tirelessly on the Live Stream team with Carolina Reuda '20, and Maja Długosz '20 every month to capture LAS moments throughout the year; and of course being a faculty mom to my three 2020 graduates.

The Innovators

The year of 2020 did not end how we had planned. Oliwia Stecko '20, LAS co-valedictorian, summed it up perfectly, "It was rough on a global scale. Political conflict almost every day, unprecedented weather extremes, raging wildfires, and the COVID-19 pandemic which has sent the whole world into lockdown. It is the reason we have been denied the milestones we have worked so hard for and served. Prom, cultural trips, senior travel, throwing of the caps, reminiscing about our favorite moment. Proper tearful goodbyes."

Despite the difficult times we've been through, our time at LAS can be defined by positive memories and funny moments. For years to come, I will remember

- sleepovers in the Beau Site Valley View Room
- the splash war and race while rafting under the Ponte Vecchio in Florence
- hanging out at the Guggenheim Museum in Venice
- filming TEDx with the Live Stream Team
- enjoying a family dinner in Monaco with a host family
- beating the seniors during the Cowbell Games in 2019
- filming a Dorm Olympics video with music from every era
- the Climate Strike rally in Lausanne



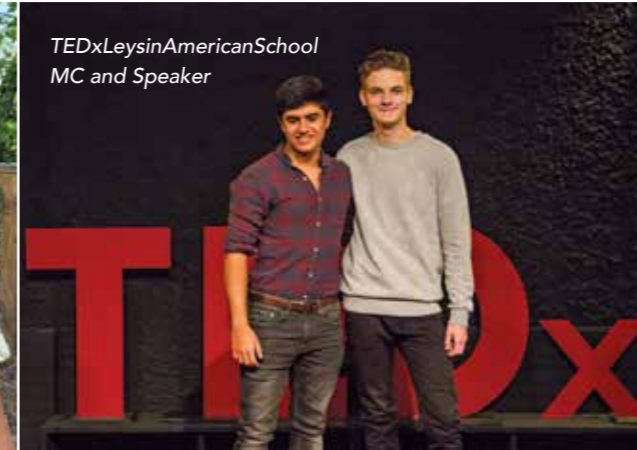
Above: Students having dinner with a family in Monaco during their homestay.

As Marija Simjanoska '20, LAS co-valedictorian, said during her speech, "I choose a different perspective. I like to think of us as special. We are the first class since the establishment of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Organization to get a legitimate IB Diploma without exams. We aren't bound by any stereotypical expectations. We get to unapologetically be ourselves. To bravely take initiative. It is our time to reinvent the world for the better."

The Advocators

How can a class like this be forgotten? It's impossible. We have an impressive group of well-rounded students. This class has acceptances to some incredible universities from 10 different countries including: Columbia University, University of Cambridge, Cornell University, University of British Columbia, NYU, and UCLA. A letter from a Columbia Admissions Officer said, "we look for candidates who are not only great academicians, but who are also true citizens of the world—thinkers and leaders who have enriched their communities..." This perfectly summarizes the Class of 2020.

On Thursday, March 13, I didn't realize that would be the last time I saw the students at LAS. It was more of a "have a nice Spring Break" and see you soon. I was expecting to go to Dubrovnik, Croatia with the senior class to celebrate their achievements on



TEDxLeysinAmericanSchool
MC and Speaker



Senior Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) project showcasing seniors on social media.

a Cultural Trip. I didn't think I would be planning a virtual Graduation Ceremony. Nevertheless, the Class of 2020 stayed positive.

Not ones to let the year slip away unnoticed, Lucia Chavez Bianchi '20 and Carlota Bedoya Gomez '20 decided to change their CAS project, an IB project that demonstrates creativity, activity, and service, to honor the Class of 2020. They were able to gather pictures from every graduate, along with their career choice, country flag, and a bio about some of their favorite memories and their hopes and dreams for life after LAS. These images were posted on social media and also in the yearbook to help remember the Class of 2020.

After Carlota and Lucia honored the class as well as they did, we knew that ending the year as positively as we could was a must. We, long-time LAS faculty member Daryl Hitchcock (see page 50 to read more about Mr. Hitchcock) and I, held two question and answer sessions with the soon to be graduates. We wanted their voices to be heard. It was apparent that they wanted some sort of live component during graduation, along with their caps, to help mimic the traditional graduation ceremony.

Over the course of four weeks, the graduates and myself worked together to execute the best virtual Graduation Ceremony we could given the situation. Lets just say I had a lot of WhatsApp conversations at all hours of the day and night with 61 graduates across the entire world. Despite a minor tech mishap, the students of the Class of 2020 were able to proudly hold up their diplomas, wave with their families, turn

their tassels, toss their caps, and get their moment "walking across the stage". It brought tears to my eyes to see families together. You could feel the emotion and see how proud these parents were of their sons and daughters. It was an incredible experience to be a part of.

Laura Mpofu '20 sent a WhatsApp message the day after graduation "you guys did an amazing job with the virtual graduation!! Nevermind the minor glitches we had, you pulled off some great work. I watched some other graduations today and I must say your work was so much better!! Made me proud to be an LAS student (well alumni now I guess :))"

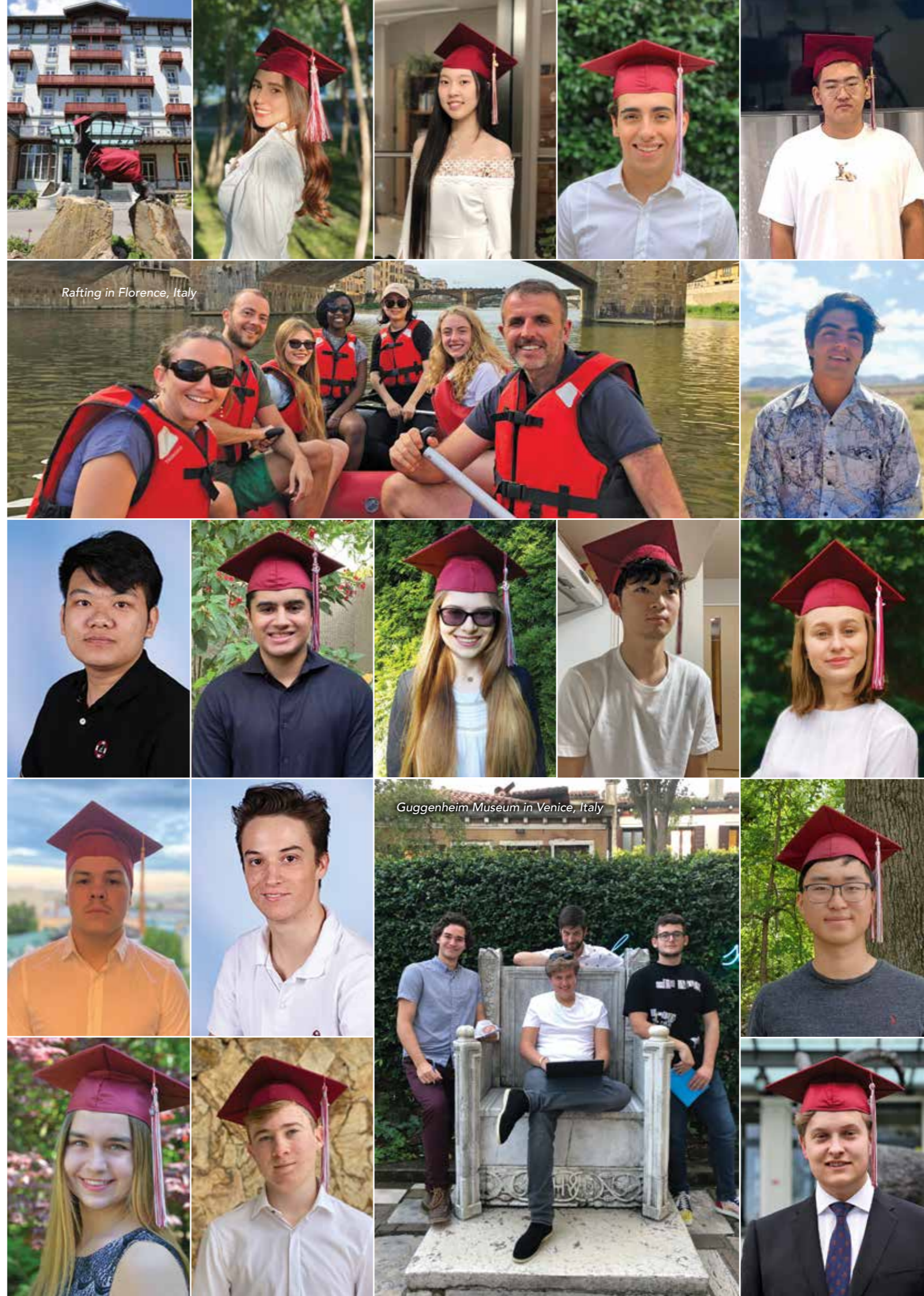
After reflecting on the ceremony, we realized that a few new ideas came out of the end-of-year events. Why don't we incorporate families into our ceremonies? Graduation is the end of a chapter, not only for the student, but for the entire family. The Class of 2020 started out as young freshmen finding their way through highschool, grew to become sophomore prefects in the dorm, then juniors going headfirst into IB, and finally seniors adapting to a global pandemic that changed their entire lives.

The Powerful

My chapter at LAS started with the Class of 2020 and it is now ending with them. It's a bittersweet ending. LAS is a special place in which students and faculty come from all over the world to live in Leysin. The bonds they have formed are incredible and some of the strongest I have seen. Living in a dormitory with students for the past three years has let me see firsthand just how much these students have grown, changed, and matured. They come in as young kids and leave as innovative, compassionate, and responsible citizens of the world.

Our students have been through so much together. Lots of tears, laughs, and memories to last a lifetime. In the words of Mr. Daryl Hitchcock, the LAS Faculty Graduation 2020 Speaker, "Things will get better. Stay positive. Hold those dear to you close. Roll with the flow." We hope to see you soon in Leysin, together, as a class. Here's to the Class of 2020. We will always remember you. We WILL see you again. You are going to do amazing things, future doctors, future CEOs, future scientists, future engineers, future diplomats, and future world-changers. 📌

"Make new friends. But keep your old ones close."
Daryl Hitchcock, TOK Department Head, Teacher, and Former LAS Dorm Head



LAS Faculty and Staff Rise to the Occasion

As the world changed, so too did our way of teaching, advising, learning, and growing

By Paul Fomalont, Dean of Students

"I received an advanced degree in education and now my job is a room packer," was a comment told to me by a Dorm Head as we went through a student room where all of the student's belongings were being placed into boxes to be shipped. It was part of the theme of the world during the spring of 2020, where everything was so different.

Imagine a time when you have had to move. It is difficult enough for a single person or family to organize all of their possessions. Most people detest moving as it is a complicated and time-consuming process. The process of moving is both physically demanding and mentally taxing. We are used to having a home, a location that belongs to us and is integrated into our life.


So, if you recall the difficulty of moving your family, now imagine that your family was made up of 300 people. That is the number of students that we needed to pack up for this spring. The famous story of Hercules describes him doing 10 legendary tasks to prove himself. Packing up LAS could have been one of them.

We approximated that it took 4 hours per student to complete the process. If you multiply this by our 300 students, that is 1,200 hours that we needed to pack the dorms, which is 30 weeks of work. We had a team

of 10 people packing and it took all of May to have the entire school ready to ship.

