

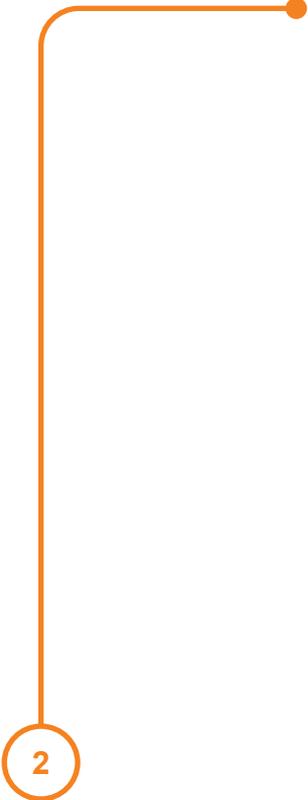
Connections

The ICS School Magazine • Issue 38 | 2024-2025



**inter-community
school zurich**

EST. 1960



The Inter-Community School is committed to providing a supportive and enabling learning environment in which all members of the community are challenged to achieve their individual potential, encouraged to pursue their passions, and expected to fulfil their responsibilities.

Welcome to Connections

The ICS School Magazine • Issue 38 | 2024-2025

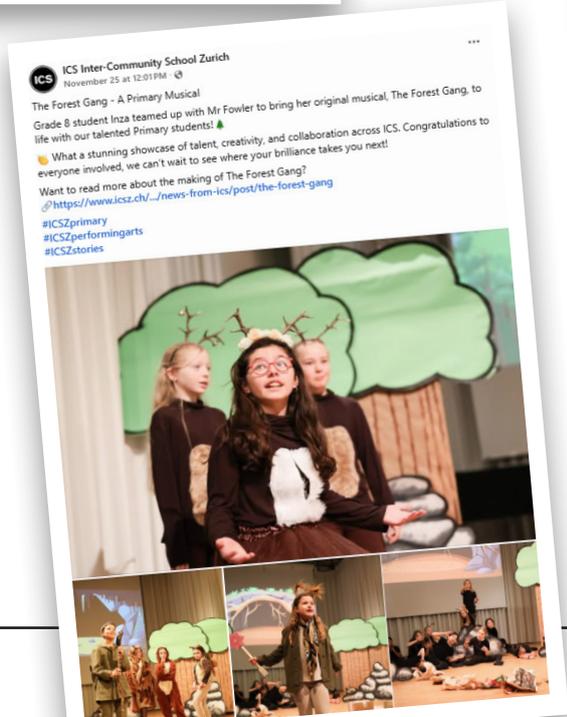
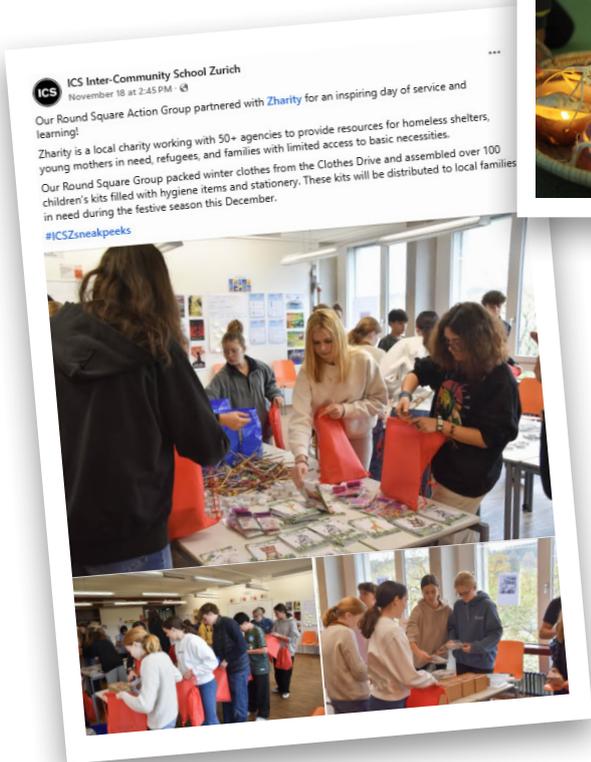
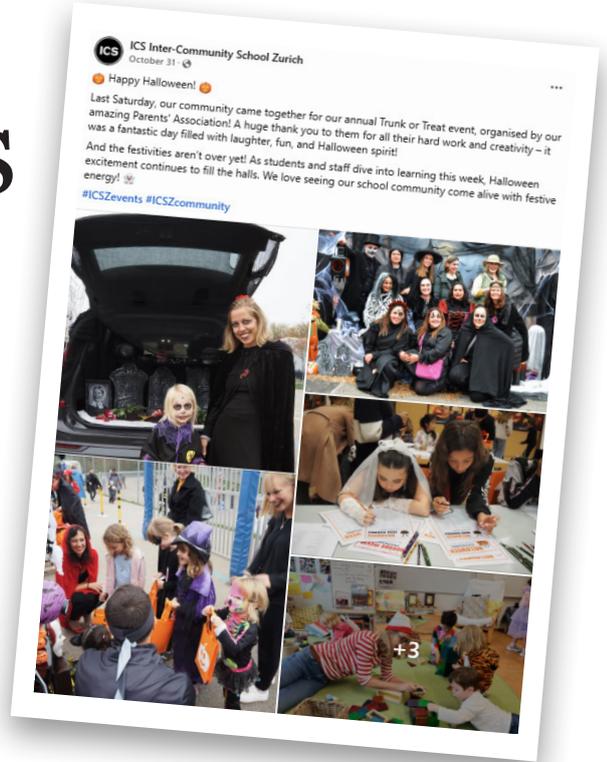
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Snapshots

