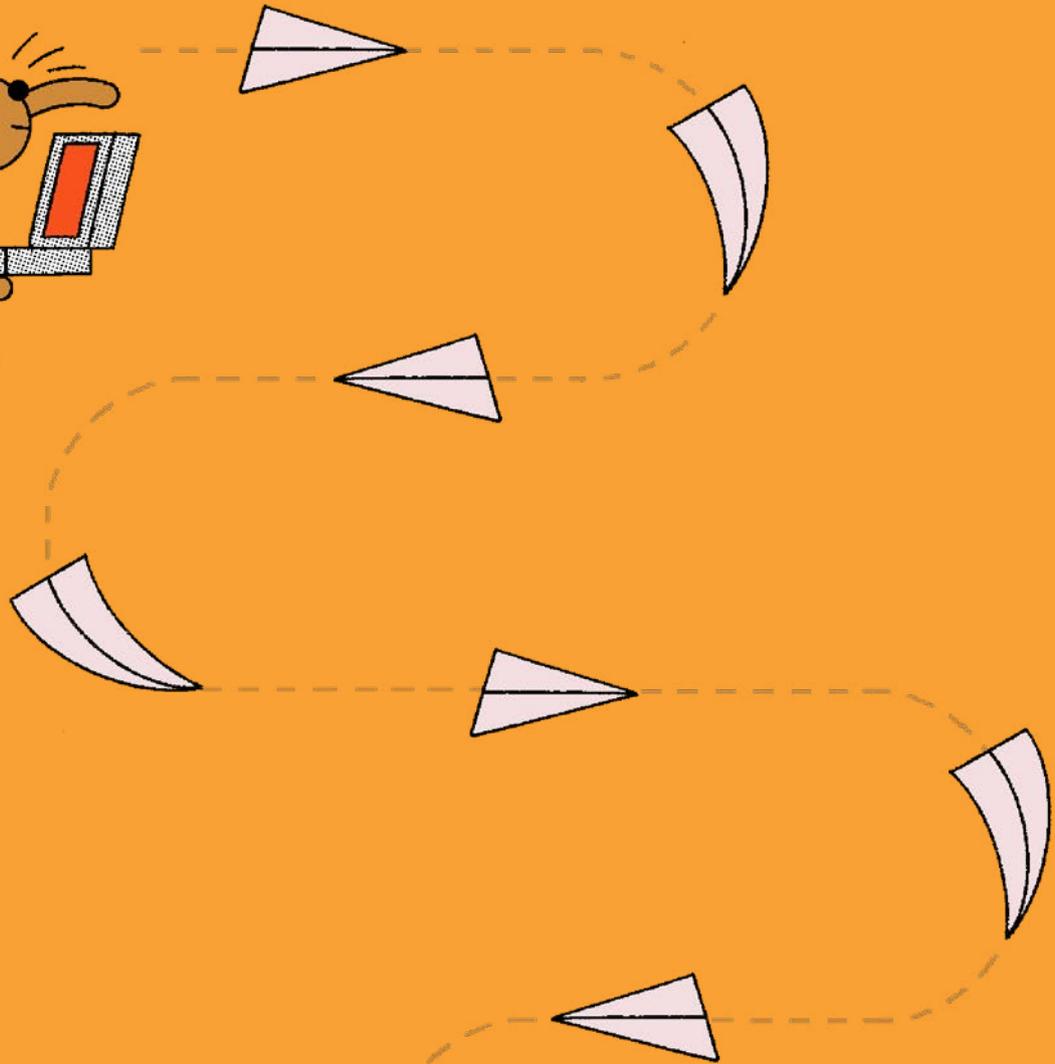
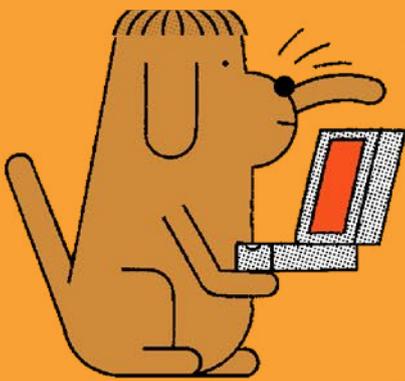


# VOICES



## THE ZIS GUIDE TO MENTAL RESILIENCE

The A-Z of building positive mental health, one of the cornerstones of a successful life.

## FUTURE PROOF

Why academic challenge and support is at the heart of ZIS's strategic planning.

## KNOWING ME, KNOWING YOU

How starting over – in career, country or passion – is an adventure in self-discovery.



# Get your Swiss winter experience

What do you want to check out this winter? Switzerland is the original winter vacation destination. Treat yourself to a unique winter experience. Here are some tempting tips from Switzerland Tourism. [MyFirsttime.ch](http://MyFirsttime.ch)



## Riding with sled dogs.

A truly emotional winter experience: gliding through the Jurassic Freiberg mountains with huskies, appreciating the strength and exhilaration of the dogs – now that's what you call a smooth ride in the far North. The guests are introduced to dog sledding and learn how to lead a team of dogs. After half a day with the pack of huskies, this experience is topped off with a gastronomic celebration around the fire in a teepee.

[MySwitzerland.com/animals](http://MySwitzerland.com/animals)



## The valley of the zip lines.

Riding the zip lines from Charmey feels almost like flying. Experience something new and unique – especially in winter, when the snow-covered fir trees make for an extraordinary backdrop. The spectacular Charmey rope park in the Fribourg Alps is a fantastic playground for young and old alike, from 11 years of age. Gliding from tree to tree on a pulley does not require any previous experience. The local guides give instructions on how the harness is worn, how the safety carabiners are to be attached and which posture is optimal and also safest.

[MySwitzerland.com/action](http://MySwitzerland.com/action)



## Raclette fun underground.

This cave expedition including raclette and wine under the stalactites is one of the most unique winter tours you will ever experience. The Hölloch is the largest cave system in Europe in the traditional Muotatal valley. Even in winter it is possible to enter this mysteriously beautiful world. The conclusion and highlight of the tour is a fine raclette accompanied by Hölloch wine, which the guests can enjoy inside in an unforgettable, underground setting.

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**Switzerland.**

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The opinions expressed in Voices are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of Zurich International School or YBM.

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# WELCOME

Welcome to the spring edition of ZIS *Voices*. Last year put the ZIS Experience to the test: the global challenge required our whole community – at home, at work and at school – to find the resilience and flexibility to come through and thrive. For me, that is the essence of a ZIS education: we build strong individuals who are able to take difficulties in their stride.

Indeed, the impact of that learning – and the whole ZIS experience – can be felt long after students have left, something our wide alumni community demonstrates on a regular basis. We know this because you've told us: in the last alumni survey, 92 per cent of respondents said that their ZIS education prepared them for success in higher education; 71 per cent said it helped prepare them for their career; and 90 per cent said it contributed to their personal happiness and success.

And so in this issue, we hear first-hand from our community about the impact the ZIS experience can have, not just while you are at school, but over a lifetime. On page 31, we asked you to tell us about your experiences 'starting over', from taking on a completely new challenge to making a major career change.

What do those who begin a new adventure later in life have in common? Confidence – and resilience. At ZIS these qualities, alongside plenty

of encouragement to use your talents to their fullest extent, are highly prized. Which is why on page 22 – in the ZIS guide to mental resilience – we hear from members of our community about the importance of developing and maintaining strong mental health, particularly relevant in the current environment.

Of course, there's more to the ZIS experience than just learning – our location has plenty of other advantages, none more enjoyable than access to great chocolate! On page 36, we delve into the world of the Swiss chocolatier, looking at the very best that Zurich has to offer.

Finally, we're delighted to share with you the details of the new strategic plan, which so many of you, in conversations and at events, have contributed to over the past 18 months. On page 16, Director Lisa Lyle introduces ZIS's vision for the future: nurturing students who possess academic knowledge and skills alongside curiosity about and understanding of the world – and a passion that can drive them to make a positive impact.

Enjoy this issue of *Voices*, and I very much hope you'll take the time to tell us what you think about any of the topics raised. I look forward to hearing from you.

**Michaela Seeger**

Director of Community Relations





## STRATEGIC PLAN

### ZIS COMMUNITY HELPS DEVELOP STRATEGIC PLAN

After significant consultation and input from the school community last year, ZIS is launching a new strategic plan.

The new plan takes account of the fact that, today, ZIS operates in a changed environment – one that brings many benefits. It identifies three key areas of focus: Academic Challenge and Support for Each Student; Thriving School Culture and Community; and Local Integration and Global Reach. Together, these three pillars will form the basis of ongoing activity across the school over the next 10 years.

And while there is much work to come, projects are already well under way in each of these areas. There are significant changes to the German programme, including the introduction of a bilingual strand option for Pre-Kindergarten

and Kindergarten in August. Within the existing Lower School programme, time dedicated to German language learning has increased and includes immersion experience in PE and music.

“As always, academic excellence is our number one focus,” says ZIS Director Lisa Lyle, “so the plan looks particularly closely at challenge for each individual student. We are using the full range of data we gather about each individual student, using that information to put the right support in place and ensure we have the right levels of challenge. We are already seeing the benefits of this approach, and I expect more to follow in our results.”

**To find out more about the strategic plan and hear from ZIS Director Lisa Lyle, see page 16.**

## JOHN MATTERN AWARD

### DON BOWDEN HONOURED

One of the school’s first teachers – Don Bowden (AISZ teacher, 1963-66) – is the John Mattern Award honoree for 2020, the award for former faculty voted for by alumni. History teacher Don and his wife Joan, who established the library, were hired by the founding director of AISZ, Dr John Mattern, after whom the award is named.

## CASE AWARDS

### VOICES RECOGNISED

ZIS *Voices* “knows its audience... is comprehensive, appealing, interesting and brings together a very diverse community,” said the judges at the 2020 Council for Advancement and Support of Education Circle of Excellence awards. The magazine won bronze, and ZIS was the only international school to receive an award.

## COMMUNITY

### SUPPORT NETWORK

The ZIS community’s commitment to support each other was in evidence again recently, with a series of events run by the ZIS Professional Women’s Network – part of the Parents’ Association – including an online discussion with bestselling author Gill Whitty-Collins about the benefits of diversity in the workplace.

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ALUMNI SURVEY

**92%**

**of graduates say their ZIS education prepared them for success in higher education**

The survey, which was conducted in April 2020, also found that 90% thought ZIS had contributed to their personal happiness and success.

COVID-19

**ONLINE LEARNING GOES HYBRID**

The ZIS response to new restrictions introduced by Swiss authorities saw the introduction of a new hybrid version of the Continuous Learning Plan successfully implemented during the first lockdown last spring.

The new model was introduced to ensure those students who had to learn from home due to quarantine could continue to join classes remotely while the vast majority of students remained on campus. Measures were adapted to better safeguard the ZIS community while ensuring educational continuity for students.

New rules also meant the school had to make significant changes to its ATAC programme. Activities needed to be grade-level based (to limit contacts and facilitate tracing) or, for classroom-based activities at the Middle School and Upper School, conducted while wearing masks.

With restrictions meaning the usual winter sports were not possible, an alternative grade-level sports programme was developed for the period up until the winter break to ensure that students

remained active, healthy and engaged. School-based activities (including activities such as debates, MUN and art) continued as normal but with all students wearing masks and groups limited to 20. And music classes were also greatly affected, with new rules banning choirs and some instruments in schools. Alternatives offered included, in Upper School band, students playing music by body percussion – clapping, tapping feet, and slapping thighs and knees.

According to Mary Sue Southon, Middle School Maths and Science teacher: “One of the best things to emerge from the recent situation is that students took more responsibility for their own learning. They had to become active learners and take ownership of their learning if they wanted to be successful online. They were more empowered to ask questions and develop their understanding.”

**Learn more about ZIS’s response to the pandemic and the Continuous Learning Plan from Director Lisa Lyle on page 9 and at [zis.ch/academics/clp-in-action](https://www.zis.ch/academics/clp-in-action)**



ILLUSTRATIONS: MICHAEL KIRKHAM

ACCREDITATION

**ZIS TAKES STEPS TOWARDS NEASC REACCREDITATION**

As the longest-accredited international school in Switzerland, ZIS is well used to the NEASC-CIE accreditation process, which encourages school improvement through continuous self-reflection and peer review. Carried out every five years, the award of NEASC-accredited status indicates that a school has achieved high standards of professional performance and is committed to continuing growth and development.

After a successful virtual visit in November, the school is awaiting the final report from NEASC-CIE as the conclusion to the extensive reaccréditation process.

The visiting team, made up of experienced educators from other NEASC schools, had access to recordings of 70 classes in action before meeting representatives of all constituent groups and joining more than 60 classes live online.

The visit built on the ZIS Internal Reflection, which included thorough reviews of all elements of school life, from information gathered through numerous faculty workshops to a community survey. This related to 10 Learning Principles – framed under three headings: architecture of learning; culture of learning; and ecology of learning – and five foundation standards: learning structure; organisational structure; health, safety and security; finance, facilities and resources; and ethical practice.

Based on these, the visiting team will make a recommendation on accreditation status to the NEASC Commission on International Education, which then makes the final decision.

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## INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME A CONTINUED SUCCESS

Students in Grade 11 have been continuing to benefit from the school’s internship programme. The optional programme, which includes workshops for current students to learn the basic skills needed to find a job, such as CV and letter writing and interview skills, benefits students while allowing companies to learn from the next generation. In a recent survey, 95 per cent of students who did an internship in summer 2020 rated their experience as excellent, very good or good, while 92 per cent of employers were very satisfied or satisfied with the ZIS interns.

“It’s very difficult to know exactly where your career is going to go, and even if you do, you might change your mind,” says Christian Heraty, Class of 1994 (1992-94), of consulting firm Geodesic, who hosted alumni on internship in summer 2020. “The most important thing to do is reach out, test, explore and experience. It’s always exciting to be able to give back to your school, but I think we’re gaining more than we’re giving back, so we’re getting the better end of the deal.”

