



FROM TRADITION *to* TOMORROW

Adapting to Change in Challenging Times

2006-2026

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TASIS SCHOOLS

Timeline 2005–2026

2005 Transfer completed of both TASIS Schools and campuses, Switzerland and England, to the TASIS Foundation, a Swiss non-profit educational foundation based in Delemont, Jura, Switzerland

Two new Boards of Directors established for TASIS and TASIS England
Founding of the TASIS Elementary School, Grades 1-6

2006 TASIS celebrates its 50th Anniversary
Elementary School expands to include Kindergarten
New building: Aurora Classrooms

2007 Bequest from John E. Palmer '64, the largest in the School's history, to finance the Palmer Cultural Center

2009 Mary Crist Fleming, Founder of TASIS and an International Educational Pioneer, Dies at 99
New building: John E. Palmer Cultural Center
New TASIS Senior Humanities Program
Publication of *In Pursuit of Excellence: An Historical Perspective 1956–2006*, R. Scheifele, Editor

2010 New buildings: Lanterna Dormitory and Fiammetta Classrooms

2011 Publication of *The Wit & Wisdom of Mary Crist Fleming*, L. Rigg, Editor

2012 New building: Ferit Şahenk Fine Arts Center

2013 New TASIS Global Service Program, funded by an extraordinary gift from Jan Opsahl '68

2014 New building: Campo Science Center

2016 TASIS celebrates its 60th Anniversary
David Mayernik receives Award from Prince Charles for the TASIS Lugano Campus

2017 New Headmaster for TASIS Switzerland, Christopher Nikoloff

2018 Elementary School expands to include Pre-Kindergarten

2019 TASIS receives Historic Legacy Gift from Donald McDermid '61

2020 TASIS Portugal opens

2022 Publication of *Beauty and Duty: Persons, Accomplishments, and Events in the Making of the TASIS Schools*, L. Aeschliman, M.D. Aeschliman, R. Scheifele, J. Riva, Editors

2024 TASIS named “the most beautiful boarding school in the world” by *Architectural Digest* magazine
TPA Gala raises an historic amount for the TASIS Global Village Building Campaign

2026 TASIS celebrates its 70th Anniversary



FROM TRADITION *to* TOMORROW: ADAPTING TO CHANGE IN CHALLENGING TIMES

By Prof. Michael D. Aeschliman, Ph.D.

Almost twenty years ago TASIS published a fiftieth-anniversary history of the TASIS schools and programs, 1956–2006, also ably edited by Dr. Reni Scheifele, and entitled *In Pursuit of Excellence*. In 2022 we published *Beauty and Duty: Persons, Accomplishments, and Events in the Making of the TASIS Schools*, which focused particularly on the career of veteran TASIS teacher and administrator Fernando Gonzalez.

Both projects were initiated by TASIS alumna and TASIS Board Chair Lynn Fleming Aeschliman, Class of 1963, the School's first alumna, one of the founders of TASIS England, and longtime Chair of the TASIS

Board. TASIS alumni magazines and separate booklets have also featured literary and pictorial portraits of important TASIS figures such as Max Page, Paul Zazzaro, Lyle Rigg, Michael Ulku-Steiner, Mark Aeschliman, Jan Opsahl, Bill Eichner, and Carolyn Heard.

In August 2026 we celebrate the original TASIS school's foundation 70 years ago in Switzerland, with new buildings financed by TASIS alumnus Donald MacDermid, Class of 1961, and designed and built by the partnership of patron Lynn Aeschliman, architect David Mayernik, and clerk-of-the-works Pierangelo Realini, who have worked together for thirty years. The School was chosen recently by

Architectural Digest magazine as the most beautiful boarding school in the world.

Yet it is no secret that private educational institutions—schools and colleges—are experiencing a period of extraordinary difficulty and vulnerability, with many closing. One recent estimate is that more than a quarter of American private colleges are at risk of going out of existence. In the world of K–12 education in the USA and abroad, for-profit educational chains continue to grow and intensify a competitive, Social-Darwinist dynamic that also characterizes contemporary international and economic relations.

In considering the history and future of the TASIS schools an interesting comparison is presented by an excellent recent historical volume on its fellow Swiss school, the International School of Geneva (Ecolint), founded in 1924 in close association with the League of Nations that was set up in that small Swiss city in January 1920. This bilingual French-English volume, *Educating for Peace: 100 Years of Ecolint* (London and Geneva: Profile Editions, 2026), was written and edited by Ecolint alumnus Alejandro Rodriguez-Giovo, a longtime teacher and administrator at the school who gave the 2023 TASIS Commencement Address.¹

Of several common factors in the formation and history of Ecolint (1924) and the first TASIS school (1956) one that stands out is the idealism and dedication of the schools' founders. This idealism was frequently tested by adverse events—in the case of the multi-ethnic, international Ecolint, World War II; but in both schools by frequent, potentially mortal, financial crises. World War II was not only a financial crisis for Ecolint, but a profound challenge to the internationalist idealism of its American, French, Swiss, and other founders (one of them an American diplomat from Boston, one a Polish-Jewish medical doctor; both men of great distinction and resourcefulness), as the League of Nations, conceived by American President Woodrow Wilson, failed to prevent a second world war.