Looking back over the last few months at ICS

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ICS Inter-Community School Zurich
December 2 at 12:00 PM

During a recent trip to the Berufsmesse Zürich, Grade 9 students had the unique opportunity to bridge their German language studies with an immersive experience in a German-speaking environment. The event provided an inspiring platform to explore various careers while practising language skills in real-life contexts.

Students interacted with professionals from diverse fields, discovering career paths and the education required for them.

Discover more inspiring quotes from our students here:
<https://ow.ly/8rIA50UjPIL>

#ICSStories
#ICSZneakpeeks



ICS Inter-Community School Zurich
December 6 at 3:03 PM

Today, we hosted our annual Career Fair, providing students with a unique opportunity to explore diverse professional fields through insightful panel sessions and networking. Topics included Arts & Education, Aviation, Business, Entrepreneurship, Sustainability & Non-Profit, and more.

A big thank you to our panelists who joined us, sharing their expertise, experiences, and advice. Your contributions are instrumental in inspiring and shaping the next generation of leaders, innovators, and changemakers.

This event reflects our commitment to preparing students for success by bridging the gap between education and the professional world.

#ICSZevents
#ICSZneakpeeks



ICS Inter-Community School Zurich
December 9 at 3:00 PM

What an unforgettable night! Last week's Winter Concert was a true celebration of student talent, featuring amazing performances by our secondary ensembles, bands, and soloists — plus a special staff performance! Students also wowed us with monologues and a showcase of visual art from this semester.

A big thank you to everyone who made this festive evening possible!

#ICSZevents
#ICSZperformingarts
#ICSZvisualarts



ICS Inter-Community School Zurich
December 10 at 3:00 PM

The Duolingo Breakfast Club

The Duolingo Breakfast Club is a club that was started by Ms Tanel and her desire to celebrate each other's differences through language. She aimed to have language ambassadors, which were people that were native in a language and were willing to help students that were learning that language — and I was honoured when she asked me to become the Spanish language ambassador.

She spoke passionately about creating a language club to a couple of her students, and soon the idea of the Duolingo Breakfast Club began. It quickly became a success, with both teachers and students coming to school early to do their daily Duolingo sessions while also being able to learn from each other.

- Veronica S. (G12)

Want to learn more about the Duolingo Breakfast Club?
<https://ow.ly/y8Ej50Unfc7>

#ICSStories
#ICSSecondary



ICS Inter-Community School Zurich
December 12 at 3:01 PM

On Tuesday, we had the honour of performing at The Singing Christmas Tree in Zurich! This festive tradition holds a special place in our hearts as it allows us to share the holiday spirit with our Community and the people of Zurich!

#ICSZevents
#ICSZprimary
#TheSingingChristmasTree



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Follow us on social media!



intercommunityschoolzurich



ICS Inter-Community School Zurich



ICS Inter-Community School Zurich

When Students Become Educators: Learning from Student Perspectives

6

by **James Penstone**, Former Secondary Principal

Some of the most impactful learning in our school comes when students are given a platform to share their perspectives with the adults invested in their learning and growth.