Current Grade 12 students who were on the programme last year were equally enthusiastic: “My time at the company gave me a fundamental insight into what marketing really is,” said one, while another added: “Completing the workshops and the internship gave me fundamental experiences for my future career ideas, for which I am very thankful.”

**If you can offer an internship, please contact Dale Braunschweig at [dbraunschweig@zis.ch](mailto:dbraunschweig@zis.ch), and to find out more, visit [zis.ch/campuses/upper-school/internship-program](https://zis.ch/campuses/upper-school/internship-program)**

**“It’s exciting to be able to give back to your school, but I think we’re gaining more than we’re giving back”**

### SCHOOL CAMPUS

## MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRESSING WELL



After May’s Middle School groundbreaking ceremony, featuring Farid Zeroual, President of the City of Adliswil, Director Lisa Lyle and Ron Steijn, Chair of the Board of Trustees (above, left to right), the start of the next exciting chapter in the school’s move to a two-campus model is developing well.

“Plans for the new Middle School are right on course,” says Rolf Streuli, Director of Administrative Services. “Work on the external structure has now started, and we are on target to open in time for the start of the 2022/23 school year.”

## ZIS COMMUNITY

As part of the school’s participation in #GivingTuesdayNow, a global day of giving in May, **Stefan Killen**, Class of 1982 (1977-82) and **Robert Gottschalk**, Class of 1978 (1973-78) designed a unique ‘Coronart’ poster. Sales of the poster, featuring 26 pieces of art contributed by artists from the Classes of 1973 to 2018, contributed to a total of CHF9,000 raised by community participation. The money will be directed towards projects to support vulnerable people affected by Covid-19 in Adliswil, Kilchberg and Wädenswil.

We were also proud to learn of all the positive contributions made by many members of the ZIS community in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Just one example is that of London junior doctor **Benjamin Rosen**, Class of 2010 (2004-10), who launched the Humans of Covid-19 project in April. Through a series of personal statements, key workers in the fight against the virus have shared their experiences on social media, helping to encourage people to take social distancing seriously. “I hope that by sharing their stories I can show everyone the personalities behind the people who put their lives at risk for them,” says Benjamin, “and that it will inspire anyone who reads it to do whatever it takes to help us fight this pandemic.”

As part of our first virtual alumni event since the pandemic hit, we had the pleasure of spending an evening in May with alumnus **Richard C. Morais**, Class of 1977 (1973-77). We were joined by alumni from the 1970s to 2010s, former faculty, parents, current parents and friends for a live discussion of Richard’s most recent novel, *The Man With No Borders*. Richard is a truly gifted storyteller, and it was fascinating to hear how he explored themes of memory, home, family and forgiveness.

Finally, congratulations to **Pauline Op de Beeck**, Class of 2011 (2000-09), who has been recognised by *Forbes 30 Under 30* for her work with fashion brands to accelerate the move towards a low-carbon economy.

We are always delighted to hear from you and share your updates. Email us at [alumni@zis.ch](mailto:alumni@zis.ch) and read more classnotes in Alumni Links, our e-newsletter.

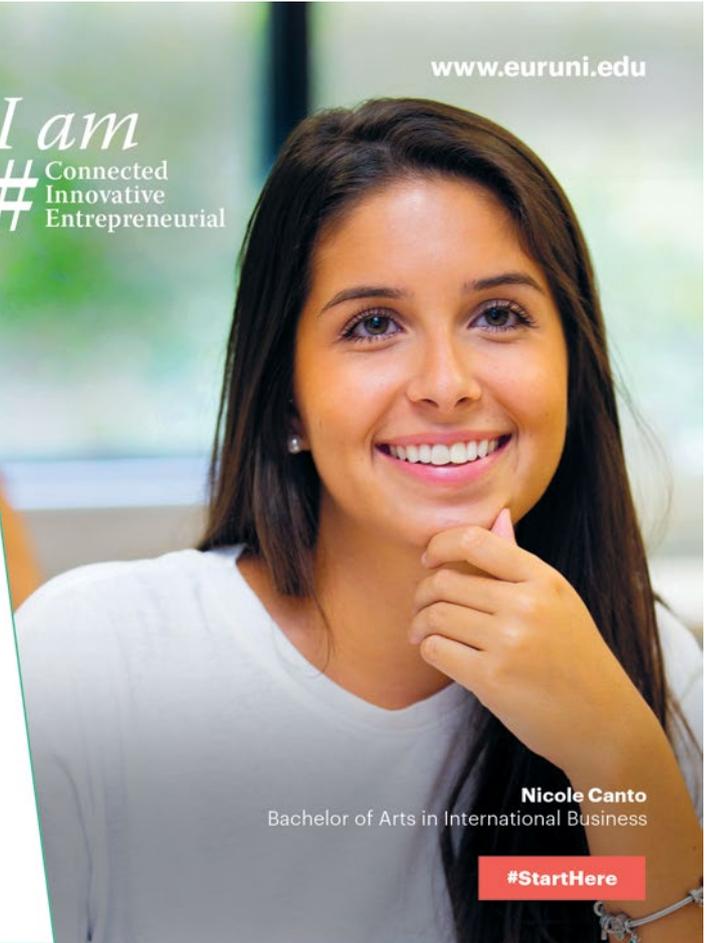
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## THE ZIS PERSPECTIVE

### It's been an extraordinary year, and our community has adapted with resilience and kindness.

We're living in extraordinary times and, during this period of challenge and change, our whole community has once again shown true school spirit. The value of the ZIS Experience and being part of a community that places importance on flexibility and adaptability has certainly been evident.

As our teachers and students found new ways to work, the ZIS Character Standards (open-mindedness, resilience, playfulness, reflectiveness, integrity, fairness and compassion), already a ubiquitous part of school life, were brought to the fore. In fact, I am so proud of how our students showed their character this past year, adapting to change with resilience – and what changes they were! With the swift action and enormous effort of our teachers and staff, we were able to quickly and successfully move our school experience online at the start of the lockdown in March 2020.

With the support of our parents, and our students' willingness to engage, teaching and learning quickly adapted, and, we are proud to report, so did so many other aspects of school life. Our Class of 2020 graduation ceremony went online, Grade 8 students celebrated the end of Middle School with a drive-through certificate presentation, and the Lower School kept connected with online assemblies. Our co-curricular program also went digital with a variety of activities and, more recently, our popular annual alumni holiday apero was attended by a record-breaking number of alums and alumni teachers, all connecting online from the comfort of their homes all over the world.

Through it all, the paramount importance of kindness, gratitude and support to others shone through. We have risen to the challenges posed by this pandemic together, and I am immensely grateful to our community for that.

As I reflect on this period, it seems to me that the longstanding focus at our school on the development of the whole child and the importance of character, critical thinking, adaptability and

leadership is the right one. And that is why these attributes are also integral to our new strategic plan, aligning as they do with the priorities of academic challenge and support for each student, a thriving school culture and community, and local impact and global reach. This is an exciting time for our school and, while transformative, the plan is anchored in our proud history. Your input and support have been key to developing this blueprint for the future – and I would like to thank everyone who has shared their thoughts and expertise.

Throughout all this, our focus on other important work didn't stop, and we have made great progress on the two-hub model with the new Middle School building on the Adliswil campus. It's so exciting to see our vision come to life! The roof and windows will soon be installed, so we are now really starting to see the building take shape.

We are very grateful to the canton of Zurich for its support of this project, which demonstrates the importance of ZIS on the economic development of the canton. Many of our corporate partners, as well as individual community members, have also already recognized the significance of this forward-thinking project by making a number of generous financial contributions, laying the groundwork for our Middle School fundraising effort.

So, when people say to me that it has been an unusual and challenging time as a relatively new Director, I agree – but I am so happy and proud to have been here for it. I knew the day I first walked on to the ZIS campuses that this was a wonderful community, but this past year you have proven it, and I can honestly say that I wouldn't have wanted to be anywhere else.

**“I knew that this was a wonderful community, but this past year you have proven it, and I wouldn't have wanted to be anywhere else”**

Lisa Lyle  
Director



## ON THE LAKE

### Whether stopping off or passing through, Zurich Hauptbahnhof – the iconic railway station – is a destination in its own right.

WORDS SARAH WOODWARD PHOTOGRAPHY ALAMY

At the heart of the grand *Haupthalle* – the main hall – stands Zurich Hauptbahnhof's giant clock, its iconic design by Hans Hilfiker later licenced to Mondaine for their official Swiss Railways watches. It is the station's official meeting point, but it's also a popular spot for visitors and locals to hang out. Guido von Arx, a former employee of Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) who now leads regular tours of the station, sees the appeal.

"Whether it's the clock or the equally impressive and colourful guardian angel – the gigantic 'Nana' by French artist Niki de Saint-Phalle – that watches over travellers, people seem to flock

here to meet and relax," says Guido. "The weekends are a hotspot, but it's busy throughout the week too. Many of them are elderly people who enjoy the company around them as they have a drink."

On average, more people pass through Hauptbahnhof each day than actually live in the city of Zurich itself. That's 500,000 daily passengers for a city with a population of 430,000. Yet many of them, intent on catching one of the 3,000 trains a day, will rush through the impressive building without a thought for its past.

"Of course, if we're late, we just want quick access to our trains. But it is worth taking your time to appreciate this beautiful place," Guido says. "For me, it is like a cinema, a great place to pass through, but also to stop and just sit back and watch."

There has been a station on the site since 1847, when two tracks opened to run the 22km to Baden and back. The current building opened its doors in 1871, but it was very different then. "The beautiful main hall was where the trains came in up until 1933. It's easy to conjure up an image of six coal-fired locomotives all pulling in to the crowded concourse at the same time, with its many ticket booths, porters, inspectors, and passengers rushing to board. Now, of course, it's people only."



**Designer station**

*Below from left:  
The main facade;  
the iconic Hans Hilfiker  
clock; the gigantic  
'Nana' by artist Niki  
de Saint-Phalle.*

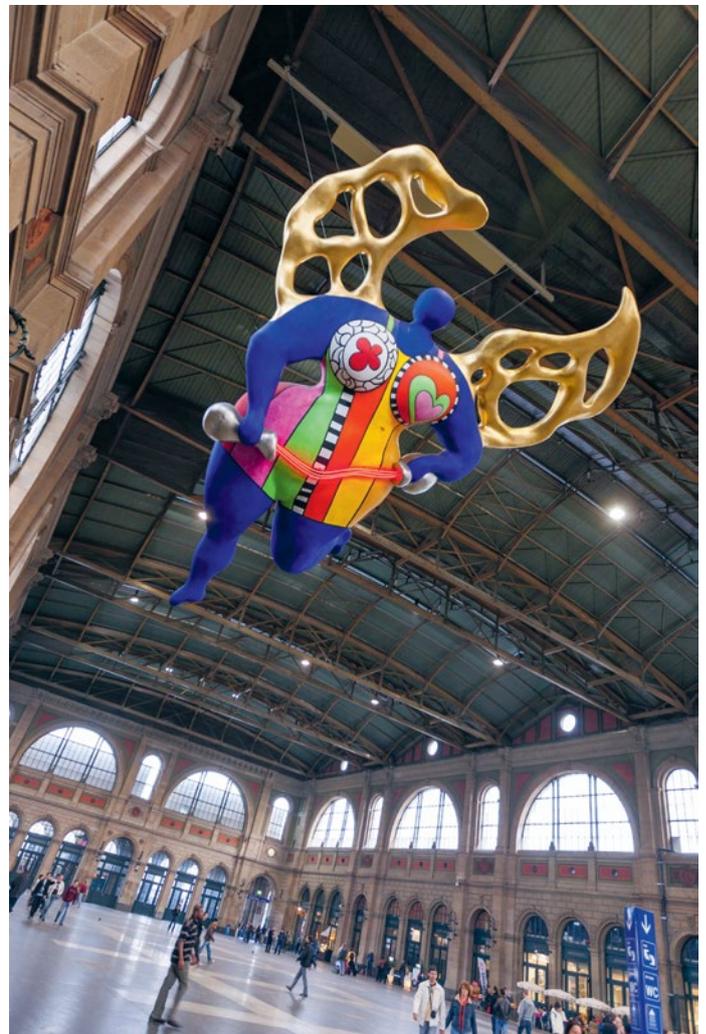
**“It’s easy to conjure up an image of six coal-fired locomotives all pulling into the crowded concourse at the same time, with its many ticket booths, porters, inspectors, and passengers rushing to board”**

And those people are well looked after when it comes to eateries, many of which have their own special history. “Up until 1956, there were three classes of waiting rooms,” explains Guido. “Third class was closed that year and is now the very

popular Brasserie Federal. Fittingly, the style is still utilitarian.” At the other end of the scale, upmarket Da Capo, with its plush banquettes, huge windows and candelabra, is believed to be housed in the original first-class dining hall. “Here you can really feel what it was like to have been a VIP traveller.”

There’s plenty to explore, from the 114 stairs to the rooftop’s stunning views over the city (and to the Alps on a fine day), to a descent to the floors hidden below in the bowels of the station. “People are usually very aware of the shopping mall [there are more than 200 shops, with around 2,000 employees] but, below that, are the administrative offices, engine rooms with the cooling systems, and five underground tunnels.

“More than 1,500 people work here for the train company, and the most common feedback I get from my tour groups is that they didn’t realise how complicated it is to keep the trains running smoothly.” And, as this is Switzerland, running on time.



## AFTER SCHOOL



### Kindergarten teacher Allan Dee wants learning to be fun and fulfilling – whichever side of the desk he’s sitting on.

#### Learning lessons

*Allan says he realised life and learning are inextricably bound together when he began making daily observations of children in the classroom.*

WORDS **DIANE SHIPLEY** PHOTOGRAPHY **OLIVER OETTLI**

Dance. Non-verbal movement. Enough paper, glue and scissors to keep your average five-year-old fully occupied for days. This busy classroom may be buzzing with activity but there is not a child in sight. Instead, with serious focus, a group of teachers are examining the impact of creativity on teaching

and learning. No wonder Kindergarten teacher **Allan Dee** is in his element.