Some interesting items that are of note:

- It was very sad for many students not to be able to have their perfumes or colognes shipped, as we were not allowed to ship liquids. The good part is that our faculty smelled amazing this spring.
- Also, we had to open all of the room safes and store the valuables in our main LAS safe. We found a 5 billion dollar Zimbabwe note in one safe. It turned out to be worth about 10 USD.
- We also could not ship food. In Eden alone we have enough students' imported meals to survive 100 years, so we were never in fear of running out of food this spring.

It was very strange going through the rooms, often on FaceTime with students, as we sorted through their possessions. It fit another theme of the spring of virtual interactions. While it worked, both teachers and students commented on the strangeness of the interactions and that they missed actually being together. Our school is a community and it needs everyone here to really function. I am excited for the return of all of the students in the fall. 



"The famous story of Hercules describes him doing 10 legendary tasks to prove himself. Packing up LAS could have been one of them."



Top: Faculty Zoom calls became the primary means of communication. Above left: LAS Kitchen Staff preparing boxed meals. Above right: Hello from the dorm where we've been socially distancing!

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Responsibility of an International Educational Institution to Evolve and Educate

By C. Ryan Joyce, Director of Advancement

On May 25, 2020, as we were beginning to see countries slowly open up, businesses learn how to welcome back employees and customers, and schools continue to grapple with virtual graduations, our social media feeds and computer screens began lighting up with the horrific scene of George Floyd, a 46-year-old unarmed African American man senselessly murdered as a Minneapolis, Minnesota police officer knelt directly on his neck and refused to move for more than seven minutes. It was a ghastly, lawless, and appalling scene... and, sadly and mortifyingly, a scene that we have seen far too many times.

People around the world had truly seen enough. Almost immediately there were calls to action, demands that police departments reform, protests spanning the globe (including our very own students, Emma Magnuson, Phoenix Peltier and Administrator, Dr. Paul Magnuson as they joined 10,000 Swiss citizens in a peaceful march for justice and equality in Geneva).

LAS, in conjunction with a group of alumni spanning as far back as the early 1960s, several faculty and staff members, the Ott family, the LAS Board, the US Board, and outside consultants, began a necessary dialogue in order to combat racism at our international school. This dialogue included seeking advice on how we can improve as an institution and what clear action steps we can take in order to educate our students, faculty, and community that there is a difference between not being racist and being anti-racist, as well as holistically incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion into our school's culture.



On June 29, 2020 the LAS Advancement Office began a series of Zoom forums to address our next steps concerning DEI. The forum was moderated by Director of Advancement, C. Ryan Joyce, and LAS alumni, Bill Carney '69.

Throughout these few pages you will find several correspondences from LAS to the community, a series of action steps implemented immediately (with several more to come once we are back on campus), and an introduction to several of our faculty and alumni who are helping lead this important cause.

Note from Marc-Frédéric Ott, Head of School

Our values are deeply ingrained as open, non-discriminatory, and tolerant of all peoples independently of their race, religion, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender, and age. However, we need to do more: we need to "walk the talk." There are a number of conversations that have taken place: in the Leadership Team, with faculty members and alumni, and at the Board level. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) will be a key focus of LAS starting 2020/21. As we move forward, we want to include you, students and parents, in the conversation. What are your expectations? What can we do to make sure everyone feels safe at all times, not just physically, but also emotionally?

Bill Carney, LAS alumnus of the class of 1969 and member of our US Board Foundation, who is an inspirational professional speaker and consultant, and works with companies around the world regarding DEI, will guide us in the process. We are fortunate that Mr. Carney lives in Geneva and has offered his time and insight to LAS. You can find more information on Bill Carney on the following page. We look forward to both engaging the community in meaningful discussions and taking concrete action steps.

Letter to the LAS Alumni Community on June 19, 2020



LEYSIN AMERICAN SCHOOL IN SWITZERLAND

Dear LAS Alumni,

Leysin American School does not condone racism in any way, shape, or form. On Wednesday the school met with a few alumni to have a meaningful and productive discussion regarding the global call for action concerning racism. Something that was said over and over again was, "we love LAS and this is why we want it to be better."

We agree actions speak louder than words. We will be sharing more progress as we continue to work with our faculty, students, and alumni over the coming weeks, however, here are some of our immediate action steps:

- LAS will host an open forum for all alumni on Monday June 29, 2020 from 5pm to 6pm (CEST) via Zoom. We welcome your voice and are here to listen. We will share the zoom link shortly.
- LAS faculty and administration have proposed a plan to better our programs and curriculum in relation to this global call for action. We will share these changes publicly at the start of the new school year.
- LAS has invited several alumni of color to attend student orientation to help facilitate workshops, share their stories, and be mentors to current students.
- LAS is committed to send several students and faculty members to the National Association of Independent Schools People of Color Conference or a similar conference in Switzerland/Europe (depending on travel restrictions). <https://pocc.nais.org/>
- LAS will direct a larger amount of annual student fundraising toward charities committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Currently, our largest recipient of internal fundraising goes to Sethule Orphans Trust to help provide children in rural Zimbabwe with food, education, and a loving foster family, <https://www.sethuletrust.org/>, we hope to continue to increase our support.
- LAS will host a series of in-person forums around the world in conjunction with our Global Signature Events Series. Once we know more about our ability to travel we will follow up on dates and locations.
- LAS will continue to improve upon educating our students and staff about race and racism in and outside the classroom.

These are only the initial actions designed in conjunction with school leadership, our alumni, and several community members. We will continue to expand upon these actions and greatly look forward to working with all of you on building an even stronger LAS for the next 60 years and beyond. We hope you will join us via Zoom on Monday, June 29, and know that we continue to hear you, see you, and care for you.

Sincerely,

The LAS Alumni Association

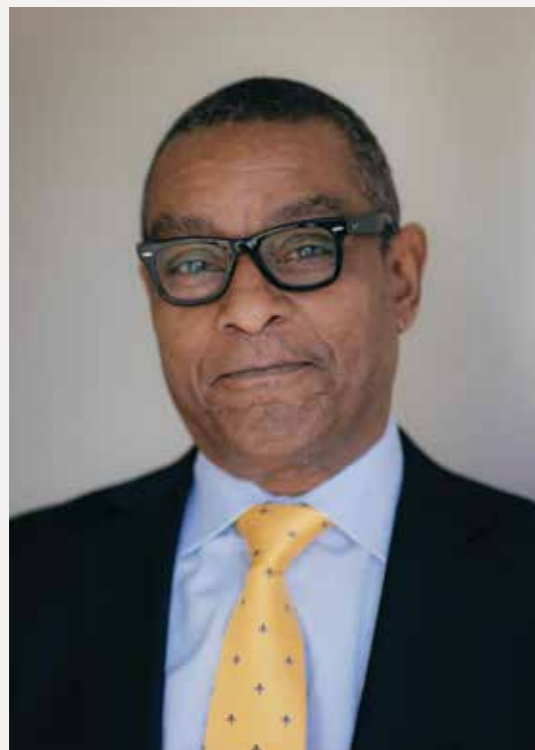
Bill Carney '69

Bill is originally from New York City. He grew up in several African countries and was educated in Switzerland and the United States. He now commutes between Geneva and Boston.

During his corporate career, he has spent time with The Gap, Chrysler and General Motors. Bill has been either a Professor or Adjunct Professor at George Washington University: IMD, Lausanne: IE Business School; The Rotterdam School of Management and Hult International Business School (Dubai, New York City, San Francisco and Boston). He has also been a guest lecturer at DTU in Denmark and has done numerous in-company presentations.

Bill has spent the last decade working with start-up in various parts of the world, most recently in the social entrepreneurship space with the Hult Prize among others.

Bill has been a coach/consultant to several multinational firms and global financial institutions. He is also on the board of Point Motion Control in Boston and the USA Board of Leysin American School in Switzerland.



Bill Carney '69 has offered his time and insight to LAS regarding DEI objectives.

A Call to Action

A group of alumni, spearheaded by Alicia Shamji '16, Sultan Aldabal '16, and Teresa Tolo '17 recently took the initiative to instigate a 'Call to Action' in order to highlight the lived experiences and instances of discrimination or racism experienced and witnessed by students at the school and suggested multiple points for improvement to hold the school accountable in creating a safer, more inclusive space for racialized, minority students.

Through a survey created by the three alumni and sent out through various platforms including the LAS Alumni Facebook group, they also collected information on the perspectives of other alumni regarding the need for a more diversified curriculum, stricter disciplinary actions against students who perpetuate discriminatory attitudes and anti-racism trainings and workshops for staff and students among several other action steps to prevent past injustices from repeating themselves among current and future generations of students at LAS. This information was then diligently compiled and presented to the administration to begin the process of identifying concrete solutions and facilitating much needed dialogue between LAS alumni, students and the administration.

You can read the profiles of these ambitious alumni and the faculty leading them on the facing page.

We are proud of our students, alumni, and faculty who want nothing more than to see LAS be even better for the next 60 years and beyond. We can and will do better—there is no other option. ⓘ

Define DEI

DIVERSITY

Diversity is the representation of all our varied identities and differences (race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, tribe, caste, socio-economic status, thinking and communication styles, etc.), collectively and as individuals.

EQUITY

Equity seeks to ensure fair treatment, equality of opportunity, and fairness in access to information and resources for all.

INCLUSION

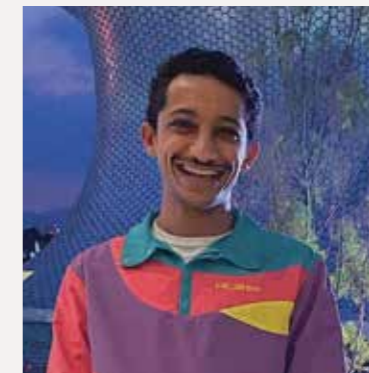
Inclusion builds a culture of belonging by actively inviting the contribution and participation of all people.

From the Ford Foundation.

Young Alumni Forging the Path



Alicia Serena Shamji '16
Years at LAS: 2014-2016
Boston University, Massachusetts
Graduating Class of 2020
Majors: Health Science and Psychology
Home: Kinshasa, DR Congo



Sultan Aldabal '16
Years at LAS: 2015-2016
Northeastern University, Massachusetts
Graduating Class of 2020
Majors: Political Science and Economics
Home: Dammam, Saudi Arabia



Teresa Tolo '17
Years at LAS: 2015-2017
McGill University, Montreal
Graduating Class of 2021
Majors: Economics and International Development
Home: Geneva, Switzerland

"Acknowledging and addressing systemic racism and discrimination, while amplifying the voices of those affected by it, is the only way we can move forward in creating a more inclusive society that allows all individuals to embrace their identities and live without fear or shame." Teresa Tolo '17

Faculty Couples Lead



Richard Campanaro '95
Social Studies Teacher/
TOK Department Head
10 Years at LAS
Country of Origin: Canada



Yik Kun Heng
University Advisor
& Counselor
1 Year at LAS
Country of Origin: New Zealand



LaToya Downing-Peltier P '22
Assistant Dean of Students -
Savoy Campus
12 Summers - 1 School Year at LAS
Country of Origin: USA

Paige Matthie
University Advisor
2 Years at LAS
Country of Origin: Canada

Robert Kostrzeski
Director of University Advising
1 Year at LAS
Country of Origin: USA

Leo Peltier P '22
7/8/9th Grade Coordinator
& Boys' Dorm Head
12 Summers - 2 School Years at LAS
Country of Origin: USA

Sarah Wilson '09

Make it Happen

By Anthony Leutenegger, Associate Director of Advancement

“Free the heel, free the mind.” A common phrase used amongst LAS staff when a telemark skier is spotted neatly carving their way down the Berneuse. These skiers lunge their way down the mountain with their heels detached from their skis. Most of them have simply become bored of regular alpine skiing and are after a challenge.