When students are positioned as educators, they bring invaluable insights and deepen our understanding of the complexities they navigate in today's world. Recently, two powerful examples stood out, highlighting just how valuable student-led education can be.

The first example took place during our In-Service days following the Autumn break. Vittoria and Ronan, two dedicated Grade 12 students, presented to our Secondary colleagues on the topics of diverse learning needs and neurodivergence. Their presentation offered a view into the experiences of neurodivergent students and emphasised the importance of understanding and supporting these varied needs. The feedback from our teachers and educators has been resoundingly positive, underscoring the value of these students' voices in shaping a more inclusive and empathetic learning environment.

Our second example came from an event facilitated by Allison Ochs, our consultant and partner, who has been working with students across different age groups on themes of digital well-being, safety, and citizenship. In October, Allison led a discussion with a panel of Secondary students, which was attended by a large group of parents. Amal, Carl, Chiara, Sebastian, Paolo, Jun, Faustine and Marko represented a broad range of Grade levels in the Secondary School. These students openly discussed their experiences with social media, exploring the pressures and motivations that come with it. Their open and thoughtful reflections provided the adults in the room—parents and educators alike—with a genuine understanding of the social media landscape that students today are navigating.

These examples illustrate what I am convinced is a cornerstone of education's future: creating time and space for intergenerational learning and collaboration. When we listen to students and recognise them as experts on their own experiences, we open doors to authentic learning and shared problem-solving across generations.



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Spotlight on Saathi



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by **Lucy M. Gowdie**, Head of School

Upon learning of the opportunity for SMD to partner with Kathmandu University in a programme to support access to higher education for students of the school, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Mr Greg Vlasek, and myself accepted the invitation to attend a day on the KU campus and meet with members of the Office of the Vice Chancellor. Our aim was to authenticate the learning experience for the students of SMD, and understand the options for them, as students with no means to pay for higher education.

The programme is an exciting one for the students of SMD as it presents wonderful opportunities for access to higher education.

In Nepal, the education completion rates are testament to a government struggling to align appropriately to protect the most important institution of all – education. Completion rates for Secondary School students are 27% and this is even lower for rural and poor children. Of the 27% of students who complete their Secondary

schooling, 59% of children come from the richest quintile, while only 10% come from the poorest. This data may not even speak to the children of the Himalayas who are catered for at our sister school, for they are forgotten, and up until 2015 were, by law, unable to access education.

It is no surprise that Nepal is struggling to enhance its demographic dividend, as quite literally it sits in the departure lounge of Tribhuvan Airport on a daily basis. In 2022 – 2023 alone, 884'982 Nepalese left their homeland, of this number, 110'012 were students.

While we continue to open doors to students of SMD to access an education here in Zurich, we are working towards a strong roadmap that impacts as many students in the school as possible and encourages them to stay in Nepal so that they can build its future.



Beyond the visit to KU, we were able to spend time in the classrooms, meet with the Senior Leadership Team, and develop a roadmap for the commencement of our school visits to SMD. We are excited to launch our first Teacher Exchange in February, and to begin climbing the mountain together, on the peak that is of most importance to us – learning.

In one of the more powerful moments (and there were many over the week) we were also able to gift the students of the school, over 80 pairs of magnificent handmade Finnish socks, gloves, and leg warmers, knitted by the grandmother of Grade 6 student Nicolas R., Ms Heliä Kiltti, in her home in Finland.