It’s all part of Allan’s lifelong learning journey. “That inquisitiveness is such a natural thing for humans. Right from birth, we want to understand what’s going on around us. We’re in a constant state of learning – with and through one another.

“I always need to be in the midst of my own personal project where I am learning something new, whether it be for education, relationships, fitness or cooking. If I am not engaged with some sort of new learning experience, I feel like my life has become stagnant. I’m always searching for something new to learn. It’s exciting when you are perpetually making new connections to prior knowledge and building new knowledge.”

## “Lifelong learning is such a natural thing for humans. Right from the time we’re born, we want to understand what’s going on around us”

Allan says it all started with his interest in the Reggio Emilia philosophy (which puts exploration at the heart of learning). He says: “I’m passionate about creativity in early-childhood education, in following children’s interests and sparking their curiosity.” He found a presentation by educator Debi Keyte-Hartland about the importance of play particularly inspiring – and when he found out that she taught at Birmingham City University in the UK, he decided to enrol in a Master’s in Education, Arts and Creativity in the Early Years.

That was two years ago. Today, as Allan completes the third (and final) year of his degree, he is more convinced than ever that creativity is essential for early years students – and that teaching creativity is grounded in effective classroom practice. “Often, we, as teachers, set things up within a very tight structure and then overload them with materials. But I’m more interested in the true sense of play, where we perhaps give them just one thing to explore, then follow the children’s interests to create opportunities where it’s very open-ended and about sparking their curiosity.

“If we’re providing children with these opportunities to be creative on their own, that’s when they’re learning how to take control over their own learning.” And that matters, he says, because “for this new generation, creativity is going to be the number one life skill”.

Balancing part-time study and a full-time job has been hard work, and some aspects, such as reading huge amounts of theory, have been tough. “I haven’t read academic papers since I graduated from McGill 20 years ago! Now I’m doing it in the evenings or at weekends and feeling that anxiety again.” He often finds comfort in his cohort, swapping concerns in the classroom and via a regularly updated WhatsApp group. “People have been through some tough times and we keep in touch, we’re there for each other.”

Following stints at international schools in Tokyo, Beijing, Istanbul and Jakarta, Allan settled in Zurich five years ago. He loves the lifestyle and the scenery, but still has a touch of wanderlust, spending school holidays anywhere from Argentina to India to the Arctic Circle – as well as commuting to Birmingham five times a year for the course. He’s not sure whether he’ll continue his formal education beyond a Master’s, but one thing’s for sure: he’ll keep following his curiosity.

## 24 HOURS IN SDE BOKER



### ZIS parent Sivan Fairman shares her guide to the Negev desert in southern Israel #ZIStravels



#### SAMPLE TRUE BEDOUIN HOSPITALITY

The Bedouin rule of the desert is hospitality – you are welcome. Enjoy sweet tea, stories, camel rides, shared dinners around a campfire and a night under the stars. A sunrise breakfast of *Shakshuka* – a traditional ‘mixture’ – is simply magical.



#### HIKE THROUGH THE ZIN VALLEY

The desert has its own beauty, and the Ein Avdat hike is the most gorgeous of all: canyons, sheer cliffs carved by water, a small spring, a waterfall and a pool where we used to swim as children. Eventually you make your way out – on ladders – to a little café.



#### DRINK WINE, EAT CHEESE

A Californian persuaded my kibbutz to start a vineyard, and now there are a number of boutique producers along the main road – it’s a mini Napa Valley. Each winery is unique. My favourites are Kornmehl Farm for the cheese and Boker Valley Farm vineyard for the wine.



#### TAKE A TOUR OF AVDAT

Avdat, which means ‘spring’, is the site of an ancient desert city along the spice route from south Arabia to the Mediterranean ports. You can wander through layers of history and see how the Nabateans, Romans and Byzantines tamed the harsh environment.



#### VISIT DAVID BEN GURION’S CABIN

The vision of Israel’s first prime minister was to make the desert bloom. He retired and settled in Sde Boker, where he hosted world leaders and worked with the sheep. You can visit his humble cabin and witness his quiet life – a unique chance to see into Israeli society.

Share your insider insights using #ZIStravels on Twitter (@ZISnews), facebook.com/zurichintschool and Instagram (zurichinternationalschool)

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# MY WORKING DAY



## Sophia Marti, Class of 2006 (2001-06) on the challenges of running her own marketing business.

### A walk in the park

*Sophia, who runs Marti Engagement Marketing Agency, says that she savoured walks with Blanche even more during lockdown.*

INTERVIEW DIANE SHIPLEY PHOTOGRAPHY KATE PETERS

I'm quite self-disciplined, so my day starts early, usually around 6am as that's the easiest time I can get out for a spot of exercise. I might go running or do a high-intensity style boot camp, or maybe yoga.

Then it's time for Blanche, my lovely fox terrier. I've only had her for a couple of years but she's transformed my working day. As well as the walk into work, I try to take her out for some fresh air whenever I get a break; there's a beautiful forest near our office and we love to spend time there. I never realised what a difference it makes if you step away from your desk, even for a brief 10 minutes. I return with a clearer mindset and, during the lockdown, walks with Blanche became even more frequent and savoured.

I'll spend the day dealing with multiple clients, and that can be tricky as everything can come at once. My approach is to tackle the difficult stuff first; I'm not a person who can live with something hanging over me – it drives me nuts. Some clients

are very sensitive; they want everything to be 100 per cent accurate and I find myself on call 24/7. I'm in the office from 8.30am to 6pm every day – but I might work evenings too.

Many of my clients are international and, without my experience of the international outlook at ZIS, I don't think I would have been able to operate in that world. My parents are Swiss, I'm Swiss, but I speak English almost as my mother tongue. The ZIS culture made me completely comfortable communicating with people anywhere in the world – my international clients don't realise I'm Swiss!

That's not to say I was the most academic person at school, but I don't think it's all about being academically excellent – one way that ZIS prepared me was to emphasise that it's important to find the thing you have a passion for and make the most of that. Don't be afraid to follow that ambition.

It's worked for me: so much of what I do is new ground for me, but I love the flexibility of being my own boss and making my own decisions. I don't have a mentor, but I do consult my husband, who runs his own asset management firm, so we know what we're both going through.

Having your own business is exciting because every day is different and brings new opportunities, but it can also be challenging as you need to be patient and stay motivated. Having ambition is what pulls you through; if you are driven, you can take the lows, move on and fight for what you love doing.



# OUR PLAN FOR THE FUTURE





PHOTOGRAPHY LEFT: KIMARA MEIER

**ZIS regularly carries out a wide-ranging consultation and strategic planning exercise. It's a big undertaking but, says Director Lisa Lyle, the resulting strategy will make a long-lasting, positive impact on teaching and learning.**

WORDS LUCY JOLIN PHOTOGRAPHY KATE PETERS

When Director Lisa Lyle arrived at ZIS in August 2019, she could not have predicted how momentous 2020 would turn out to be. Throughout, Lisa has remained resolute in her commitment to “figure out ways to surface our collective yearning for the next evolution of what the school should become”.

In January, the Board-approved strategic plan was launched. It applies a laser-sharp focus on teaching and learning, advancing the ZIS Experience and setting out the vision for the future.

The plan is the result of almost 18 months of work, including broad community consultation and intense planning and feedback processes, and delivers three key ZIS priorities: to provide outstanding academic challenge and support for every student; to ensure a thriving school culture and community; and to empower learners with local impact and global reach. State-of-the-art campus facilities (on two sites), a robust and sustainable financial model and transparent, collaborative stakeholder communications will support educators as they deliver excellence, underpinned by ongoing professional development. ►

### A sustainable financial model

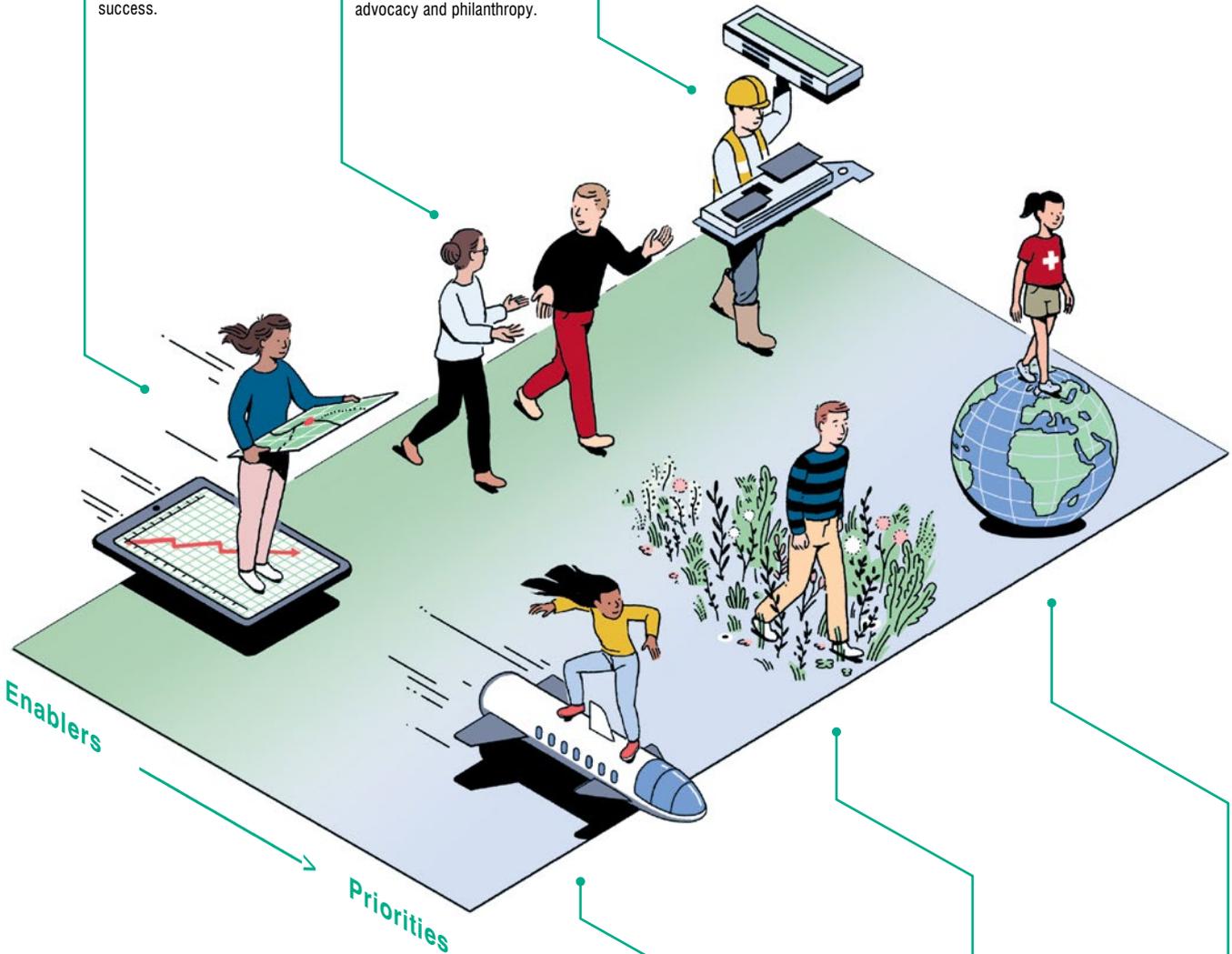
While we are a non-profit organisation, we will maintain a business mindset. We will ensure that ZIS manages its budget in a rigorous yet responsible way, with an approach to student enrolment, retention and staffing that sets the school up for growth and success.

### Transparent, collaborative stakeholder communications

Our community plays a vital role in who we are. We will use all relevant channels to communicate, and welcome input from all constituents. We will also instil a sense of pride in being part of these discussions, with a particular focus on advocacy and philanthropy.

### Excellent campus facilities on two sites

A 21st-century education requires 21st-century facilities. The two-hub model, with the new Middle School a central feature, will enable us to deliver a more inspiring environment and a more connected community.



### Academic challenge and support for each student

We will provide an education for tomorrow's opportunities. We pledge to deliver outstanding teaching, led by well-supported teachers. We will provide clearly defined academic and co-curricular activities, with a strong focus on STEM. And we will draw from data and other insights to ensure that every student's education builds on their unique potential.

### Thriving school culture and community

We will provide an education that builds on who they are, as well as what they know. We will ensure that every student understands the importance of good values, and the power they hold to make the world better. And we will ensure that ZIS supports every child's social, emotional and mental wellbeing throughout their journey with us.

### Local impact and global reach

We will develop true global citizens who recognise the value of their local community. ZIS students will be open to different cultures, backgrounds and perspectives. They will understand the importance of inclusion and equity. And – through our excellent German pathways and local connections – we will help students develop a bond with their community and a desire to support it.

## **“Children benefit most when parents and schools reinforce the same values and standards. Ensuring children develop a strong inner moral compass is vital, and that when things don’t go according to plan, they develop the ability to make sense of that, rebound and move forward”**

The new plan also takes into account the fact that, today, ZIS operates in a changed environment – one that brings many benefits. “For instance, the Board decided to consolidate on two campuses going forward, which will make us a more coherent community,” says Lisa. “It will enable us to find synergies and create a much more cohesive experience for all our students.”

So, what does this all mean in practice? First, “academic challenge and support”. As a non-selective school, it is vital to give every student the platform they need to excel, and Lisa is confident that progress will be reflected in results. “As always, academic excellence is our number one focus, so the plan looks particularly closely at challenge and support for each individual student,” she explains. “We are using the full range of data we gather about every student to ensure that they can become their best self and reach their potential, whatever their interest or passion.”

There will also be a greater focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering, maths) skills for all students and at all ages – reflecting their vital importance in the modern world. “Real-world challenges shape the student experience in and out of the classroom,” Lisa points out. “STEM subjects and skills are at the heart of ensuring our students can approach these problems with confidence and a sophisticated toolbox.”