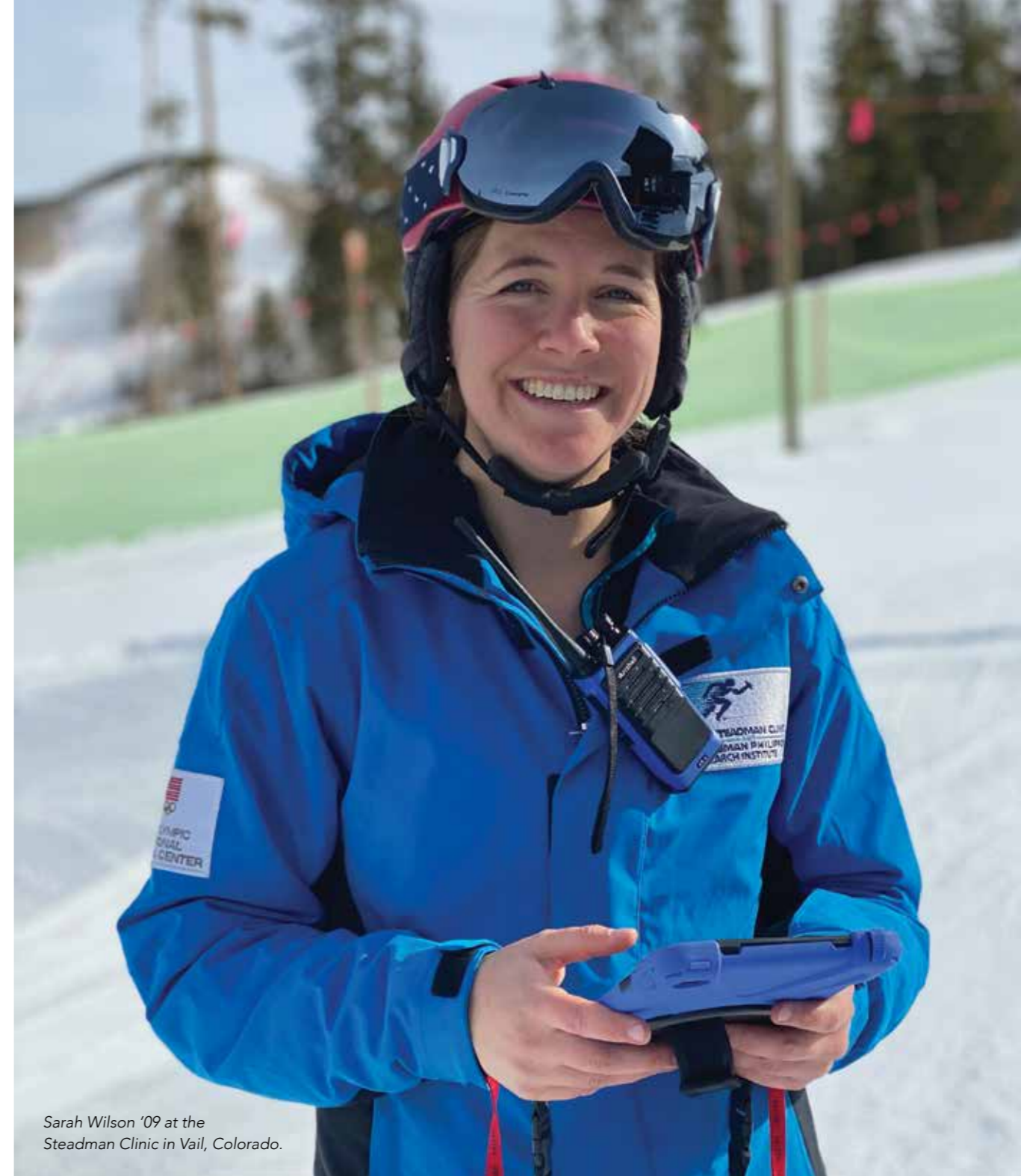
I met Sarah Wilson '09 at the LAS Breckenridge ski reunion a few years ago. She was that skier mentioned above, and had evidently freed her mind. Sarah is a lifelong skier who was once on the US Free Ski Ride Circuit and is now a research engineer at the Steadman Clinic in Vail, Colorado. Her team uses biomechanics to help individuals in the sport reduce risk, prevent injuries, and hopefully make the sport more inclusive for everyone. She has recently been selected as one of the 125 AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science) IF/THEN® Ambassadors. AAAS is deeply committed to advancing education and opportunities for girls and women in STEM. Their ambassadors are role-models and leaders from different backgrounds across the country.

Before Sarah became a high profile ambassador, she was a teenager looking for an outlet. In 2007 she shipped herself off to LAS for grade 11 and 12 and had a transformative experience. The independence, the ability to ski regularly, mountain life, and the close relationships with staff and teachers are what she fondly remembers. She still recalls her first trip up the mountain from the airport: “Eyes glued to the window in awe.”

One particular activity at LAS changed Sarah’s life forever. For years, LAS staff have hosted a bikepacking trip around Lake Geneva. Dubbed the “Tour de Lac”, staff members and, that particular year, Sarah, rode around the lake, bonding and experiencing everything the region had to offer. It was through this trip that Sarah fell in love with bikepacking.

In 2015 Sarah began her own bikepacking journey. Her plan: “to ride as far north as I could.” She rode 3,000 miles over 60 days from Colorado to Haines, Alaska. One of the highlights of the trip was when she managed to see Mr. Davidov, on his own journey, near Jasper, Canada. It was he, after all, who introduced Sarah to the sport. “It was the most amazing sense of family.” When Sarah reached Haines, she was physically and emotionally drained and decided to end the journey short of her ultimate goal. It was

Left: Sarah bikepacking in Alberta, Canada.




Sarah Wilson '09 at the Steadman Clinic in Vail, Colorado.

not fully completing this trip that had her come back in 2017. This time she started in Portland, Oregon, rode to Haines, and then continued on. Pedal stroke after pedal stroke, road line after road line, doing anything for that length of time allows one to think deeply. It was on these trips that Sarah discovered what she wanted to do with her life and how she wanted to get there.

“Do something you are passionate about. Don’t forget that what you put in is what you’ll get out, and most importantly: Go for it!”

If there is one theme to Sarah’s success it’s that nothing will get done if you don’t make it happen. It was going out on a limb and applying to LAS that began this journey: flying to the school alone without knowing anyone; taking

advantage of all the school had to offer and building relationships with teachers who could guide her; and finally, taking the self awareness and understanding that she had built and using it to passionately forge ahead professionally. Sarah works in a difficult industry and has built a niche that now makes her a national expert. The best part is, it is now Sarah who is inspiring that next generation. 

LAS edge Program

LASER's Edgiest Program

By Paul Magnuson P '21, Director, LAS Educational Research

Two students are learning to throw clay: one is at the pottery wheel, the other is asking questions. A third student is filming them to make an ad for the new LAS edge Program.

Two other students in the class, who started a business selling bubble tea in the dorm, are drafting an official exclusive rights agreement as they can manage. You see, a second pair of students is starting a similar bubble tea business, and the first two want to do everything they can to preserve their hold on the market. Who will gain market superiority?

Working by himself, another student learns Unity, a platform for developing games. He recently finished writing music with a different software program. We all gathered around to listen to that final product.

Other students are setting camera traps to capture images of the local nighttime fauna, or they are painting, drawing, learning how to sing in a musical, creating a web page for their business, or even taking apart a microwave. How, indeed, is a microwave put together?

This is the LAS edge Program.

LAS edge Program students working on their Edge Chalet Project.



The LAS edge Program is the latest curriculum project and program created by LAS Educational Research (LASER). A joint idea of academics and admissions in the fall of 2018, the LAS edge Program was developed before the 2019/20 school year with these goals in mind:

- Learning should include an intentional focus on skills that transcend subject areas
- Students should get ample time to practice personal agency
- Creative personal exploration is so valued that we are willing to figure out any disruptions to our regular educational thinking that it might cause

We do not believe that learning content alone is a high enough bar for an LAS education. Education is not simply the collection of facts and analyses of a set number of subjects, determined historically and maintained through inertia. Like the quote attributed to Albert Einstein, paraphrased: "education is what remains after you've forgotten what you learned in school." Education is, in other words, what makes you, you. Your ability to think, to get along with others, to pursue happiness responsibly, to puzzle out problems, and to ask the right questions.

So, students in the LAS edge Program are taught ways in which to work together, ways to plan their time, and ways to view failures as steps closer to success, and successes as steps to future successes.

We also do not believe that it is enough that students follow our teachers' instructions. Following instructions is a fine skill—we often need to be good followers.

Above: Students embark on an alpine expedition. Below: Students in the LAS edge Program: Design & Performing Arts Conservatory.





Students practice self-expression through abstract art.

We often need to be good leaders too, though—or at least, we need to understand leadership so we can lead when called upon to do so. Simply showing up to class and waiting for the teacher’s instructions is not going to build leadership, at least not effectively. Students must practice leadership to be leaders.

In the LAS *edge* Program, we let students practice leadership by giving them time and space to practice personal agency. This means that we have to accept, as teachers, a fair amount of struggle as students figure out their next step themselves, without our constant guidance. This is the time that an uninformed outsider might think is wasted. It is not wasted. How would you ever learn personal agency if you aren’t allowed to practice it? And if you haven’t been allowed much time and space to practice personal agency in school before, how should you be good at it immediately?

Finally, we also have to be ready to do our jobs a bit differently. If students are finding their own way, choosing their own projects, working at their own pace, and selecting individual or collaborative work on their own schedules, well, our standard approach

to school is not going to work. Curricula, for example, are generally set up so that all students are working on the same thing, at the same pace. It’s not necessarily the best (or worst) support for learning, but for sure it’s administratively the easiest, which is why it is so universal. Another example: Grades are usually predicated on comparisons between students, or, in more modern systems, comparisons between a student’s current achievement level and the target the school has set. Grading gets difficult when students are left to sort out their work on their own. What projects merit student attention? What is good enough for what grade? What is a fast enough pace for what grade?

In the LAS *edge* Program we teachers are constantly confronted by situations outside the school norm, situations for which we have to find solutions that require fairly patient and persistent explanations to our fellow teachers, parents, and students themselves.

But we persist, because we believe it is the right thing to do, and if our read on student progress and student self-reports is correct, we are headed in the right direction. ⓘ

You can learn more about the LAS edge Program on the school website or in the next edition of LASER’s publication, Spotlight. We are also working on a publication detailing the development and delivery of the inaugural year of the LAS edge Program, in which we share the experience for other schools that may like to make education just a bit edgier. The publication, with the working title Living the Edge, is being co-authored by Paul and Ana Aguirre, one of the founders of TAZEBAEZ, a cooperative in Bilbao working with entrepreneurs, schools, and much more. Contact Paul Magnuson for more information: pmagnuson@las.ch, <https://www.las.ch/learning/edge>.

LAS Leads the Way

Agile Certified Educators and the Agile Mindset

By Paul Magnuson P ’21, Director, LAS Educational Research

Faculty members in LAS Educational Research (LASER) have been growing expertise in the values, principles, and practices of agility for over five years now.

Agility is a movement that began in software development and is influencing business, healthcare, government, and now schools. It emphasizes short iterations of work, informed by constant feedback, with plenty of transparency and trust so everyone can be involved.