Alumni Reunion in Zurich: Holiday Cheer Despite the Chill

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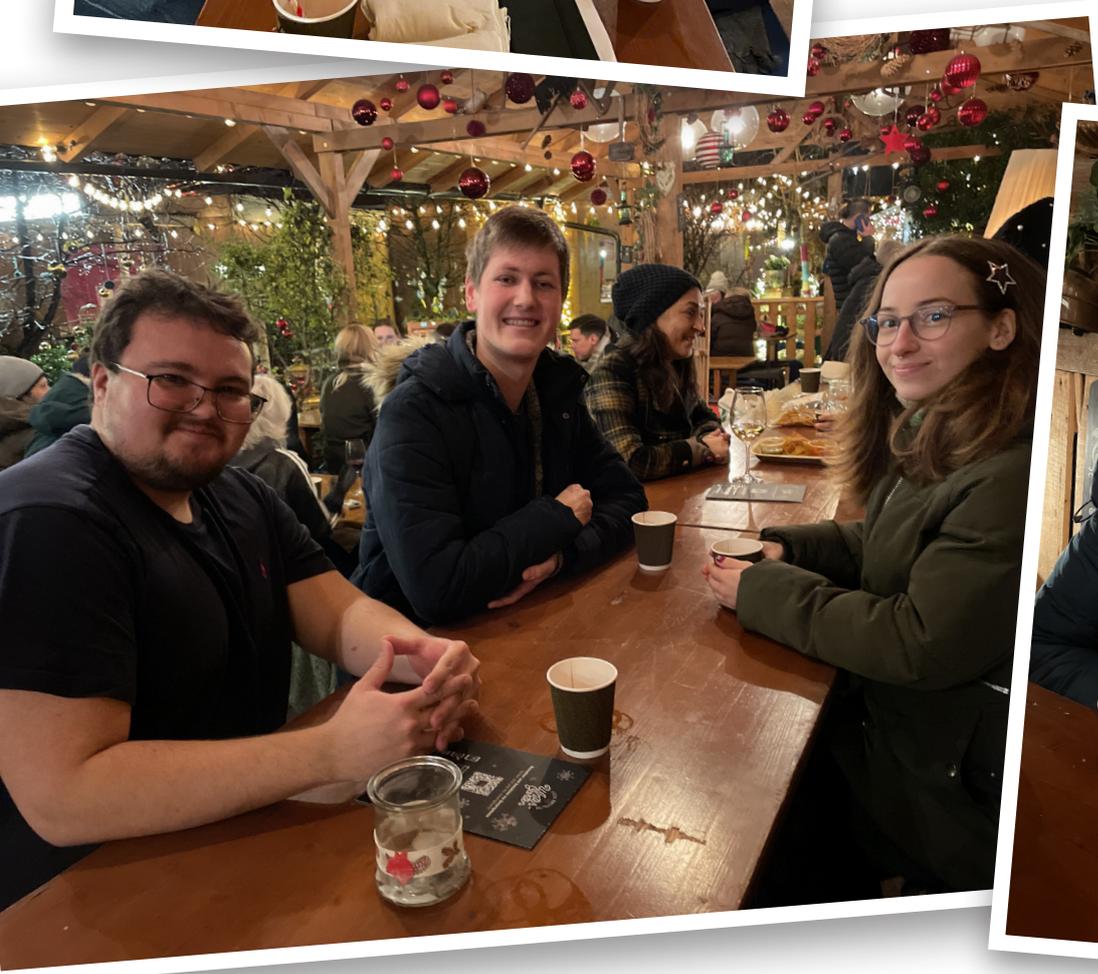
by **Gabriela Newman**, Community & Communications Specialist

On Saturday 14 December 2024, alumni gathered at Frau Gerolds Garten in Zurich for an evening of festive celebration. Despite the cold and rainy weather, the turnout was heartwarming, with alumni embracing the holiday spirit together.

The reunion offered the perfect chance to reconnect with old friends, make new connections, and relive cherished memories. With steaming cups of Glühwein in hand, attendees shared stories and laughter, creating a cozy atmosphere that made the night unforgettable.

Thank you to everyone who joined us in Zurich—it was truly a wonderful way to celebrate the season and our shared alumni bond.





CAS Opportunity: Best Buddies

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by **Jake H. (G12) and Ronan B. (G12)**

Adding onto their inclusive community, ICS is launching a new partnership under all three pillars of CAS (Creativity, Activity, and Service). Best Buddies is a non-profit international organisation and their mission is to establish “a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development, inclusive living, and family support for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)”. Founded in 1989 by Anthony K. Shriver, Best Buddies has grown into an international movement with chapters in Middle Schools, High Schools, Colleges, and communities around the world.

But what does this mean for ICS?

Essentially, a student will be paired up with a student who has IDD and over time, hopefully, they will not only foster a connection with these students, but will also improve their quality of life by helping them feel more integrated into our school environment. It is essential that as a society we provide these individuals with the help that they need to reach their potential. The globally

recognised Best Buddies programme will soon become a part of the school’s CAS opportunities, aiming to foster friendships, enhance social integration, and provide mutual learning experiences among students.

Why Best Buddies at ICS?

This introduction aligns with ICS’s priority to cultivate an inclusive and compassionate environment. This addition to the CAS programme enables us as a community to bridge the gap between students with and without IDD, leading to understanding, acceptance, growth, and, hopefully, lifelong friendships. Best Buddies is a unique opportunity enabling us to make a difference in the lives of our peers, and it is not about service hours, but it is about creating meaningful relationships and creating an inclusive community.

