

ZIS

For the ZIS community
– at home in Zurich
and around the world



Winter
2022/23

- Why compassion is good for you
- The future of climate strategy
- Everyone wants to be a creative
- Six decades: the time of our lives
- ZIS connections around the world

Voices



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News



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• New Secondary Campus

Flexibility is the key to new Middle School building

Our wonderful new state-of-the-art Middle School is finally open - and, in September, it was an absolute joy to welcome students, staff and parents past and present to a Community Open Day and to invite politicians, including Dr Sylvia Steiner, Head of the Department of Education for Canton Zurich, and supporters to a more formal opening event.

The campus has been purpose-built to deliver extraordinary benefits to students and their learning, creating innovative spaces that support every aspect of school life - so flexibility is key. Thanks to clever design (from Zurich architects AMZ Architekten), the spaces can move seamlessly from lesson to co-curricular activities. The building's expansive rooftop is a garden, event space, amphitheatre and meeting point all in one. Co-curricular activities are integral, not extra, and the building reflects that, too, with enhanced sports facilities and concert spaces.

In the adjacent new Makerspace, again, there's no divide between art and science. It is filled with physical tools but also house the latest technology: 3D printers, computers with design software and router hubs. Student are using the Makerspace for everything from designing websites to building sets for drama productions and creating music videos. And like many parts of the new campus, the library and music rooms are shared between Middle and Upper School, enabling students of all ages to learn from one another.

"The new campus opens up a world of opportunities for collaboration between students, teachers, parents and the wider community," says Middle School Principal David Wood. "That synergy is embodied in this building."

Left to right:

Dr Thomas Heiniger, formerly of the Zurich government; Lisa Lyle, Director; Dr Silvia Steiner, Head of the Department of Education for Canton Zurich; Farid Zeroual, Adliswil Mayor; and Philipp Kutter, member of the National Council and mayor of Wädenswil.

• In numbers

72

three- to eight-year-olds in our Bilingual Pathway.

The ZIS Bilingual Pathway, an exciting addition to our Lower School program, will extend to Grade 3 as of August 2023.

For more, visit [zis.ch/bilingual](https://www.zis.ch/bilingual)

• Ukrainian support



ZIS was proud to welcome 27 Ukrainian students to the school during 2021/22, based on where there was availability in classes and whether the school could meet the individual needs of the child. We're also delighted to have gained funding to support seven Upper School students as they complete their education at ZIS.

• Villars Institute

Inaugural Villars Institute symposium focuses on leaders of tomorrow

From teamwork to leadership skills, the first Villars Institute symposium was an experience no future leader should miss – and six ZIS students were lucky enough to attend.

The non-profit foundation is dedicated to accelerating the transition to a net zero economy and restoring the health of the planet for all. As a platform for change, it brings together future potential leaders in a spirit of collaboration, allowing students to discover new ideas, opportunities and knowledge.

“The world can be intimidating to begin any leadership role,” says attendee Lexi Weibel, Class of 2022 (2009-22). “But any leader, or anyone, must not worry. When we are a team, we make it to our goals not alone but with peers who care and strive with us; who want the best for our futures.”

• ZIS Community

In memoriam

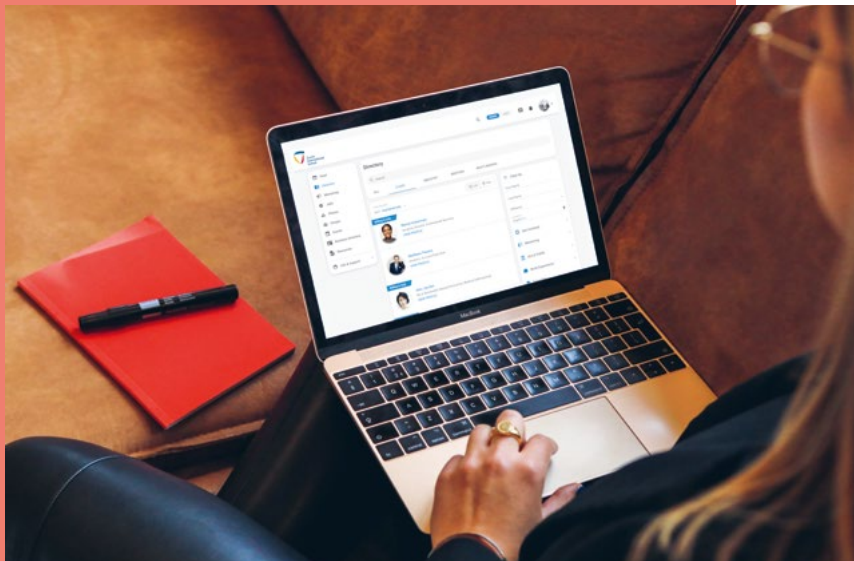


ZIS was very sad to learn of the recent deaths of two of its former teachers, Ian Dealey and Chris Ramsay.

Ian Dealey (above left), who passed away in July, was a much-loved Chemistry and Mathematics teacher, and a former Deputy Principal, at the American International School of Zurich, ZIS predecessor school, between 1963 to 1990. He not only defined the word ‘educator,’” wrote Barbara Roche in tribute, “but also the term ‘cool.’”

In 2015, Ian was recognised with the John Mattern Award. “He was a wonderfully multi-faceted man who excelled as both a math and chemistry teacher and a soccer and track coach,” wrote the John Mattern Award Committee’s Harry Korine.

Chris Ramsay (above right), who taught English and English as a Foreign Language from 1977 to 1990, died in August. Her daughter, Alison, Class of 1981 (1977-1981), said: “Even through her dementia she had crystal-clear and solid memories of her teaching career at AISZ, and spoke often of her students and fellow faculty members and friends. She truly loved her years in Zurich.”



• ZIS Global Community

New platform for ZIS community

Want to reconnect with former classmates and see what they’ve been up to? Expand your professional network? Advance your career through connections working in top companies? Or perhaps you want to give back to ZIS and offer your expertise to our graduating students?

Join our new global community online platform for alumni, parents and employees. Signing up is simple and should take less than two minutes - just visit globalcommunity.zis.ch where you can import your LinkedIn or Facebook profile. We’re looking forward to seeing you there.

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From the Director



Lisa Lyle

My term in culture

I have been reading

Walk Out Walk On: A Learning Journey into Communities Daring to Live the Future Now by Margaret Wheatley and Deborah Frieze.

I have been listening to

The Joe Gardener Show podcast, all about organic vegetable gardening and making the world a better place through sustainable practices.

I have been cooking

Texas Sheet Cake. As a Texan, I grew up eating a cake like this at family reunions and church pot-lucks. Find my recipe at zis.ch/texancake.

New opportunities to learn encourage new ways of thinking, which is why we put broadening students' horizons at the heart of the ZIS Experience.

• Photography **Oliver Oettli**

There's a kind of magic that takes place at ZIS. Our students explore an incredible range of topics and take part in a hugely varied number of activities. Each one brings the chance to dig deeper, bringing life to further learning and - this is the magical part - sparking an interest that will animate engagement for a lifetime.

I see our students embarking on this journey of exploration on a daily basis, in and around the school; and, of course, our new Middle School is now a beacon for this style of learning. Much more than simply a building, the Middle School represents everything we believe in - from our philosophy of education, with its focus on the development of critical thinking, to the embodiment of the ZIS Experience. It offers even more opportunities for our students to be stretched, with fantastic new spaces for cross-age group music, play and learning. It is, indeed, the future of learning.

It will also, no doubt, encourage new ways of thinking, a flame we look to fan at every turn. This Fall, for instance, our Middle and Upper School students took part in a Design Thinking program, bringing together external partners such as Globalance, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Credit Suisse with our brightest minds, to tackle industry-specific sustainability challenges.