Before 2014, the original agile thinker at LAS was Bill Tihen, the school’s former IT Director. If you were at LAS in those years, you’ll remember Bill as “the guy with the dog,” because between 2008 and 2018 he spent hours every day walking his Australian Shepards, first Pema and then Nyima, across campus, stopping to talk with everyone. Bill was leading the IT Department using principles of agility, whether they knew it or not, and trying to teach me, too, about things like lean, kaizen, and pull systems.

His patience paid off. In 2014, when I was struggling to find the right structure for an elective language course, Bill rescued me. By then I was ready to learn more—I needed a solution to my project-based class! We experimented that year with eduScrum, which is a direct translation of scrum used in IT (and business) for the classroom.

Our work that year convinced us we were onto something new and interesting for education! We hosted workshops by Willy Wijnands, eduScrum’s founder, and John Miller, one of the first to experiment with agility in education. Nicola Cosgrove, PE teacher and Associate Director of Educational Research at LAS, produced an agile toolkit and web presence as

a resident scholar. Several of us visited schools and attended workshops in the Netherlands, and Bill and I made something of a splash at an international conference in Munich, because agility in education was still quite new, even as recently as 2017. We recorded both a podcast and an interview, and presented our work to curious software developers.



That conference in Germany was hosted by Scrum Alliance, a company based out of Colorado, USA, the largest provider of certifications for working in this manner. The organization has in fact certified several LAS teachers as “Scrum Masters”—facilitators of groups working with this particular mode of agility—following a two-day workshop at LAS in Fall 2019. We don’t expect, nor want, all of our faculty to start following a particular set of rules about agility—that would be counterproductive and it is not the point. The goal at LAS is to continue its shift to an agile mindset, because we believe the mindset is good for students and adults alike. Things like trust, transparency, collaboration, and growth—all hallmarks of agility—enable quality learning.

In November 2019 we reached another milestone when I was invited by Scrum Alliance to work with a group of leading agilists in education to create the first certification specifically for educators: the Agile Certified Educator. When the training materials are complete, we expect to begin introducing agility to more schools, starting perhaps with those who, like LAS, found agility on their own and are ready now to take the next step. ⓘ

You can read more about agility on the LASER website, on my blog (Teaching Your Way Around the World, The International Educator), or more formally in the chapter Getting Agile at School, written by Bill and three more of us at LAS, in the book Agile and Lean Concepts for Teaching and Learning: Bringing Methodologies from Industry to the Classroom. Contact Paul Magnuson for more information: pmagnuson@las.ch, <https://www.las.ch/laser>.

Johan Larsen '91

The Journey of an Entrepreneur

By Anthony Leutenegger, Associate Director of Advancement

The growth of our world and its communities doesn't come from one source. It isn't just governments, NGO's, or big Fortune 500 companies that make the biggest changes in society. Often it's small businesses, entrepreneurial start-ups, and passionate people that can make the quickest, largest, and most positive impacts.

A social entrepreneur is an individual who creates productive and applicable solutions to community-based problems. Their goal is often to create positive societal change in a financially stable way. It's no secret LAS has built a reputation for nurturing students from entrepreneurial and business-oriented families, producing similarly-minded and successful alumni.

Johan Larsen '91 is an example of such. He is a Danish LAS alumnus who attended LAS from 1988-1990, during what he describes as some of the best years of his life. Today you can find this Dane living in Knoxville, Tennessee—a fact that is enough of an eyebrow-raiser to know his story isn't your typical one.

Johan came from a family in the ocean-shipping and food manufacturing and export business—his parents built an enterprise that was one of the primary suppliers of seafood to select European supermarket chains. At the time he was at LAS, their business spanned the North Sea of Scandinavia to the Arctic waters of Greenland and into the vast oceans of Canada.

Johan first became acquainted with LAS when he attended Summer in Switzerland in 1987, and later attended LAS for 10th and 11th grade. He was sent to learn English during a difficult time watching his parents go through the process of a divorce. LAS offered stability and routine that was missing at home. Many of

his fond memories at LAS stem from the support system he built through mentors including fellow student, Will Marshall '89, who was a senior at the time, and Dorm Head, Fred Sharp. "Mr. Sharp had a big influence on me and considering I was not the best rule follower, nor, at the time, eager to concentrate on academics; he knew how to motivate me and keep me accountable. He truly cared, and instilled self confidence in me and many other students who passed through LAS's doors." Johan propelled much of his energy into the extra-curricular activities the school offered. Like many other students who've stomped through the halls of LAS in their ski boots, Johan was a skiing fanatic and member of the ski team and remembers each day on the mountain as a great day.

The journey of discovering what you want to do professionally often escapes the average person. Johan attests much of his success to "finding things out the hard way and dabbling in everything." He wants our young alumni to know that we are all at some point "lost but in the same boat."

After LAS, Johan completed his studies in business. Shortly after, he was drafted into the military where he underwent leadership and strategy training and became an officer in supply chain and logistics; after five years he retired with the rank of 1st Lieutenant.

The Royal Danish Army shaped him as much as LAS did, instilling values, emphasizing open-mindedness, and teaching him to think strategically, constantly assessing risk versus reward.

Following the completion of his education and service in Denmark, Johan moved to the US where he has been since 1999. The dot-com bubble had forward thinkers moving in droves to the Bay Area. Johan found himself reuniting with Will who had just finished law school at UCLA and they decided to start a business. Their first business effort in food supply technology was maybe just a tad too early, and while it was a struggle to make the project sustainable, it did provide them with a direction in their respective careers. "Will went on to co-found Javo Beverage Company, a coffee extraction company, and is now a business lawyer and co-founder of UBM Law Group LLP, a boutique law firm focusing on business and tech transactions, real estate, and data protection law. He resides in San Diego, California with his wife and two sons. Johan went on to

work initially for a Japanese company in San Francisco in business development and account management and eventually moved to Tennessee to work for a family office with a focus on real estate development. Will and Johan are still close friends today and work together as often as they can. Soon after his move to Tennessee, Johan met and married his wife Katie, they have two young daughters, Silvia and Ingrid. In fact, Silvia is about to begin 8th grade and is starting to show interest in attending LAS. It is not unlikely that she will someday be on the Magic Mountain herself.

One of Johan's biggest life-altering moments came after a catastrophic motorcycle accident in 2009. He was left with 19 broken bones, a ruptured spleen, bladder, two collapsed lungs, and a stroke. At the time he was engaged and had a second child on the way. The accident put a lot of things into perspective, his life and self-worth, his family, and his career. He underwent years of physical and speech therapy, the recovery was slow. This led to the reignition of his entrepreneurial

"I think the notion that you finish your education and dive straight into entrepreneurship is somewhat foolish and I would strongly advise anyone to first spend some time (years) working for someone else. This allows you to make some costly mistakes on someone else's dime before venturing into building your own business. I'm not saying it cannot be done—I'm just saying that patience is your friend. I failed many times and with the luxury of hindsight, I certainly had to get many things wrong before I could get something right."

Johan Larsen '91



mindset and helped him think through various start-up initiatives in the green sector, advanced manufacturing, and even security and defense sectors with what he describes as both wins, losses, and some great lessons learned. These experiences ultimately led Johan to the health-care sector where his passions lie. Through his personal experiences he developed an intense drive to help, which is what he is still doing today.

Johan classifies himself as a pragmatic conscious capitalist or social entrepreneur, working on implementing systemic change in the US healthcare industry. Together with partners from health care companies, the government, and various agencies, they are trying to have a positive impact on poverty and food insecurity—two important social determinants of health and leading causes of healthcare spending in the US. Research indicates that poor nutrition, often a result of food insecurity, is a leading risk factor for many chronic conditions, including heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and other diet-related diseases. It's reported to cost the US healthcare system an additional \$53 billion a year.

Johan's development company, Catapult 4D, focuses on technology projects with a preference for social entrepreneurial ventures. Their projects are launched through a holding company, Synergasia Health Technologies, Inc and brands Field & Yield, Truck2Table, and GroceryVIP. They work through the supply chain and healthcare system to help at-risk individuals by sourcing and delivering affordable food and medically-tailored meals, while also educating, and studying health outcomes and collecting the needed data to support the value proposition. The goal? To break the pattern in population health!

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected Johan and his company, like many others they are having to adapt to current times. With supply chains disrupted, further economic insecurity growing, and social distancing imperative, Johan's team pivoted and leveraged their existing infrastructure (warehouses, kitchens, staff, vehicles, and software) and have distributed approximately 40,264 meals to needy families and low-income individuals around Knoxville, Tennessee.



Johan Larsen '91 and family in Knoxville, TN.

Looking back at his long journey, Johan knows that through all of these experiences, he has found what he loves to do and that has, in turn, created his success. It is often at this stage of life that we look towards giving back, and he is no different. What are his thoughts on entrepreneurship today, how can a young LAS grad successfully navigate the turbulent waters to become one?

Johan offers these insights:

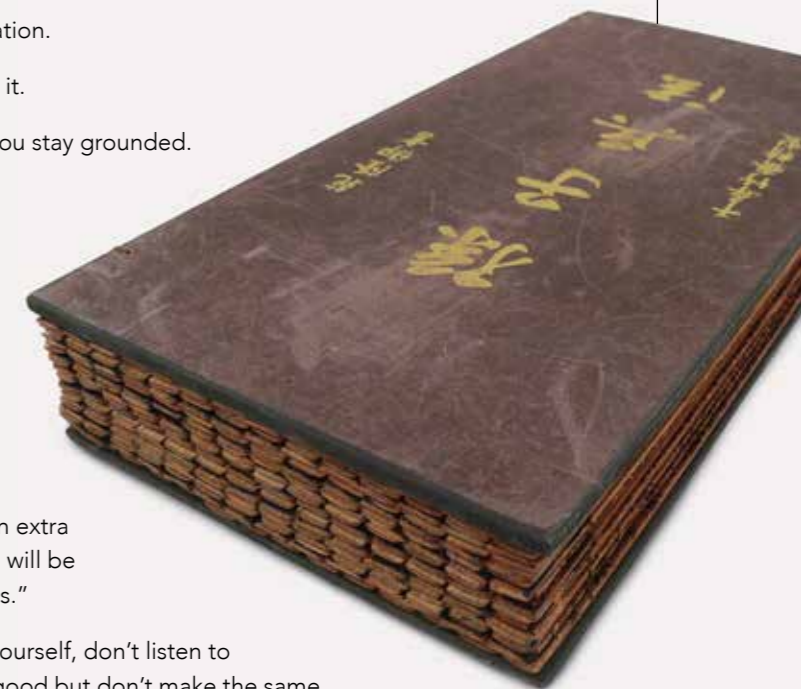
- If you want to be an entrepreneur, I would encourage you to work on something that you believe in with all your heart, since you are about to embark on a tough and humbling journey and you will fail on the way.
- Look narrow and deep instead of wide and shallow.
- Failure is good as long as you use failure to learn, progress, and inevitably succeed. Most of all, something new entrepreneurs have to understand is that it's all about hard work. The stats speak for themselves: 9/10 fail.
- Remember, the harder you work, the luckier you get.
- Always underpromise and overdeliver.
- The single most important thing you can do is to get access to some good advisors. It is easy to get bad advice but not easy to get good advice.
- If you want something done, ask a busy man or woman, since they tend to do it right away (Mr. Sharp taught me that).
- When the horse is dead—dismount.
- Being honest also means being honest with yourself.
- You cannot build a house without a foundation.
- Understand money, but don't be driven by it.
- Pay attention to your ego and make sure you stay grounded.
- Finally; read, study, absorb knowledge, and seek wisdom constantly.

Some valuable reading material that helped me on my journey.