The second focus is “a thriving school culture and community”. The ZIS character standards – open-mindedness, compassion, fairness, resilience, integrity, playfulness and reflectiveness – are a key element to this approach. Lisa says they will become even more strongly embodied in the school’s daily life.

As a mother of three children herself, she wants parents to be more involved in that conversation, too, whether

informally or via parent education. “Children benefit the most when parents and schools work together and reinforce the same values and standards,” she says. “Ensuring that children develop a strong inner moral compass is vital – that they do what’s right. And that when things don’t go according to plan, we must ensure they develop the ability to make sense of that, rebound and move forward.”

This past year – like no other – has emphasised the need to put a greater focus on social emotional health, and that students need to be equipped with the resilience and flexibility they need to thrive. But Lisa says that even before the pandemic, it was always clear that character and wellbeing were a central element of the school’s ethos, and that every member of the community should feel known and valued.

The third pillar – “local impact and global reach” – puts emphasis on creating individuals who can be world citizens, while feeling at home in Switzerland. She points to the development of German language teaching across the school as a great practical example of ensuring students can integrate in the local community.

“I have a deep love of languages and know how important it is to integrate their learning and teaching. We are monitoring students so that we can ensure they make the progress that we – and they – expect. So, we are taking a new approach, starting in the Lower School by increasing integration of German into music and PE classes and a range of co-curricular activities, and ending with graduating students who can achieve a bilingual International Baccalaureate Diploma.” ZIS is also launching a new bilingual programme in stages, starting with Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten in August and, with the approval of the authorities, going up to Grade 6. ►

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Lisa is also looking forward to exploring more opportunities for students both locally and globally, working with ZIS's corporate partners, NGOs and universities, while also enhancing the school's best-in-class co-curricular offerings. Parents want their children to grow as whole people, she points out, and not just because universities regard this favourably. Students need a deep understanding of core global issues and a responsible mindset with a focus on sustainability, equity and inclusion.

"As parents, we want our kids to be aware of the needs of people around them and to be compassionate," she says. "We have a deep commitment to community, the appreciation of each individual child, and the safeguarding of the experience of being a child. Yet at the same time, we are committed to preparing that child to be a confident participant in the global community."

The widespread consultation about the plan has also enabled all members of the ZIS community to share what they love about the school, and for parents, in particular, to articulate their most deeply held hopes and dreams for their children. For some, that may include Oxbridge or an Ivy League school. But it is important to remember, as Lisa notes, that ZIS parents' aspirations are broad, not narrow. "The ZIS vision calls for all students to 'join and strengthen a global community of citizens, determined to make a difference to the organisations and communities in which they work and live' and to 'develop the intellect, skills and character to become caring individuals and adaptable and independent thinkers'."

**"A strategic plan like this is a gift. It allows everyone – students, parents, the leadership team, employees, the Board and alumni – to engage in conversations, to talk about what they care about and what they love"**

Indeed, ZIS plans to continue the ongoing community conversations, individual interviews and stakeholder surveys that have led to the launch of the plan. "I'm extremely grateful to the Board and the wider community for all their efforts to get us to this point, and I'm committed to measuring our success and feeding that back to everyone. That's because a strategic plan like this is a gift. It allows everyone – students, parents, the leadership team, employees, the Board and alumni – to engage in conversations, to talk about what they care about and what they love," she says.

"We have developed specific goals and key initiatives and will be implementing these over the next five years, and we will begin to see some immediate effects in the everyday life of the school. In addition, we will share progress regularly."

The history of the school shows that it has always been at the forefront of educating students for an ever-changing world, and the strategy ensures it will continue with this tradition. Much of the time, parents, teachers and students want the same things, Lisa points out: her job is to find a way to achieve them. "We want children to have academic knowledge and skills, curiosity about and understanding of the world, and passion that will drive them to have a positive impact. The plan will support us in aligning our efforts to ensure that we get where we want to go, measuring our progress every step of the way." ©

For more on the strategy, visit [zis.ch/strategic-plan](https://zis.ch/strategic-plan)

## STRATEGIC PLAN

At ZIS, we deliver an education for a changing world. We want every student to thrive, and to make their own impact locally and globally. That means discovering how to learn, rather than just what to learn. It means giving each child an outstanding education that focuses on character as well as academics. It means providing the right environment for that learning, from excellent campus facilities to a sustainable financial model that gives us the strongest foundation possible. And – at every step – we will speak clearly about our plans, and collaborate with our community to keep building and growing, together.

**"Academic excellence is our number one focus, so the plan looks particularly closely at challenge for each individual student"**

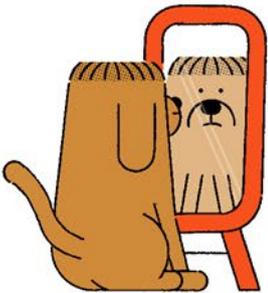
*Lisa Lyle, Director*



# The ZIS guide to mental resilience at home, work and school

**Mental resilience is the cornerstone of a successful life – but can you build it in yourself, your family and your team?**

WORDS BECKY ALLEN ILLUSTRATION JAY DANIEL WRIGHT



Crying every morning may sound like a terrible way to start the day, but for life coach **Suzie Doscher**, Class of 1974 (1970-74), tears are

a vital safety valve – and a healthy response to a global pandemic. “When a friend asked me how I was coping with lockdown, I told her I regularly had a good cry,” she says. “I sometimes started the day feeling uneasy or unsure, but I know it’s important to deal with my emotions so I release them by having a cry. That is how I got myself to a place where both my feet were firmly on the ground, and then I knew that I could handle whatever came my way.”

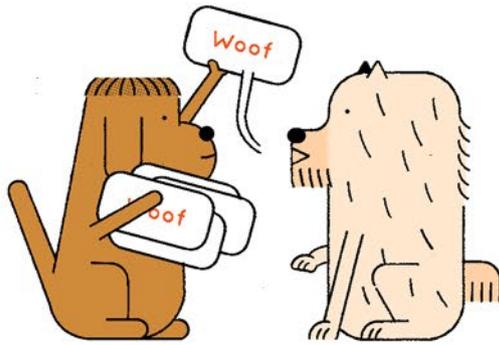
Now, more than ever, our mental health matters. We live, work and study at breakneck speed, bombarded by choice. And with technology – and the recent lockdowns – creating an ‘always on’ environment, boundaries between life and work are increasingly blurred. Clearly, the ability to build our own mental resilience, in mentally healthy work and living spaces, is crucial.

None of this is news to **Brigitte Eigenmann**, Head of Human Resources at ZIS. “Our mental and physical health are connected,” she says. “That’s why we need to take mental health seriously.”

When she started out in HR in the 1990s, workplaces were different. “The economy was booming, we worked our butts off,



# A

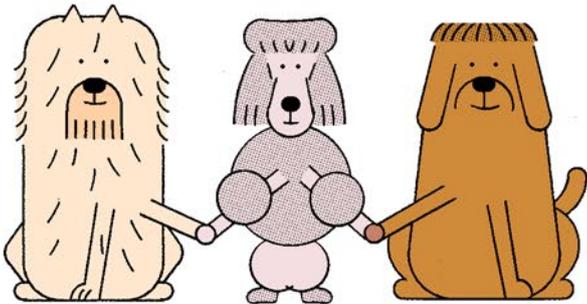


for Active listening

# B

While stress is about 'too much' happening, burnout is 'not enough' – feeling empty, helpless and mentally exhausted. To combat it, follow the 'Three R' approach: recognise (the signs), reverse (the damage, by seeking support) and resilience (build it, by addressing your physical and emotional health).

for Burnout



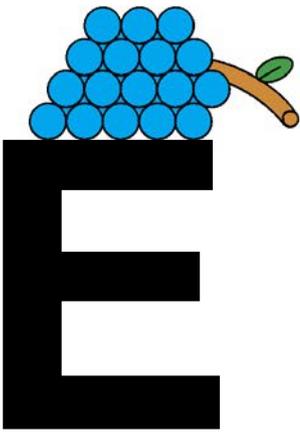
# C

for Community

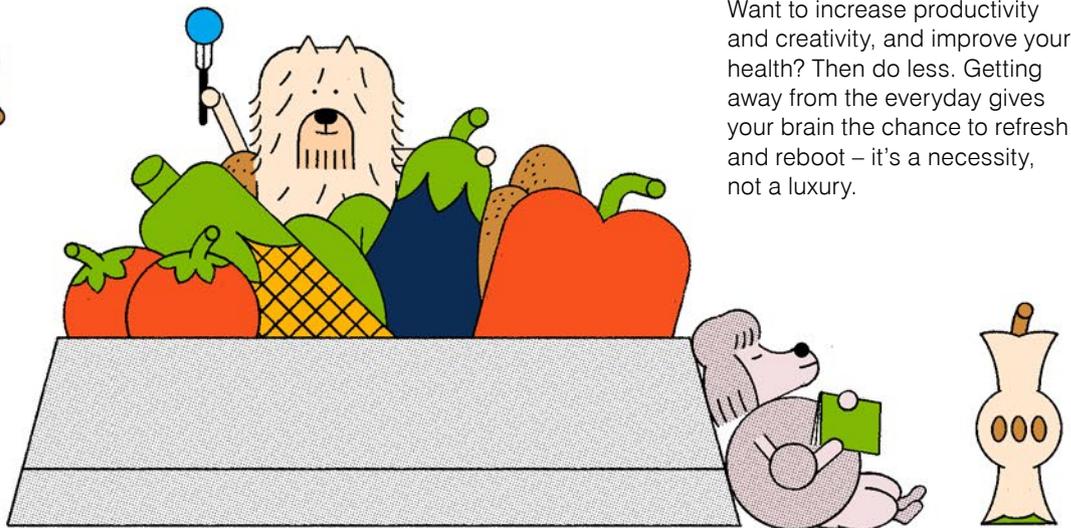
# D

for Downtime

Want to increase productivity and creativity, and improve your health? Then do less. Getting away from the everyday gives your brain the chance to refresh and reboot – it's a necessity, not a luxury.



for Eat well



but there were few surprises," recalls Brigitte. "I knew where my job started and ended. When you arrived in the morning, you knew what the day would bring, and you had long stretches when you could work undisturbed.

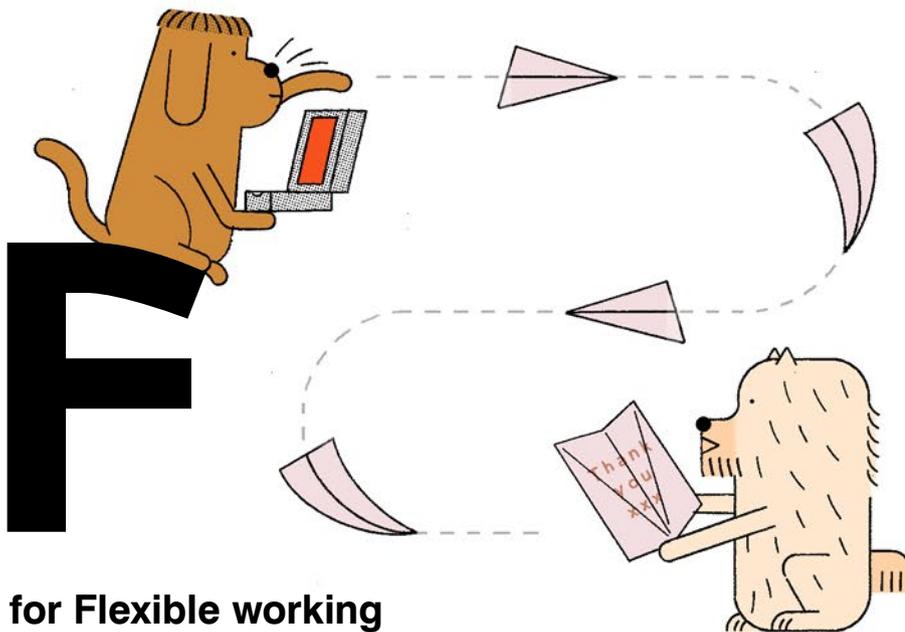
"Today, work is much less predictable. It's quicker, more dynamic and much more chaotic. There are cellphones ringing and social media messages. You're available 24/7, you get calls at the weekend, before the work day starts and after it ends – all these things are really demanding for people."

That impact affects employers as well as employees. In Europe, it is estimated that between 50 and 60 per cent of all lost working days are linked to stress. And, according to the European Agency

for Safety and Health at Work, mental ill-health at work costs the EU economy €240bn (CHF259bn) in lost productivity, sickness absence and direct health costs every year.

The good news, however, is that there's a lot that companies can do to improve mental health in their workplace. Like many good employers, ZIS offers staff programmes, from mindfulness and walking clubs to reading circles and speakers on healthy living. But, warns Brigitte, while these focused events are useful for raising awareness of mental health at work, they are only the first step.

"The more important, deeper and more cumbersome challenge is establishing work practices that don't make ▶



**for Flexible working**

**G**

**for Gratitude**

Be thankful – be happy. Studies show that being grateful boosts physical and mental health: try identifying three good things a day, keeping a journal or daily note of 'little joys', or sending notes of thanks to friends, family or colleagues.

**H**

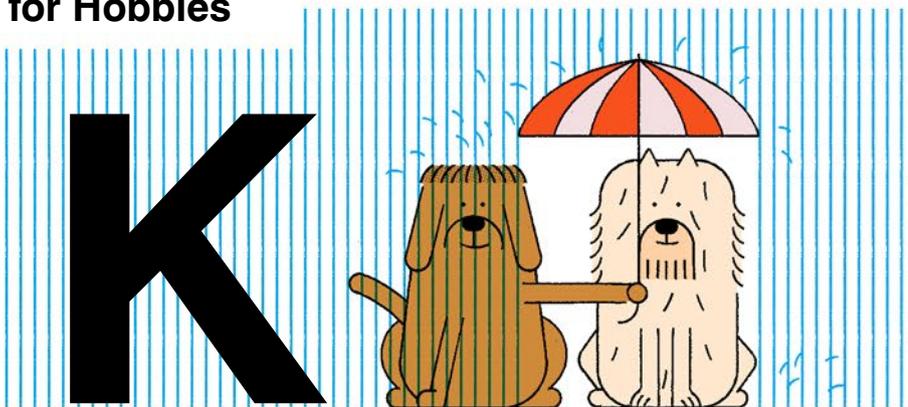
**I**

**for Inspiration**

Finding inspiration, whether by taking up a new hobby or mastering a new skill, won't just improve your career prospects, it's empowering, good for your mental wellbeing... and fun!