Then there is the wide range of after-school activities that continually ignite new interests, as well as our Beyond the Classroom activities, which I am thrilled to see back in full swing. These activities are carefully planned to connect our students across both campuses to our principles of Learn, Care, Challenge, Lead.

Of course, we want students to have fun. We also want them to understand what it is to be an independent member of our modern society, and to explore their place in that world to its fullest. I'm always excited to hear about their adventures: most recently we've seen students exploring on campus as well as venturing both near - across a variety of Swiss locations - and far, including a conservation trip to Croatia to observe marine mammals in their natural environment and help gather data to ensure their survival.

We want students to understand what it is to be an independent member of our society, to explore their place in that world to its fullest

I even had the chance to see our students living the 'local impact, global reach' principle at first hand, when I joined six Upper School students at the inaugural Villars Institute symposium. Our students

were treated to a powerful three-day immersion in some of the key issues in future sustainability, and I was blown away by how super-engaged, curious and committed they were.

All these activities reinforce the notion that young people have enormous capacity to learn, engage and make change. And as a result, we can, do and must expect much of them. Our job is to give them every opportunity to gain the insight and skills they will need, broadening their horizons and helping them to take their place as global citizens, shaping all our futures in the decades to come. **Z**

Community

• Illustration **Carla McRae**



ZISMeets

There are a series of exciting ZISMeets events planned for the coming months, such as events in Zurich on 15 December and then New York, Chicago and San Francisco in March 2023.

These follow a series of successful events around the world; for instance, Lisa Lyle met former teacher Don Bowden (above) while in San Francisco for a ZISMeets in April, and there was a successful 'auf Wiedersehen' breakfast in September at the Spinnergut Villa attended by more than 200 alumni. This was followed by reunions for the classes of 2002, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

To find out about upcoming events near you, visit zis.ch/one-zis-community/alumni or globalcommunity.zis.ch

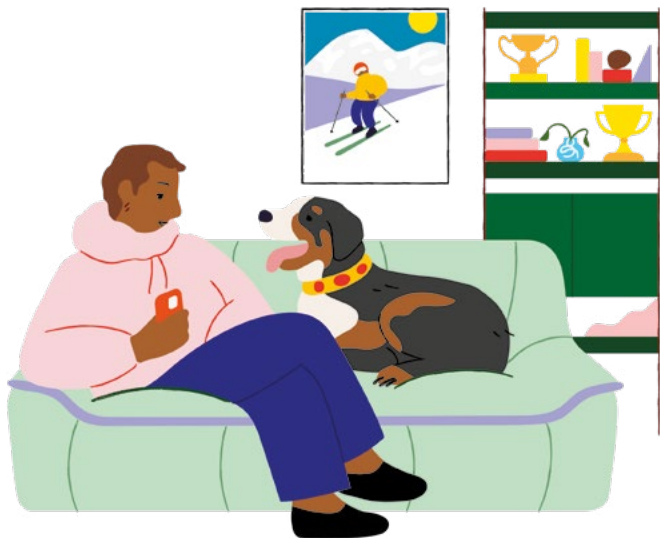
John Mattern award

Former IB Coordinator and Biology and Geography teacher Joe Amato (below) has been chosen as the 2022 recipient of the John Mattern Alumni Award for Faculty.

Named in honor of the school's first headteacher, the award recognises a former faculty member who has provided an exceptionally high degree of individual attention to students. Joe, who worked at ZIS from 2000 to 2020, was nominated by numerous alumni who described him as inspiring, supportive, approachable and humorous.

Meanwhile, we were delighted to welcome back last year's winner, Rob Caramella, for a celebration at the Lower School. "Mr. Rob" was joined by Mark Schulz, Deputy Director and students to be awarded a plaque from Ceyda Avunduk, Class of 2001 (1995-2001).

To read more about the award and its past winners, visit zis.ch/one-zis-community/alumni/john-mattern-award



ZIS Gazette

• Career Forum

We always welcome the opportunity to hear from our alumni community and in March and November, alumni shared their career experiences with our Grade 10 students at the annual Career Forum.

• Alumni books in the library

We've designated a shelf in our new Secondary Campus library where we will feature books written by alumni authors, along with background information on them. Authors featured include: Kevin Davenport, Class of 1981 (1976-77); Richard Morais, Class of 1977 (1973-77); Chris Oggerino, Class of 1979 (1976-79); and Warren Tuttle, Class of 1973 (1968-72). If you have published a book and would like to donate a copy to our library, please contact us at alumni@zis.ch.

• Happy returns

We were thrilled to welcome back two prestigious graduates to the school recently, to talk to students about their experiences. Drew Bard Varges, Class of 2011 (2005-11), returned to the Upper School in November to speak with Grade 11 and 12 students about his experience as an undergraduate at McGill University and his MBA studies at MIT Management Sloan School alongside his work as an investor. And Alex Pérez, Class of 2008 (2001-08), gave sports science students an insight into the merits and challenges of his career with the NBA in Europe, Formula E and now as a partnership manager with FIFA.

If you are interested in talking to students about your experiences, contact us at alumni@zis.ch



ZIS students are winners!

We're thrilled to congratulate two members of the ZIS community who have struck gold this year.

Grade 12 student David Fankhauser was a member of the Swiss team that won the International Young Physicists' Tournament. It was the first time Switzerland has won this prestigious competition, which saw teams from nearly 30 countries compete in Romania this summer.

"Thanks to a strong performance over the course of five rounds, we qualified for the finals against Singapore and Poland," says David. "With an outstanding team performance, we surprised serial winner Singapore to take home the trophy. We were not expecting to beat the tough competition, so I was all the more excited and proud to win."

And congratulations also to Freddy Macdonald, Class of 2019 (2015-19), who has won an Oscar!

Freddy was successful in the Narrative category of the Student Academy Awards for *Shedding Angels*, his culminating project at the American Film Institute. The editor on the film is fellow ZIS alum Jessica Petersen-Gyongyosi, Class of 2014 (2012-14), who also went to the American Film Institute.

Freddy has been back in Switzerland this autumn shooting his first feature-length movie, a continuation of *Sew Torn*, a 'short' made during his time at ZIS.



Connections: Old friends are part of the pack

From Zurich to the world: how one group of friends brought Switzerland to San Francisco.

• Words **Kat Brown** • Photography **Cynthia Towle**

Even by the usual standards of close-knit alumni, there must have been something in the water for the Class of 1976. The group were drawn together by circumstance and have stayed together through friendship - a significant number moved to the San Francisco Bay Area after graduation, with numbers swelled by other graduates who also moved there.

It started with **Vasco Morais** (1971-75) and **Sandra Day** (née Burgo, 1971-76), both Class of 1976, who became firm friends in kindergarten in Zurich. At the American International School of Zurich (AISZ) in the 70s they were joined by **Mike Head** (1971-72), **Tim Tuttle** (1971-72) and **Kevin Verch** (1971-74), followed by **Boyd Bel** (1971-75) and **Carolyn Herrick** (1972-73), all Class of 1976, and **Kevin Walraven**, Class of 1977 (1974-76), to form a close-knit gang of friends, which steadily expanded (see caption, right).

“What was so special about the AISZ was that, because of its size, we were one family. In large American high schools, students tend to limit their friendships to cliques, but due to the small class sizes at AISZ, we were able to interact much more, mixing with a wider variety of people and allowing us to know each other more intimately.”

When Boyd Bel’s family moved to Belvedere near San Francisco for Boyd’s senior year of high school, Vasco, who had at that point never lived in the US, moved to Belvedere too. After graduation, school friends migrated over to Berkeley and San Francisco for college. “Because we didn’t have any family close by, we became reliant on each other. We were each other’s family; we were there for each other through

thick or thin. We literally did everything together,” says Vasco.