- *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu
- Any reading or theory by Von Clausevich and Helmuth Von Moltke.

Earl Nightingale said it so well, "If you spend an extra hour each day of study in your chosen field you will be a national expert in that field in five years or less."

If you decide to go down this path, believe in yourself, don't listen to negative people, aim for the sky, mistakes are good but don't make the same one twice—good luck! 🍀



Right: A Chinese bamboo copy of *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu. Credit: CC BY 2.0, wikimedia.org, by vlasta2.

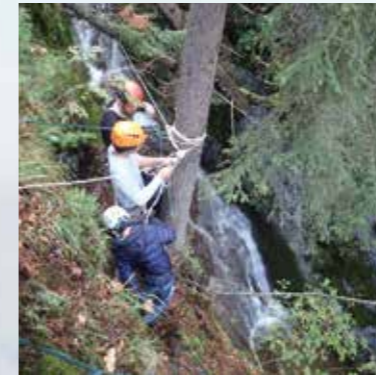
Alpine Adventure

By John Harlin III P '14, Director, Alpine Institute

Sure, mountains make lovely horizons. The vistas from nearly every window on campus take your breath away with their beauty alone. But it's so much better to lose your breath from the effort of climbing those peaks! And then, depending on the season, from skiing back down through deep powder.

Pictures are better than words for capturing the magic of adventuring in Leysin. Here are some from last year. I hope you see what I mean.

Below: LAS students making their way to the Les Diablerets Glacier for glacier travel practice.



Mountains
of joy,
mountains
of memories



Drawdown at Globe Day

At LAS's annual conference, students prepare for the world

By John Harlin III P '14, Director, Alpine Institute

First came the arguments. Panelists presented six different visions for how LAS could help save the world by "drawing down" (reducing) our carbon footprint. In the audience was every student from grades 7 through 10. Then came the time for students to vote with their feet in the style of an American "caucus" election: students were instructed to gather in groups to show support for their favorite solution. Would it be reducing the use of plastic on campus? Or planting trees in cow-grazed meadows (silvopasture)? Empowering women? E-bikes? Smart thermostats? Plant-based meals?

Students streamed down from the bleachers to stand by the panelist who they thought had made the most compelling argument. Panelists waited anxiously to see how convincing they'd been. And the winner was... e-bikes, by a landslide! Or, more specifically: building a fleet of retrofitted e-bikes for students to use while commuting between campus buildings in Leysin.

This electrifying vote—the first of its kind at LAS—took place on March 11. School was still "normal" that day. The next day, March 12, came as a shock: the school was being abruptly shut down and all students were sent home as a precaution against COVID-19. Voting for e-bikes turned out to be the last event on campus during the 2019/20 school year.

Six Years of Globe Day

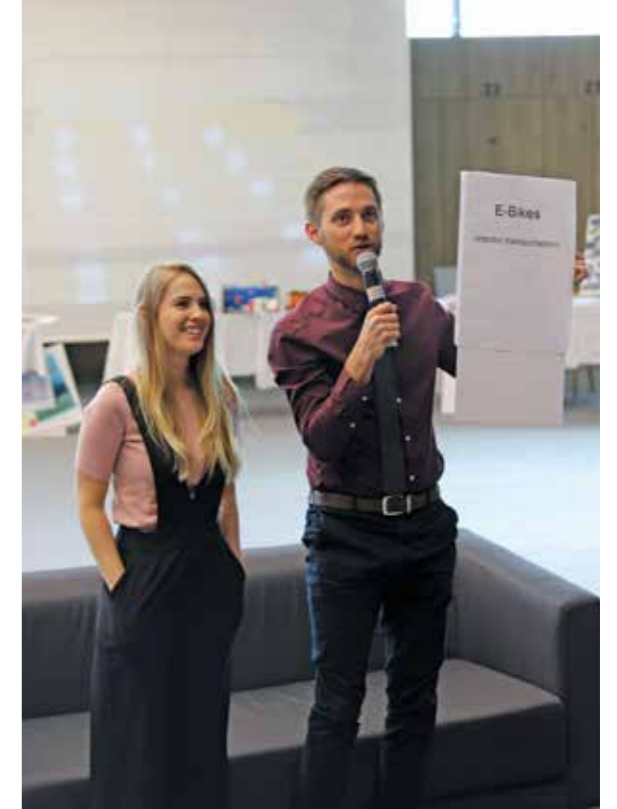
March 2020 marked the sixth year of LAS's annual Globe Day student conference where young people present "project-based learning" results to their peers. The simple act of spreading carpets on the floor converts the Magic Mountain Athletic Center (MMAC) into a conference hall, a professional-looking space for students to share their posters, videos, and slideshows. During "breakout sessions" after lunch, students who want to discuss their work in more detail engage smaller groups of students in intimate settings. The precise format of Globe Day varies each year, but

Right: Panelists presenting their visions for Drawdown.

the mission stays the same: to help students shine by sharing their work with their peers in a setting designed to mimic a professional conference. These "soft skills" will serve them the rest of their academic and professional lives.

Around six regional boarding schools have joined our Globe Day conference each year, each time bringing 60 or more students and teachers, many of whom present their own projects. This mix of schools provides a more meaningful experience for everyone.

Right: Benjamin Jackson, Science Teacher, and Sarah Graham, English Language Acquisition & Psychology Teacher, present their idea on e-bikes to the students for Drawdown.



we call it “Globe Day” because the concept springs out of NASA’s Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE), a citizen science program that aims to put student-collected environmental data into the hands of scientists for the benefit of both—and of the planet.

Over the years our Globe Day themes have expanded well beyond science. We also embrace service projects from clubs, artworks, and social studies projects that explore diverse aspects of the human experience and of nature—indeed, anything that our students wish to present on. In recent years the art department has become a vital player in Globe Day, offering inspirational displays that range from sculptures to fashion, focused on recycling and Earth stewardship.

Drawdown

In the past we’ve always featured guest keynote speakers, some who have flown in from National Geographic Society in the US, and others from Swiss universities. In 2020 we instead featured the Drawdown Panel. “Drawdown” is LAS’s student- and teacher-led effort to reduce carbon emissions based on the solutions suggested by Project Drawdown (drawdown.org). Our goal is for LAS to help bring the world to a state of “drawdown”—the necessary era when levels of global greenhouse gases in the atmosphere start to steadily decline.

The Drawdown Panel on Globe Day set the stage for student leadership. A half-dozen students and teachers picked potential “solutions” and pitched them to the student body. Some teachers were surprised by the overwhelming popularity of e-bikes; this wouldn’t have been our first choice—but we’re determined to show students that their votes count. When school restarts in the fall, so will a brand-new program to build a fleet of e-bikes intended to reduce our dependence on gas-powered buses in Leysin.

High school is all about preparing young people to find their places in the world. Globe Day has become a major tool to help them build the thinking and presentation skills they’ll need wherever they go. ⓘ



Above: Students vote for their favorite eco solution in the style of an American “caucus”. Right: Students present their Globe Day projects.



Top: Example of a student’s Globe Day project on deforestation. Above: Student presents his project on Easter Island.

March 2020 marked the sixth year of LAS’s annual Globe Day student conference where young people present “project-based learning” results to their peers.



How LAS Faculty Families Were Created

A Conversation with the Ott

By Doris and Steven Ott... as told by Sigrid and Fred Ott



SIGRID: Let us see if we can budget this. The question then is to define the social environment of the dorms. I believe that we should consider the dorms not as dorms, but rather as a home for the kids. The question that I have is 'How many students per faculty couple?' A number greater than 8 seems to cancel a home-like feeling. What do you think?

FRED: I agree. Besides we can probably make a one-to-eight ratio work with the academic and activities requirements. But we must go further in our thinking—'How do we define such an environment?' My thinking goes back to your roots, Sigrid. Iceland was able to create a unique society of adventurous, community-oriented people. They were not rebellious, since they had no neighbors. They were required to stick together as a community, family-like and harmonious due to the hostile natural environment of their island. So, I think that the LAS community could take your background as an example.

Left: Students exploring Leysin. Below: Students enjoy sodas at The Station in Leysin with their Faculty Family parents.

Imagine an evening in Wiesbaden, Germany during the fall of 1960. Fred and Sigrid Ott, founders of LAS, were delighted that their dream of an international boarding school had advanced with a building secured, investors committed, and planning underway.

SIGRID: Fred, we need to consider how to structure the social environment. Boarding students need more than just classroom instructions, sports, and travel—they also need a safe haven.

FRED: I fully agree. This aspect of the Leysin American School needs deep thought, since we do not have a great deal of experience, nor are there many existing examples. I definitely do not think that the British model of daily cold showers, five kilometer runs, and housemasters responsible full-time for dozens of students, provides the kind of social environment that we should have.

SIGRID: Fred, maybe we can have the faculty share in the lifestyle of students by living in the dorms. The Savoy is a big building and having faculty apartments may work out, although it would limit the number of student beds. The question is whether or not we can hire teachers willing to take on the additional responsibility of dorm supervision in addition to teaching, supervising activities, and joining in school travel.

FRED: We may not find many Europeans, as such a concept is foreign to them, but American teachers at boarding schools often live in dorms. However, American teachers are expensive, which will affect budgets. *(In 1959 the CHF/US\$ exchange rate was 4.35. Thus, the tuition of LAS was very competitive, however US staff were very expensive.)*



SIGRID: What a nice thought! I believe that Switzerland also has much to offer to our thinking on student lifestyle—a country at peace for 150 years with a diverse population consisting of four distinct cultures that have learned to live together. The Swiss model of consensus is admirable. We need to include these concepts as well.

FRED: The question now is how to realize these ideals. Much depends on getting it right from the start so that we can develop a tradition. Just having faculty share living space is not sufficient. We need to plan ongoing professional development that includes this family concept. I could see challenges, especially for young teachers. As you know, they can bring much in terms of innovation, but I worry that they may not understand how to create a family environment in the dorms.

SIGRID: I think that having faculty live in the dorms is a great idea. They will be available when a student knocks on their door seeking advice or help, or suffering from an upset stomach. This is, however, an informal way of parenting. Yes, that is what we need to study—‘How can we enhance parenting by the faculty at LAS?’

FRED: Yes, ‘parenting’ is the magic word! Sigrid, that is our solution—we need the faculty to be LAS parents to their students, while they are at school and away from their parents.

SIGRID: Let’s consider formalizing ‘parenting’ and have LAS Faculty Families. Just imagine, each student has a faculty mom and dad. They will be encouraged to provide kids with a safe haven, full of love and care—an on-campus copy of a real family.

FRED: Let’s develop this idea a bit further. LAS families should come as close to real families as possible, so there should be boys and girls of different ages. Here we can add another of our LAS dreams, namely, to enhance the concept of international understanding by mixing cultures, ethnicities, and religions in one family. Just imagine, having an LAS brother from a different country, Brazil mixing with Germany, the US with Japan. What a wonderful educational experience!

SIGRID: Slow down, Fred, we do need to outline how to organize programs to make the families a success, before dreaming of citizens of the world. But here are some concepts: Families have their own budgets so that faculty parents can plan events that kids will enjoy. Student birthdays are celebrated in the family circle, and at least once each week, the family has a meal together. Furthermore, family parents need to be who students go to when they have problems, such as homesickness, difficulties with roommates, or trouble establishing a positive relationship with a teacher.

FRED: I agree. I think of our Faculty Families as an ongoing project that will always be open to new ideas and growth, even when LAS is sixty years old.

This is how Faculty Families became part of LAS, a cornerstone of our students’ experience at the school. ①

Top: A faculty family enjoying fondue at the famous Restaurant la Fromagerie in Leysin. Bottom, from left: Students eagerly await fondue with their Faculty Family; A Faculty Family poses in front of local restaurant, Le Leysin.