**J**

**for Hobbies**



**for Job satisfaction**

**for Kindness**

Research shows that being helpful and kind to others has a beneficial effect on how you feel about yourself, boosting self-esteem. So, get out there and do some good – it's the ultimate win/win scenario.

people sick," she says. "For organisations, that's about values, trustworthiness and long-term planning." It means having excellent leadership, management and communications. It also means establishing clear processes that staff understand and stick to, using job descriptions that clearly define roles and responsibilities, and setting realistic workloads and deadlines.

Brigitte is a firm believer in the benefits of mindfulness, meditation and yoga – practices that carve out time and space for introspection, creativity and slowing down. "Find what works for you – whether that's yoga or Qigong – but learn to be gentle with yourself and aware of what's going on in your mind and body. It's about being present and alert – that does the job for me."

As well as making workplaces healthier, there are tools we can all use to boost our mental resilience, says Suzie, who as a life coach has spent the past 14 years working with individuals and corporate clients. "Coaching is all about helping people become the best version of themselves. It's about acknowledging that things might not always be perfect, but then working to improve things and move forward."

Reassuringly, research suggests that, while we're all born with a degree of mental resilience, it's something we can also learn and build on. "It's an acquired strength and it feeds into self-esteem and self-confidence," says Suzie. "The bottom line is learning how to handle yourself better – that's what gives you

# L



# M

## for Mindfulness

Studies show that practising mindfulness – making a conscious effort to notice what’s happening in the present moment – can help to manage depression, some anxiety problems and feelings of stress.

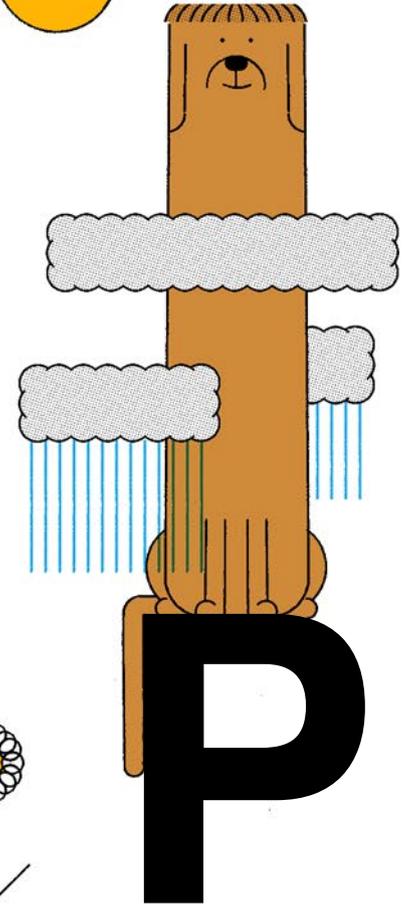
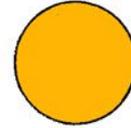
## for Loneliness



# N

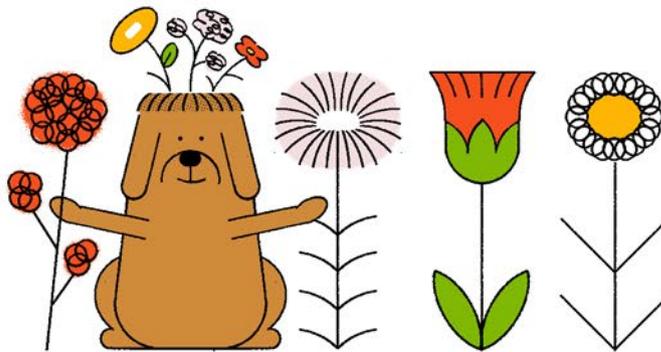
## for Nature

Spending time in green spaces, or bringing the outside in, can be incredibly calming. In fact, studies have found that walking in woods or near trees can actually reduce blood pressure.



# O

## for Openness



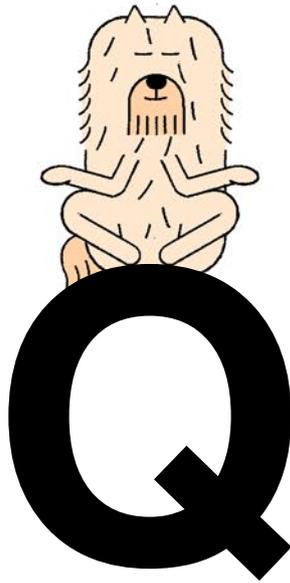
## for Positivity

**“The more cumbersome challenge is establishing work practices that don’t make people sick. For organisations, that’s about values, trustworthiness and long-term planning”**

mental resilience. The most important thing is being willing to change.”

Although altering habits and behaviour takes time, Suzie’s advice is to begin by examining your habits and how you are really spending your time. “I’ll often start by focusing on a client’s daily stresses. Some people, for example, might always be late and can’t bear starting the day by running for the train,” she explains. “So, we work on that, to reduce the stress, take charge of the behaviour and self-care, and then work towards the bigger goals.”

Other people might find it impossible to leave work at the office and have problems switching off, even though they want ▶



**for Quiet**

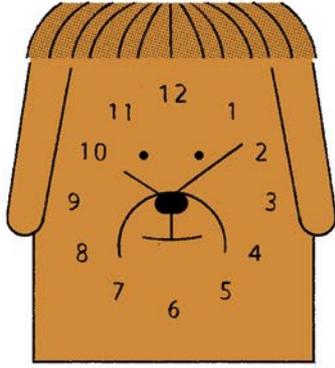


to spend more time with the family. Here, she suggests raising your self-awareness of behaviour patterns. Observe if working on the commute home or answering a call while unlocking the door is helpful, in an attempt to 'leave work at work'. Then focus on ways to instil new habits, such as using index cards to 'park thoughts' until the next day, or other practical tools to help clear your mind.

It's all part of what **Karin Shipley**, ZIS Middle School Counsellor, sees as a rising tide of interest in mental health. A school psychologist, she has worked with children and families for 23 years, and supports ZIS students with mental health issues as well as helping devise the Middle School's

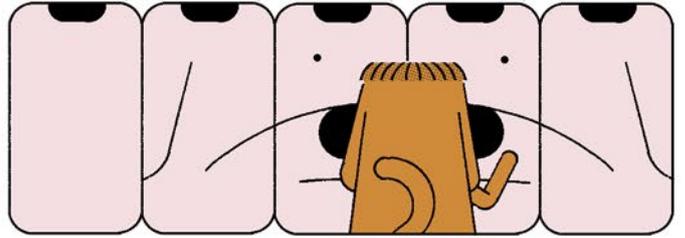
**“The bottom line is learning how to handle yourself better – that’s what gives you mental resilience. The most important thing is being willing to change”**

# R



## for Routine

Order, order! Building a routine you can stick to in daily life may not sound important, but a lack of it can make many of us feel out of control. So, when life gets in the way, make sure you keep a bit of structure wherever you can.

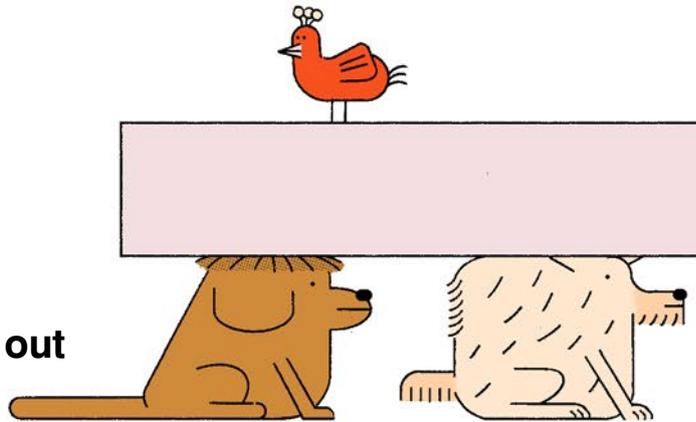


# S

## for Screen time

Too much screen time isn't good for you whatever your age – but balance is key. Rather than ban all screens from your non-work life, keep a usage diary to help you decide boundaries and norms for the whole family.

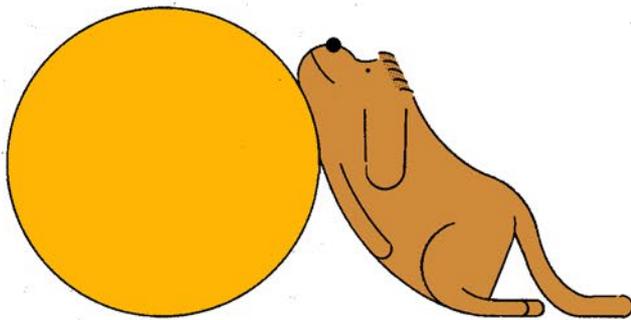
# T



## for Talking it out

# U

## for Under pressure



# V

## for Vitamin D

Sunlight is a great source of vitamin D, the trigger for our brains to release mood-improving chemicals such as endorphins and serotonin. So, if you can, aim for 30 minutes to two hours of sunlight a day.

advisory programme. Working in small, family-sized units, the programme covers topics from stress management and emotional regulation to cyberbullying and healthy relationships.

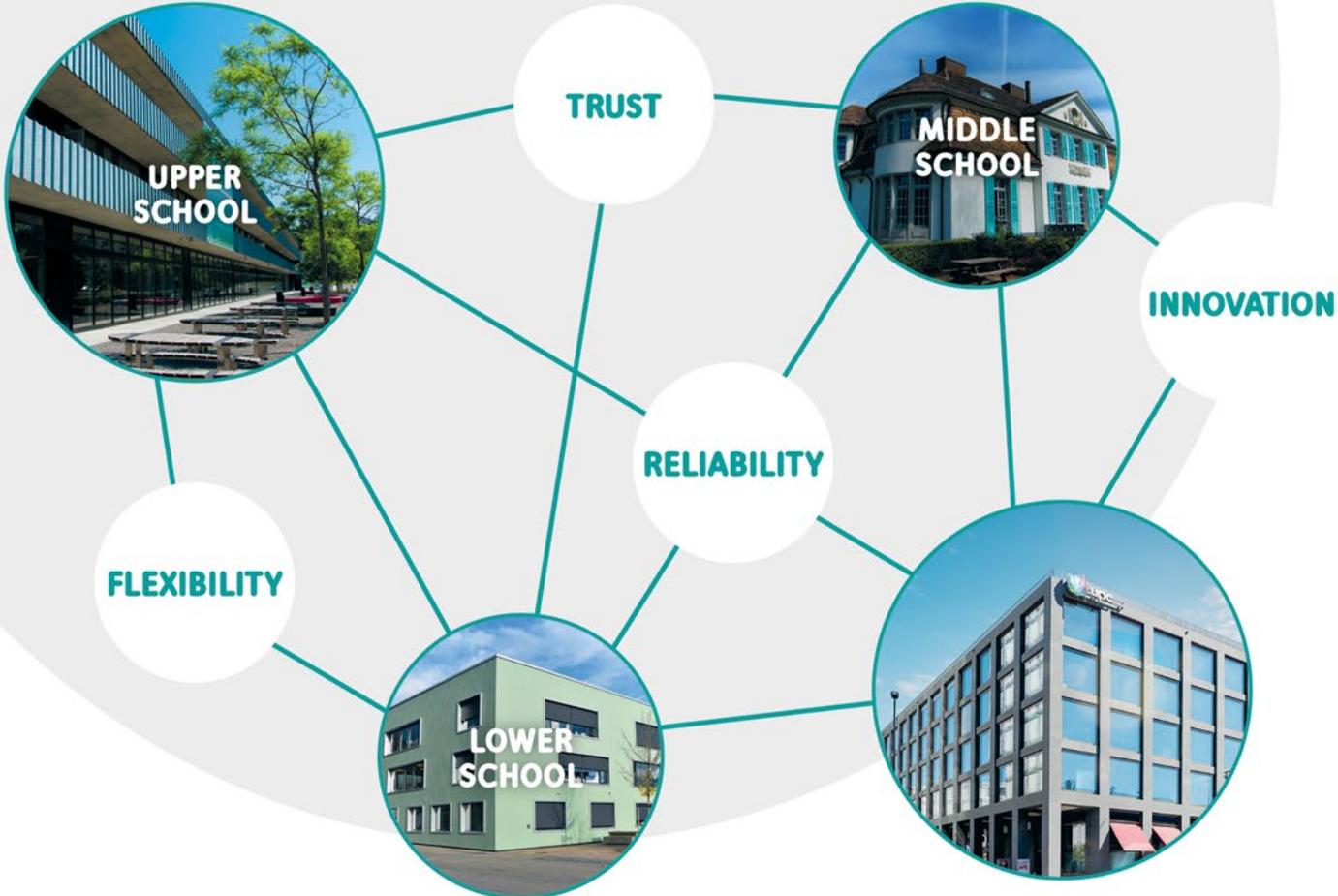
Every student will develop their own tailor-made toolkit of tried and tested techniques, but what's important, says Karin, is that there are daily practices that everyone can use to have better mental health and resilience.

One of her go-to techniques is somatosensory regulation which, despite its technical name, is a simple yet effective way to defuse stress and give the thinking mind a chance. It works through a physical and mental process of grounding – feeling your toes and feet, becoming mindful, using all five

senses to become aware of your surroundings and connecting with the breath.

“It’s the number one tool in my counselling practice when someone is ‘off’ or upset,” she says. “Exhaling for longer activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which is automatically calming. Once your body is more relaxed, you can use more top-down strategies, like naming the emotion or talking to someone about what’s happening – and then you can start problem-solving.”