The Bel family’s holiday home on the Marin County coast became a weekend retreat where their ranks were swelled by other visiting friends. With such a group to wrangle, you might expect military organisation. Far from it, says Vasco. “That’s what was really beautiful, it was just very organic. Someone would call with an idea and we’d all travel to meet up.”

He remembers hiking to Kirby’s Cove just below the Golden Gate Bridge to play capture the flag, and one year, they headed up to a festival in the Sierra Mountains. “Sandra and I hopped in a car with nothing, and then we were in the fairgrounds with thousands of other people - and sure enough we find the Swiss-Berkeley crowd and end up camping.”

These friends from ’76 have marked every decade since they turned 40 with a party, often with other friends from adjacent school years. “Our 40th was up in Dillon Beach near Boyd’s house; about 40 people came for a four-day party and we built a big bonfire. When we turned 50, we had a large event in San Francisco, and then a much smaller event when we turned 60 - just for our class.” Rather than wait for their 70th, the plan is to go to Zurich, where Sandra lives, to mark their 65th. “We all retired early, except Tad,” chuckles Vasco. “He’s a workaholic.”

So, what’s the special sauce that keeps this group going? It’s simple, Vasco says. “We lived that expat life, which in Zurich tends to bring you closer. But the other part is we just really enjoy each other’s company.” **Z**



San Francisco Bay
Area-based **Vasco Morais**,
Class of 1976 (1971-75).



“We didn’t have any family close by, we became reliant on each other”

California dreamin’

The wide group of friends includes Vasco (pictured on left, with friends BJ and Wolfie) as well as Karen Scatamacchia (née Nielson) (1971-72), Ron Campini (1972-76) and Diane Prystas (1971-74), all Class of 1976, Lili Burgo, Class of 1972 (1967-72), Cindy, Class of 1975 (1971-75) and Debbie Gavin, Class of 1973 (1971-73), and the late Kevin Walraven, Class of 1977 (1974-76).

• Connections

24 hours in Milan



Milanese ZIS parent Massimiliano Nunziata shares his insider’s guide to the global capital of fashion and design.



07.00

Enjoy a pastry

Pasticceria Sissi is famous for its pastries – their fruit pastries with cream are sensational. And its shady garden is a good place to hideaway for a coffee or freshly pressed pomegranate juice.

10.00

Browsing in Brera

Brera is one of the city’s oldest neighbourhoods and where you’ll find the Pinacoteca di Brera art gallery. But there are many smaller clothes and antique shops that you’ll only find in Milan.

13.00

Explore a food hall

If you know the food halls of Globus or Jelmoli in Zurich, then Peck is like that to the power of ten. This friendly indoor market has high-quality produce, including fruit, ham, cheese and wine.

16.00

Visit two Scalas

Catching an opera at Teatro alla Scala is a must, but there’s another Scala to visit – the San Siro football stadium (and watch the Milan derby, between AC Milan and Inter Milan if you can).

18.00

Enjoy art in the park

The Triennale di Milano is a large gallery focused on modern art and design. It’s located in a park and they have an outdoor restaurant, so you can combine your visit with an early supper.



#ZIStravels



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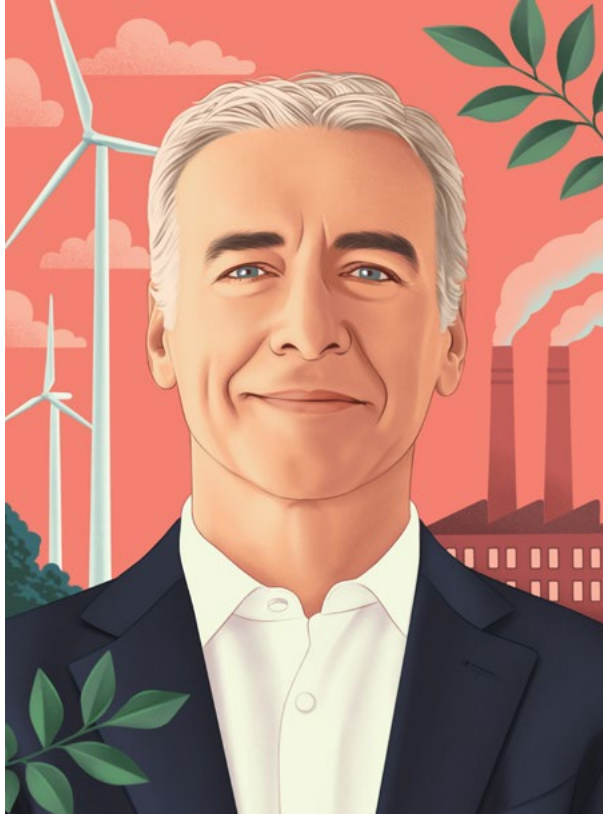
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The future of...



UBS' Michael Baldinger, a current parent, says that whatever sector you're in, transparency in your climate change plan could make or break your business.

• Interview **Kat Brown** • Illustration **Helen Green**

One of the biggest challenges facing the global economy right now? Climate. As the Chief Sustainability Officer at UBS, I've long been aware of the critical role that the risks and opportunities of a warmer world play for businesses and economies - and they're playing out right in front of us now. Just look at the way the Rhine's low watermark this summer impacted Germany, Europe's largest economy, and its ability to transport products.

Sustainability is reshaping economies and business. In today's markets, investors come armed with insights into companies' business models - the goods and services they provide and their interactions with stakeholders. And just as consumers can compare best prices, that same transparency is being applied to corporations.

Nowadays, investors can scrutinise companies' climate reports just like they interrogate balance sheets. They can see where the climate-related risks and opportunities lie, and, thanks to frameworks like the Task Force for Climate Related Disclosures (TCFD), they can compare one company against another. That transparency then helps them make highly informed, holistic decisions about where they invest their money.

So if a business wants to attract scarce capital, they need to be smart about how they operate. They need to demonstrate a very clear strategy for transforming their existing business model into one that's fit for the 21st century. Because what we see today is a growing weight of capital shifting towards those organizations that are creating long-term value across a broad group of stakeholders, including employees, customers and investors.

So while there are risks in the climate transition, there are also great opportunities. It's estimated that more than eighty per cent of global GDP is committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The power of these commitments is that they, in turn, are driving a wave of groundbreaking new technologies and partnerships. Innovation comes not as a gentle curve, but a sudden vertical swoop.

I've always said that the capital markets are the most effective transmission mechanism for promoting corporate sustainability. Speaking personally, and in my role as a CSO, I really believe the business case for net zero is a force to be reckoned with. It's not about sacrificing financial performance, it's about knowing what the impact of that performance really is. Whether a company operates in the fossil fuel sector, retail, manufacturing or finance, they have to understand which sustainability

Net zero commitments are driving a wave of new technologies and partnerships

issues matter most for their sector and organization - and then act accordingly.

We need better data, however, and we also need much greater alignment between regulators around the world to better support investors and corporates as they invest and spend. But as the understanding and expertise around sustainability grows and deepens, the closer we will get towards the reality of 2050 and a net zero world. **Z**

Climate strategies

Michael Baldinger's top three tips for creating a sustainable future

Turn down the heating

The current crisis has really focused attention on what we can do to reduce our energy consumption. It's been estimated that if thermostats across the EU block were turned down by just one to two degrees Celsius, then 130 terawatt hours of energy could be saved over the course of one year.

Offset that travel

Transport is a significant contributor to global GHG emissions, so companies (and individuals) should look to offset wherever possible.

Save water

Simple steps like rainwater collection and recycling, with that water to be used in buildings or for irrigating grounds, can make a big difference.



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Everyone wants to be a creative



Design thinking is taking the world by storm. And no wonder – its potential is huge. But what is it, and why is creativity so vital to what might seem like uncreative tasks?