A Going Away Speech

Saying Farewell to Mr. Daryl Hitchcock

By Mark Fryer, English Teacher



Mr. Hitchcock teaching his Theory of Knowledge class.

After 15 years, the LAS community is saying farewell to Mr. Daryl Hitchcock.

Mr. Hitchcock joined LAS for the 2005/06 academic year. He worked in the Beau Reveil and Savoy dorms for 13 years as Dorm Head. In his teaching capacity he taught Geography, History, and Theory of Knowledge (TOK). On multiple occasions, Mr. Hitchcock was voted for by the senior class to give the faculty address at their graduation ceremony. He met Ms. Krause, our beloved Director of Residential Life at Christoph and Gosia Ott's wedding in 2009. They married the next year in Canada and have worked together at LAS ever since. Daryl is known for his forthright opinions, his deep intelligence and the exemplary pastoral care he provided to LAS students. In September 2020 Mr. Hitchcock will be starting a new position as Deputy Head of School for Residential Life at the EF Academy in New York.

Below is the speech delivered by Mark Fryer, LAS English Teacher, for Daryl at the Faculty Farewell party.

Good evening, everybody, from the Savoy library media room.

I have been given this honor, as Daryl and I are the remaining members of the 2005/06 new faculty cohort. We did duty together back then in the "new dorm" of Beau Reveil, on Sunday nights, for two years. And I class him as a dear friend. However, my address this evening has to encompass more than my personal experience, and I speak for the whole faculty and student body, present and past, some of whom I've contacted in preparing this speech.

There is just one thing to note from the outset. I'm not going to be describing Daryl as a legend. We all know he is and in contemporary parlance it couldn't be more appropriate, but to a student and teacher of classics such as he, I'm not sure it's acceptable. If not that, then what is he?

A teacher, mentor, coach, department head, faculty parent, Dorm Head, tour guide par excellence, film star, voice for the faculty, and consigliere to the vast majority of administrators at LAS, whether they asked him to be or not.

Of course he's also the creator of the ubiquitous and now universally-known maxim—SAY IT WITH ME—"Swiss time is on time." In fact, a couple of alumni I reached out to told me that, thanks to the repeated exhortation of this phrase while residents in Savoy, they are now always punctual for everything. To the students he is known as, Mr. Hitchcock, Hitchcock, Hitch and to some perhaps the other half of his name.

It is understandable why that unspoken moniker might be used. Daryl tells the truth. He tells it directly. As Gloria Steinem said "The truth it will set you free. But first it will piss you off."

He is not afraid to avoid tiptoeing around kids and colleagues to say it how it is. Daryl has the wisdom and experience. He has the courage and confidence to make him a master of the difficult conversation.

I've heard him tell students that he's not their friend and he'll never be their friend. I'm not so sure about the last part. But it works. It adds to the mystique. It creates that necessary barrier. Students may not always understand Daryl but they know where they stand.

Daryl is a formidable competitor, as anyone who has played him at tennis, squash, or golf can testify. For us at LAS he has been a multiple-trophy-winning volleyball coach. He employs to great effect, according to a 2008 student newspaper, "an unorthodox coaching style".

If no one is there to compete with, then he does so with himself. Daryl is always out to achieve. Whether it be: Thai cooking, designing the best TOK website, getting to C1 in French, and then Italian, and then becoming Swiss. If indeed there is a pattern there, perhaps it explains how, now that he is Swiss, he's off elsewhere. He needs a new challenge. To test himself. To see how he fares in the face of a new competitor.

For me, the most powerful of Daryl's attributes is his humanity. He protects students and they have told me that despite being scared of him, they are aware of his protection from day 1. He makes a spoken or unspoken solemn vow to parents that he will take on the responsibility to guard their kids. He has a fierce loyalty to friends.

Daryl has dealt with more emotional turmoil while at LAS than a normal person could imagine—the vast majority of which we have no idea. I will never forget when he came to our apartment on that fateful February evening, after we'd heard the helicopters outside, to tell us that Spencer was missing. And his silent visit a few hours later to let us know what we had feared. Daryl counselled students then and after other tragedies. While we subsequently got on with our lives, he carried those burdens and still does.

For those of us who remember, Daryl's devotion to our former colleague and friend Ted Groom needs no words.

On the occasions when with furrowed brow and deep in thought, he passes you in the hallway without seeing you, it is perhaps because he feels the weight on his shoulders and is in a sense elsewhere. However, look into his eyes at any time and you will see something else. I challenge anyone not to notice the twinkle, the dancing flashes, the warmth that is never very far away.

That's the truth of Daryl. He may at times be bluff but really it doesn't take much to see that badly hidden compassionate side.

When talking about Daryl on Tuesday this week, a former Russian student taught me a proverb. He said, "When you meet a person, you judge them by what they are wearing. When you say goodbye to them, you judge them by their actions."

Daryl has almost certainly been an inspiration to most of the students with whom he has interacted in his 15 years at LAS. He has been the same for his colleagues. I know that he has been an inspiration for me.

His honesty, his determination to win, fused with his enormous compassion have made him an invaluable asset to LAS. I speak for everyone when I thank him for sharing his excellence and say that he will be very much missed. 📌



A Year Like No Other

Reflections from the Associate Deans and the Director of Student Life

By James McKenna, Director of Student Life

WHAT A YEAR it was indeed! From an action-packed fall semester, to an excellent ski season, to a virtual world of Student Life activities, the Student Life and Activities program certainly experienced its most unique and special year to date.

The school year kicked off with a very rich program of activities for students. Events, such as the Berneuse Challenge, Faculty Family Weekend, Dorm Olympics, and the Terry Fox Run encapsulated the LAS sense of family, community, and internationalism.

Midway through the first semester we enjoyed the introduction of a new student-initiated event, the first-ever LAS "Spirit Week." In the spring semester of 2019, I was approached by an eleventh grade student, Nick Torres '20. He came to me with a proposal to re-energize the student community with a new kind of event; something that would further promote school unity and community, and create future excitement for other events. Hence, with the collaboration of the Student Council (StuCo), the LAS Spirit Week was born!

The week was a huge success with a number of student-organized events. StuCo dodgeball, speed-climbing, faculty versus student volleyball, and an Esports competition were just some of the many highlights of the week. Its main success, however, was the realization and fulfillment of Nick Torres' vision: students uniting with one another in a fun-filled celebratory atmosphere, bringing the whole LAS community together with some brand new and exhilarating events!

WHAT A SEASON! From gail force Tuesdays, to wet n' wild Thursdays, to the Youth Winter Olympics, and not one, but two fantastic Ski Days, we experienced one of the most memorable ski seasons on record!

Two weeks of spring conditions at the beginning of January enabled our beginner skiers and snowboarders to progress quickly up onto the mountain. This spell of fine weather also saw the Lausanne 2020 Winter Youth Olympics come to town. Leysin was the host venue for all freestyle events, and students were treated to some fantastic slopestyle and halfpipe action. For students to watch athletes of their own age live, competing at an international and Olympic level on our own doorstep, was an unforgettable experience. Following this, extreme storm conditions meant the mountain was out of bounds for three ski afternoons. Despite this unfortunate spell, students remained adamant that this would not hold them back from enjoying the rest of the season. Our weekend ski trips to Verbier, Crans Montana, and Zermatt proved to be extremely popular as a result. Then, when fresh snow arrived mid-week, with clear blue skies breaking through the morning sun, students were able to enjoy two unforgettable and fantastic ski days. A highlight of every student and staff member alike!

Just when the season was experiencing some of the best conditions and student morale was high, the impact of COVID-19 in Switzerland meant the season took an unexpected turn and closed prematurely.

WHAT A REALIZATION! With this sudden turn of events, before we knew it our world was turned upside down. From the enthrallment of winter sports to a studentless spring, LAS certainly felt a void never



Top: Students venture up to Solacyre in Leysin to help prepare them for their expedition up Kilimanjaro in the spring. Above, from left: Lots of smiles at Dorm Olympics; Belle Epoque girls' dorm celebrates at Dorm Olympics.

Five Questions for Jennifer Miles P '24, Associate Dean of Middle School & Preparatory Years

What was the highlight of the academic year for your students in the BEC or Savoy?

The Global Futurizer event held in November. The event provided a wonderful opportunity for the students to demonstrate their strong creative problem solving and teamwork skills. Globe Day! Although it was a bit different this year with COVID, the students' presentations were extremely professional, creative, and passion-driven.

What was one of the biggest challenges you had to tackle?

Echo: Chris's answer on the facing page, with online learning and finding the models that worked for both our students and faculty.

Were there any moments where a student rose to a particular challenge during the course of a rather unusual school year?

I was impressed with so many of our students and their ability to navigate the hurdles of online learning. In particular, their end of the year portfolio projects for math and science. The portfolio was a brand new format and concept and their finished projects were stellar.

What will you miss the most when looking back at this past school year?

Lunchtime conversations with the Grade 10 students. I would often stop by their table just to chat about nothing in particular or listen to their passionate pleas for another ski day.

Although online learning had so many challenges, it did force LAS to come together as a community in way we have not been asked to do so prior. It was very impressive to see how all members of the community contributed to create a workable solution in a very short time period.

What are you looking forward to for academic year 2020/21?

Having everyone back on campus, the sound of laughter in the hallways and the energy the students bring to LAS! I am also excited to welcome the Middle School students officially in Savoy.

before experienced in its history. The Student Life program, without any students, began to take on a whole new innovative direction. Just as it has for many others, the virtual world became a booming platform for online learning and communications.

Hence, the Student Life Office launched a new and creative online program: the LAS Seven Peak Challenge—a series of seven engaging and fun activities that shared their names with the surrounding peaks of Leysin. From the viral toilet roll “keepy uppy” challenge, to more creative photo competitions, we set up a variety of challenges so there was something to interest each and every one of our students. An online platform was key for students to still feel connected with LAS and their friends, enabling them to stay healthy and provide an after school community, although distant, to support them alongside their online learning.

Even though a virtual Student Life program will never replace the true impact of being face-to-face with students, this experience certainly helped us realize two

things: Firstly, without modern technology, an online program with students from over 60 different countries all across the world, would not have been possible. What would we have done without the internet and Zoom? Secondly, even the best of programs can be brought to a complete standstill. Possessing flexible, innovative, and creative qualities appear to be more and more indispensable for our foreseeable future and present day.

WHAT AN OPPORTUNITY! As we plan and prepare for the future with optimism and excitement, a post-COVID world presents a unique opportunity for us in the Student Life Office—an opportunity to provide new and rejuvenating programs that engage a new generation of students who will face the world with a refreshed understanding of what it means to be innovative, compassionate, and responsible citizens of the world.

I like to think and hope that when there is a change, however good or bad, there will always be something better to replace that change. Exciting times await us! 📌

Five Questions for Chris Taylor, Associate Dean of Diploma Years

What was the highlight of the academic year for your students in the BEC?

It's hard to say, but I think some of the big ticket events, especially at Christmas, were great. The Parade of Flags was surprisingly moving and good too. I'm sad that I didn't get to see all the Graduation rituals in full, but the online Graduation was pretty amazing.

What was one of the biggest challenges you had to tackle?

Remote Learning—creating a model that worked for as many students as possible and was practicable for faculty too. The start of my first year at LAS was pretty challenging too—there were so many new systems and new faces to learn!

Were there any moments where a student rose to a particular challenge during the course of what was a rather unusual school year?

