

Alumni in the Spotlight

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JIS ALUMNI

E-NEWSLETTER - SPRING/SUMMER 2021



Dear JIS Alumni,

Apa kabar and greetings from Jakarta! I hope you and your family are staying safe and healthy as many parts of the world continue to grapple with the coronavirus pandemic.

By the time this edition of the Alumni Newsletter reaches you, the 2020/21 academic year at JIS will have drawn to a close, with our students enjoying the start of a well-deserved summer break. Saying that they — and the entire Dragon community — have had a tough year would be an understatement. But they persevered through the challenges of online learning, being away from their friends and teachers, and missing out on beloved school traditions. They personify the Dragon Spirit and remind us what it means to be resilient and resourceful JIS Dragons.

What has the past year been like for you and your family? Do any experiences stand out that remind you of the values and dispositions emphasized at JIS? If you would like to share your story with us or simply let the JIS Alumni community know what you've been up to, contact alumni@jisedu.or.id.

In this edition of the JIS Alumni Newsletter, you'll hear the latest stories from Dragons based across the world who reminisce about their days at JIS, the teachers who inspired them, and the lessons they've carried with them to this day. We were honored to speak with United States Congresswoman **Pramila Jayapal** (Class of 1982) about growing up in a multicultural environment and what inspired her work in activism today, and also had the chance to catch up with former teacher and swimming coach **Wayne Kaler** (1988-2016).



We're also excited to share with you some of the service-learning activities our students have engaged in, as well as updates on the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (BTI) scholarship.

Throughout the year, we also heard from many JIS Alumni who reached out to offer their help, support, or some words of encouragement. On behalf of all the JIS staff, teachers, and administrators, I would like to thank you for your generosity and kind words.

Please know that your continued support is a tremendous source of inspiration for all of us here at JIS. *Terima kasih!*

Warm regards,

Tarek Razik

Head of School



JIS ALUMNI PORTAL

Did you know that you can promote your business or an event on the Alumni Portal? Just post a message on the **Dragon Message Board!** If you have your own business (restaurant, hotel, etc.) and want us to help you spread the word among our global community of Dragons, simply log in to the Alumni Portal and fill out a form under **Dragon-Owned Businesses**. Students, parents, and faculty, if you feel like taking a walk down memory lane, you can browse through our archive of past yearbooks.

NOTE: We're happy to announce that the JIS Alumni Portal is now accessible to former JIS teachers and administrators in addition to ex-students!

For those who do not have access to the platform yet,
click here to register!

Upcoming JIS 70th Birthday

This year JIS will be celebrating its 70th birthday and we want you to celebrate with us! We would like to ask you to share your fond memories, stories, birthday well wishes and photos that we can feature in upcoming newsletters and social media. Please send these to alumni@jisedu.or.id.

NOTE: If you would like to be involved in a "Happy Birthday JIS" video, please let us know by reaching us via email.

Send us your photos!

Do you have any photos that you would like featured in the next Alumni Newsletter? If so, please send them to us with a short note and we'll help share your JIS memories with all Dragon alumni worldwide.

For further information please contact: alumni@jisedu.or.id

Introducing the JIS Podcast!

We're thrilled to announce the launch of our brand new [JIS Podcast](#)! Curious about what happens behind the scenes at JIS? Want to know more about how the school's core values and philosophies shape our learning programs both in and outside the classroom?

In a very special episode, host **Joanna Sommers** (JIS Middle and High School Curriculum Coordinator) welcomes a guest who was a valued part of the Dragon community for nearly 40 years. Her name is **Beata Mirecka Jakubowska**, but JIS Alumni will fondly remember her as Mrs. M, who taught English as an Additional Language (EAL) and English from 1983 to 2019.

She returns to offer us a fascinating glimpse into what it was like teaching at a growing Jakarta International School surrounded by paddy fields, traveling the city by becak, and the challenges of adapting to life in Jakarta before it became the modern megalopolis it is today. Learn more about what Mrs. M is doing now and what continues to inspire her to be Best *for* the World.



Tune in to the official [JIS Podcast](#) for in-depth and informative discussions on a variety of topics centered around the Dragon community, education, and living and learning in Indonesia. Each episode will feature voices from across JIS divisions who play a vital role in the smooth and successful running of our school.



ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Wayne Kaler

Former Swim Coach, Activities Director, and Teacher

When did you arrive at JIS and what subjects did you teach?

My family and I arrived in August of 1985. I was hired as the aquatics director for kindergarten to Grade 12 and varsity swim coach. I was the aquatics/athletics director from 1988 to 1994. From August of 1994 until my retirement in June 2006, I taught what was then known as Health Science. I was also a substitute teacher in the High School and helped manage the Swim Kidz after-school program from 2014 to 2016.

Did you go back to visit after you left?

Both of my sons — **Eric**, Class of 1987, and **Kurt**, Class of 1989 — married Indonesians. I returned to Jakarta for one month each year from 2007 to 2011. The primary purpose was to spend time with family. I did visit the campus on numerous occasions during each visit. In December of 2012, I brought my mother to Jakarta to celebrate her 90th birthday with her two grandsons and three great-grandchildren. The decision was made to live in Jakarta providing we could get a KITAS for my mother and myself.

How was JIS back then compared to now?

There were two campuses: Pattimura for Kindergarten to Grade 6 and Cilandak for Kindergarten to Grade 12. The Cilandak campus had two soccer/softball fields and a faculty housing complex known as the Four Plex. The Cilandak pool was used for K-12 swim classes during the day and AquaDragons and varsity swim teams after school. Pattimura



had no pool until the mid-1990s, so students were bussed from Pattimura to the American Club for swimming lessons. In 1985, you could get from the Cilandak campus to Monas [the National Monument] in less than 30 minutes despite the hundreds of becak, bajai, and bemo (the three B's of public transportation before busway busses and the MRT). Jl. Fatmawati was only two lanes wide and few buildings were more than three stories tall. Jl. Antasari did not exist. One of the tallest buildings on Jl. Sudirman as I recall was the Mandarin Hotel. When I retired in 2006, the 1985 city had been transformed.