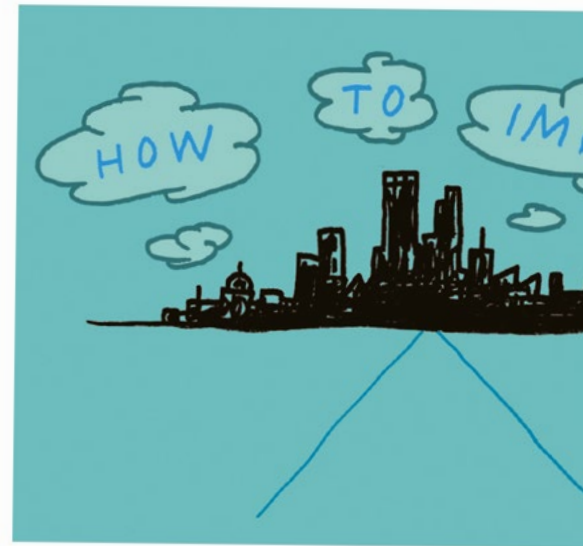
• Words Lucy Jolin • Illustrations Paul Davis

McKinsey analysts hanging out with designers. Boston Consulting Group partners discussing the importance of experimentation. There's a reason why formerly numbers-driven industries are embracing iteration, agile thinking and jobs containing the word 'creative'. It's called design thinking: a problem-solving strategy that seems more at home in the studio than the office. It's likely to change the way we solve problems both big and small forever - and it's now a big part of the ZIS experience.

Design thinking was first introduced at Stanford University in the 1960s as a way of teaching engineers how to approach problems creatively. Its ideas began to find their way into the business world, thanks in part to legendary design consultancy IDEO, founded in 1991 and headquartered in California. IDEO defined design thinking as "a human-centred approach to innovation that draws from the designer's toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology and the requirements for business success". This problem-solving methodology then translates to a simple - though not necessarily easy - process.

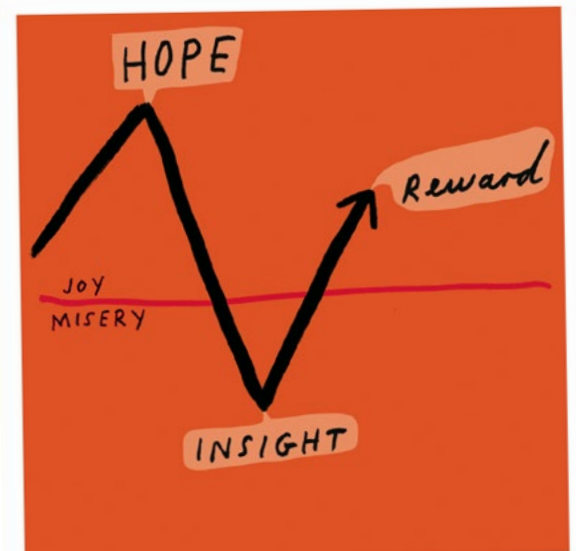
In 2005, Stanford began teaching design thinking as an approach to technical and social innovation. Now, it's routinely taught by prestigious universities - including ETH in Zurich - as part of their curriculum or as a stand-alone Design Thinking Master's programme. The ideas it espouses are used in sectors from banking to car manufacturing and hospital design to computer game creation.

And it's why ZIS now incorporates design thinking across its curriculum. "In very basic terms, all we're actually doing is providing a problem for the students and a framework for how to navigate it," says **John Northridge**, ZIS's STEM Coordinator. "During a project, students have to use their prior understanding to try and tackle it, but at a certain point their prior knowledge hits a limit and they need to extend their understanding. If we have a process such as design thinking, we can start with the problem and we work



Design thinking is a human-centred approach to innovation that draws from the designer's toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology and the requirements for business success

- IDEO





our way through that problem by developing a real understanding of the needs and pain points of the people impacted by the problem.”

John uses the examples of students being asked to tackle the problem of sustainable food production in megacities, from which ideas of building floating farms emerged, with integrated aquaponics and renewable energy production. This, in turn, means students need to understand photosynthesis, water management and the circular economy, extending into other subjects such as mathematics and design.

“Having a built component in the project where possible means that students engage with their learning on a new level,” says John. “They are not just thought experiments. They actually have to design and build a solution to the problem.” He also points to opportunities closer to home, with a design thinking challenge set for Grade 12 students that aims to develop solutions to traffic management on the new Secondary Campus. They can use design thinking to generate campaigns that are designed to nudge behaviours towards more sustainable travel choices.

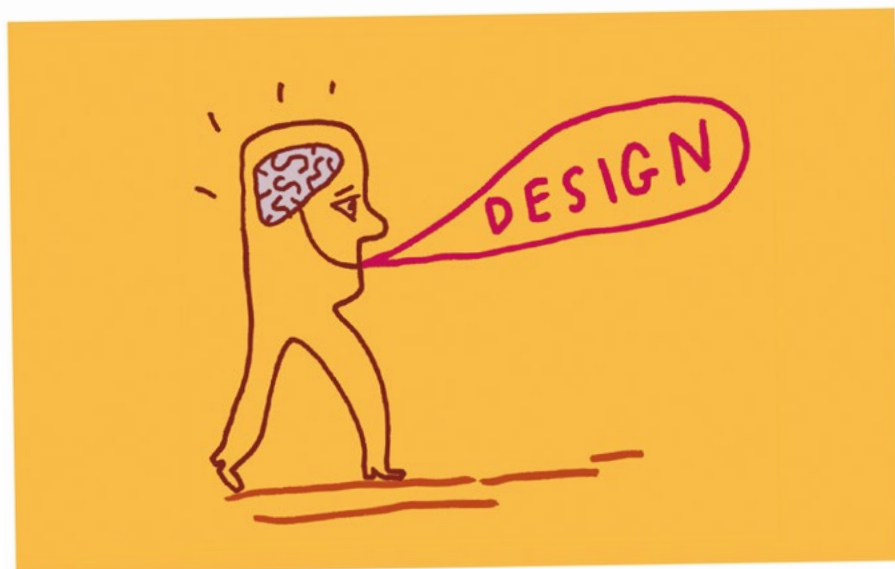
One valuable aspect of design thinking is changing student mindsets to appreciate that failure is a real part of the process – to be more reflective on what we’re trying to achieve

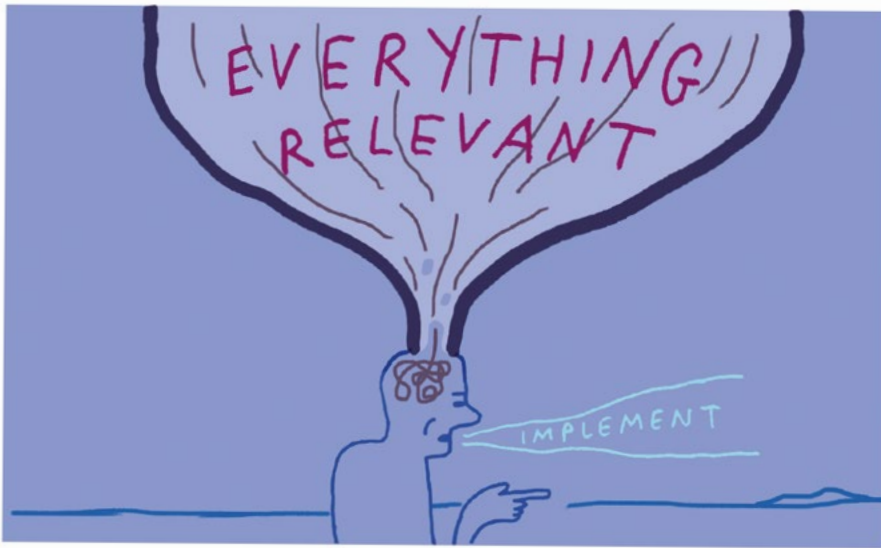
**– JOHN NORTHRIDGE,
ZIS STEM COORDINATOR**



“Just going through the design thinking process teaches students valuable skills, such as teamwork, independent research, communication – and, vitally, how to fail,” says John. “One of the most valuable aspects of design thinking is changing student mindsets to appreciate that failure is a real part of the process and only serves to strengthen the final product. In many cases, there are lots of different solutions and no single right answer. It encourages us to think a little bit more and be more metacognitively reflective on what it is that we’re trying to achieve. I think that’s a valuable lesson for learning – but also for life.”