The TASIS careers of Mrs. Fleming, her daughter Lynn, and their close TASIS associates have also frequently been shadowed by financial apocalypse, if less spectacularly by world-historical calamities. Mrs. Fleming's initiating vision was largely inherited from her school-founder parents, Protestant Christians who themselves started as teachers, but she gave it a uniquely inspired formulation and a life-time of dedication. Perhaps the best brief description of her vision that I have seen is the formulation by the great French philosopher Jacques Maritain

(1882–1973), most of whose career was spent teaching in the USA: “It is by virtue of the allure of beautiful things and deeds and ideas that the child is to be led and awakened to intellectual and moral life.”²

This specific, traditional view is articulated in the TESIS Foundation Paideia document (see page 189) and has found inspired recent application in the extraordinary commitment to teaching “virtue ethics” to all TESIS Middle and High-school students of TESIS Headmaster Christopher Nikoloff. To say that this approach is unfashionable just now is a great under-statement, despite support from a distinguished body of recent educational literature.³ If it is true that the State doesn’t necessarily ‘know what’s best’ educationally, it is also true that the profit-driven market

doesn’t either. Sometimes bad ideas, beliefs, and practices thrive, in education and elsewhere.⁴ There is a glib, pop, free-floating, ahistorical nihilism in the culture today that does not favor—or even conceive—the kinds of idealism that led to the foundations of schools such as Ecolint and TESIS.

But with each newborn child the world too begins anew in some important sense, human possibilities are renewed, the future opens unpredictably, and the often hidden or dormant allure of truth, beauty, and goodness can be awakened. Hundreds of TESIS teachers, and thousands of TESIS alumni, can attest to these characteristics and capacities of the TESIS schools. The current volume helps document them.

1 See “From Geneva with Love,” *TESIS Today*, Fall 2023.

2. Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1943), 61.

3. See TESIS Foundation Board member David V. Hicks’s *Norms and Nobility* (1981 and several subsequent editions) and William Kirk Kilpatrick, *Why Johnny Can’t Tell Right from Wrong* (1992).

4. See, e.g., my own “Principled Pluralism in Education,” *Modern Age* (USA), 64, 1 (Winter 2022), 13ff., and E.D. Hirsch, *Why Knowledge Matters: Rescuing Our Children from Failed Educational Theories* (2016).

THE TESIS FOUNDATION



Mrs. Fleming with her children Lynn, Tom, and Gal, in Casa Fleming

Towards the end of her life, Mrs. Fleming and her family made the decision to bequeath the TESIS Schools to a non-profit Swiss foundation, the TESIS Foundation. It is a remarkable act to give away your life’s work to a non-profit, but because of this noble donation, TESIS is able to continue with Mrs. Fleming’s mission without individuals or entities profiting. The Foundation is charged with ensuring that her virtuous and inspirational educational vision is kept alive for generations to come at TESIS Lugano, TESIS England, TESIS Dorado, and TESIS Portugal.

The donation and transfer of the TESIS Schools and campuses to the TESIS Foundation was completed in 2004. In 2005 the TESIS Foundation Board changed the form of governance at the TESIS schools. The new governance structure created a Board of Directors at each school responsible for all aspects of the school’s operations with significant autonomy to direct the school’s activities, consistent with the broad but specific objectives of the TESIS Foundation. The change in ownership of the TESIS Schools, now 100% owned by the TESIS Foundation, did not change the corporate structure of the operating schools. The governance changes implemented in 2005 were put in place to further ensure the perpetuation of the TESIS schools.

The Foundation is run by a Board that works pro bono and includes two former TESIS headmasters, educators, financial professionals, and alumni. Many of them knew Mrs. Fleming well (two are her children, Tom Fleming and Lynn Fleming Aeschliman), and are committed to ensuring the Schools adhere to Mrs. Fleming’s vision for her schools.

Early on, the Foundation Board made key decisions that concerned all TESIS Schools. First, the Schools are truly independent, and thus are not governed by state directives or political considerations. And second, the Board established that all TESIS Schools must be financially viable, thus eliminating the need for dependence on fundraising to support the operating budget. Finally, the board solidified the common culture of the TESIS schools with the Paideia, a document written with Mrs. Fleming

that sets out the overriding virtues, intentions, and ambitions that guide TASIS educators and communities.

“The beauty of this structure is that donations to the school can be focused on enhancements,” says Bill Eichner, forty-year TASIS veteran and Director of Institutional Advancement. “We’re not a school looking for an identity. We know who we are and what is possible as we stay true to the strength of our identity. This is very different to for-profit schools and educational groups.”