What do you think is special about JIS?

Where to begin? I believe an exceptionally talented, dedicated, diverse, engaged faculty, and administration whose efforts are enhanced by a hard-working dedicated staff of secretaries, technicians, and specialists.

What is your fondest memory of your time at JIS?

My "memory bank" is so full that it is very difficult to isolate/identify a particular memory in my 23 years.



ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Pramila Jayapal Class of 1982

United States Congresswoman

This interview was edited for clarity and length.

You spent quite a long time at JIS, from elementary school to graduation. Can you tell us a little bit about that experience? Did you develop an interest in politics at JIS or did that happen after JIS?

We arrived at JIS at the end of 1969, and Cilandak wasn't even really built at that time, so it was Pattimura that was our school. I remember we spent several years at JIS at that time — I think it was until 1972 or '73. We moved to Singapore for two years and then moved back to Indonesia in 1974, [where] I stayed until '82, so essentially, I had almost my entire education at JIS. I remember when we went to the Cilandak campus — it was so phenomenal — one of the things I still remember are all the Frangipani trees. I don't know if they're still there, but they were a big part of walking across the grassy places between those modules and picking up the Frangipanis. But I had an amazing experience there.

I still remember and am still in touch with a few of my teachers; **the Flicks, Harland Flick**, who taught track for many years, and then **Pam Flick** [...] I took typing at JIS and got a typing award, which she told me to never tell anybody, but it has really stood me [in good stead]!

But also all the fine arts; I'm still in touch with **Lincoln Myerson, Latifah Myerson, Lynn Thomas**, and many of the people who ran Joint Sound and concert choir. I was in several musicals at JIS and I think it was an



experience like no other. I always say JIS made me feel like the world was so small because there were people from all over the world there, and it definitely increased my interest in the rest of the world and my understanding of the rest of the world.

As far as politics, I guess I must have [developed an interest] because I ran for some office in my senior year — I think it was vice president of the student class or something like that. I remember **Scott Bolitor** was the president and he was like, "You need to run 'cause I will not get anything done unless I have somebody like you there!" So yes, I didn't think about it that much at the time, but I did a lot of activist work if I were to describe it that way now. We would go to the kampungs and help out there after big storms. We had a number of assistance days across the campus, and obviously, I've spent [...] most of my life dedicated to social justice, including in the rest of the world. So, I think a lot of that probably got started at JIS.



ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Pramila Jayapal | Class of 1982**Do you think your intercultural experiences at JIS helped shape that direction you went in or at least provide a certain kind of understanding of the world?**

Oh, there's no question about that; I knew about places in the world that nobody else knew about that I still draw on. That experience at JIS cemented a deep interest in the rest of the world and I think all of my work internationally before I became a congresswoman working on international health and development issues; [JIS cemented] my understanding of global coalitions; my understanding of poverty, as well, honestly — poverty and privilege. I think a lot of that came from JIS and was shaped by JIS and had a long long-lasting impact on me.

The fact that I kept in touch with so many people from JIS over the years — it really came about because of Facebook mostly — I think [it shows] there is a close-knit community

[...] I've even been surprised that, along political lines, perhaps I thought we might be more divided. But I've been really pleasantly surprised to see the people who spent time in Indonesia at JIS with me, who may otherwise come from more politically conservative backgrounds, are still extremely supportive of immigration and are still extremely supportive of global development aid. I just think there are things that shaped us being there [at JIS] and shaped our understanding of what the rest of the world was like and what the United States' role is in advancing policy that benefits the rest of the world.

Senator Duckworth was also a JIS student. Have you two chatted about this?

Just in passing because I think there was some article that mentioned that we went [to JIS] and of course Barack Obama and his time in Indonesia, so I think we were mentioned here and there, but there was no deep conversation. She and I do work together on a number of issues and she's wonderful. Obviously, I'm a part of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus and we're very proud of the work that we do [and] the beginning that we had a JIS.

You've mentioned a couple of teachers already, so what was it about those teachers that inspired you, or what was the connection like with your teachers? We know that with so many of our alumni and current students, one of the things they always talk about is that the teachers, faculty, and staff were so warm and welcoming. Can you tell us a bit about that connection?

Yes, that's exactly what it was. I felt like they really nurtured us; they nurtured our learning. And I built relationships [with teachers] that went beyond just going into a classroom.



ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Pramila Jayapal | Class of 1982

I remember having meals with some of these teachers, and I remember just being encouraged to go outside of my comfort zone sometimes when I needed that. [They were] people who would see something in me that I didn't even think I saw in myself, [...] including people who were tough on me.

I mean, I remember **Ronu Dali** — man, she was tough on me! She [taught] AP English and she was fantastic, really fantastic. And the fact that I went on to get an English literature degree — I always say she's partly to blame for that when my dad wanted me to get an economics degree! I learned my love of words with her. I was just talking about **Madam Soussou**, who was my French teacher, and I'm kind of amazed that I still remember a lot of French; I credit that to Madam Susu. She was such a great French teacher and really took a personal interest in me and in helping me to excel.

But also **Dorothy Barbour**, who would give B-plus-plus-plus-plus on a grade — it was so infuriating! I would be like, "Mrs. Barbour, how do I move to an A?" And she's like, "Oh you'll get there." Then, we would see an A-minus-minus-minus-minus-minus-minus. I don't think I've ever had another teacher who gave so many pluses and so many minuses!

But they all did an amazing job of just opening a world to us that we didn't know was there as young people. I was very young when I went to JIS. I graduated at the age of 16, and to have been able to come to the United States by myself, which is what happened, I really needed a foundation that was strong in terms of not just education but

my own sense of self and security. I think that JIS gave me that.

Do you have any words of advice for JIS students who might be interested in activism or entering politics at some point? We have many students that are involved in service-learning clubs and trying to help communities in need.