This project will function through a structured pairing system, where students are paired with students with IDD based on common interests and needs. These pairs will then engage in various activities which are designed to not only entertain and support the students, but to



also create trust and camaraderie. These activities will vary based on the students, but it could include things such as social events like film nights and sports games, to academic support sessions. On the other hand, there will also be group activities, allowing all individuals to interact and build a connection among a larger community. Such events will be fun and educational, allowing students to learn new skills and embrace the diversity within our community.

This project will also benefit the mentors as it is a chance to develop their leadership skills, empathy, and a deeper and richer understanding of diversity and inclusion. Furthermore, these mentors will receive professional training on how to effectively support and communicate with their buddies. Such an experience is invaluable, promoting personal growth. On the other hand, for students with IDD, this programme provides them with friendship, social engagement, and a sense of belonging. This is essential as such individuals may face social isolation, so the ability to form meaningful connections will profoundly impact their self-esteem and overall well-being.

The introduction of Best Buddies at ICS is launching next year. We sincerely hope that this becomes a legacy project in hopes of expanding our reach from our school environment. Initially, we will focus on IDD students who are in ICS in order to enhance our school environment. However, in the future, we hope to work with other schools close to ICS to expand our community.



Celebrating the Arts at ICS – Semester One Highlights



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by **Holly Sullivan**, Head of Performance Studies and Arts Coordinator

As we wrap up the semester, we're reflecting on an incredible few months for the arts at ICS. Our students have embraced every opportunity to create, perform, and explore, filling our school with talent, energy, and creativity. Here's a glimpse of what they've achieved.

Memorable Performances & Events

Our stages came alive with unforgettable performances. Primary students enchanted audiences in The Forest Gang, while Secondary performers began their journey towards the Secondary School production of Kafka's Metamorphosis with auditions and early rehearsals.

Young musicians and performers embraced the spotlight during ArtsAlive, an after-school live lounge where students showcased their talents in a relaxed, supportive environment. Our talented advanced rock band took centre stage at the Battle of the Bands hosted by Zurich International School (and won!). ICS was represented at an ethereal event, Zumikon's MehrGenerationen Konzerte where students performed for our community with pride and professionalism.

The Primary students brought holiday cheer to Zurich through the magical Singing Christmas Tree. The Secondary performing arts term culminated with the much-anticipated Winter Concert, a joyous celebration of music, drama, visual art and community.

The arts also spilled into everyday school life with Pop-Up Performances, surprising and delighting students and staff alike with bursts of creativity at both Primary and Secondary lunchtimes.

Broadening Artistic Horizons

We've also ventured beyond the classroom to immerse ourselves in the wider world of the arts. Grade 4 explored the absurdist world of Dada through performances at Cabaret Voltaire, while Grade 7 discovered artistic treasures at the Matthew Wong and Vincent Van Gogh exhibitions at Kunsthaus Zürich. Our DP Visual Arts students experienced the cutting-edge creativity of the Venice Biennale, a journey that sparked their imaginations and broadened their perspectives.

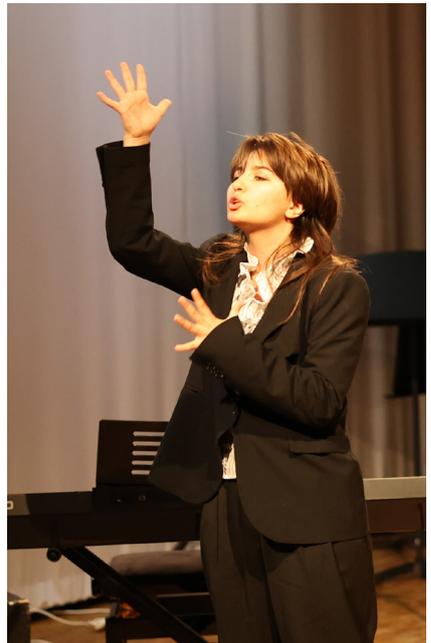
Creativity Beyond the School Day

The arts extended well beyond the school timetable this semester, with students engaging in diverse extracurricular clubs. From Origami and Filmmaking to iPad Photography, Art Clubs, and Violin lessons, there was something for everyone. Music ensembles, including Middle and High School Strings, Vocals and Rock Band, offered students opportunities to perform and grow, while dance clubs brought movement and expression to life.