All funds donated to the non-profit TASIS Foundation are designated by the donor to programs which support the TASIS mission and Mrs. Fleming’s vision, or to the Global Village Fund which focuses on campus development and completion of the ambitious, sustainable, inspiring Campus Master Plan, a tangible commitment to the future of TASIS. Currently, funds are focusing on Collina Alta Upper Campus, which includes the Donald MacDermid Hall and Music Center and the Annie Bezikien Elementary School Center based in Belvedere, and the Pergole Middle School classroom building.

It is confirmation of the strength of TASIS that throughout its history it has produced positive operating results. These operating surpluses together with prudent mortgage financing have funded the development of the TASIS Schools for over 65 years. It is the Foundation Board’s judgment that these forms of funding will continue to be the primary sources for funding high-quality programs and campus improvements, together with major funding for the Global Village.

Tuition provides the base. Generosity provides program and campus enhancement.

FOUNDATION
BOARD MEMBERS (2026)
W. Thomas Fleming (Chairman)
David V. Hicks (Vice Chairman)
Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63
Dr. Michael D. Aeschliman
Fernando Gonzalez
David King
Dennis G. Manning
Marco Ornaghi
Michael Ulku-Steiner
Alexandra Heumann Wicki '80
Federico Stubbe, Jr.

THE TASIS SCHOOLS

Each TASIS school is governed by its own Board of Directors, which is responsible to the Foundation Board as well as to the authorities in the country of operation. These boards focus on the day-to-day running of the Schools and are in frequent contact with the respective headmasters.

The boards are involved in how each school operates, advising on everything from budgets to curricula, graduation requirements to revising the Academic Travel program. The boards are constituted to include select alumni, educational experts, and individuals with expertise relevant to the needs of the Schools. These individuals are deeply dedicated to ensuring that the spirit of Mrs. Fleming remains critical to the student experience.

Mrs. Fleming was known to say, “times change, values don’t,” and through myriad challenges the TASIS schools have remained true to the beauty of the TASIS settings and campuses and the exceptional scholastic and social ethos of the schools she founded.



The TASIS Board of Directors, 2026: Mathias Muehlhofer '95, Sevim Arslan, Sara Rosso Cipolini, Alexander De Bruin '87, Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63, Alexandra Heumann Wicki '80, Marco Ornaghi, Carla Arimont '94

THE TASIS SWITZERLAND
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Strong leadership at the Board level ensures a bright future for TASIS.

DIRECTORS SINCE
THE BOARD’S INCEPTION IN 2005

- *Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63, Chairman, 2005–present
- *Alexandra Heumann Wicki '80, Vice-Chairman, 2005–present
- *Alex Korach, 2005–2008
- *John Pritzlaff '72, 2005–2009
- *Fernando Gonzalez, 2005–2020
- *Dr. Giovanni Barone-Adesi, 2005–2008
- *Curtis McGraw Webster '75, 2005–2021
- *Dr. Berkley Latimer, 2005–2020

* = Founding Board Members

- Gianni Patuzzi, 2006–2018
- Stefano Borghi, 2008–2010
- Riccardo Braglia, 2009–2015
- Jennifer Bullard Broggini, 2009–2017
- Richard Bell PG '65, 2010–2016
- Arne Jan Opsahl '68, 2010–2017
- Lyle Rigg, 2020–2023
- Lars Titland, 2022–2025

2026–27 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63, Chairman
- Carla Arimont '94, joined 2022
- Sevim Arslan, joined 2025
- Sara Rosso Cipolini, joined 2013
- Alexander De Bruin '87, joined 2025
- Mathias Muehlhofer '95, joined 2019
- Marco Ornaghi, Chairman of the Finance Committee, joined 2016
- Alexandra Heumann Wicki '80, Vice Chairman



TASIS FOUNDATION

JUNE 8, 2024

Mrs. Lynn Aeschliman
Chairman: TASIS S.A.

Dear Lynn,

Following another successful year at TASIS, I am writing to express my personal gratitude to you and to the Board of Directors at TASIS. Your leadership as Chair and the remarkable wisdom, judgement, and commitment to the traditions and values of TASIS displayed by all Board members are remarkable to observe. After almost twenty years following the establishment of this form of governance at TASIS, I am, as I know you are, extraordinarily gratified that what we hoped for and envisioned when we put this structure in place has succeeded beyond our expectations. The governance changes implemented in 2005 were put in place to further ensure the perpetuation of the TASIS Schools, which was the objective of the Founder and Fleming family in donating the Schools and campuses to the TASIS Foundation. This has succeeded magnificently.

When we initiated the Boards, we departed from the model of most independent schools. We wanted small boards, we eliminated mandatory terms, and we did not consider fundraising potential as a criterion for appointment. The performance of this Board has demonstrated

the wisdom of those precepts. The longevity of service and the extraordinary commitment of time and wisdom from Alexandra (a founding member of the TASIS Board), to Sara and Marco, serving long after the departure of their children, have provided remarkable contributions to the success of the Board and thereby the success of TASIS. A short list by design, other current members and members having previously served are notable for their contributions and fidelity to continuing TASIS according to the vision of the Founder.