Another useful tool is identifying heroes or positive role models. “I get really interesting responses from students – one might pick their grandfather while another might go



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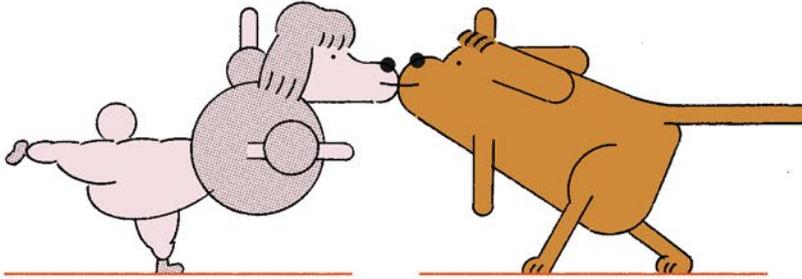
“We thank Zurich International School for the trust placed in us over the past 14 years and look forward to a continued successful and loyal partnership in the future.”

**Marco Quinter, Managing Director Business Services**

# W

## for Workplace support

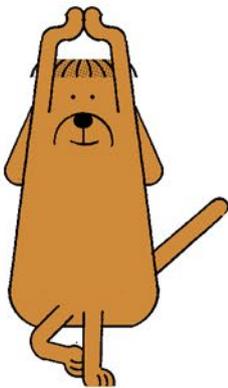
Mental health in the workplace has long been a tricky subject: but creating an environment in which employees feel able to ask for help can have a positive impact on the individual – and the productivity of the whole organisation.



# Xx

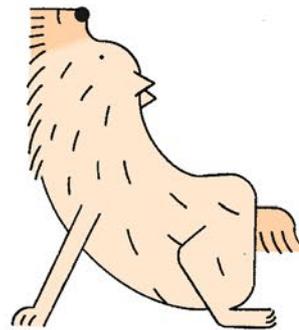
## for Kissing

Pucker up – kissing triggers your brain to release a cocktail of chemicals to ignite the pleasure centres of your brain. It can also lower levels of cortisol, the stress hormone that relieves stress and anxiety. The lips don't lie!



# Y

## for Yoga



# Zzz

## for Sleep

Mental health issues and sleep problems are closely related. There are a range of things you can try to help, however, including establishing good routines, keeping a sleep diary and relaxing away from screens.



**“Another useful tool is identifying heroes or positive role models, and we have powerful conversations about what these heroes would say if they were in the room with us”**

for Gandhi – and we have powerful conversations about what these heroes would say if they were in the room with us,” she says. “It’s a really effective way to build hope and positive thinking.”

Her final piece of advice is a daily gratitude practice. It’s an effective tool that everyone can use and something Karin does around the dinner table with her family. “It helps us pause and reflect together about what has touched us in a positive way that day. Yesterday I was grateful that we are all healthy, that I got to play ball with my four-year-old daughter, for the warm sun and the birdsong.” ☺

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# Know thyself

**Starting over – whether in a new career, new country  
or new passion – is always an adventure in self-discovery.**

WORDS VICTORIA JAMES JOURNALS VICKY LEES PHOTOGRAPHY KATE PETERS

**W**hen you're thousands of kilometres from everyone you've ever known, it's easy to lose yourself – and to find new ways to be you. Which is why starting over – whether at 30, 40 or 70 years young – is as much about discovering more of yourself as it is about seeking new adventures in a new, far-off destination. You let go of your former self and allow change to happen, all the while holding on to what is essentially you. Well, that's the theory. But what is it really like to go on a journey of self-discovery?

**Carlos Nielsen** knows. Five years ago, he swapped 25 years in the boardroom for the classroom, in search of fulfilment, reconnection and, yes, self-discovery. Carlos, who worked in petrochemicals in Switzerland and the United States, retrained at the age of 51 to qualify in the UK as a mathematics teacher. "I used to work in plastics. Now I've been recycled," he jokes.

However, Carlos says that making the change was a "long-term goal: a way to share my passion for science and maths and my experience in industry,

and to return something to the community. As a teacher, you can help and mentor young people, and in middle school, especially, they're at an age where you can really connect and make an impact on them."

There were also more practical considerations. "I was taking 100 flights a year," he says, "so my quality of life was also a big consideration. Teaching gives you a regular schedule – though I was unprepared for what hard work it is! If you have a bad day in a company, you can let it go, skip a conference. But, in the classroom, you always have to put on your best face for your students." Nonetheless, Carlos, who now teaches Math at ZIS's Middle School, has "no regrets. Teaching is very rewarding."

"People make changes for all kinds of reasons," says **Lesley Symons**, Class of 1975 (1971-73), who, after 20 years in senior leadership roles in business, made her own life change and now works as a coach and leadership trainer between the UK and Australia. "It can be unhappiness in a current profession, or frustration with a certain lifestyle. It can be wanting to fulfil a life dream, or to give ▶

**“Doing something out of the ordinary, having an adventure, can be enriching in ways you could never imagine ahead of time. When you can trust the ‘pull’ or ‘call’ of something outside yourself, you will find yourself in a flow where you are living in the moment. This can be immensely fulfilling and peaceful”**

back. Or the change can be forced by circumstances out of our control, such as redundancy.”

But, whatever the prompt, the key to making such a ‘change-journey’ successfully depends on your mindset and belief system, says Lesley, and also your support system and financial situation. “In all change and psychological transition there is a shifting of our identity both for self and others, as well as a myriad of new learnings.”

Sometimes, a change-journey can be exactly that – as experienced by brothers **Mark**, Class of 1971 (1966-71), and **Reid Thomas**, Class of 1974 (1969-74), who embarked on a literal journey of self-discovery, aged 65 and 61. Taking time out of their everyday lives – Reid, an engineer, lives in California, while the ‘more literary-minded’ Mark is based in Mexico – the pair completed the Jakobsweg, a 350km historic pilgrim route through Switzerland from Rorschach to Geneva. They blogged a joyful account of a journey whose purpose was “to rediscover and reconnect with this beautiful country”.

In fact, their appetite for adventure began at the American International School of Zurich (AISZ, predecessor school of ZIS) in the late 1960s. “We’d just go off for a few days,” recalls Reid. “We’d take collapsible kayaks to the train station in Zurich and carry them to the river at the other end – the Rhone, the Rhine, the Danube. Sometimes the expeditions were school sanctioned... sometimes they weren’t!”

“And the ski trips,” adds his brother Mark. “We were ski co-captains at school.” This, it turns out, involved organising competition travel and trips away for dozens of people: hostel bookings, train

reservations – and hair-raising baggage logistics.

“The exciting bit was Bern station,” says Reid.

“You had to switch trains quickly, so we’d be trying to get 15 people off the train, each with two pairs of skis, then across 10 lines of track for our connection. We got pretty good at it.”

“Looking back, it set a pattern,” admits Mark, a feeling of being “an old hand” at international airports and being comfortable with the business of finding one’s way in the world.

The rewards of such self-contained adventures, says Lesley, often depend on where you sit on your life path. “For the young, it’s about seeking new experiences, meeting others and seeing a world that is different from their current one. However, for those in ‘second adulthood’ who are now conscious of the fleetingness of time, it can be about growth, reflection, rekindling, nurturing current relationships and reliving earlier life stories.”

These qualities all resonate with the brothers. Reid recalls “a church where we’d gone to get our pilgrim stamps. There was a woman in there practising her Ave Maria, so we just sat and listened – it was so peaceful and beautiful.” Mark, struggling at the time with his knees and feet, experienced both the value of perseverance – “I’d tell myself, ‘Everything’s going to be OK at the end of the day’, and it always was” – and the simple joy of connecting with strangers. “We were far off the tourist track and had numerous encounters with local Swiss people we bumped into. I enjoyed that an awful lot.”

The trip provided a space to connect more deeply with themselves, each other, a country they have ►

#### **Carlos Nielsen**

*Carlos’s journey of self-discovery took him from boardroom to classroom when he retrained as a teacher at the age of 51.*

# A POSITIVE EDUCATION

1962



CARLO'S GRADUATION, UNIVERSITY OF BUENOS AIRES



1962-1997	2001 - 2006 2012 - 2016	1998 - 2001 2006 - 2011 2017 - 2020



IBM was my first internship while I was studying at the university. The plant in Argentina was the sole producer of dot printers in Latin America. The printers were infamous because they were very noisy.



MÜRREN, SWITZERLAND



WHEN CARLOS RECEIVED HIS TRAINING CERTIFICATE, HIS STUDENTS SENT THEIR CONGRATULATIONS!



2017 X

Teaching was a long-time goal, a way to share my passion for science & maths & my experience in industry - & to return something to the community.



CASINO NIGHT WITH GRADE 8 AT ZIS

SUNDAY  
MARK  
JAKOBSWEG

Reid & Mark



Day 9 - Mapped  
walk. Bunches to  
Flüeli - Ranft



- Day 10 - Flüeli - Ranft - Brüning
- Day 11 - Brüning - Ringgenberg
- Day 12 - Ringgenberg - Mürren
- Day 13 - Mürren rest day
- Day 14 - Rest day - Blumenstein
- Day 15 - Blumenstein - Schwarzenberg



Day 12 - on the road to visit St Beatus

Day 12 - View from our hotel in Mürren



Day 19 - Romont - Moudon  
... and then more fields. While beautiful today's walk was mostly field.

Being able to forget normal life for weeks on end, walking for hours and just letting the mind wander is incredible.



**“For the young, it’s about seeking new experiences, meeting others and seeing a world that is different from their current one. However, for those in ‘second adulthood’, conscious of the fleetingness of time, it can be about growth, reflection, rekindling, nurturing current relationships and reliving earlier life stories”**

**Mark and Reid Thomas**  
*The brothers completed the Jakobsweg, a 350km historic pilgrim route through Switzerland from Rorschach to Geneva.*

rarely visited since their expatriate childhood, and with the qualities fostered by AISZ, says Mark. The school “was foundational for us, not only individually, but as a family”, he says.

The question as to what spurs people on to make these life-changing decisions is behind the research – as yet at a very early stage – by a team of academics at the Psychology Institute at the University of Zurich. “Our participants report a very high motivation to make the most of their life,” says the university’s senior research associate Dr Mirjam Ghassemi Tabrizi, “suggesting that this motivation is widespread. We assume it is the result of our zeitgeist.

“We do know from literature that most people pursue this goal to be happy. Making use of given possibilities could be – in the eyes of many – a way to achieve this goal of leading a happy and fulfilled life. Indeed, in our society, there is a strong emphasis on self-actualisation and personal striving.”

Self-actualisation is not an act of changing who you are, but of fully becoming yourself, employing your talent to its fullest potential. And that’s a lifelong process. “There’s no big right-hand turn, left-hand turn,” says Mark, thinking back on his schooling in Switzerland, his recent month revisiting the country, and the decades in between. Those years have been “a continuation of what we learned in Switzerland, about being comfortable in different cultures”.

“The attention we got from the teachers was incredible,” recalls Reid of his schooldays. “Their concern about how we were learning, what we were

doing, trying to make sure that we were growing as young adults, was fantastic.” And, yes, he and his brother Mark are already planning their next trek across Switzerland. “Having walked east to west,” Reid says, “we’d love to go north to south, Basel to Chiasso, over the Gotthard Pass. We’ll dig into the history. It won’t just be one foot after another!”

Looking back, Carlos, too, sees how education was always present, even during his corporate years. “When you’re working, you’re both learning and teaching. When you’re raising a family, or in a company, a team, a boardroom, there’s always some education happening there, too.” Lesley believes that her journey to helping others realise their potential is deeply rooted in her own schooldays at ZIS. “That gave me the confidence to face changes; it showed me there are many ways to get to an outcome,” she says. “And most importantly, it instilled confidence that I was OK and could achieve things.”

This desire to make the most of our life and utilise all our potential is almost universal. “Sometimes when I meet parents of my students – some of whom are also my former colleagues – they’ll say, ‘What a great thing you’ve done, I’d love to think about doing something like that’,” says Carlos. He admits he feels privileged that, as a teacher, he can provide such a sounding board for his students early in life. “I tell them that I’m proof you can change geographies, you can change careers, you can make a big switch at even a relatively late stage.” ©

**To read Mark and Reid Thomas’s account of their journey on the Jakobsweg, visit [jakobswegswitzerland.com](http://jakobswegswitzerland.com)**

**S W E E T  
D R E A M S  
A R E M A D E  
O F T H I S**

**Switzerland has long been famous for its chocolate. But, today, Zurich is taking the art to new heights – with a thriving craft chocolate scene that’s the envy of the world.**

WORDS MIKE MACEACHERAN ILLUSTRATION JOOST STOKHOF



**B**itter absinthe is not the sort of thing you'd expect to find in a chocolate shop. Neither is powdered gold, for that matter. But while tradition often looms large in Switzerland, in Zurich's playful chocolate emporiums, the merging of two distinct worlds has resulted in something new. A kind of magic.

But then anyone who's ever had a ruffled nest of chocolate (filled with the cult medicinal wormwood spirit) at Confiserie Honold in the city's Old Town knows this. Here, anise-flavoured pearls can be found under bell-shaped cloches at the wonderfully unmodernised atelier, alongside unexpected truffles such as Caipirinha cocktail and others decorated in edible gold.

There is a sense of being spirited back in time here, and yet this is chocolate firmly in the now – a clear sign that Zurich's chocolatiers are taking the art of chocolate into new realms.

If the perfect city consists of two overlapping circles, one denoting culture,

the other food, Zurich is one of those rare places that occupies the sweet spot in the centre of the Venn diagram.

Local tips come laden with calories. Lines snake outside chocolate houses, not museums (even if the Kunsthaus is deliciously good). In fact, Zurich is a living encyclopedia of tempting chocolatiers and coffee houses in which to wolf down bean-to-bar treats and exquisite truffles.

The reason is simple. More than anyone, the Swiss love their confectionery. They lead the way globally in terms of national per capita consumption of chocolate – at nearly 9kg per year – while a third of national production is consumed in the country.