Looking Ahead to Semester Two

As we reflect on this vibrant semester, we're excited for what's to come. The following semester promises even more artistic adventures, including the launch of the Middle School Production, the Metamorphosis performance, a visit from UK theatre company, The Paper Birds and participation in the SGIS Orchestra and inaugural SGIS Theatre Festival.

Later in the semester, we're thrilled to host another Arts Alive, giving even more young performers the chance to take the stage. The Primary Arts Night will showcase the incredible creativity of our younger students, while the International Festival will celebrate the rich cultural diversity of our community through music, art, and performance.



The Model United Nations (MUN) Club at ICS

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by **Helena H. (G11)** and **Nicolas S. (G11)**

The ICS Model United Nations is a club where members of our community are encouraged to develop international-mindedness, learn debate, and foster a passion for the world around them, approaching real-life politics and issues through the lens of the UN. We aim to foster collaboration, encourage an appreciation and understanding of the world around us.

Students who join our ICS MUN gain many benefits. Preparing for, and actually participating in MUN allows students to develop research, public-speaking, and critical thinking skills, which are so essential in our ever-changing world. Because of these skills, students are able to get better at problem-solving, which equips them with the ability to adapt and persevere later in life. Also, coming up with resolutions and solutions that are acceptable to the majority of delegates, which takes place during conferences, allows MUNers to establish the important grounds for conflict resolution, and cooperation.

Helena's dream career is to work in human rights, ideally with the United Nations, and she feels that the skills she develops through MUN are essential for success in this field. However, all of these skills are transferable to different sectors. Future doctors will be able to approach medical issues through problem-solving, and research skills. Professional athletes will be able to approach challenges through perseverance. Teachers will have to adapt and use conflict resolution and cooperation skills to effectively lead a classroom-setting.

Helena feels that she's been able to grow as a learner, and as a person, with each of these attributes and skills. And we're sure that we speak for all of us when we say that the experience is enormously helpful and essential in shaping who we'll become.

This year was the first time our club took part in an international Model United Nations (MUN) event; we had the honour of going to the Copernicus Model United Nations (CoMUN) conference in Poland. About 300 students from different schools attended the conference, and we were able to represent our school on a number of committees, such as the Future Security Council, UNESCO, African Union, European Council, and International Criminal Court. It was an incredibly fun and enjoyable experience for all the students involved.

Nicolas has been involved in the Model UN club for three years, and it has sparked his interest in pursuing a future career in politics. Over the years, he's had the chance to go to three conferences, and the most recent one in Poland was his first MUN trip abroad. He represented the delegation Sudan in the African Union, and talked about how to deal with political unrest in Africa, especially through the lens of military coups. Similar to his previous experiences in MUN, this conference has enabled him to participate in discussions on global issues and broaden his understanding of different countries' viewpoints. Each conference offers a unique experience that inspires him to remain actively involved in the club and continue attending new conferences each year.



Thomas, who was also on the trip, shared,

“It was an amazing experience. I found it fascinating to interact with all other delegates from around the world. I am very thankful I was able to come on this trip. It was a great learning experience to have and to build upon in the future.”

Bhavya said,

“I really enjoyed the conference, and I love how we got to meet a lot of new people and see how different things were in other countries. Through the committee, I was able to gain knowledge for my future.”

Athletics Continue to Thrive at ICS

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by **Jonathon Greenwell**, Athletics & Sports Coordinator

The Winter season of sports is upon us here in Zurich! We have seen amazing energy levels across all our Winter sports. From Skiing to Basketball, Badminton, Swimming and indoor Football, students from Grades 4 - 12 are shaping up to proudly represent ICS.

With our teams embarking on this season, it is worth reflecting upon the last season and the experiences that ICS offers. A key experience has been our international conferences, with students travelling around Europe to represent the school at the Sports Council of International School conference. These trips provide students with the unique opportunity to compete against a variety of athletes, while also creating amazing bonds between the different schools. With students travelling to Basel, Warsaw, Bucharest, Budapest and Prague there are always cultural opportunities and exchanges happening.

These experiences that we offer gave me a chance to reflect on my own experiences as a High School student in Asia, travelling to Manila, Hong Kong and Jakarta for sport and remembering how rewarding that was, through the development of lifelong friendships. Talking to our student athletes, they share that these trips are: Opportunities for team building and bonding, chances to experience new cultures around Europe and the excitement of making new friends from the different schools.