Please share this note with your Board along with an expression of my gratitude for their extraordinary contributions and commitment to TASIS.

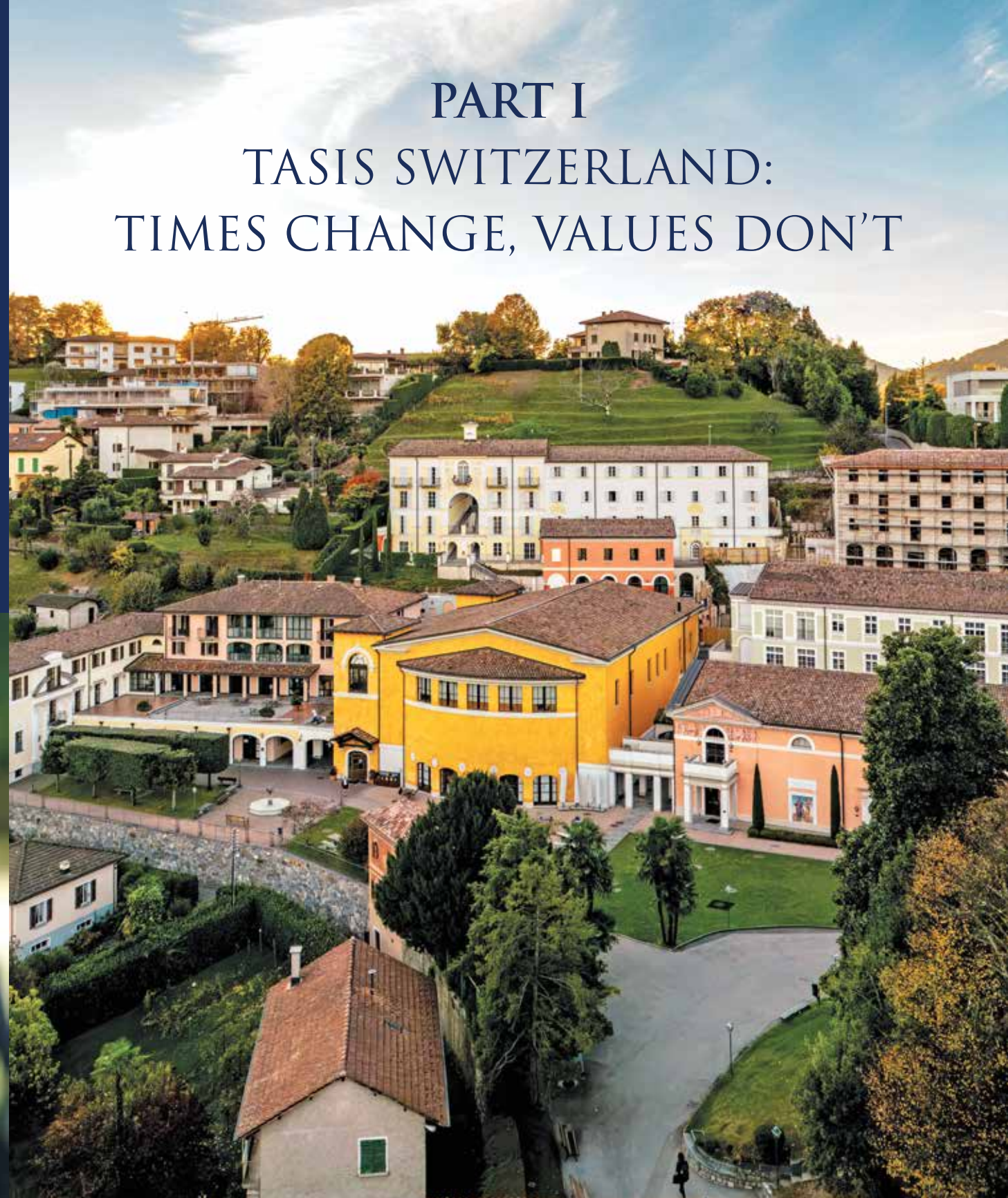
Warm regards,

Tom Fleming,
Chairman of the TASIS Foundation Board



PART I

TASIS SWITZERLAND: TIMES CHANGE, VALUES DON'T



1. THE TASIS LEGACY



Lynn Fleming Aeschliman with architect Ugo Fröh

Her Mother's Legacy: Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63 (from the *TPA Galazine*, 2024, and *TASIS Today*, 2022)

Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63 wears a lot of hats. Officially, she's Chairman of the TASIS Board of Directors and Chairman of the Board Campus Development Committee, and she has also served as Vice-Chairman of the TASIS Foundation Board. She's the first "TASIS Lifer" who spent most of her education at TASIS. She's a wife, mother, grandmother, daughter. She's a founder, mediator, entrepreneur, and savior of old edifices and builder of new ones. She's an educator. She's a visionary. It is undeniable that TASIS is the school it is today because of Lynn's foresight, her audacity, her fearlessness. As well as her unwavering commitment to TASIS: its past, present, and future; in this, she is not unlike her mother ...