I think that JIS is such a privileged place. To be at JIS is a place of tremendous privilege and I think it can be easy to rest in that place of privilege. But one of the great beauties of being in Indonesia and being at JIS is to examine the relationship between privilege, those who have privilege and those who do not, and what the causes of that are because that is ultimately what we're talking about when we talk about justice. It isn't just that we are great and that's why we have privilege; it's that we are in particular situations and circumstances that allow us that privilege. I think anything that explores that, which is not comfortable by the way, [is a great beauty]. One of the things that used to be true, I think it's less true now because we have so much poverty here in America as well, but one of the things that used to be true of living in countries such as India and Indonesia is that you could not walk outside and not question that sense of privilege unless you really block yourself off to it. That's what I would say: Remember that your privilege isn't just because you earned it, it is because you happen to be in a situation with a lot of access, and so use that access even in school to explore how you might share [and] how you might make the adage that we're all better off when we're all better off really true.

I felt like they really nurtured us; they nurtured our learning. And I built relationships [with teachers] that went beyond just going into a classroom.



ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Pramila Jayapal | Class of 1982

And then the other thing is, [...] Indonesia at the time that I was there [had] the largest Muslim population in the world, and I think my respect and my work around anti-islamophobia, founding One America after 9/11, and fighting on behalf of Muslims in America, as well as all immigrant communities, comes in part from that understanding of Islam from a country that [had] a lot of contradictions built into it, relative to the stereotypes of Islamic countries.

So, I would really say: Use that opportunity in Indonesia to explore religion, explore the relationships between the ASEAN countries and the rest of the world. It is a really unique opportunity, and don't forget that you may not have that again. I have been fortunate to have that again, but for a lot of people, you may not have that again. So, do everything you can to explore right where you are, and remind yourself over and over again that you have a responsibility to pay it forward; whatever your privileges, you have the responsibility to pay it forward.

You mentioned Joint Sound and concert choir, are you still singing? Is there a Congressional group that you're a part of? Do you still perform and when was your last performance?

You know, there is no Congressional group! Though a month ago, I said to my husband, 'If I had more time I would join a choir,' but I just have no time. So, I downloaded a karaoke app recently and I sing to myself on the karaoke app. Maybe one of these days I'll have enough time to join a choir, but right now, that's just not part of it. So, instead, I turn on my music and sing along whenever I'm feeling blue.

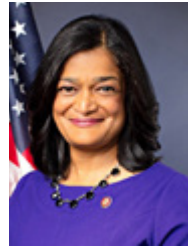
I still remember so many of those songs that we sang in Joint Sound. There is a video

somewhere online that you can find easily of when I was invited — I think it was in my first term — to the Indonesian ambassador's house here in DC, and he was absolutely floored because I can still speak some Bahasa Indonesia. Of course, we know it's one of the easier languages to learn and remember because it has no tenses. But I went to his house [and] he is a phenomenal cook, so he cooked this multi-course meal. His wife was there and I happened to mention that I still knew some Indonesian songs and she said, "Which one? Let's sing one." So, we sang "Halo, Halo Bandung" together. The staff at the Indonesian embassy videotaped it and then put it out on the internet as "Congresswoman from Washington Seventh Congressional District Sings 'Halo, Halo Bandung' With the Ambassador's Wife." It was really a fun thing! [...] I still remember all the words.

Do you have any parting thoughts for the people of JIS? We are all here rooting for you, we are very proud of the work that you do and your relationship with JIS.

I just want to say "thank you" to JIS. It's been a long time now, but I have never forgotten JIS, I have never forgotten Indonesia, I've never forgotten the generosity and loving nature of the people that I encountered through my education but also outside the walls of the school. It has really shaped me, so for that, I'm very grateful. And I'm glad that you can be proud of what JIS helped me to become.

I guess that award I got, Most Likely to Succeed, I think, and I was photographed with **Mark Poulter** in a rickshaw for my senior year, [...] it must have somehow helped propel me along the way! So, thank you so much for that, and thanks for taking me down memory lane for a little bit.





ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

JJ (Jue Ji) Liu Class of 2000

I moved to Jakarta when I was 12 going on 13 years old, attending JIS for High School and graduating in 2000.

I graduated from Boston University in 2003 with a BA in philosophy and started working. I wear multiple hats in my career and having the chance to be entrepreneurial is a blessing that I do not take for granted. Here are some of my key focus in 2021: I'm a certified coach and founder of [The Governess](#); I co-host and co-produce [The Powder Room Talk](#), [which] allows us to reach a broader audience and have real talks about topics that are not commonly [covered] in depth; and I'm the business director of the [Clique Limited](#) in Hong Kong, [...] a fashion brand management, public relations, and brand consulting company founded by my sister Faye Liu, [which aims to] put Indonesian fashion talents onto the global fashion map. To date, we have successfully garnered international placements and the attention of celebrities like Lady Gaga, Nicki Minaj, Ariana Grande, and the like.

What do you think is invaluable about the JIS experience?

The [school's] diversity in a subtle manner teaches students about acceptance as we gain an understanding about the cultures of our classmates and teachers. UN Days were exceptionally enjoyable for me. It definitely provides an edge in the marketplace when one understands the various cultural nuances.

The integrity demanded of students is also an important value I learned, like no plagiarism, don't steal someone's thunder,



be happy about your peers' success, and in order to win, you simply raise the bar but play fair. Then, there was the encouragement to embark on social work and leadership. I was always keen on impactful work, but it was during my time at JIS that it was fully lived out. JIS offers a lot of opportunities for students to practice pro-activeness by participating in meaningful activities instead of just focusing on me, me, and me. The key still lies in one's individual drive, but JIS offered a great environment and platform to do such things.

There are also many interesting clubs students can join at JIS and through them, we learn teamwork, community building, and leadership while doing things we enjoy with peers.



ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

JJ (Jue Ji) Liu | Class of 2000

The [school's] diversity in a subtle manner teaches students about acceptance as we gain an understanding about the cultures of our classmates and teachers.

If there was one thing I would say to JIS students, it's to never miss out or waste this precious time at JIS; put yourself out there, make the most of your JIS life. It is the safest, most low-risk manner to learn at a very young age how to fail and learn to recover in a safe space while learning important life skills that are very applicable for your entire lifetime. In that process, you will pick up cues on what you are good at and can accelerate your journey of figuring out how to live out your best purpose-driven life.