There's a heartwarming appreciation of it in Zurich too, and from Paradeplatz to the Niederdorf you may well catch, wafting from the doors of shops, a whiff of cinnamon, raisin, caramel or cocoa. This is one of the delights of Zurich, and something you can't get from a guidebook or photograph.

None of this seems to faze alumni parent Milan Prenosil, Chairman of the Board of Directors at Confiserie Sprüngli, the city's longest-running manufacturer, in business since 1836. The sixth-generation chocolate boss has his attention firmly focused on the reactions of customers, regardless of the legacy on his shoulders.

"Walking through our doors gives you an intense emotional feeling of *erlebnis*, or experience," says Milan. There is no bluster to this claim, only insight into the responsibility that all Zurich's chocolate makers have. "This is an experience only available in Switzerland and – without sounding arrogant – it's difficult not to stumble upon us when you visit Zurich."

At the commercial heart of Bahnhofstrasse, beside a tram terminus and sandwiched between Swiss banks and haute-couture ateliers, Confiserie Sprüngli is located at the nexus of city life. It is almost designed to put temptation before you like a banquet. ▶



**“The longer you spend in Zurich, the more you realise there are brands for every mood and occasion. In some ateliers, the craft is taken so seriously it takes more than a year to perfect one single truffle”**

“I remember my first visit to a Sprüngli with my uncle when I was five,” recalls Milan. “It’s a moment that’s always stayed with me – that raw emotion. You can bring innovation into chocolate, as well as sustainability and all sorts of processes, but, ultimately, it needs to be about a feeling.”

What Milan really means is that, while Swiss chocolate needs to evolve, it also needs to maintain a balance with centuries of craftsmanship. A case in point: the manufacturer’s latest

sweet is a true world-first, yet one that sounds like it has always had a place on the shelf. It goes by the impressive name Grand Cru Absolu, and is made with only two ingredients: intense, single-origin chocolate and cacao juice extracted from the fruit. Nothing else.

“There’s long been a pioneering sense of commerce in Zurich, and that’s put the city on the map,” says Milan. “A liberal business spirit gave Zurich an incredible financial boost and this was the perfect background for entrepreneurs to grow.

That enabled chocolate artisans like us to take full advantage.”

While Sprüngli is responsible for new products as much as it is spinning a sticky web of nostalgia, newer chocolatiers can play faster and looser with the rules. One such new face in the mood for change is La Flor, which eschews industrial manufacture for a low-key studio in Alt-Wiedikon. As well as touting traceable and transparent beans from single-estate farms, it regularly partners with other Zurich startups, from beer to gin to sausage producers, and shares co-working space with sustainable food projects – in an open-plan laboratory dubbed DasProvisorium. It has also formed a global chocolate club, with limited-edition bars for subscribers. If tomorrow’s chocolate lovers need to find a home, it might well be here.

The longer you spend in Zurich, in fact, the more you realise there are brands for every mood and occasion: head to Teuscher for Dom Pérignon truffles, or drop into Läderach for pick-and-mix









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sugar. It is, as Dieter puts it, a much-needed antidote for a world drowning in diabetes and obesity. “This is a real threat to traditional industry,” says Dieter. “In 10 years’ time, this is how the majority of chocolate will be produced. What companies are doing today? It’s so outdated.”

On Schlüsselgasse, two streets behind Chocolat Dieter Meier in the shadow of the Church of St Peter, Max Chocolatier has an entirely different feel. The idea for its chocolate isn’t born from science or from the next big thing. It is born from the love of a family.

The atelier is named after Max König, the owner Patrik’s son, who was born with an additional chromosome. “At all levels, and in all its expressions, this is a project of the heart,” says Ramona Odermatt, general manager of Max Chocolatier. “Max embodies what his family seeks to stand for with their chocolate: honesty and contentment. Coupled with a little stubbornness, and lots of diligence.”

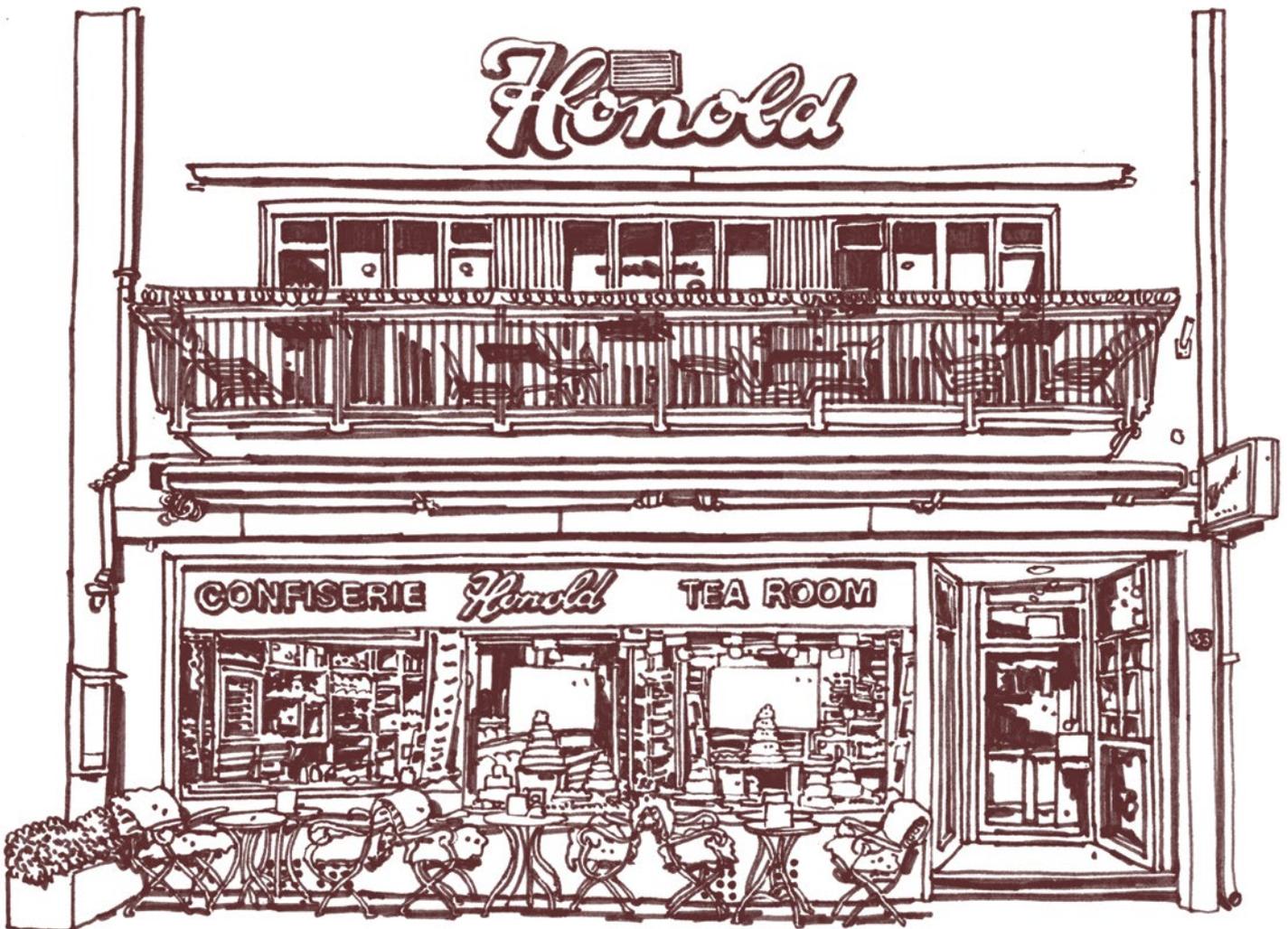
**“People have started to select their chocolate with care and want to know how it is produced. This trend is appreciated by a small brand like ours that cares about nature, celebrates craftsmanship and doesn’t mass produce. Less is more, as they say”**

Now the family-run chocolatier is bringing the same approach to its latest range – beautiful vegan and dairy-free chocolates. Far from a gimmick, they could become a sort of badge of honour for those in Zurich who want to live well and long.

“We all know we only have one planet to live on,” says Ramona. “People have started to select their chocolate with care, to ask more questions, and want to know how their chocolate is produced. This trend, of course, is appreciated by a small

brand like ours that cares about nature, celebrates craftsmanship and doesn’t mass produce. Less is more, as they say.”

In Zurich, it’s possible to spend hours debating the nature of chocolate in all its many forms. Here, it is an obsession – a way of life – and as much about the past as it is the future. Chocolate hasn’t become Switzerland’s most beloved export by accident, but because it continues to evolve. Hang out in the city long enough and some of this magic might just rub off on you. ☺





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### The strategic thinking that put character development at the heart of co-curricular activities.

Proud, but not complacent. That was the starting point of last year's full review of the co-curricular programme of activities that we offer at ZIS – and the outcome is improving the way we do things.

Co-curricular offerings are a core part of a ZIS education, and we place great emphasis on the way the activities help our students grow. We know that co-curricular programmes need to be about more than just playing a sport, acting on a stage or singing in a concert – as wonderful such individual experiences are. A team trip to Frankfurt to play soccer, for example, offers great opportunities on the pitch, but we must also focus on developing core skills and behaviour off it.

As well as developing those soft skills, we are looking for lasting impacts around character development. This is important when we consider time out of class for both students and teachers, so it's important that we focus on where we can have the most effect.

One example was the tradition at the beginning of the school year for students from Middle School to travel to the mountains in the south of Switzerland for a team-bonding exercise. It could be argued that, even though the students enjoyed the trips, the impact did not match the resources required.

Instead, we introduced Mission Week in 2019, now an annual event, with local activities run primarily by ZIS teachers to encourage relationship-building between students and staff. We found we did not need to send students away from school and home to build a sense of belonging. I'm looking forward to seeing how the programme evolves over the coming years as we continue to develop ways to do things differently.

In Grade 8, for example, there was a specific focus developed around group dynamics – leadership, group cohesion and group productivity. The goal was for students to learn about themselves and others by applying group dynamic theory. At the end of the week, students were asked what they had learned, to try

to measure the impact of the experience. One student summed it up: "I really worked on trying to contribute in a meaningful way, and I learned that we can all work together really well in a group if we communicate."

Of course, Covid-19 intervened, and earlier this school year the focus was on home-based activities delivered online. But, thanks to our earlier strategic thinking, this simply speeded up the need to do things differently – and better. We are learning what works remotely, and what doesn't, often driven by suggestions from teachers, parents and alumni as well as the students.

We will continue to identify 'core' or 'signature' opportunities that all students should experience, and which embody the pillars of the new strategic plan in terms of our emphasis on creating individuals who can be global citizens, but who are at home in Switzerland. When restrictions are lifted, our sports teams will travel and compete against other schools, our musicians will participate in international musical gatherings, and our children will go to other countries for cultural appreciation and learning. But we will more clearly define the purpose and outcomes of large group trips.

The unwelcome experience of the pandemic has given us all the opportunity to pause and reflect on the way we live our lives. Meanwhile, we are building on plans already under way to refine a sustainable co-curricular programme focused on each student's development. As well as making sure everybody enjoys the activities, of course!

**“As well as developing soft skills, we are looking for lasting impacts around character development – important when we consider time out of class for both students and teachers”**

**Nick Bentley**

Director of Student Life



## PERSPECTIVES

# Remote working has become the new normal for many of us, so how do you maintain team spirit when your people are no longer in front of you? We asked the ZIS network.

WORDS PETER TAYLOR-WHIFFEN ILLUSTRATION MICHAEL KIRKHAM



**Isabel Almiro do Vale**  
Global Marketing and Strategy Director, Dow  
*Current parent and Trustee*



**Carl Hollitscher**  
Head of Institutional Business (AT & CH), Franklin Templeton  
*Current parent and Trustee*

Building remote team spirit is about ensuring everyone feels they add value. It can be something as simple as making sure everyone on a video call has their camera on, to avoid the temptation to multitask and ensure you're giving – and receiving – full attention. And after big meetings, I delegate tasks to smaller teams of two or three; this fosters collaboration and maintains their connection with each other.

It's also important that you have processes that enable projects to advance. This means good communication between line managers and their teams to check individuals are OK – professionally and personally – and encouraging them to come to you with any issues.

Remote working, particularly from home, can blur lines between professional and private lives, so we have set breaks, including a lunch hour. It enables home workers to have lunch with their families, for example, or colleagues to take a break and chat without feeling guilty.

It's good to use humour, too – it's a great decompressor. And I'm always keen to get everyone involved in celebrating achievements.

Recently, one of our team members celebrated 30 years' service, so we asked everyone to come on a Zoom call wearing a hat including a feature that reminded them of this colleague.

It gave everyone a chance to pay tribute in a really fun, informal celebration. And at 5pm on a Friday we have digital drinks.

All of these things create team spirit by giving everyone a sense of purpose and of enjoyment.

Remote working needs to reflect interactions you'd have in an office. If you don't achieve that, it has repercussions on the way people work.

A high level of engagement is vital – everyone needs to feel they belong, and I try to make contact with each team member at least twice a day. But obviously you don't see if people are around or on the phone as you would in an office, so a quick note via electronic conversation is always necessary to check their status. I don't expect everyone will instantly be free to talk.

It's important to be aware of everyone's different circumstances. As long as our staff meet their deadlines, it doesn't matter when they work, so they don't need to window-dress what they're doing. Some team members might want to have some spare time during the day to look after a young family, but work in the evenings.

Others might live alone and have no other interaction with anyone, so I'll regularly check in on them – not to ensure they're working, but just to make sure that they are OK in general, even if there are no work matters to discuss.

Camaraderie is important. As well as the normal remote work communications, we have a separate, informal Microsoft Teams chat where rules are more relaxed and people can chat about other things, such as things in their private life that they might want to share.

We also encourage virtual social gatherings outside work time, where we just sit and chat as if out for a drink – it's nice to see each other relaxing. That builds bonds and leads to better team performance.