Headmaster Christopher Nikoloff

Affecting Eternity by Headmaster Christopher Nikoloff, 2024

In thinking about the next phase of the Global Village, I cannot help reflecting upon the fact that TASIS sits at the intersection of local and global, family and humanity. This is Mrs. Fleming's legacy, creating schools in beautiful locations that bring young people from around the world together to learn and grow, and increase their understanding of each other. TASIS is a local enterprise with a global impact. Though on one level we are part of an immediate family called TASIS, the legacy that is Mrs. Fleming's vision extends to all of humanity.

The Global Village reflects this combination of the local and the global, of family and humanity. The phrase itself contains a fruitful oxymoron:

"Global" and "Village." Nestled on a hill called Collina d'Oro, the campus brings us all together into one small setting where we have to share spaces and exchange cordialities every day, like a family. Yet the campus looks beyond ourselves towards vistas stretching across distant horizons, perhaps reminding us that we are here not only for each other but for all of humanity at the same time.

Architect Frank Lloyd Wright said, "A building is not just a place to be but a way to be." The TASIS Global Village inspires "a way to be," bringing to life the values behind the school's motto, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. Not only is the school's motto on the Mary Crist Fleming Library for all to see as *Verum, Bonum, Pulchrum*, it is built into the campus itself—in the classrooms, labs, athletic and artistic facilities, and in the community spaces where we practice the values of the school every day. The next phase of the Global Village further invests in these values with improved residential spaces, classroom spaces, dining facilities, underground parking, and a music center. It also unites the entire school onto one campus.

Bill Eichner, TASIS's Director of Institutional Advancement, often calls Mrs. Fleming the Founder and her daughter, the Chairman of the Board and TASIS's first student, Lynn Fleming Aeschliman, the Builder. "The Founder and the Builder" is a phrase that has made its way into the TASIS vernacular. Mrs. Fleming founded the TASIS legacy while Lynn has built upon that legacy and also extended it into the future. Lynn, working for decades with the school's Master Architect David Mayernik, has built the TASIS campus to reflect the school's values and ensure the Fleming family legacy continues to serve future generations.

I like to remind faculty that we are doing uniquely noble work in education. One of my favorite quotations that exemplifies the nobility of this work comes from American historian Henry Adams: "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." The legacy of Mrs. Fleming "affects eternity," but it continues in the present, inside the Global Village, with a thousand small acts of kindness and discovery every day. We are all a part of this legacy, and our work in keeping it alive makes a much-needed difference in an increasingly small world. We are all part of Mrs. Fleming's family and, as she understood so well, the human family, extending from ourselves to all of humanity, now and for generations to come.

On Legacy by TASIS Master Architect David Mayernik, 2024

Legacy is both what we inherit and what we pass on. It therefore depends on seeing ourselves as part of a continuum, where we have responsibilities not only to the present but the past and the future as well. In architecture that



David Mayernik

has a lot to do with durability, both physically and culturally.

The only things we can be sure will last are those things that have lasted. At TASIS we have privileged durable construction, but also durability of architectural language (classical), the meanings the language conveys, and the role of architecture in shaping community.

The buildings of the TASIS campus represent a stable, enduring approach to building responsibly on our precious land.

They also build a community of values by creating positive open spaces/piazas and terraces, stairways, etc., where the shared experience of a noble environment will hopefully create in students a lifelong desire to build and do well in the world and for the world. For Lynn Fleming Aeschliman and I know that the TASIS campus is not only where education happens, it is itself educational.

It passes along a cultural heritage not only by conserving but by adding to its inheritance. I believe the TASIS campus is one of the most noble environments built in the last century anywhere in the world.

On Legacy Excerpt from a speech by Carlo Pagani '12 during Family Weekend, 2011

My first day at TASIS coincided with the inauguration of the Elementary School, a historical event I still remember with emotion, with Mr. [Jonathan] Morris playing the piano at the opening ceremony. I did not speak a word of English, which made me quite uncomfortable.



But in spite of my worries, I found an immediate feeling of comfort with the ambiance at TASIS. The teachers were always smiling, ready to help, cheer me up, and to motivate me.

Seven years have gone by since that day, and I have no idea where they went. What I know is that I did not regret any moments spent here at TASIS during this long but perceptually short period. Here I am, seven years later, on the finish line of my last high-school year, ready to look forward to another major change in my life into the university world.

I am more confident than I was seven years ago, and thanks to my TASIS years I have matured enough to leave behind my comfort zone. Now I know that life is made of cycles, and that I

will always have to be ready to confront new challenges. I learned that this is the rule and not the exception. I also appreciated the fact that I attended two years in the Italian Section, from 8th to 9th Grade, where most of my classes were also taught in Italian. This helped me to practice my English while still maintaining my Italian proficiency.