That said, stay out of high school drama; it's a time-waster that distracts the work on yourself. Be kind to everyone but focus on the solid circle you vibe with. And finally, engage in public speaking. You might hate it now, but you will thank your teachers later in life.

**Who were the teachers who contributed to who you are today?**

It takes a village to raise a child and it would be hard to name one individual. There were so many excellent educators during my time; they not only taught the curriculum, they taught me how to think and how to be a better person. I had good relationships with many teachers and each of them left a different mark in my life: **Mrs. McCarthy, Dr. Nespor, Dr. Frank Thomas, Mr. Detwailer, Mrs. Davies** — the list is quite long.

**1984/85 Pondok Indah Elementary Student Council**



ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Sebastian Modak Class of 2006

Sebastian Modak has had a lifelong love for stories and storytelling. It all started with *Calvin + Hobbes*, *Tintin*, and the phantasmagoric world of science fiction and fantasy. Today, he creates his own stories — visually and through the written word — as a freelance travel writer and multimedia journalist. His works can be found in such widely read publications as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, and *Lonely Planet*, where he is currently the editor-at-large. He's also pursuing a slew of independent projects, requiring him to tap into the skills he learned and honed at JIS as a still-nascent writer studying under the tough-love tutelage of **Margo Roby** and **James Penha**.

"In general, JIS was a place where I constantly felt challenged to think a little harder and push myself to bring new perspectives to my creative life. Margo Roby and James Penha were two of my high school English teachers who really pushed me towards a career in writing, even if they — and I — didn't know that's what was happening at the time," Sebastian explained.

"Ms. Roby was always encouraging us to take on independent projects of our own design, which made me fall in love with the craft because I was doing it for my own reasons, not just for an assignment. Dr. Penha, on the other hand, really made me hone my hard skills as a writer. He could be a tough critic — I distinctly remember him tearing apart my college application essay. But it was just because he knew what we, as students, were capable of. When it comes to my career as a writer, I owe a lot to so many of the teachers at JIS."



The added push seemed to have worked because Sebastian went on to study at the University of Pennsylvania, where he majored in English and history while minoring in music and African studies. An ensuing Fulbright Fellowship in Botswana challenged him in the art of visual storytelling by documenting the local hip-hop scene, which was followed by a "stint in documentary television."

Then came a chance at travel writing, and thanks to his multicultural experience at JIS and globetrotting childhood, he discovered



1986 Pattimura Elementary students in the bus

ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Sebastian Modak | Class of 2006

In general, JIS was a place where I constantly felt challenged to think a little harder and push myself to bring new perspectives to my creative life.

that he was most comfortable in new surroundings and meeting new people. This, he said, was why he not only enjoyed his work but was also good at it.

“Growing up surrounded by people from different cultures, a guest in a country that was not my own, lent me an open-mindedness and a curiosity that made me wind up with the career I have. It also made me better at that career,” he said. “I’ve never been comfortable enough anywhere to call it home, and I think that means that I approach

travel with a sense of humility that helps me connect with people and tell stories about the world at large. At least I hope it does.”

His skills were put to the ultimate test when he was tapped by *The New York Times* to be its [52 Places Traveler](#) in 2019. Both a dream come true and an immense responsibility, the assignment called for him to visit 52 places across the globe in 52 weeks in search of not just picture-postcard destinations but also “compelling stories in each stop that would resonate with a wide audience.”





ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT



1978 Seniors



1996 Middle School Hippie Day



2009 Middle School Madness Days



Michelle Yao Class of 2010

Did you graduate from JIS? Can you tell us a bit about what you did after graduation/leaving JIS?

I graduated in 2010; I joined in 2001, so I basically grew up at JIS. After graduation, I went on to study footwear design at the London College of Fashion at the University of the Arts London — yes, that's a real bachelor's degree!

After London, I moved to Singapore and worked in the fashion industry for a while before deciding that I wanted to be an entrepreneur in the startup space. For the last three years, I was an in-house entrepreneur at a startup studio where my job was to innovate, build, and run multiple businesses at once, from food and fashion to tech.

Is this your first book as an author and creative director? What inspired you to publish this book?

Yes, [*Ready, Get Set, Connect!*](#) is the first book for which I was the author, creative director, and publisher! It's the first book I've published under my new startup, [Cyberlite Books](#), a boutique publishing house focused on delivering relevant topics that matter to children in an engaging fashion. The topic for our first book is cybersafety, and it was largely inspired by my co-founder, Nina's experience in that industry. Together, we saw a huge gap in the market for cybersafety awareness for kids and decided to produce a fully illustrated, interactive workbook. Developing this book was very creatively cathartic, as I had complete freedom and control in the written content and artwork.



ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Michelle Yao | Class of 2010**How did JIS help you pursue and develop your passion for art?**

I definitely credit a lot of my artistic development to **Mr. White** and IB Higher Art! It was in those few years that I got to understand the importance of experimentation and received encouragement for stepping outside the norm. The sense of agency that was instilled in me in JIS to go down the creative path led me to feel very certain of myself and my decision to pursue the arts in university.



me success to my time at JIS. Skills such as critical thinking, creative problem solving, and to some extent, having a lot of personal conviction, have become useful tools to land big contracts and not shy away from a challenge. I didn't realize until I started working that these things are quite unique to my upbringing at JIS and the value it has in the "real world."

What are you doing now? And what skills did you learn at JIS that help you in your current career?

I'm perpetually a serial entrepreneur and currently the co-founder of Cyberlite Books. We've been very fortunate to be supported by some of the largest cybersecurity firms in the world and have sold over 32,000 books in our first six months. With this early validation, we're now ramping up with big plans in EdTech and launching our second book soon! I attribute a lot of the traits that have brought

What advice would you give a student currently studying at JIS and hoping to make a career of their passion?

Be curious, stay open-minded, and go out to explore as much as you can! Make use of everything JIS has to offer because being exposed to all different experiences will broaden your thinking and make you better equipped for the real world. The road to making a career out of your passion may not be the clearest, straightest road ahead, but if you keep your mind open to opportunities, you will get there eventually. The great thing about being young and having dreams is that there's a lot of time for you to pave your way and make your mark.



ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Ayoni Thompson | Class of 2017

I began singing around the age of 4 or 5 at church plays and continued to sing in choir, school productions, and regional competitions throughout my childhood and adolescence.

I was a part of Joint Sound in High School and had started out in the choir when I moved to Jakarta in 2015. I was supported and taught by **Ms. Gutierrez** at the time, now **Mrs. Jamierrez**. She really encouraged me to use my voice, and as seniors, we were able to suggest songs for our setlist we were passionate about and perform arrangements of them as a group. Joint Sound really helped me to think about vocal arrangements on a slightly simpler level than a huge choir, and performing them acapella gave me a deeper understanding of storytelling through arrangements.

JIS helped me to pursue and develop my passion for music through the service I was able to engage in that taught me the power of community, empathy, and self-empowerment. In my senior year, I was the president of the Popular Musicians Union (PMU), which involved planning school concerts and a benefit concert called A Voice That Cares, where we partnered with Angel Tree Orchestra, a *yayasan* [non-profit foundation] for disabled musicians in Jakarta.

These opportunities reminded me that service is central to

my role as a musician, as well as the power of music to unite and uplift.

Since graduating from JIS, I've been attending the University of Southern California, studying at their Thornton School of Music in the Contemporary Program. I've been studying performance, theory, and songwriting while also working as a recording artist and songwriter in the LA industry. I released my debut EP project, *Iridescent*, in the fall of 2019 and am currently working on my debut album.

My advice to students at JIS pursuing their passions is to enjoy their journey of self-exploration in such a diverse and special environment. You never have to have all the answers but trust your place in this world and pursue what enriches your soul and the souls of those around you.

I'd also say to have fun and keep finding joy in life and learning.



JIS helped me to pursue and develop my passion for music through the service...



JIS COUPLES

JIS was not only the place where we went to school and made lifelong friends, but some of us also found our life partners there.



Lincoln Myerson (Class of 1981) and Helena Horthy (Class of 1981)

Remained friends after JIS High School but didn't start dating until 2015 and got married in 2019.

Helena has two children from a previous marriage.

Living in Auckland, New Zealand.



Peter Neels (Class of 1982) and Barbara Phillips (Class of 1984)

Remained friends and got married in 2017 in San Diego, California.

Peter has one son (22), Barbara has a son (26) and a daughter (21).

Living in Charleston, South Carolina.



Marcel Heilijgers (Class of 1988) and Susanna Heilijgers (Class of 1988)

Together since senior year at JIS High School.

They have two children who also graduated from JIS: Kailani (Class of 2017) and Joshua (Class of 2020)

Living in Jakarta.



Jerome Landerer (Class of 1996) and Zoe Anderton (Class of 1995)

Started dating in JIS High School.

They have two children who are now at JIS: Bianca (15) is in Grade 10, Chloe (11) is in Grade 6.

Living in Jakarta.



Zoe Anderton and her father during the Class of 1995 Graduation.



JIS COUPLES

JIS was not only the place where we went to school and made lifelong friends, but some of us also found our life partners there.



**Sten Vogel (Class of 1995) and
Suelyn Tan (Class of 1998)**

Started dating in 2004.
They have one daughter.
Living in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.



**Chris Garrett (Class of 2003) and
Ilaria Garrett (Class of 2003)**

Started dating on the third day of orientation at the University of San Francisco.
They have one child, Tre Garrett (3).
Living in Sanur, Bali.



**Kevin Aluwi (2005) and
Felicia Kawilarang (2009)**

Started dating after university, met while doing job searches.
Got married in 2018.
Living in Jakarta.



**Muneaki Iijima (Class of 2010) and
Tiffany Sadeli (Class of 2010)**

Lost contact after high school, met again seven years later, and started dating a few months after.
Got married in November 2020.
Living in Jakarta.





2019 High School United Nations Day

HOME OF THE DRAGONS

Inclusion and Diversity

At JIS, we value and respect our diverse community of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni. We firmly believe that fair treatment, justice, and equality for all regardless of race, creed, religion, color, culture, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical ability, or socioeconomic status is the most basic of rights.

It is our job as a school to provide an education for all that goes beyond academics, with the aim of contributing to a more understanding, just, and peaceful world. We strive to instill in all of our students compassion, empathy, understanding, and integrity. We are committed to delivering learning that values and embraces diversity and culture, empowers students regardless of their background or how they identify, encourages critical thinking toward social responsibility, and teaches respect for others.

As part of our commitment to inclusion and diversity, we will continue to learn and grow as a school and always work to do better. We understand that there is a difference between simply being diverse and creating spaces for diversity to flourish. It is our goal to have a culture where all of our students and families feel welcomed to participate in all aspects of our community.

It is our responsibility to live our core values and provide an inclusive learning environment, and we ask that you help us get better every day. We welcome all voices in this conversation. Keep us informed as you find ways we can improve as a community. Several committees focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion have been created with the purpose to hear students' voices on this topic and conduct an internal audit of our culture and practices. We are in the beginning stages of that process now and we will share information on our progress.

JIS recognizes that there are systemic factors that continue to contribute to prejudice and racism, not only in society at large but in our school community. It is not enough for our community to "not be racist." We must all become anti-racist and walk against the system that we find ourselves in.

We also know that prejudice is not solely based on race and we will endeavor to eliminate all forms of systemic discrimination where it is found at JIS. We know that prejudice is a learned behavior and, therefore, can be "unlearned". As an educational institution, we believe that making a commitment to this concept is vital to our core purpose — learning in Indonesia to be Best for the World.



HOME OF THE DRAGONS

JIS's Return to Campus

The month of March marked a milestone of sorts for JIS, as it had been exactly one year since we started Home and Online Learning. This past year has certainly been a trying time for all of us — the entire JIS community, our families, our host country — as the coronavirus pandemic dispensed one challenge after another. But it has also been an extraordinary achievement for our entire school and one that we should all be very proud of.

In March, all our campuses were visited by representatives from the Jakarta Education Agency who relooked at our plans for a possible return to face-to-face learning and inspected our facilities. We're happy to say that the visits went very well overall. They made a few recommendations, such as placing more signage and directional walking arrows around each campus and providing more step-on trash bins that can be opened using a foot pedal. We immediately took steps to address these recommendations.