In April, ZIS ran its inaugural Design Thinking Event, initiated by the Board Committee on Corporate Partnerships as part of ZIS’s Strategic Plan. It brought industry partners together with students to tackle industry-specific challenges using the design thinking process. Each industry partner set a specific challenge to a student group, and a ZIS educator alongside a coach from Sparklabs at ETH Zurich supported them throughout. At the end of the event, each group presented their solutions to parents.

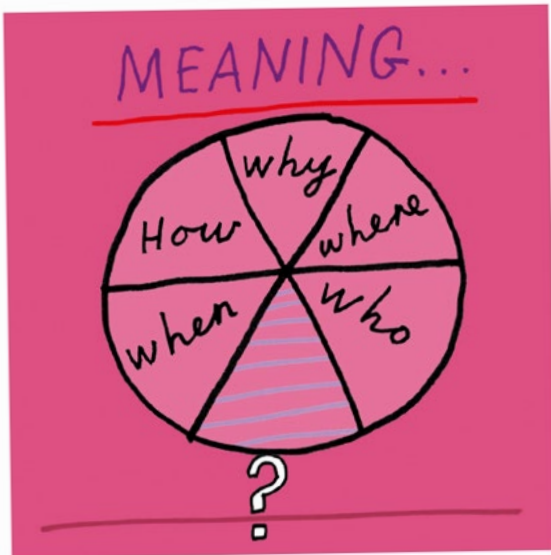




“Our group was assigned the ZHAW, and their question was: ‘How can we find better ways of living in a city?’” says **Monica Meijer** (Grade 12). “We went deep into defining the question and we ended up looking at more general solutions for all city dwellers. We considered all kinds of aspects, from availability of basics like food and transport to creating more sustainable cities. Our final idea was something small, but which could have a big impact on energy saving - a light switch which turns itself on and off when you walk in and out of a room.”

Monica says her main takeaway from the event was the importance of empathy in problem-solving. But, she adds, she’s also gained an insight into how the problems facing her generation might be approached. “In fact, I feel like I’ve seen the future. Ten years ago, design thinking wasn’t so important. Now, as challenges get more complex, I think it will be the way forward.”

Marco Dönier, project manager for CSX Strategy at Credit Suisse, was at the event. “For me, design thinking is a toolkit and a beautiful approach for both business and for life,” he says. “It first enables me to empathise



I feel like I’ve seen the future. Ten years ago, design thinking wasn’t so important. Now, as challenges get more complex, I think it will be the way forward

- **MONICA MEIJER, GRADE 12**
ZIS DESIGN THINKING EVENT ATTENDEE



with a problem or with a situation. Then I need to define and understand the problem or the situation. Next, it’s ideation - coming up with a bunch of solutions that help me to solve a problem. And lastly, it helps me to prototype and test those potential solutions. It’s an iterative process: when something is not right, you can just step back and start over again. It’s an approach that helps me to find the best possible outcome.”

Conventional thinking produces a product or service that a client or customer must fit to their needs. In design thinking, it’s the other way around: the problem, rather than the product, comes first. This human-centred aspect of design thinking makes it very effective for innovation, says **Kerstin Strubel**, founder of the Lupo Marketing Training Company, alumni parent and former trustee.

Kerstin says that, these days, corporations regard design thinking as a core competency. And they recognise the value of a design thinking approach, not just to solve problems but also to boost collaboration. “Employees are trained to be creative in finding solutions collaboratively across different functions in the organisation,” she says. “For many companies this

Design thinking is totally industry agnostic. It can be used to design a new car, define a new customer service for a bank, to build an app for an ecommerce business, or find a way to encourage people to recycle more

– KERSTIN STRUBEL, PAST TRUSTEE

methodology is used in innovation departments, to come up with new products or services.”

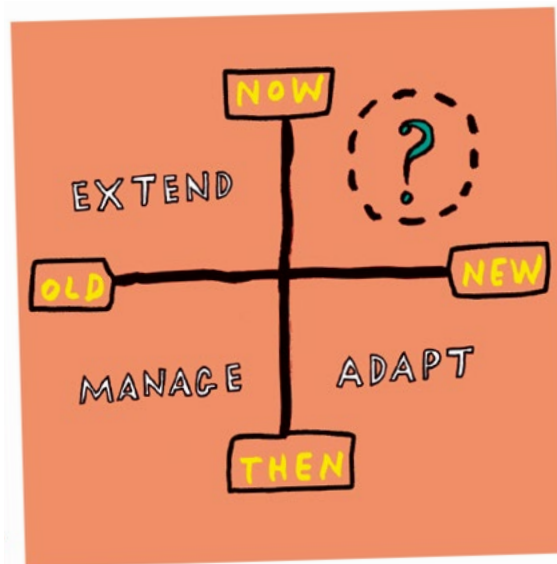
In fact, design thinking, Kerstin says, is “totally industry agnostic”. It can be used to design a new car, define a new customer service for a bank, to build an app for an ecommerce business, or find a way to encourage people to recycle more. And its cross-collaborative ethos means it’s perfect for solving complex problems that can’t be overcome by one person, one discipline or one company department alone, such as reducing carbon emissions or driving the sustainability agenda. But its flexibility also means that it’s increasingly being applied in different fields, such as education.

“The way I approach learning is that we should not be looking at subject-specific problems,” says John. “In the world of work, you don’t use English on one day, then maths on another. We should be bringing subjects together into meaningful projects, looking at real problems that students can see and experience in the real world.

“It could be big challenges, like global warming, or smaller ones, like getting more students to walk to school. But to solve a problem, you must look at it with a different mindset that reaches across different subjects, from maths to geography to IT. ‘What’s the problem? How can I find out more about it? What materials might I need to fix it? Who are the experts in this field who can help tackle this problem?’”

Marco points to two key tenets of design thinking: ‘fail fast’ and ‘kill your darlings’. “Say you design what you think is the best, most comfortable running shoe. You test it with professional runners. They say it’s OK, but not great. Rather than arguing, you listen to what the professional runners have said, and you immediately adapt your product.”

Design thinking has the power to change the world for the better - but it’s still a relatively young methodology. And ZIS students, says Kerstin, are perfectly placed to take it forward. “It will truly set them apart when they apply for universities or jobs in later life. It enables them to effectively work together in a team and keep a creative and solution-oriented mind. And it will enable them to be leaders for positive change in the future.” Z



A helping hand

Compassion is the most human of emotions, good for those around us but also good for ourselves. That's why ZIS is finding new ways to help.

• Words **Clare Thorp** • Photography **Kate Peters**

Like most of us, Grade 3 student Kori Taylor was deeply touched by the TV images of desperate Ukrainians having to flee their homes. “Every morning we’d look at the news and see bombs coming down and people leaving to go somewhere else,” says Kori. “I felt really bad seeing people go through that.”

Though only nine years old, Kori (Class of 2031, 2015-22) knew she wanted to do something to help. “I had an idea that we should have a sale to raise money for Ukraine,” she says. She put it to her teacher, Kimberley Bentley, who connected her with the Student Council to help make it a reality. Kori’s class then came together to make bracelets, earrings, bookmarks and clips to sell. They raised more than CHF3,000 for Save The Children’s Ukraine appeal - with the school matching the profits to double the size of the donation.