In these years, I also witnessed the constant effort that this school puts forth in improving the campus for the rising students, not only academically but also in continuing to develop and upgrade the facilities necessary for teachers and students. In these seven years I saw the realization of major improvements. Aurora, Fiammetta, the Palmer Cultural Center, Lanterna, and the roof on the gymnasium are all things that did not exist when I arrived here. These efforts contribute to the efficiency and comfort of teachers and students and are certainly appreciated.

A few months are left until graduation day, the finish line of the high school cycle, and my gratitude goes out to Mrs. Fleming, whom I had the pleasure to meet, Mrs. Aeschliman, all the faculty and teachers for their patience, to the many friends of various nationalities that I have met in this journey.

On Legacy by Carla Arimont '94, TASIS Board of Directors
Speech presented at Family Weekend 2025

It has been more than thirty years since I was a student here. The world has changed in countless ways, but the essence of TASIS remains timeless.



Mrs. Fleming was larger than life. Her grand gestures, her theatrical voice, her powerful presence—all unforgettable. But what made her truly extraordinary was her vision.

She dreamed of a school that was more than a place to study. She dreamed of a community where young men and women from around the world would discover not only knowledge, but the deeper values of life.

This is the power of TASIS: to form character, to cultivate excellence, and to create a community that passes values through generations.

Mrs. Fleming believed education must shape not only the mind, but also the heart and character.

Thirty years later, I can say with conviction that Mrs. Fleming's dream has not faded. Her

philosophy of courage, trust, and community remains alive.

TASIS is a place where big dreams take flight, anchored in values and strengthened by a true sense of belonging. She believed in truth, goodness, and beauty: timeless ideals. These values shaped not only me, but also my family. They shaped my siblings, Barbara [Arimont Lincoln '92] and Miky [Miguel Arimont Lincoln '01], my nieces Pia [De Villalonga Martin '22] and Valentina [De Villalonga Martin '19], and my older children Olivia [Garcia-Atance Arimont '22] and Sol [Salvador Garcia-Atance Arimont '24]. These same values are shaping my daughter Allegra [Garcia-Atance Arimont '28] today and will shape my son Lucca in the future.

I know my story is not unique.

Many of you have children, nieces, nephews, or even grandchildren at TASIS today. You know what it means to see the same values passed from one generation to the next and to watch how this school becomes part of your family's story.

Why do these values endure? Because they are timeless.

Truth is the foundation of trust. Without honesty and integrity, knowledge has no direction and communities have no anchor. It's the glue that holds relationships together.

Goodness gives purpose to our talents. Compassion, justice, and kindness are never optional. They are what turn knowledge into wisdom and strangers into friends.

Beauty nourishes the spirit and inspires us to dream. It elevates the soul and reminds us that life is not only about achievement, but also about wonder and joy.

Together, truth, goodness, and beauty are what distinguishes us as humans. They transcend culture, politics, and time. That is why Mrs. Fleming's vision still inspires us today, and why it will continue to guide TASIS for generations to come.

Thirty years ago, I stood here and gave a similar speech at an assembly. Five years ago, my daughter Olivia did the same.

Today, it is Allegra's turn ... to carry forward that same voice, for her generation and the ones to come.

For my family—and for so many families gathered here—TASIS is not “just a school”. It is a home, a compass, and a legacy.

This is the essence of TASIS: values lived, taught, and passed from one generation to the next.

Allegra... *adelante*.

Continued by Carla's daughter Allegra Garcia-Atalce Arimont '28

I am honored to stand here today as part of that same story—one that started with Mrs. Fleming's dream and continues with all of us.

Every day, as I walk through campus, I see how



Mrs. Fleming's dream is still alive. From the carefully considered location to the vivid hues of pinks, oranges, and greens that charm our campus, Mrs. Fleming is present.

We are welcomed from every nationality into a community that values respect and understanding.

We seek excellence. We are challenged not only to pursue knowledge, but to love wisdom. We are encouraged to learn through books, yes, but also through service, athletics, art, and through friendships that reach across cultures and languages.

TASIS reminds us that education is not only about preparing for college, but about preparing for life.

It is about becoming responsible, compassionate, and courageous. It is about building relationships and creating a sense of belonging.

My mother always says that she found her voice here at TASIS. She also tells my siblings and me that we must find our own places under the sun.

I believe this school is the perfect place for both things: to discover our own voices, and to find where we belong.

The world around us changes quickly. But here, the values remain constant. They are timeless.

William Butler Yeats said, “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” That fire still burns here at TASIS—the same one Mrs. Fleming lit years ago. As she believed, true education awakens in us the spirit of *bonum, verum, pulchrum*. That is the light she passed on to us, and the one we carry forward.

On behalf of every generation—past, present, and future—thank you, Mrs. Fleming.

2. THE TASIS GLOBAL VILLAGE: OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

CREATING THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL BOARDING SCHOOL



In 1996, TASIS engaged classical architect and urban designer David Mayernik to develop a Master Plan for the TASIS campus. The result is a long-term plan tailored to the needs of our School which also serves as a model for the world as an ideal academic community. The guiding idea of the Master Plan is to create a village environment to foster a sense of community, complete with green spaces, open piazzas, and beautiful, multifunctional buildings. TASIS has become renowned as an example and advocate of sustainable campus design, even catching the eye of Architectural Digest which named TASIS the “most beautiful boarding school in the world”.