**Aly Sparks**  
Global Head of Talent  
The Adecco Group  
Current parent



**Emma Molvidson**  
Global Head of Investigations  
& Employee Conduct Risk, UBS  
Current parent



Create water-cooler moments! They're a vital part of the working day, the opportunity for downtime, a chance to socialise. I've begun scheduling meetings for 50 minutes instead of an hour. Give your teams those 10 minutes' breathing space just to get up, pop out, walk around – as you would in an office.

We have a lot of Zoom meetings with a dedicated focus to get something done, but we also build bonds through 'white space meetings', which encourage a real free-flow of ideas and conversations. It is a working get-together but with the freedom to discuss anything.

The key to successful team-building is empowering your staff and, when working remotely, this may mean changing your leadership style. Constantly checking on what everyone's doing can seem overbearing, micromanaging and not trusting people to get on with it themselves. But building mutual trust makes remote working a great leveller – it encourages more free-flowing conversations, both ways.

Positivity makes a big difference. If someone impresses, let everyone know, and encourage staff to praise each other. Video communication is the most personal alternative to being with someone, and the most effective way of sharing that positivity – but it also gives you more chance to pick up cues if there is a problem.

Socially, it's great to schedule a coffee or a beer with everyone after work, but be mindful that everyone experiences life differently. Just as you need to understand how they work best, you also don't want to put pressure on them by demanding they join in the drinks if the time isn't right for them.

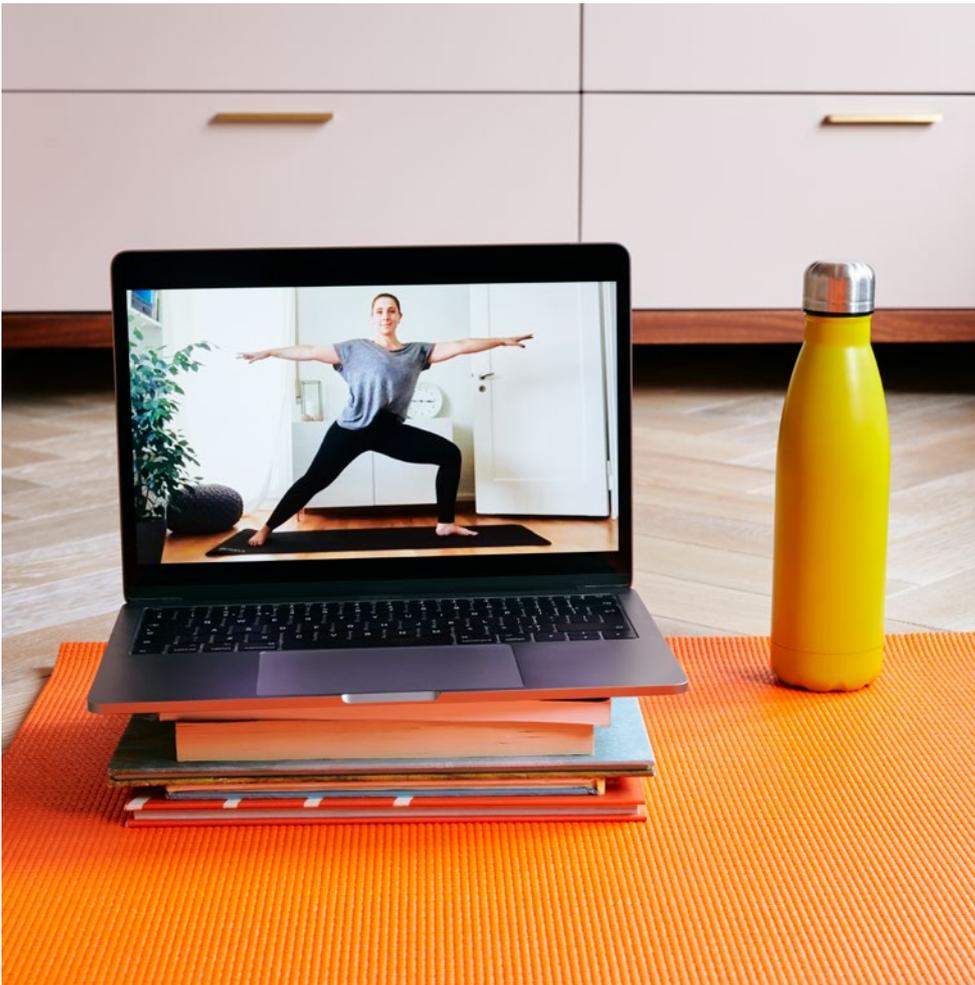
For a remote team to work well, you need their full buy-in. They have to know you're interested – *genuinely* interested – in them as individuals. My team's personal and mental wellbeing is the most important thing to me. If you don't have empathy, you might have their minds but you lose their hearts.

I engender team spirit by reminding people how valuable they are in their roles, and the contribution our company makes to society. And I bring them together – we have had virtual coffee mornings, quizzes and drinks evenings, which are fun and enhance the feeling that we're all in it together. I get real pleasure out of seeing teams bond.

Communication is at the heart. I have my team managers' names permanently on my screen to ensure I contact them in some form at least every two days, if not every day, whether or not there's work to discuss. It's natural, friendly, impromptu conversation – I ask after their families. They do the same with their teams. I need the list to ensure I've connected with everyone but the connections themselves are from genuine empathy, not just box-ticking. People will soon see through you if it's the latter.

Some people struggle remotely, which is why it's good to know everyone's circumstances. Those who live alone are particularly susceptible to loneliness, and we keep a special eye on them. Their individual managers will contact them regularly but as someone higher up the chain I connect with them every three weeks. I'm not looking for a deliverable from them, and they see that, which encourages them to share any problems they might have. It reinforces that we are there for them.

## CO-CURRICULAR



### Origami, German yoga and online chess: lockdown may have changed school life, but the learning went on.

WORDS SARAH WOODWARD PHOTOGRAPHY KATE PETERS

“I knew our remote programme was going to work when I saw some Lower School students putting on their PE uniforms for the online session at home. It’s not required at all, but it was lovely – and unexpected,” says **Marie-Thérèse Malina**, ATAC Co-ordinator. “And when parents started joining in, drawn by the Spotify playlist, it was hilarious! But it was important for that connection, for the students to see their teachers talking to them and their friends.”

Some of the learnings from last year’s lockdown have continued to feature at ZIS today and, most importantly, there was no break in the provision of classes. In fact, the school was able to ‘switch on’ its continuous learning plan within a couple of days of the campuses closing in March 2020, and its virtual Co-curricular activities in the weeks following.

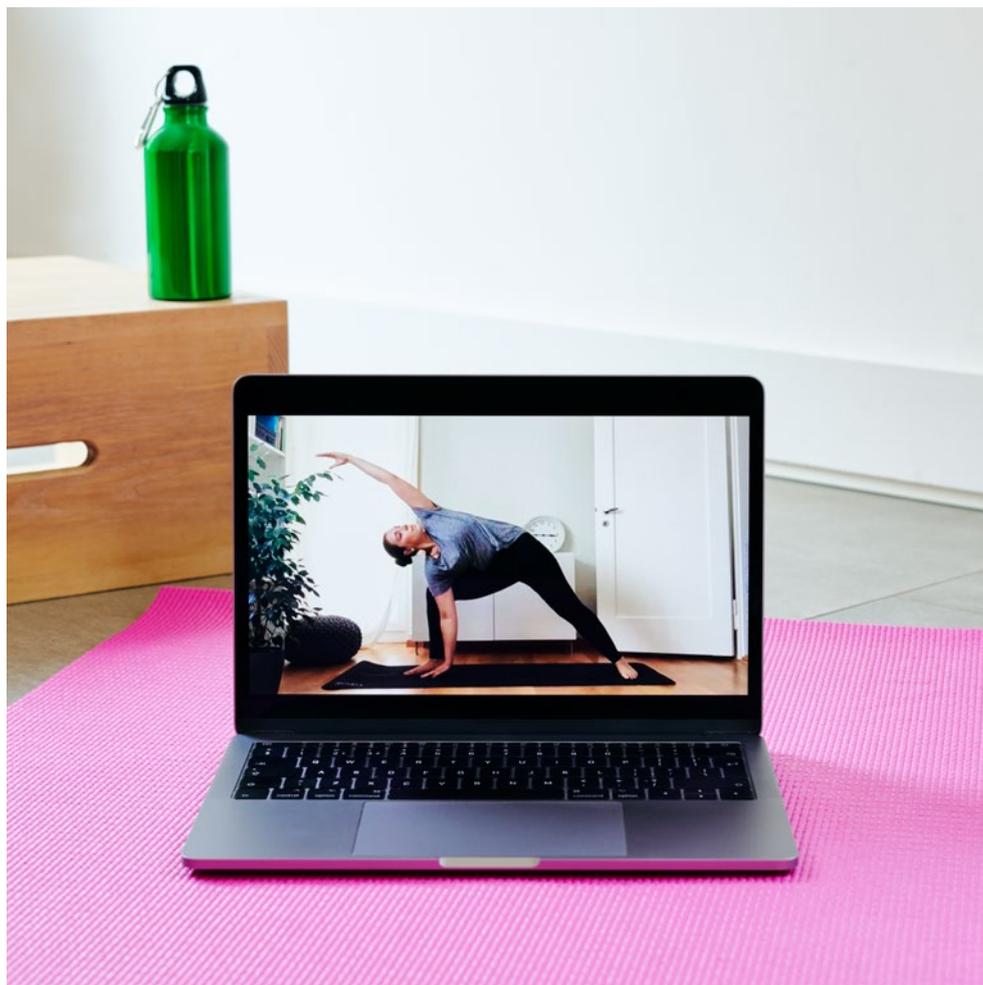
**Chloe Young**, Grade 3, took part in remote yoga classes in German, after her mother, **Melanie**, heard about the classes from the school. “Sometimes I wore a leotard – we planned what we’d wear together so we were ready. It was really fun,” Chloe explains. “I do speak German, but not fluently. Learning it as I did yoga made it easier! And **Frau Rimpler**, our teacher, didn’t make the yoga too hard.”

Melanie told other mothers how much Chloe was enjoying the class and, as a result, two of her friends joined – which, they both say, was “really cool”. As for Melanie, she says she was delighted to get a glimpse of what her daughter gets up to in school!

Chloe could also have chosen to brush up her German in the online origami classes – if she could have got in. “It was a huge success, so much so that we had to limit the class sizes,” says Marie-Thérèse. “The teacher used simple vocabulary for those who are learning German as a foreign language and the children got a product at the end of the session.” Flocks of paper birds could be seen flying around Zurich.

A ZIS parent herself, Marie-Thérèse was concerned about students having too much screen time, but Melanie and Chloe were delighted that in the German yoga classes there was lots





**Stretch it out**

*Lower School German teacher Sophie Rimpler's online yoga classes in German were a big hit with students.*

of movement away from the computer. “After-school classes were all optional and we were careful to involve parents,” Marie-Thérèse explains.

“Take the online chess classes, when the children were simply looking at the screen as a board. The teacher showed his moves on his screen for the first half-hour, then he asked for the next best move and threw the session open. There were 25 children in the end, and for the second half-hour, students played virtually against each other in a mini-tournament. It was very interactive.”

The STEM activities programme was a natural fit for remote classes, given its teachers’ technology background, and the #TechGirls classes were a great success. Those of a truly technical bent signed up for Arduino programming, and another hit was the song-writing class. “Everyone saw that as very cool,” says Marie-Thérèse. “We had not done it physically in school before.”

Marie-Thérèse is convinced that many positive things will emerge from the Covid-19 experience. “It took a lot of work by very dedicated teachers

**“It took a lot of work by very dedicated teachers to offer such a range of activities online, but once established, we now have the model”**

to offer such a range of activities online,” she says, “but once established, we now have the model.

I know from my own home life that not only did the kids enjoy the remote activities, it gave their hard-pressed parents some time off!”

Chloe admits she sees the benefit of both online and offline activities. “The online learning is great – but, of course, it was also great to see my friends in person,” she says. “I missed them!”

***Find out what's on offer now by visiting [zis.ch/student-life/activities](https://zis.ch/student-life/activities) and [zis.ch/student-life/vacation](https://zis.ch/student-life/vacation)***

## MY PASSION



### Isabelle Dady explains why leadership is about the team.

WORDS DIANE SHIPLEY PHOTOGRAPHY OLIVER OETTLI

#### Public speaking

*Isabelle says she used to be more reserved, but speaking in front of 500 people at school assemblies quickly improved her confidence.*

It might seem unlikely, but it was while watching Grade 9 students trying to win a tug-of-war against their teachers that **Isabelle Dady**, Class of 2020 (2013-20), realised how much fun student government could be. As a Grade 11 representative, she had helped organise the school's first Spirit Week, a five-day competition between faculty and students. "I figured out that I have this passion for using my abilities to help the student body unleash their potential."

As Upper School Student Council President in her final year at ZIS, she promoted causes that benefited the whole campus, something she'd long been enthusiastic about. "I think that's when my confidence improved, as people really supported me."

Isabelle's team was keen to make meaningful changes, not superficial ones. "We wanted to promote students' voices on administrative matters, and collaborated with Upper School Principal, **Mr Markus**, to set up a process so students could be heard."

She says the highlight of the year was being asked to speak at the ZIS Women in Leadership event alongside Director **Lisa Lyle** and holistic health coach **Martina Fink**, where she hoped her presence inspired younger students. "The last female Student Council President was six years before me, so I wanted to challenge the mindset that powerful positions belong to guys. The president elected after me is another girl, so hopefully that worked!"

A pandemic was never part of the plan, but the council made the end of the school year as enjoyable as they could. Instead of an in-person Spirit Week, they ran a virtual event, featuring dance and cooking challenges as well as Instagram Live performances by student musicians. "We were debating whether to do it, because you can't force spirit on anyone, but I'm really glad we did." And then there was the online graduation, at which Isabelle and fellow student **Nicholas Lustenberger**, Class of 2020 (2005-06, 2014-20), reflected on the unusual end to their peer group's school career.

"It was disappointing, but we didn't let it stop us," says Isabelle, who is now studying at Dartmouth College in the US. "We just adapted. The challenge made us stronger."



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