So many! The vast majority of students responded to Remote Learning really well and showed a great sense of adaptability and determination. The situation wasn't ideal of course, but in a strange way I think many students will have learned more grit and resourcefulness than they might have done in a normal school year.

What will you miss the most when looking back at this past school year?

Although the year was disrupted and strange, I really did enjoy the way that the community came together in a crisis and we worked together to make things function.

What are you looking forward to for the 2020/21 academic year?

Getting back to normal and working with students face-to-face. I might even enjoy yelling at lazy students to get out of bed! I'm also looking forward to dining room life returning back to normal because so much good social stuff happens there for students and faculty... and the return of ski season of course!

Left: Jennifer Miles P '24 and Chris Taylor.



You Make the Difference Advancement, One Year In

By C. Ryan Joyce, Director of Advancement

When I sat down to write my first article for the Panorama magazine in July of 2019, I had been at LAS for three weeks. I was writing an introduction and knew next to nothing about the school, summer programs, and community. I was impressed by the beauty, blown away by the welcoming atmosphere, and excited for a new adventure ahead, but was as wide-eyed and curious as I have ever been.

If I had a crystal ball that July and could have peered into what would be the unusual, unprecedented, and unique year ahead, I am certain I would not have believed it. We never know where our paths will take us in life. We can make predictions and assumptions, but ultimately it's how we navigate that tricky trail that will bring us to where we are today.

As you will read in the article entitled, Global Signature Event Series: A Success!, we were thrilled to spend time with nearly 600 alumni, parents, and friends of LAS from October until the pandemic halted our travels in early March. If you were able to attend one of the many events that took place all over the globe, you heard one very consistent message: LAS is in a strong position as we look toward our 60th anniversary as a school and LAS wants you back! During the course of each event, myself or Anthony Leutenegger (Associate Director of Advancement), would quiet the crowd, thank our co-hosts, pass out a substantial amount of LAS swag, and then would stress three main points:

1. WHAT IS ADVANCEMENT? What exactly do the two of us do at LAS? Good questions to address and I'm glad we had a moment to do so. As outlined in my previous Panorama article, the essential job of our Advancement team is to simply advance the mission of the school through alumni relations, fundraising, and recruitment. In short, we ask our community of parents (past and present) and alumni to share their time, talent, and treasures in order to secure an even more robust future for our students.

"While this year has been a trying one for everyone around the world, I feel grateful to have joined the Leysin American School family when I did, and am confident that this community will continue to rise and be strong through even the toughest of times."

C. Ryan Joyce

2. OUR ALUMNI ARE OUR GREATEST RECRUITERS!

We wanted to make it clear that there is no better example of who we are as an institution than our alumni. Wearing LAS gear in your hometown; speaking about your experiences on the Magic Mountain; hosting an event for our Advancement or Admissions teams when they come through town; sending your children to our summer program or school; or inviting a friend or loved one to do the same. THIS is how we continue to be the excellent school we are: thanks to you! It's always good to remember that we have a healthy scholarship program at LAS and over 30% of our student body is the beneficiary. We want LAS to work for you or your loved ones and will do all we can to bring that to fruition.

3. THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF LAS!

We heavily promoted the celebration set to take place June 17-20, 2021 in Leysin. We want you to bring friends and family, to stay in the dorms (if you wish), and to enjoy a weekend of celebration! Obviously, this was pre-pandemic and we will make a decision prior to December 1, 2020 as to whether or not we will be able to host in June of 2021 or if we think it's best to postpone for a year in order to enjoy the great weekend we are planning!

It remains an absolute honor and privilege to have met so many of you either here in Leysin or around the globe this past school year. Further, it was extremely moving to read your emails, receive your calls and texts, and to see how our community in all parts of the world came together during what has been a challenging 2020. We thank you, we appreciate you, and we truly cannot wait to see you again. 📌



Above: The new LAS Alumni Association car magnet on the way to the Boston Global Signature Event, November, 2019. Below: Director of Advancement, C. Ryan Joyce, and Associate Director of Advancement, Anthony Leutenegger, ready to hit the road in their LAS gear!





On March 12, LAS made the very difficult and historic decision to send our students safely home to be with their families during the pandemic. Our classrooms and common spaces were an eerie sight for several months. We were thrilled to welcome students back safely in August!

A Record Breaking Year

In four months, the LAS COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund raised nearly half a million francs

Fiscal Year 2019/20 (July 1 to June 30) produced more donors than ever before at LAS.

We are so grateful to everyone who reached into their pockets and made a donation to Leysin American School this past fiscal year. As mentioned in the article on the previous pages, we rely on our donors to support our scholarship program, our campus improvements, and our ability to offer above and beyond to our community. Without philanthropy, LAS would look and feel like a very different school than we so proudly are.

Our community stepped up in unprecedented ways by raising nearly half a million francs from March until June for the LAS COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund. This is a remarkable amount for such a short period of time and a record number of families, alumni, faculty, and staff (over 150)!

We appreciate everything our LAS family members do to support our efforts and we look forward to thanking you in person when we are able to see you again!

HONOR ROLL OF DONORS 2019/20

Anonymous (75)	Skye Fiedler '96	Chris Loewen & Millie Mung	Lindsay Posillico
Raphael Aschenbrenner	Alex Flynn-Padick	Adam & Malgorzata Macierzanka P '19	Andrew Przekurat
Jen Beighton & Mat McLeod	Paul Fomalont	Paul & Chris Magnuson	William & Kathleen Rogers P '20, '23
Adam & Maja Bradford	Hatty & Mark Fryer	Kristin Maurer	Catherine Schwebel
Mike & Sandra Brinkmeyer	Emily Gain	Stuart McGee	Sabina Schwedtmann & Ronan Lynch
Pablo Bris lance	Carl Gehriger	Kellie McGill	LeighAnn & Joey Shafiq
Caroline Brocvielle	Elisa Giobellina	Laura Meagher	Laura Sommariva
Raya Burla '01	Sergio Guzman	Artenis Metaliaj '20 & Family	Michelle Starke & Connor Weik
Richard Campanaro '95 & Paige Matthe	John Harlin III P '14	Wolfgang Meusburger P '02, '05	Pascal Stefani P '18
Elaine Cheung Tam	Brittany Holsapple	Suzy & Ian Meyskens	Dottie Steward
Sergio Claire '11	Benjamin Jackson	Ira & Jen Miles '24	John Sutton '98
Tom & Nicola Cosgrove	Kevin Jennings	Virginia Morgan	Chris Taylor
Nicola Cottom	C. Ryan Joyce	Ramesh Nair	Vladimir Vozdvizhenskiy
Aaron & Katy Deupree	Aniko Rekasi Kalmbach P '21	Christoph & Gosia Ott	Shixuan Wang P '23
Emma Dixon	Benoit Kanyandekwe P '22	Marc-Frédéric & Stephanie Ott	Tamara Yahfoufi
Michael Doland & Malia Lemond	Masakatsu Kayamori	Doris & Steven Ott	Andres & Marcela Yarte P '19, '20
Anton & Olga Eruntsov P '19	Robert Kostrzeski & Yik Kun Heng	Dimple Patel	Martin Zupan
Maurizio Fabbri	Marta Krause	Jeff Paulsen	
	Anthony Leutenegger		



Global Signature Event Series: A Success!

Our Global Signature Event Series (GSES) in preparation for the 60th Anniversary of the school has been an incredible success. We launched our first event in Cancun, featured in the 2019 edition of the Panorama, and have since traveled much of the globe; from the United Arab Emirates, to Japan, to Kazakhstan, through 12 cities in North America, and finally ending in India, it was a whirlwind tour bringing over 650 LAS alumni together. If it weren't for the unfortunate cancellation of events in Iran, Turkey, and Russia due to the pandemic, we would have met with nearly 1,000 members of the LAS community.

Our success as a school is exemplified best in our alumni, for you are our final product and we are very proud of you.

Thank you to everyone who attended our GSES events. To those who missed an event, we very much look forward to seeing you at the next one, hopefully when the global pandemic is in our rearview mirrors.

Please enjoy a few images here and on the following pages from our alumni celebrating with each other around the globe. ①

Our goal was simple: to strengthen our community, to grow our base of supporters, to allow our alumni a chance to reconnect with each other and the school, and finally, to show each and every person that they are still very much a part of the LAS family.



DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
PEACOCK ALLEY, WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL DUBAI
OCTOBER 8, 2019



MUSCAT, OMAN
ROYAL OPERA HOUSE MUSCAT
OCTOBER 10, 2019



BARCELONA, SPAIN
RESTAURANT FERROZ AT TUSET 27
OCTOBER 24, 2019



NEW YORK, NEW YORK, USA
THE CAMPBELL BAR, GRAND CENTRAL STATION
NOVEMBER 7, 2019





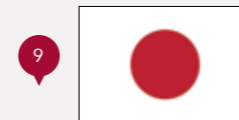
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, USA
SONSIE RESTAURANT
NOVEMBER 8, 2019



WASHINGTON, D.C., USA
PJ CLARKE'S RESTAURANT
NOVEMBER 11, 2019



TOKYO, JAPAN
ANDAZ HOTEL TOKYO
NOVEMBER 15, 2019



DENVER, COLORADO, USA
DEATH & CO. RESTAURANT, RAMBLE HOTEL
NOVEMBER 16, 2019



CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, USA
PERRY'S STEAKHOUSE & GRILLE
NOVEMBER 12, 2019



HOUSTON, TEXAS, USA
VINOTECA WINE BAR, FOUR SEASONS HOTEL HOUSTON
NOVEMBER 14, 2019



SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, USA
THE SLANTED DOOR RESTAURANT
NOVEMBER 18, 2019



MONTERREY, MEXICO
LA CENTRAL SP RESTAURANT
NOVEMBER 20, 2019





MEXICO CITY, MEXICO
RESTAURANTE CASSATT
NOVEMBER 22, 2019



LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, USA
WALLY'S WINE BAR & RESTAURANT
NOVEMBER 25, 2019



LONDON, ENGLAND
SCOTT'S RESTAURANT
DECEMBER 7, 2019



NUR-SULTAN, KAZAKHSTAN
ST. REGIS HOTEL ASTANA
MARCH 4, 2020



PHOENIX, ARIZONA, USA
RITA'S KITCHEN, CAMELBACK INN
NOVEMBER 27, 2019



VANCOUVER, BC, CANADA
BLUE WATER CAFE & RAW BAR
NOVEMBER 30, 2019



ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN
SEVEN BAR & RESTAURANT, THE RITZ CARLTON HOTEL
MARCH 7, 2020



MUMBAI, INDIA
THE SAHIB ROOM & KIPLING BAR, THE ST. REGIS HOTEL MUMBAI
MARCH, 9 2020



Remembering Dr. Thomas Haldi

LAS teacher in the 1960s and 70s and Summer Program Director in the 2000s

Earlier this year the LAS community was saddened to hear of the passing of Thomas Haldi. As you will read in his obituary below, Thomas bookended his career at LAS and had a profound impact on our entire community. Further, Thomas was a critical thinker during our pioneering years as a school and impacted our community for generations. The Magic Mountain is fortunate to have had Mr. Haldi for as long as we did and we continue to send our very best to his wife, Colette, and the entire Haldi family.



Dr. Thomas Haldi (1938-2020), beloved husband, father, and friend, passed away peacefully on May 7, 2020, surrounded by his loved ones.

Dr. Haldi grew up in Cleveland and was a loyal fan of all Cleveland sports, with a special place in his heart for the 2016 Cavaliers' team. After graduating high school, Dr. Haldi earned a degree in electrical engineering from Case Reserve (1960) and began working with General Electric on NASA's Gemini rocket program before moving to Douglas Aircraft. After a few years working as an engineer, Dr. Haldi realized a career in education would be more rewarding.