BUILDING OPENINGS



1999 – Palestra opens, replacing “the Bubble”
2000 – Villa Del Sole renovated into a dormitory
2004 – M. Crist Fleming Library opens and wins Palladio Award
2005 – Ca’ Gioia is renovated for art studios
2006 – Aurora Classrooms
2009 – John E. Palmer Cultural Center opens
2010 – Lanterna dormitory and Fiammetta classrooms open
2012 – Ferit Şahenk Arts Center and Palestrina open
2014 – Campo Science Center opens
2020 – Ca Pietra demolished
2025 – Casetta renovation completed
2026 – Donald MacDermid Hall dormitory and MacDermid Music Center open

NO MORE TENT! from *TASIS Today*, 2006

One of the highlights of a semester at TASIS is a theater production. But it’s tough when you are working out of a very cold (or very hot, depending on the season!), small, and drafty tent. Sadly, that’s been the “theater” since structural problems forced productions out of Hadsall two years ago.

TASIS needs a new theater. Badly. It will likely be one of the most highly used facilities on campus, and not only for theater productions ...

What will it be used for? Debate. Dance. Faculty meetings. Student films. Acting classes. Art exhibits. Community functions. There is no end to the possibilities.

We are extremely grateful to deceased alumnus John Palmer '64 for donating his entire estate to TASIS. By supporting TASIS, his most generous gift will have a long-lasting effect on our students. The Board plans to use part of his gift to help build the new Performing Arts building as well as utilize a portion of his gift for faculty benefits in an effort to retain our good teachers, the heart of our school.

— Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63, 2007

NEW FOUNTAIN SCULPTURE from *TASIS Today*, 2007



Mrs. Fleming commissioned a statue for the fountain on the M.C. Fleming Piazza by one of the finest young classical sculptors in America, Andrew Wilson Smith. Completed and dedicated in 2007, the bronze sculpture depicts the Sibyl of Cumae, described in Virgil’s the *Aeneid* as Aeneas’s counselor and guide. It celebrates the beauty of Lugano’s lakes and mountains while indicating the commitment of TASIS to educating young people in the liberal arts.

TASIS MASTER PLAN PROGRESS from *TASIS Today*, 2008



In 1999 the first phase of the TASIS campus Master Plan was completed. The Palestra (P) houses the student common room, dance, fitness, and music studios, and the magnificent multi-use gymnasium that has one of the only sprung hardwood maple basketball floors found in Switzerland. The Palestra is the centerpiece of the hill-town village concept.

The Palladio-award-winning M. Crist Fleming Library (L) was made possible in 2004 through the generous donations of former students and parents. Besides the library, the building contains two classrooms with dormitory rooms above and a large faculty apartment. It is situated to the left of Monticello and shares a tree-lined piazza with a beautiful fountain.

Plans are in place to begin construction in September on the large Poporino dormitory (E.1) above the Palestra with faculty apartments (E.2) and classrooms (E.3) incorporated into the

complex. Completion is scheduled for fall 2010.

Lastly, the generous legacy gift from John E. Palmer '64 has allowed us to conclude the \$3,900,000 capital campaign for the aptly named John E. Palmer Theater (T), which is scheduled for completion by the fall of 2009. Over 250 alumni, parents, and friends of TASIS have come together to make this project a reality.

As the School expands, future plans are to build a second practice gym with classrooms above (G), a six-laboratory science building (S) with public spaces on the ground floor, and another dormitory (D) to replace the current art building, Ca Gioia. An expanded Casa Alba (A) will serve as the Headmaster's residence. And yes, as soon as we can move Admissions, IT, and the infirmary out of Ca Pietra, that building will come down and we will build an all-weather practice field in the middle of the campus.

AROUND CAMPUS: THE GLOBAL VILLAGE from *TASIS Today*, 2009



The TASIS Global Village is an ensemble of beautiful and functional new buildings ... In 1996 the TASIS Foundation Board approved a comprehensive campus master plan addressing the School's long-term needs. At the heart of the plan: the Founder's vision of surrounding students with beauty. In collaboration with TASIS Board Chairman Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63, Master Architect David Mayernik has developed the TASIS Global Village Master Plan. Mayernik aimed to create an Italianate hill village—an urban cluster of buildings, piazzas, fountains, and stairways surrounded by colorful villas and open space. This approach maximizes the School's development potential, increases the amount of usable green space, and fosters a sense of humane community. As such it makes TASIS a unique and important example of sustainable development locally, nationally, and internationally.

The first three phases of the Global Village Master Plan have been completed: the handsome multi-use gymnasium, the Palestra (1999), the stunning M. Crist Fleming Library and Piazza (2004), and the Aurora classroom building (2006), all beautifully enriching the campus and providing much-needed facilities for our community.