Our learning plans and health and safety protocols were approved soon after, but it also meant that our return to campus would be much different than what school "used" to look like.

On April 7, we were excited to partially reopen and welcome students back to their classrooms with a blended learning approach. This new model was part of a city-run pilot project that involved 85 schools across Jakarta. Together, we hope to model the proper steps and health procedures for other schools to safely resume face-to-face teaching.

Officials from the Jakarta Education Agency and Jakarta Health Agency joined us on our first day back to help us monitor the health and safety protocols in place at our elementary, middle school, and high school campuses. All JIS faculty and staff members



were thrilled to see our students back in school!

Our long-empty classrooms once again heard the distinct sounds of collaborative learning taking place — students discussing assignments, asking questions, and expressing their ideas. It was a truly exciting day and it reminded JIS teachers, administrators, and staff just how much we have missed interacting with students.

As one of the Joint Cooperation Schools (SPK) in Jakarta selected to be part of the pilot program, we take this responsibility very seriously and are honored to have been chosen. At the same time, we are also confident that we will be able to offer the Jakarta Education Agency and other schools a great deal of feedback, insight, and inspiration on how they, too, can keep their students safe.



HOME OF THE DRAGONS

High School

2021 JIS MUN Conference

Another part of being a collaborative community is connecting with other schools in Jakarta and our many partners in education. You'll be proud to know that both JIS teachers and students are making every effort to keep this tradition alive and well. High School students, for example, organized and hosted the 2021 JIS MUN Conference over Zoom. They teamed up with delegates from ACS Jakarta, SIS Kelapa Gading, National High Jakarta School, and Gandhi Memorial Intercontinental School to discuss relevant, real-world topics such as mitigating hate speech on social media, improving healthcare systems in the aftermath of COVID-19, and alleviating economic disparities caused by the pandemic.



Class of 1986 Photo courtesy of Bradley Benson

JIS ALUMNI INVOLVEMENT

High School Careers Day

As part of a decades-long tradition to connect students with professionals from various fields and give them a glimpse of what they can look forward to in the workplace, JIS High School hosts Careers Day each year with guest speakers from the Dragon community. This year, Careers Day was held virtually and saw more than 70 members of the JIS community — parents and alumni — contributing their time and knowledge as guest speakers. Students received valuable insights into a range of professions and industries, from education, entrepreneurship, and media, to technology, diplomatic relations, and law. The alumni and parents who volunteered to share their expertise made it a great success!

Thank you to the following JIS Alumni who joined us on Careers Day:

Class of	Name	Company/Profession/Studying at	Class of	Name	Company/Profession/Studying at
1977	Arnie Enriquez	Independent Project Management Consultant	2008	Jessica Buck DiSilvestro	Brown University / Women and Infants Hospital
1978	Alexander David	Manulife Financial	2010	Chandni Mohan Chainani	Dropezy
1984	Darcy Vanderbie-Pace	Pace West Physical Therapy	2011	Emilio Shareef Wibisono	Sinbad
1988	Steven Deputy	The Walt Disney Company	2011	Olivia Murray	Accoras
1989	Kuniko Nakamura	American Chamber of Commerce in Japan	2012	Janine Sijercic	Deloitte
1990	Rena Chng	Seattle University School of Law	2012	Satya Hangga Yudha Widya Putra	SKK Migas (Special Task Force for Upstream Oil & Gas Business Activities)
1991	Nicholas Schmidt	Spencer Stuart	2012	Niharika Sahni	Baker McKenzie
1991	Rob Livingston	Visa Europe	2012	Sakshi Khurana	PhD candidate at Northwestern University
1992	Kim Montelibano Heil	San Diego Repertory Theatre	2013	Alisha Mahtani	Docquity
1994	Amber Clark	Microsoft	2013	Simran Nanwani	Nutritionist & Entrepreneur
1996	Ana Reyes-Abano	Facebook Asia Pacific	2013	Bhavna Nanwani	Entrepreneur and a student at University of Western States - Masters in Functional Medicine & Human Nutrition
1996	Anuj Ralhan	Stifel	2015	Mahika Narula	Law student at Georgetown University Law Center
1996	Ardi Putra Baramuli	World Bank Group	2016	Celine Chai	NinetyEight
1996	Elaine Foster	MY Poetry School	2016	Xian Kai Ng	Tesla
1996	Mel Zwyer	Lucasfilm	2016	Indah Gunawan	Author under New Degree Press
1998	Ken Parsons	Holland and Knight	2017	Jacob Hable	BYU Athletic Communications
1998	Kevin Sutantyo	Sovereign's Capital	2018	Ziyuan Xu	Student at Seattle University School of Law
1999	Signe Skjaerlund	BAR Studio in Melbourne	2018	Timo Fukar	Student at University of Warwick
2002	Eun-Ae (Michelle) Cho	Edwards LifeSciences Korea	2019	Shaurya Taparia	Sophomore at Baruch College in the Zicklin Honors program
2002	Mex Martinot	Siemens Energy	1985-1987 & 1989-2008	Gene Magill	Faculty at JIS Cilandak Campus
2002	Patrick Cao	Tokopedia	1988-2012	Kristan Julius	Writer & Faculty at JIS Pondok Indah Elementary Campus
2003	Josephine Pham	Yellow Door Energy			
2004	Armand Steinmeyer	The Ascott Ltd. / Tauzia Hotel Management			
2004	Cassandra Winzar	Committee for Economic Development of Australia			
2004	Sahil Sondhi	Waterbom Bali			
2006	Sanuk Tandon	Kalibr			
2006	Sebastian Modak	2019 New York Times 52 Places Traveler Writer			
2008	Jennifer Fontenot	Belzberg Architects			

JIS ALUMNI INVOLVEMENT

High School UN Day

JIS High School Uniting Nations Day was very different in several ways this year. For one, it's usually celebrated in October with a food festival, performances, and a Parade of Flags on the Cilandak campus. But despite the change in schedule and venue, High School teachers and students worked hard to make this year's UN Day was a special one. Everyone still dressed in their national colors or costumes for the event, which was held virtually with students and their families watching and participating from home. JIS High School also had a very special guest: Class of 2010 Alumna and House of Representatives Lawmaker **Dyah Roro Esti**, who took time out of her busy schedule to say hello and give the event's opening remarks.