As we move forward with this Winter season, we hope the same rewarding experiences are offered. We love to witness the laughter and growth our students experience, both on and off the field. From chatting in training sessions, to giving one another tips on how to perfect skills, the collaboration and team building of our students is a joy to witness. We cannot wait to celebrate the great successes and progress of our Winter season athletes. We hope the students, and in turn the ICS community, enjoy and support all the events over this next season. The rewards are too numerous to count!



ICS Rock Club yonaH

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by **Marcello Granata**, Senior Teaching Assistant Music

This year, our advanced Rock Club group, “yonaH,” prepared rigorously for the inter-school Battle of the Bands competition at ZIS. The band features some of ICS’s most talented musicians from across all Secondary Grades and boasts an impressive eight-member line-up, including two keyboards, two vocalists, and a trumpet!

“We are beyond excited to share that all the dedication, countless hours of practice, and passion paid off — our band won the Battle of the Bands! It was a moment of pride and celebration for everyone involved, and a true testament to the talent and teamwork of “yonaH”.

Throughout the semester, students have been workshopping Michael Jackson’s Billie Jean, building essential skills for playing in a band. They are learning to keep time with each other, incorporate dynamics, and adapt the structure and arrangement of the piece — all while training their ears to learn without sheet music. Beyond musical techniques, we’ve been having valuable discussions about the non-musical aspects of being in a band, covering topics like punctuality, preparation, and clear communication. Students are also learning to give and receive constructive feedback in a respectful, supportive way.

Recently, students have also begun learning about the technical side of performance. They’re gaining hands-on experience with setting up, fine-tuning, and caring for their equipment — skills that not only help them respect shared gear but also give them practical knowledge about the tools they use each week.



The Waldkinder - ICS Forest Programme



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by **Gemma Sinclair, Karen Levingstone, Gernine Tucker, Adrienne Copper** and **Katja Simmangk** (Kindergarten 2 Team)

Our Waldkinder sessions are all about immersing ourselves in nature, building a deep connection with the environment, and learning to see the world through the eyes of a scientist, a member of a community and an ecological custodian. Each Friday morning, Kindergarten 2 (K2) ventures into the forest, turning it into our classroom. In this natural setting, the K2 children engage in hands-on activities that encourage curiosity, exploration, and resilience. We observe wildlife, identify plants, and discuss natural cycles, adaptations and evidence of change, fostering a sense of wonder about the natural world while building essential scientific skills.

The purpose of our Waldkinder programme extends beyond environmental education; it also cultivates critical social and emotional skills. Working in small groups, students collaborate, problem-solve, and support each other. By learning in an open and less

predictable environment, they develop adaptability, patience, and self-confidence. They encounter real-world challenges — like navigating uneven terrain or learning how to build fires and the importance of fire safety — that help them build resourcefulness and perseverance.

In addition to educational and social benefits, Waldkinder sessions offer value by instilling a respect for nature and a sense of responsibility for our planet. Children begin to appreciate that they are part of a larger ecosystem and learn to care for it. This experience nurtures environmental stewardship, giving them the foundation to make thoughtful, eco-conscious decisions in the future. Through our time in the forest, students gain not only knowledge but also the empathy and skills to become thoughtful, responsible caretakers of the earth.



We asked K2 students:

“What do you love about being in the forest?”

“So I can build stuff.” - Theo

“Playing. My favourite thing to play is building because there are some sticks and we can build a house.” - Gustaw

“Eating snacks outside in the forest.” - Rena



“Playing with my friends. They do kind things and we play unicorn tag.” - Fallon

“Having hot chocolate, building fires and roasting marshmallows.” - Bowie

“We love building. Getting people sticks. Building houses and playing with sticks!” - Pacco

“How to use sticks safely. Using sticks as tools.” - Alexander



“The trees fall down and the leaves change. The animals make houses in the trees.” - Jon

“The mushrooms are hiding in the leaves.” - Can

“Being kind in the forest.” - Emilie



Nurturing Lifelong Learners in Physical Education

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by **Leanne Byle**, Primary PE Teacher and **Elisabeth Ruiz**, Primary PE Coordinator

Physical Education lays the groundwork for students to apply the skills they develop in PE to real-life situations – challenging themselves, building resilience, and discovering their potential through movement. In our PE lessons, our focus is to empower students to make meaningful connections between their learning and physical development, while providing learning engagements they enjoy and can progress in.