In 1962, Dr. Haldi moved to California and attended UCLA's school of education. After earning his M.A. in secondary teaching, Dr. Haldi taught high school in New Jersey and Ohio. He then returned to UCLA to earn a Ph.D. in Philosophy of Education (1969). While at UCLA, Dr. Haldi joined Kneller Tours and guided six tours throughout Europe, instilling a life-long love of travel, which he passed onto his children.

Dr. Haldi's passion was education and he spent the next several decades teaching around the world. In 1969, he began his first overseas teaching assignment at the Leysin American School (LAS) in Switzerland where he taught Physics and Calculus in between mountaineering and skiing trips. In addition to teaching in Switzerland, Dr. Haldi taught in France, England, Singapore, and Kuwait, holding positions of head master, dean of students, principal, and assistant superintendent. Dr. Haldi ended his career where it began returning to LAS, where he helped to create the summer school program which he led for 16 years before retiring in 2000.

Dr. Haldi was a dedicated and loving father who took on the roles of coach, classroom parent, and tour guide. Together with his family, he enjoyed mountain climbing (he successfully summited the Matterhorn), hiking, skiing, and watching English soccer (go Liverpool). Dr. Haldi also loved art, opera, classical music, and ballet—a true renaissance man.

Dr. Haldi is survived by his loving wife of 37 years, Colette, and his two children Erin Fitzpatrick (h: Kurtis) and Ryan Haldi (Tara) and was looking forward to his first grandchildren due this fall. He is also survived by brothers Laurence Haldi (w: Patricia) and Robert Haldi, and niece Debbie Meder, as well as nephews Richard Haldi (Mary Lynn), Donald Haldi (Jennie), Douglas Haldi (Annie), and many grand nieces and nephews. Dr. Haldi was preceded in death by his parents, Arnold and Matilda Haldi (Cleveland).

Donations may be sent to North Bay Hospice in Dr. Haldi's name. 📍

*Published in Press Democrat
on May 14, 2020.*



SAVE THE DATE

Return to the Mountains and Remember the Magic

On June 17- 20, 2021, Leysin American School will be celebrating 60 years of world class education, life long friendships, and a growing community. We are inviting every family, friend, alumni, and current and former faculty members to attend this special milestone with us. Enjoy a weekend catching up with fellow LAS community members while making new connections.

You will have the opportunity to meet with your favorite teachers and even have the chance to stay in the dorm rooms. Our official invitation and schedule will be sent out soon.

LAS looks forward to welcoming you back home in June 2021!

NOTE: Due to the pandemic and the uncertainty around travel and large events, the LAS Alumni Association will make a decision by December 1, 2020 as to whether we will be able to hold this event or postpone it until June of 2022.



Homecoming!

First Year of Governance

By Stefanie Ott P '18, Chairwoman of the LAS Board

1982 saw many changes in our family. Christoph, a sweet three-year old, Marc-Frédéric, a lanky ten-year old, and I, at eight, were in Leysin on summer vacation avoiding the unbearable heat of our home in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia. I still remember how strongly the green of the meadows and forests and the white of the glaciers of Switzerland contrasted the dull brown of the sands of Eastern Saudi Arabia.



Early July, just before our departure to the US for a reunion of my grandmother's family, my parents announced that we would be moving to Leysin and not returning to Saudi Arabia. They had decided that they would take on the challenge of rebuilding Leysin American School after it had begun to struggle under various leadership changes shortly after my grandparents stepped away. Naturally, we children did not understand. Rather, Marc-Frédéric and I would not see our school mates at the Dhahran Academy, and we would need to learn French, develop new friendships, and somehow 'make it' at the local school. I remember how I looked forward to the future with a sense of trepidation, but also adventure!

After completing my schooling, I moved to the United States for a number of years before returning to Switzerland in 2010. My true homecoming year, however, wasn't until 2015. With my eldest daughter, Nadine, enrolled as a 10th grade student at LAS, my ties to Leysin were renewed and I was invited to join the Leysin American School Board. The school was vastly different from my time spent there as a child. Enrollment was well over three hundred students from over sixty-five countries. Graduates were being accepted at some of the top universities around the world, and alumni had built successful careers—all strong indications of the value of an LAS education. In 2018, Maurizio Fabbri, vice-chair, and my father, chair, both 75 years old, retired from the Board. I then

assumed the chair, appointed Wolfgang Meusburger, long-time member as vice-chair and was able to select two new members. I was delighted that Pascal Stefani, father of Nathan Stefani '18 an experienced international businessman and philanthropist joined the Board, along with Jeff Paulson, formerly head of the Zurich International School.

I quickly realized that as a non-executive chair, Board management had to change. The Managing Directors, my brothers Marc-Frédéric (Head of School) and Christoph (Head of Operations), would work without the daily interaction of their parents. Moreover, I could bring my corporate experience to the table and provide ideas on strengthening governance.

The Board Pivots

And then, as we began, COVID-19 hit. By early March 2020, the world was in crisis. LAS students were sent home early for Spring Break and we quickly realized that they would not be returning for the rest of the year. To support the managing directors, the board organized online weekly meetings and helped implement plans for online instruction, maintaining clubs and Faculty Family activities, and parent and student communications for the rest of the school year. One of our best graduating classes in a decade had a graduation ceremony in the virtual world, excellently executed by the Marketing team. Looking back, I am very proud of our teachers, who taught over seventeen time zones, from Tokyo to Los Angeles, maintaining personal interaction with their students. I recognize the service of all of our staff, many stuck at home, but always ready to come to school when necessary. I am thankful to the Senior Leadership Team, who worked to maintain excellence in education and a positive team spirit under the most difficult of circumstances, and finally, many thanks to the members of the Board for their wise counsel and words of encouragement during the difficult early hours of the pandemic.

The post-pandemic world will be different. The history of earlier crises and the predictions of many futurologists confirm this fact. LAS will also be different. But I see incredible opportunities for growth at this time. Our teachers have added valuable skills of instructing online and the Leadership Team has discovered new approaches to education:

- The world will need young people, who are life-long learners and creative in their approach to life. Perhaps, LAS can move ever closer to ensuring that students can reach their personal potential by ever-stronger individualized teaching.
- We need a deepening of international understanding. Perhaps, LAS can more effectively educate global citizens.
- Societies must address the chasm between rich and poor. Perhaps, LAS can better-educate compassion to take responsibility for the poor and needy.
- The world is suffering from human abuse. Perhaps, our students will be able to contribute to saving our planet.

This is what I feel about the school that has been part of my life from when I was eight years old—a homecoming! 📍

All roads lead back to Switzerland!

1982

Left our family home in Saudi Arabia

1994

Completed St. Maurice Matura Program

1997

Obtained MS in Finance from University of Geneva

1997

Moved to Baltimore

Joined Deloitte

1998

Married Dr. Mikael Eliasson

1999

Moved to Boston, Massachusetts

2000

Daughter Nadine '18 born

2002

Daughter Hannah born

2006

Son Nathaniel born

Moved to London

2010

Moved to Basel, Switzerland

2013

Moved to Zurich

Joined Generali

2017

Joined SwissRe and is now Managing Director covering topics in risk management such as sustainability, operational risk, politically emerging risks, cyber risk, and more, with a large global team

After a divorce from Dr. Eliasson, Stefanie began a partnership with Andreas Krümmel and his daughter Sara (see pictured on opposite page).

Fairmont
LE MONTREUX PALACE



Welcome to LAS Global Connect

Join LASconnect—your alumni platform—
to reconnect with fellow LAS graduates,
act as a mentor to new graduates,
and leverage your personal network.

lasconnect.ch



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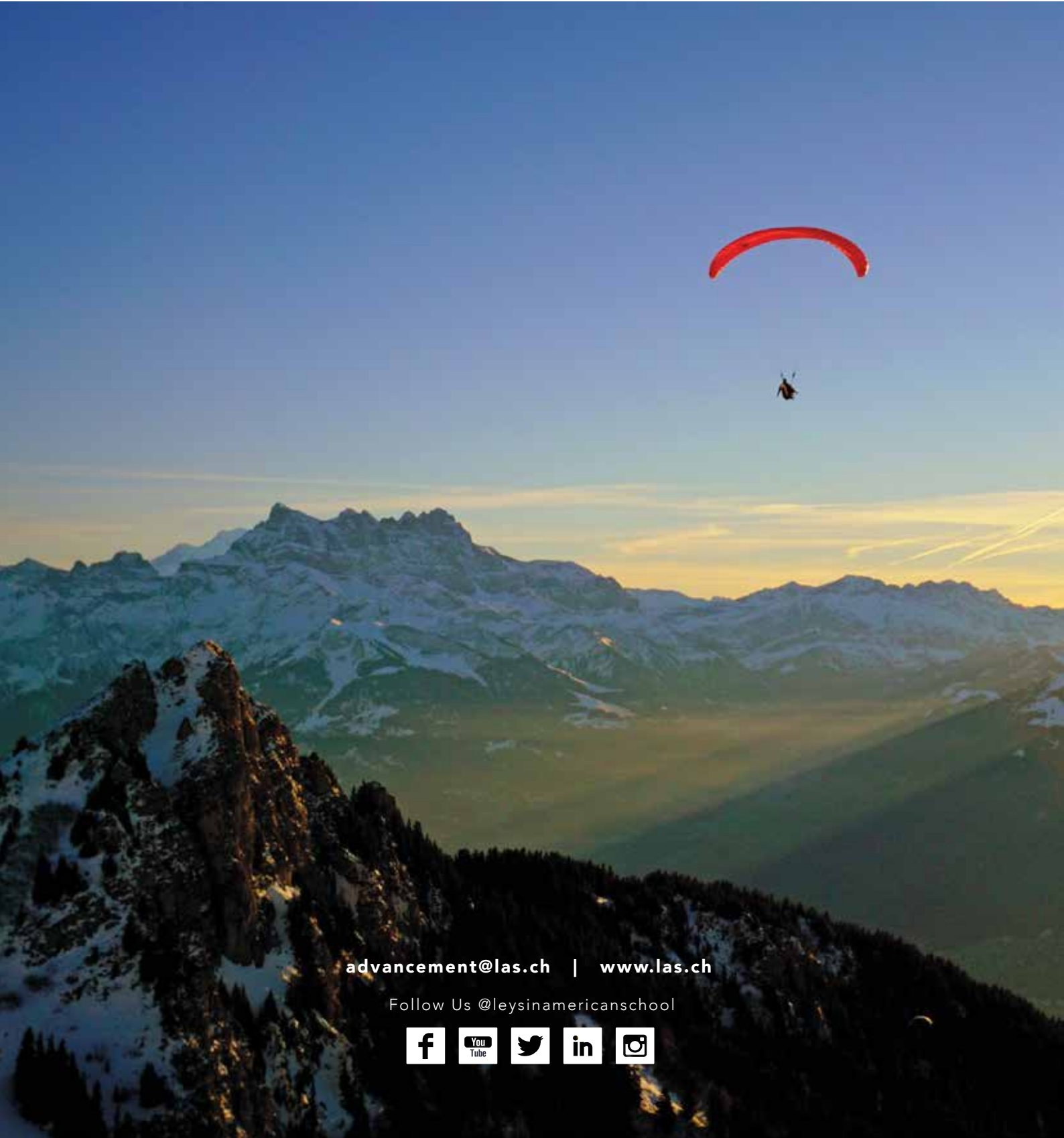


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