“It made me happy that people really cared,” says Kori. It also made her mother, Morven, extremely proud. “It was her idea, but it got bigger and bigger and it was really fabulous,” says Morven. “It wasn’t just about raising money, it was also about people coming together to demonstrate compassion. I think that’s what sets ZIS apart: values are so integral - and compassion is something we see encouraged across the school.”

Compassion is the most human of responses - and one that ZIS actively seeks to nurture in its students. A few weeks before she raised money for Ukraine, Kori took part in the school’s second annual Compassion Project. Over four weeks in February, Lower School students learned more about what compassion and self-compassion are and how they can be practised in daily life. As part of the project, they were asked





Shona
Grade 7
Food waste initiative

Tackling food waste is a recent focus for the Middle School Eco-Schools Club. "The poster we designed helps students and staff better understand the impact of food waste on the planet, and what we can do about it. Hopefully this will help us tackle the problem here."





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**Issy and Sophia
Grade 5
Ukraine fundraising project**

Isabel de Wit, Sophia Holzmeister and Kori Taylor (Grade 4) came up with a self-made bracelet project in support of children in Ukraine, including all planning and organisation. "We were really happy that our classmates joined in, making yellow and blue and other beautifully designed bracelets. We sold loads at the booth, and raised more than CHF3,000."

to observe fellow students practising acts of compassion. These "caught in the act" moments were posted on a Compassion Wall and included helping others put on gloves, inviting others to join in with games, picking up litter in the playground and comforting those who had hurt themselves in the playground.

"I loved seeing the kids so excited about seeing compassion in our community," says Janna Trontvet, Lower School Assistant Principal, the driving force behind the project. "Compassion is one of the school's core character standards - and one that feels more important than ever. We're really focused on building an inclusive, compassionate community and every year we

We're really focused on building an inclusive, compassionate community, and every year we look at ways that we can do that

look at ways that we can do that," she says. "But I think Covid and our current reality has made us even more intentional about it. I've helped a variety of kids this year - and I know other teachers have as well - who have seen something in the news or heard about something and just have such a willingness and such a good heart to help."

Humans have an innate capacity for compassion, but research shows it's also something that we can cultivate and get better at. At the University of Sussex's School of Psychology, Dr Jenny Gu is working to further our understanding of compassion. She defines it as "the capacity to recognise suffering and its universality, be able to tolerate elicited feelings, and act to alleviate any suffering".

That suffering covers a range of negative emotions - including sadness, fear, anger, frustration and guilt. Compassion is different from kindness, says Jenny, because



Oscar
Grade 12
Youth peer
education projects

Oscar Dohr dedicates his own time to work on projects facilitating youth peer education, to empower young people to create change. "I co-founded Youthtopia and represent young people at conferences and in board meetings for companies and NGOs around the world. I like connecting with like-minded people, as it gives me hope in a time when we are all facing great challenges."





it is a specific response to suffering. “Remembering someone’s birthday or making someone a cup of tea can be kind but not necessarily compassionate.”

Jenny says that cultivating compassion not only benefits others but ourselves, too. “Compassion can help us realise how interconnected we all are in life, and view our experiences, and suffering, as shared rather than isolating,” says Jenny. “We really are all in it together. It’s no wonder, then, that it’s linked to a range of positive outcomes such as better mental health and wellbeing, improved relationships, and greater happiness.” She refers to a quote from Albert Einstein, who said that compassion helps us break the “optical delusion” that we are separate from each other. Einstein said: “Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”

Society benefits when people have the requisite degree of compassion or empathy, and there’s a great deal of room for it in the business world. I think compassion is a necessary part of the job. You don’t have to be harsh to succeed. I owe that attitude to the school and to my parents

A recent act of compassion proved especially rewarding for **Marc Cannizzo**, Class of 1975 (1970-75), who, like Kori Taylor, was also moved by the events taking place in Ukraine. Marc, a financial services trainer who lives in Bucharest, reached out to an old AISZ classmate, **Dirk Kuyper**, Class of 1975 (1970-75), whose wife is Ukrainian, to ask if there was anything he could do to help. When Dirk said his wife’s sister and niece were trying to flee Odessa, Marc immediately offered to go and meet them at the border and bring them to his home. “It was a no-brainer,” he says, despite not having seen Dirk in person since they graduated. “What bonds us is the family atmosphere we had back at AISZ in the 1970s. It’s like long-lost relatives.”

Marc met Dirk’s wife’s family members in a border town and brought them back to Bucharest where they stayed for two and a half weeks before they could get the visas that would allow them to join Dirk and his wife in the United States. “It was just a wonderful experience. It turned my house into a home. They made borscht for me and the mother painted my portrait.”

When Marc was at AISZ, compassion wasn’t taught explicitly, but it was ingrained in everyday life. “It was just simply the way we treated each other with respect and the way the teachers treated us as adults. There was always an expectation that one should be kind and tolerant.” He credits the staff and teachers for leading

by example. “Auggie Zemo, the Director at the time, just exuded a sense of compassion and tolerance.”

The value of compassion is something that has stayed with him throughout his life and career. “Society benefits when people have the requisite degree of compassion or empathy, and there’s a great deal of room for it in the business world,” he says. “I’ve managed people, and I think compassion is a necessary part of the job. You don’t have to be harsh to succeed. I owe that attitude to my school and to my parents.”

Nathan Taylor, Middle School Social Studies Teacher and Social and Emotional Learning Working Group Chair at ZIS, agrees that compassion comes from the top down. “There are some truly remarkable human beings that teach here,” he says. “I feel really lucky to work at a place that’s full of people who are constantly challenging me and challenging each other to be the best versions of ourselves.”

When it comes to social and emotional learning, putting it into practice is also vital, he says - which is what makes the Compassion Project so successful. “It’s a muscle that we have to train,” he says. “What the school does so well is give students a lot of opportunities to practise the skill with others.”

Nathan has run focus groups with parents to get their views on the school’s social and emotional curriculum. “Interestingly, they compared ZIS students - not only their own but other students at the school too - to other kids in their lives, and they noticed this really amazing contrast. Politeness was a word that came out, and the helpful spirit of students - these were things that they noticed in ZIS students that they maybe hadn’t noticed in some other kids.”

It doesn’t go unnoticed in the school corridors, either. “When you walk through the hallway, it’s just amazing what you see students and teachers model in terms of our character standards,” says Janna. She points out that compassion comes in different ways at different times as part of ZIS life, and that it doesn’t have to be grandiose gestures every time.

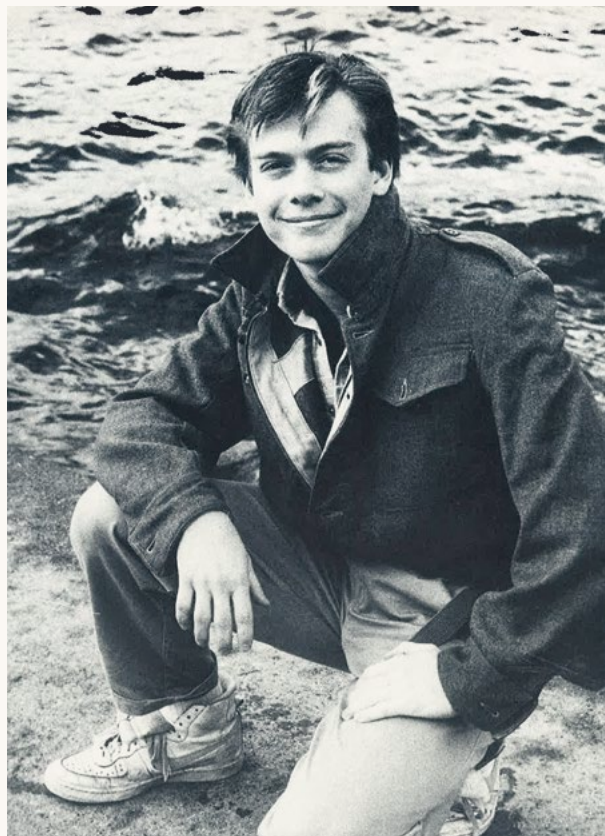
“These little acts of compassion throughout the day make such a massive difference in how our community feels. The Compassion Project is something really great that we do, but it’s just one little bit of what’s happening every day here.” **Z**

The time of our lives



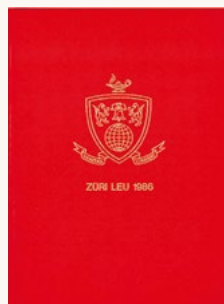
New teachers, new facilities, new approaches. Like all those who want to remain at the top, ZIS is constantly evolving – but our ethos has held fast over six decades. We asked what the ZIS Experience has meant to you.