In each lesson, students are learning skills that will help them in everyday life, like managing their time, working well with others, and thinking critically. For example, in our **Health-Related Fitness** unit, students set personal fitness goals and track their progress. We see this as an opportunity for students to take charge of their own well-being journey and learn the importance of staying active.

A parent said,

“I had no idea they covered so much in PE! I love how they connect what they learn in the classroom to their activities in PE, and how it all prepares them for the future.”

During **Athletics** and **Gymnastics**, we encourage students to explore their personal strengths and challenges. We aim to foster self-directed learners and we give the students time to reflect and further develop these skills.

A Grade 3 student said

“I like gymnastics because there is a lot of challenge.”

We love seeing these moments of growth and where students push their limits and celebrate their achievements, no matter how big or small.

Teamwork and communication are big focuses in our **Adventure Challenges** and **Games** units. Whether they are figuring out a strategy in a game or working through a challenge, students learn to listen to each other and solve problems together. Furthermore, they are developing their critical thinking skills, becoming more reflective, analytical and capable of making informed decisions during PE activities. These skills go beyond Physical Education, helping students in the classroom and in life.

One Grade 4 student, who had just finished playing in the ISSL Basketball tournament, said

“We played so well for our first tournament. We now know what we are good at, so we can change our strategies and play even better in the next one (tournament)”.

We feel incredibly fortunate in our positions, where it is our responsibility to create a safe, enjoyable environment where everyone can move, learn, and grow together. Our goal is for students to leave each lesson feeling more confident, thoughtful, and prepared to take on any challenge.



Parents' Association



New Beginnings, Vibrant Celebrations, and Community Connections: A Year Ahead at ICS

by **Christel Ahlawat**, PA Communications

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A New Year is starting and we, as the Parents' Association, are so excited to be back to school for this new beginning full of promises, to discover the new Pavilion built in a record time, to meet the new families joining us and to prepare for the upcoming events!

Our main objective as the PA is to build the community so that we create a home away from home, and this mission starts as soon as the new families set a foot into our school! At the beginning of January, we had the chance to meet most of the new parents as they had just dropped their children for their first day at ICS. We felt their anxiety as well as their excitement: new year, new school, new country, new house and new job! That's a lot to take in, it's not an easy place to be, especially when all this is happening in the middle of

the school year! The pressure is even higher to speed up the process of integration and have everything fall into place as soon as possible. We hope we reassured them that they had made the right choice to join our school and our community, and that we answered their most pressing questions to get settled and up to speed quickly. We were very happy to welcome them, and we wish all the new families a fantastic time at ICS!

We are also very excited to be organizing the Second Edition of the **Spring Party** after last year's success! The party will be on Saturday 26 April 2025 (18:00-23:00) at the Lakeside Restaurant in Zurich. This year's edition will be Bollywood-themed so it promises to be a lot of colours, dancing and fun! As per last year, this is an opportunity for us to dress up, to spend a joyful



moment together as parents and to do some good as well through the Live Auction. Last year, the money raised during the Spring Party Auction funded a project of solar panels for our school. 60 solar panels were installed on the roof of ICS last October, expecting to generate 29'000 kWh of energy per year, the equivalent of the energy needed for 7 households annually. This project not only will help the school to reduce its energy consumption, but it's supporting as well its broader commitment to environmental sustainability, so we are very proud of this achievement. This year, the money raised during the auction will go to fund up to 10 Nepalese students from our sister school, SMD in Kathmandu, for their entire 4-year university course in Kathmandu University. So save the date, and we hope to see many of you to party with a purpose!

Finally. It's a tradition, the yearly events will end with the biggest of all and the most emblematic one as well, the **International Festival**, on Saturday 24 May 2025. This event is really a celebration of our cultural diversity that we are so proud of: 30 food stalls showcasing the cuisines of the world, performances, games and so much more. It's always a fantastic way to finish the school year on a high!

We hope you are as excited as we are looking ahead, and we are looking forward to creating wonderful memories altogether!

Potential, Passion, Responsibility

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inter-community school zurich

EST. 1960

potential • passion • responsibility

ICS Inter-Community School Zurich
Strubenacher 3
8126 Zumikon
Switzerland

Website: www.icsz.ch
Email: contact@icsz.ch
Tel: +41 (0)44 919 83 00