Elementary School Indonesia Week



Every year, JIS Elementary School honors our host country by celebrating Indonesia Week. This week is all about getting immersed in the archipelago's rich traditions through the arts, literature, language, and food, and learning all about them from local experts. This annual tradition invites students, parents, and teachers alike to dress in traditional Indonesian costumes or batik, and features student performances, cooking activities, dance and art workshops, and various guest speakers from in and outside the JIS community.

This year's festivities, which were held over Zoom, featured both student and guest performers (professional musicians and dancers), workshops presented by JIS Bahasa Indonesia teachers and parents, as well as a special reading of *Nenek & Sayang*, a children's book illustrated by JIS Alumna **Amanda Krishna** (featured in the JIS Alumni Newsletter Winter 2020/2021). After the reading, presented by author Rebekah Nivala, students had the chance to learn from Amanda herself in a special art activity.

This year's event may have been held online, but the children's enthusiasm shone through their computer screens, and each engaging activity was a fun-filled experience that further enriched their connection to Indonesia.



JIS GIVES BACK



Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Scholarship

The goal of our Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (BTI) scholarship program is to provide world-class educational opportunities to exceptional Indonesian students regardless of their financial means. Since 2018, the JIS BTI has helped recipients reach their educational goals and prepare them for a future full of potential. The program is now in its fourth year and we have six BTI scholars studying at JIS on a full-ride that includes tuition, transportation costs, and additional fees.

In our previous newsletter, we mentioned that we had received over 500 applications from all over Indonesia for a chance to join JIS at the start of the 2021/22 academic year. After several Zoom calls, interviews, and tests, we narrowed the list down to 35 candidates. They joined us from as far away as Gorontalo in North Sulawesi, showing us that our school's reputation for high-quality education has spread across this vast archipelago.

The Scholarship Committee was greatly impressed with each promising candidate, whose academic interests range from coding, media arts, and medicine, to journalism, psychology, and global politics! After a thorough (yet tough) review, this year's recipients of the BTI scholarship were selected at the end of May and we are excited to welcome them to JIS as official Dragons in August!.

If you're interested in supporting the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Scholarship please click [here](#), or if you are interested in supporting it in other ways, please contact scholarships@jisedu.or.id.

JIS Service Clubs

Earlier this year, Grade 10 students offered their services to Kookie.do to help them sell cookie dough-based treats throughout February. Ten percent of their proceeds went to the [JIS Care Package Campaign](#) (created by three JIS Juniors) and its ongoing mission to send monthly care packages filled with personal protective equipment and staple foods to our service partners. As part of the same initiative, the Urban Gardening Club gathered and donated 50 gardening kits to the XS Community School.

JIS Senior **Nelson Sinarya** is a prolific service leader and now a proud published author of a language workbook titled, [Let's Learn Basic English with Billy](#). Nelson was motivated to write the bilingual book by his service-learning work with young children, who inspired him with their resilience and sheer enthusiasm for learning English. All the profit he earns will be donated to schools and charities across Indonesia.



You can listen to Nelson talk about service learning at JIS, his Home Online Learning experience, as well as his book on the latest episode of our [JIS Podcast](#).



A YEAR AFTER THE PANDEMIC STARTED?

With the increasing number of people getting vaccinated, case numbers in many countries are decreasing and there is finally a light at the end of the tunnel. All are hoping to be able to return to a sense of normalcy in life, whether it is work, school, sports, or going to the restaurants and movies. One thing the pandemic has shown us is that people are resilient in helping others in need across the globe. Continuing on from our last newsletter, here are some more examples of JIS Alumni in action to be Best *for* the World...



Bradley Benson Class of 1986

When did you attend JIS as a student?

I moved to Jakarta after my freshman year of high school in 1983 and moved back to the United States for college in 1986. My older brother **Rich** (JIS Class of 1984) and younger sister **Sarah** were also Dragons.

What are you doing now?

I am currently a professor of internal medicine (care of adults) and pediatrics (care of children) and serve as chief academic officer (CAO) at the University of Minnesota Medical School and within the M Health Fairview Health System. That's a mouthful, but in short, I work as a clinical doctor, teach medical students and also wear the administrative hat with responsibility for all of the research and education in the health system.

My clinical focus has been on the care of adults and children with complex medical needs in the hospital and clinic. I specifically work with adults who survived childhood cancer and now need follow-up care and surveillance for side effects or complications of the disease and the treatments they received. It has been a crazy 15 months at the bedside of COVID patients, leveraging

Zoom to continue medical education and supporting clinical trials to find better ways to prevent and treat this disease.

What do you remember most about your time here as a student?

What stands out are the friends I made. Whether it was Danish New Year's traditions, the Friday night Seafood 99 trips, or the Senior Class trip to Bali, we had each others' backs. One of the great joys that came from COVID-19 — I still don't know why it took a pandemic to spark this — has been a reconnection with my fellow JIS classmates. I now smile at the ding of my watch or phone telling me another WhatsApp message has come through on the JIS 1986 Chat Group of 23 friends. Usually, it's an update; a photo of feet with a panoramic view of a pool, lake, or ocean with some tasty beverage in hand but often a viewpoint from around the world on current events or a recounting of some memory from our time together (with grainy scanned photos).

It's amazing to me how much and how little we've all changed. The kindness, the caring, the humor, the larger world view — all the same. The gray hairs (me), the home addresses, the jobs, the small and large families — all new! In the past month, I have jumped on a plane (with less than 24 hours' notice) to join dear friends in Las Vegas for 24 hours (my personal tolerance limit for that city)



A YEAR AFTER THE PANDEMIC STARTED?

Bradley Benson | Class of 1986



and have also met up with other dear JIS friends on an annual bike trip to San Diego. While 30-plus years had passed since I'd seen them all, in many ways, it seemed like yesterday. I believe the cauldron of JIS forges bonds that stand the test of time. Good stuff.