• Words **Clare Thorp** • Images **ZIS Yearbooks**



→ Marcus Weiss' senior portrait 1986.

↓ AISZ Yearbook 1986.



Marcus Weiss

Class of 1986 (1982-86)

Marcus joined the Middle School (then at AISZ, the American International School of Zurich), following in the footsteps of his older siblings, who had already made the jump from the Swiss public school system.

He was getting on well in Swiss school but, roped in to play drums for an AISZ musical that his brother and sister were starring in, Marcus was so struck by the “warmth and embrace” of the school that he asked to be transferred there too.

Marcus remembers hurrying along on his almost two-hour commute to school, a journey that involved bicycle, train, tram and bus: “I would walk as fast as possible so that I could be one of the very first people at school. I wanted to be first because I loved being there, witnessing everyone arrive.”

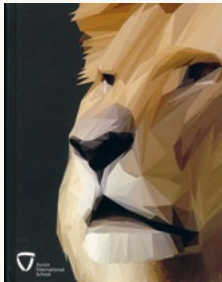
Life at the school was “full of possibilities”, Marcus recalls. “I just had this sense that the teachers were always there, with arms wide open to embrace what you would bring. They were friends, mentors and heroes.” Particular moments of learning have stayed with him: an English lesson spent under a large oak table reading *The Lord of the Rings*, for example. “There was this real individuality to the teachers,” says Marcus.

After AISZ, a liberal arts Bachelor’s degree and a Master’s in theatre, Marcus began a successful career as a performer with the likes of the Blue Man Group and Cirque du Soleil.

“I found this freedom in theatre, an ability to express myself and grow in that way; this collaborative thing that I had flourished under at AISZ” he explains. “When I think about who I became, it’s completely thanks to those years.”

“How are we ever going to finish our final expedition if we’re getting lost just an hour away from school?”

– Claire Cole, Class of 2015.



↑ Claire Coles's senior portrait 2015.

↘ Claire and the 2015 cross-country team running in the mountains.

↙ ZIS Yearbook 2015.



“I just had this sense that the teachers were always there, with arms wide open to embrace what you would bring. They were friends, mentors and heroes”

– Marcus Weiss, Class of 1986.



Claire Cole

Class of 2015 (2011-2015)

Spending the night camped outside the Upper School sports hall wasn't what Claire envisioned when she signed up for the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Bronze Award. But that's exactly what happened after she and her friends got hopelessly lost during a Grade 9 practice expedition ahead of a much more ambitious trip to the Alps.

“There's a hillside just outside the school - it was so close!” recalls Claire, chuckling at the memory. “We ended up having to be picked up. All we could think was, ‘How are we ever going to finish our final expedition if we're getting lost just an hour away from school?’” It worked out fine in the end - more than fine in fact, with Claire going on to complete Silver and Gold awards during her time at ZIS.

It's not just the memories of those years that have stayed with Claire. The friendships she made at ZIS have proved just as enduring - she was at a wedding with many of her fellow hikers this summer, and has kept in touch with a lot of the other people she graduated with.

And after joining the school midway through Grade 8 in 2011, her family having relocated to Zurich from the Netherlands, she believes it's thanks to those fellow students that she settled in at ZIS so quickly. “I had the chance in Middle School to improve my English and focus on making good friends,” she says, “so I was able to start Upper School with a group of friends and with more confidence in my English abilities.”

She also fondly remembers the support of her teachers, one - Paul Doolan - in particular. “He's one of those teachers that can just talk for an hour and continue to engage everybody in the classroom, a teacher that has so much passion for his subject that he will happily talk about the subject at length and make it funny and then act things out. Super knowledgeable, quirky, engaging, funny - it was just a blast going to his classes.”





Richard Daetwiler

Class of 1987 (1983-87)

For Richard, it was the international nature of AISZ that made the biggest impact on his life. “The school was a microcosm of different cultures from all around the world,” he says.

Coming into that environment from a Swiss school, this self-described “multicultural kid who grew up parts of his youth in Asia and then Switzerland” felt immediately at home. Not only that; the school “opened up my global horizons, and gave me the opportunity to make connections with teachers and students, some of whom I’m still in touch with today, even though we’re scattered all around the world,” he says.

This period proved to be excellent preparation for his career in Capital Markets, starting in Zurich and London and continuing into more than 20 years of service with UBS. “Learning about different cultures, about spending time together on a daily basis, ultimately brought me to my employment because it taught me how to work with different people from different parts of the world,” he says.

Richard has particularly fond memories of his classes with maths teacher Dale Braunschweig, who made him feel comfortable in his early days at AISZ by switching between Swiss German and English. “It was a little intimidating going from a larger classroom to the much smaller one we had at AISZ. Dale made the experience very welcoming.”

It wasn’t just the student-teacher relationships that he appreciated; there were plenty of other quirky elements to life at AISZ during that period. The weekly hot dog day tradition was a case in point. “We didn’t have the facilities to warm them, so the buns had to be warmed in the drying cycle of the dishwasher,” he remembers. Usually, this method worked just fine but it certainly wasn’t foolproof: “There were times when they would get the cycle wrong and then the buns would come out a little bit soggy. These were little growing pains that we still laugh about today.”

- ↑ Richard Daetwiler’s senior portrait, 1987.
- ✦ AISZ seniors of 1987 outside the Spinnergut Villa.
- ✦ AISZ Yearbook 1987



“ZIS opened up my global horizons, and gave me the opportunity to make connections with teachers and students, some of whom I’m still in touch with today, even though we’re scattered all around the world”

– Richard Daetwiler, Class of 1987.



↑ Brett Morachnick and his Grade 7 advisory.
 ➔ Charli Morachnick and Team Ghana.
 → ZIS Yearbook 2013.



Nikki Morachnick

Parent of Charli, Class of 2016 (2007-13)
 and Brett, Class of 2018 (2007-13)

ZIS has long proved a welcoming environment, not just for its students but also for their families too. For **Nikki**, this began even before she and her family arrived in Zurich from the US, when the school organised a ZIS pen pal for her daughter, **Charli**.

“The day I was moving in, **Anette Allde** came and picked up my daughter and took her for a playdate with her daughter,” Nikki says. “That was so much nicer because I was trying to handle the whole move by myself with two children. A lot of times the working spouse travels a great deal and my husband was no exception: he travelled about 75 per cent of the time. So it was nice to have a community of other moms and dads that were stay at home that could help out when I needed it.”

Nikki threw herself into the life of the school, facilitating other families’ arrivals into Zurich as Parents’ Association Vice President of Welcome and Community and becoming “drama mama” when Charli and son **Brett** became heavily involved in co-curricular theatre activities.

Such was the closeness of the relationship that in 2012, when Nikki was diagnosed with a brain tumour and had to undergo life-saving surgery, it was to the school community that she turned to for support. “None of our family came over for it because it would have been more trouble for my husband to try to negotiate taking care of family members on top of the kids,” she says. Instead, another ZIS family, the **Gildersleeves**, had Charli and Brett to stay while Nikki was in hospital, and another local parent, **Bonnie Best**, took on the task of relaying news to family back in the States. The school, meanwhile, made sure that Charli and Brett and all the other students that were close to Nikki were given the space to navigate these unbelievably challenging circumstances.

“With the expat life, your friends become your family,” says Nikki. “It’s just remarkable that we felt it would be harder to have family than not. It says a lot for the community and the administration itself.” **Z**

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My passion

“Being at ZIS has really grown my awareness of other cultures. I wouldn’t trade that for anything”

Isabella Sanchez, Class of 2022 (2009-22) explored her Colombian roots through the Barefoot Service Club.

• Words **Jo Caird** • Photography **Kate Peters**

With her Colombian roots, the Upper School Barefoot Service Club was an essential choice for **Isabella Sanchez**, Class of 2022 (2009-22). Dedicated to raising awareness of, and funding for, education in Colombia and other Latin-American countries (and affiliated with Colombian singer-songwriter Shakira’s Pies Descalzos - or Barefoot - Foundation), the club offered a way for Isabella to connect with her heritage.

“It meant a lot to me,” says Isabella. “I haven’t lived in Colombia, but I visit a lot and discover various different places within it. So being in a club that helped to give back was quite lovely for me, being so far away and living a completely different life in Switzerland.”

One of her proudest achievements as a member and then President of the club was organising Barefoot Week, involving a volleyball tournament, decorating the school with Colombian posters and delivering lectures on its culture.

Another was presenting on behalf of Barefoot at the annual European conference of the Global Issues Network, which supports and grows sustainable youth-led empowerment in the face of challenges including climate change, poverty and illiteracy. Working with other clubs at ZIS, Barefoot “created an interactive story game that told the lives of three different kids facing these issues. It was the best way for people to understand what their support can do for someone else.”

And in recognition of her outstanding leadership, Isabella received an Award for International Understanding from

the Educational Collaborative for International Schools, which acknowledges students who are actively involved in promoting international understanding.

“She is a truly international student who recognises the advantages and opportunities that education offers,” said the judges. “With a humble Colombian heart, she appreciates the culture of others and was a driving force encouraging ZIS students to understand the social problems in Latin America. She is a fantastic leader who has a way of making others feel appreciated and comfortable. She leads by example and has been a positive force at ZIS throughout her time here.”

Isabella helped to raise almost CHF8,000 over the course of her time at ZIS, money that is sent to support school projects administered by the Pies Descalzos Foundation in underdeveloped areas in Colombia. As a result of her efforts, “most people at the school know more about who we are, because we try to make activities that directly correlate to Colombian culture,” she says with pride.

It wasn’t just the Barefoot Club keeping her busy at ZIS, though. Isabella was also a keen participant in Model United Nations (MUN), enjoying the debating and the chance to “delve into other issues around the world”. It’s thanks to her experiences at the MUN that she decided to go into law, which she’s now studying at the University of Bristol. “Being at ZIS for so long has really grown my awareness of other cultures,” she says. “I wouldn’t trade that for anything else.” **Z**

Klausjagen

Every December, on the eve of St Nicholas Day, something magical happens in the village of Küssnacht.

• Words [Yessica Klein](#) • Photography [Alexander Dietz](#)



Canton

At 8.15pm sharp on 5 December each year, firecrackers cut through the icy night in Küssnacht, a village 40km south of Zurich with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants. In the city centre, the lights go off. Somewhere in the pitch black, music starts and the Klausjagen begins, a unique procession that attracts more than 30,000 spectators each year.

“Carrying out the tradition and being together with the community creates a wonderful experience,” says Pascal Knüsel, President of the St. Nicholas Society. The association has been responsible for organising the Klausjagen - loosely translated as ‘St. Nicholas’s Hunt’ - since 1928, when the procession became more cultural and less chaotic. Before that, the custom had been more of a free-for-all. “To avert an official ban, dedicated Küssnachters agreed to make the local customs more civilised and to celebrate the Klaus procession with dignity,” explains Pascal.

However, it’s not the only tradition that brings spectators and Küssnachters together on a dark winter’s night. This Klausjagen also invokes a mythical allure, with its colourful spectacle of dancing Iffelen - illuminated head lanterns, lit from the inside by candles, some taller than two metres, floating eerily down the streets.

These are the most intricate part of the procession: each headpiece might take more than 500 hours to complete, drawn by hand and covered with tissue paper. The craft is taught in an evening course, allowing participants to create their very own Iffelen. “It takes them a lot of time and discipline,” says Pascal, “but you don’t have to go to such great lengths. You can join in with other instruments such as cow bells or horns - anyone can be a Klausjäger and join in the procession. It’s just about the tradition and having fun together.”

After the 250 Iffelen comes St. Nicholas with his ‘Schmutzli’ (the Swiss name for his helpers) and torchbearers. Then, more than 1,000 hunters with swinging bells stride through the village, followed by - at the end of the procession - the noise of more than 250 horn blowers. The procession may end there, but the night is still young, and the ensuing feast and celebration often runs deep into the night.

It’s an incredible spectacle, but in addition to preserving and promoting tradition, the St. Nicholas Society aims to support socially disadvantaged people. Membership costs CHF20, but many members donate more, adding to the society’s gift fund and supporting visits to hospitals and schools, for example. “The community is very important to us,” says Pascal. “Our members’ generosity shows that the world can only develop if everyone comes together.” **Z**



Pascal Knüsel is President of the St. Nicholas Society, which oversees the annual Klausjagen procession in Küssnacht.



My working day

Sylvia Cediel, Class of 1995 (1993-95), Deputy Public Defender in the San Francisco Public Defender's Office.

- Interview **Clare Thorp**
- Photography **Julian Coffin-Lennear**

“Each of us is more than the worst thing we have ever done,” said Bryan Stevenson, the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, and I firmly believe that’s true. When you work as a public defender, you learn to see the humanity in everyone. I believe everybody deserves good legal representation, and I represent people charged with a crime who cannot afford a private attorney; I do everything I can to try to make sure that their rights are upheld.

I’m in court nearly every day, usually for at least half the day, but otherwise I might be at the jail seeing clients, meeting with social workers or investigators who are working on my cases, reading police reports or negotiating with the District Attorney’s office. I have 60 clients at any one time and for all of them I’m trying to get the most favorable outcome.

I recently had a client who was in custody for nine months and we finally got him out and home with his family and young son. Moments like that are fantastic. A good day is when I win a case, but it’s not always about getting someone off completely – sometimes it’s about minimizing harm.

We provide what’s called holistic defence, so we’re not just helping people with the criminal charge against them, but addressing all areas of their life that they need support in. We want to improve their lives so we don’t see them here again. My clients are often scared, because they’re facing serious charges. It’s rewarding to be able to hold their hand and help them through the process.



Of course, not all people who commit crime are bad people – and people aren’t always guilty of the crimes they’re accused of. The United States over-prosecutes people of color especially – for example, San Francisco has a black population of less than five per cent, but more than 50 per cent of people in jail accused of a crime are Black.

There’s obviously a massive range of people to deal with, and my ZIS experience has been invaluable, helping me deal with so many different personalities. Being at a school with people from such a diverse range of backgrounds and nationalities definitely makes you more open and tolerant. But as rewarding as my job is, it can be emotionally draining too. Your heart really has to be in this job or you won’t last. The people I work with are really dedicated and we’re a very close community who lean on each other and spend time together outside of work – I’m on a softball team with some colleagues.

Whenever I’m having a tough day I remind myself of the bigger goal of why I do this, which is making sure that justice is served for everybody, and that everyone has the opportunity to be properly represented in the system, no matter their skin color or socio-economic background. **Z**



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