What made you decide to become a doctor?

That is a hard question! There are quite a few influences I'd call out. My IB Biology teacher at JIS, **Anthony Dilley**, was one of the best teachers I've ever had. In the US, I could "phone it in." Mr. Dilley demanded more of me and loved me through the initial shock at my first grade of 3 out of 20 marks on the superficial essay I'd turned in. I'll never forget him taking me aside and asking if everything was OK. When he determined I was fine and that the essay was simply the result of laziness, he looked me in the eyes and told me that I'd put my name on that paper and that needed to mean something.

As a teacher now, I aspire to that commitment to my students. I am grateful for him and attribute some of my love for science to his enthusiastic teaching. Looking back over a life in medicine, I have been privileged to be with people at critical and often terrifying times in their lives. It creates deep connections in remarkably short time frames that often lead

to long-term "therapeutic alliance." It builds a trust that helps in caring for them over the long haul — that has been a real joy in this work.

How did your work change during the pandemic and how did it affect you?

COVID sucks — no other way to summarize it. I spent Thanksgiving at the bedside of a woman dying without the comfort of her family as it wasn't safe for them to be with her. I wore the same three masks (rotated) for nine months as we were desperately short of supplies. I moved to video and telephone visits for half of my clinic slots. I didn't see my parents for nine months and worried about their vulnerability to this scourge. I've spent innumerable hours on Zoom meetings hoping my dog stays quiet and my kids don't text "hilarious" and inappropriate messages while I'm screen-sharing (sadly they've inherited my sense of humor).

That being said, it has been gratifying to fight back. I've spent afternoons giving people vaccines and seeing joy and hope in their faces as they take selfies during the jab. I've also helped support over 36 COVID-19 clinical research trials and written a few scientific papers on things we've learned in the work. We will get through this. I hope it reminds world leaders of our interconnectedness and the need to come together and share resources and knowledge to beat it. I hope.



A YEAR AFTER THE PANDEMIC STARTED?

Ariel Aldrin Class of 2015

Can you tell us a bit about what you did after graduation/leaving JIS?

I graduated from JIS in 2015 and went to UC Berkeley, where I pursued a B.S. in economics and a certificate in entrepreneurship and technology. After graduating Berkeley in 2019, I started my career in strategy consulting at Accenture Strategy in San Francisco. Now, I run noDokter with my brothers **Nathan** (Class of 2018) and **Braddy** (Class of 2022).

Was there a significant event that inspired you to start this project?

During the day, I work at Accenture Strategy as a consultant. However, at night, I work on a personal project with my brothers called noDokter.com. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people lacked access to information on how to maintain their health and instead fell victim to hoaxes and misinformation. This is why, during a critical time when our health mattered more than ever, we launched noDokter.com, a health and wellness platform that provides Indonesians with free, accurate, and easy-to-understand information. Our platform aims to improve the health of the Indonesian people through providing online personal training, accurate information about balanced nutrition, and ways to maintain mental health, among others.

We hoped that through the use of our platform, users would not have to go to a doctor, which would help ease the burden on medical workers who are overwhelmed with victims of the COVID-19 pandemic. My brothers and I have always wanted to give



Nathan, Ariel, and Braddy.

back to our country and make an impact, as this was something that JIS instilled in us from a young age, but we didn't know how we could do this — until the idea struck us as we watched the pandemic in Indonesia unfold. One of the other ways we are giving back through noDokter is through a campaign we launched called 1 Million Prayers for Indonesia to Unite Against COVID," which we launched on April 10. This campaign gathers Indonesians around the world to pray for our country through a support video that they post on social media. Feel free to contact us if you are interested in joining our campaign alongside the 200-plus organizations and more than 30 countries that have already participated.



A YEAR AFTER THE PANDEMIC STARTED?

Ariel Aldrin | Class of 2015

My brothers and I have always wanted to give back to our country and make an impact, as this was something that JIS instilled in us from a young age, but we didn't know how we could do this — until the idea struck us as we watched the pandemic in Indonesia unfold.



You can also check out our work for yourself at nodokter.com and on social media at [@nodokter](https://www.instagram.com/nodokter). If you have any questions or would like to help join our effort to provide a better health platform for Indonesia, you can reach out to us directly at admin@nodokter.com.

How do you expect to keep this relevant once the pandemic has passed?

Although the pandemic initially sparked our creation of noDokter, the end of COVID-19 will not mark the end of noDokter. We hope to continue our work after seeing how much impact we have been able to make on other people's lives. Currently, noDokter only provides articles and videos, both homegrown and content created by our partners. However, in the future, we hope to continue expanding our platform to support every step of our user's health and wellness journey.

Were you involved in other co-curricular clubs/organizations at JIS?

When I was at JIS, I started two small businesses with several of my friends, as well as joined service and cultural clubs. Beeznuss was a business where we sold school spirit wristbands with our logo "Once a Dragon, Always a Dragon" embedded into the bands. We then donated the funds to service organizations such as XS Project and House of Hope.

We also created a social entrepreneurship business called LAKK of Education, with which we aimed to empower scavengers working the streets of Jakarta. The trash they collected were cleaned and recycled to create items that would be sold to students in our High School. The money that we got would then be given back to the students in the form of school supplies, such as stationery, pencil cases, backpacks, and school shoes. Aside from these projects, I joined XS Project, Indonesian Club, and the Chinese Club in High School.

What advice would you give a student currently studying at JIS?

Gather as many experiences as you can, especially while you are young — trust me when I tell you that you will have a lot of time to do what your heart desires before you start working. Especially in JIS, where you are blessed to have the opportunity to explore and try out as many things as possible, I would encourage you not to take this perfect learning ground for granted. Do well in school, but remember that your life is more than your GPA, transcript, and standardized tests. It is the accumulation of experiences you gain in your life that makes you the unique individual you are and that prepares you for your life ahead.

If you or if you know of other JIS Dragons who have been an everyday hero — big or small — during these difficult times, please share the story with us and email it to alumni@jisedu.or.id.