Ground-breaking for the new John E. Palmer Cultural Center took place in May 2008. When completed in the fall of 2009 the new Cultural Center will be one of the most widely-used and vital buildings on campus. TASIS students now enjoy the advantages of a new gymnasium, attractive class and dorm rooms, and a quiet and beautiful library.

AURORA from *TASIS Today*, 2010



It's worth reminding ourselves that Mrs. Fleming herself was a Master Planner, acquiring buildings that made sense for the campus and expanding our programs over the years. Had she not bought and renovated the Coach House, for example, we likely wouldn't have the photography program we have today. Had she not planned, funded, and built Monticello, we'd probably be packed into classes in Ca' Pietra. And had her daughter not decided to devote her life to building and strengthening TASIS, we wouldn't have the Palestra, and the students wouldn't have their favorite hangout on campus—the snack bar.

The Global Village Master Plan began with the dream of replacing a cramped, uninsulated, noisy plastic bubble with the Palestra, a beautiful, versatile space that boasts the best basketball court in Ticino and hosts assemblies, PE classes, exams, banquets, concerts, and more. Next came the M. Crist Fleming Library, which created an elegant tranquil space for reading and, simultaneously, the most beautiful piazza on the campus. Then Aurora, which houses some of our best classrooms, has played host to several years of theater productions, and is designed flexibly enough to be classrooms, dorm rooms, offices, or faculty apartments as the school's needs change in the coming years.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

By David Mayernik, *TASIS Today*, 2011



The Brundtland Commission of the United Nations describes sustainable development as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” ... This is what TASIS has been doing for more than half a century: giving new life to old buildings and creating new buildings that combine the wisdom of traditional construction with the best of modern systems. With the Campo Science building, TASIS will continue to advance its mission of being a positive contributor to its environmental and cultural context; indeed, since the Sciences are dedicated to the study of the natural world, it is appropriate that their new home fits naturally into its environment, contributes to a model development that conserves open space, develops a sensible footprint that allows the building to enjoy full pedestrian access, natural

light, and fresh air, is durable, and employs a discrete renewable energy source for its heating.

Sustainable building begins with the site: how accessible is it on foot, how does it impact the terrain, how well does it collaborate with other buildings, how does it minimize infrastructure, how does it work with the sun and climate? The TASIS Master Plan has been designed with all of these factors in mind ... As important as sustainable siting are the building's footprint and volume: do they adapt to the form of the terrain, do they have a shape that can be naturally illuminated and ventilated (does the building minimize mechanical means of lighting, ventilation, and circulation), is the building simple enough to be adaptable over time to other needs, and does it maximize its volume so that it is not wasteful or

inefficient? In all of these cases TASIS has been prudent in building structures that take advantage of their hillside settings, and that are traditionally proportioned, with often single-loaded corridors to allow all rooms a view. The buildings are relatively simple in shape, with clear, straightforward room organizations and a minimum of horizontal and vertical circulation space.

The UN definition of sustainable development may be a minimum definition, restricted to defining how our development will not negatively affect the future. Still, it is often honored more in the breach than the observance. In many cases quick fix solutions like solar panels (which have life spans of approximately 20 to 25 years) substitute for careful planning, and durability is sacrificed to speed of construction. TASIS has made itself an internationally-regarded model of sustainable planning and building, a logical consequence of its heritage of studying the best of the European tradition. The idea that our built environment is beautiful enough that we will want to preserve it is almost never mentioned, but this is one of the most critical aspects of building durably.

**ESSENTIAL ASPECTS
OF SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION**

- Building durably so that the building isn't obsolete or beyond reasonable maintenance for the long term, measured in centuries.
- Creating an environment that is non-toxic, imagining, as well, that the building may some day become raw material for other buildings or end up as waste.
- Minimizing the building's dependence on energy-intensive mechanical systems.
- Relying, at least in part, on renewable energy sources for supplying the required mechanical needs.



**METHODS USED
TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY**

- TASIS builds with insulating clay blocks covered in lime-based plaster as a simple, highly-effective way to achieve many sustainable objectives: it is durable, ecological, non-toxic, and recyclable.
- Materials and finishes include natural materials such as wood, clay tile, and lime-wash paint
- Relying on day lighting and natural ventilation reduces two of the most voracious energy consumers – electrical and air conditioning systems.
- Supplementing our heating systems with site-produced geothermal heating (and some cooling) is a low-impact way of providing reliable renewable energy.
- Incorporating sophisticated ecological lighting and water-management systems.
- Continued encouragement of recycling and ecologically-minded everyday choices by students, faculty, and staff.

THE SPACES BETWEEN By David Mayernik, *TASIS Today*, 2014



One could naturally think that the character of the TASIS campus development over the last fifteen years is principally about new classical architecture, but that in fact misses the most radical part of the campus master plan: its attention to the spaces between the buildings. Indeed, the buildings can best be understood as frames to the piazzas, stairways, and “streets” that make up the academic village growing on the hillside around Monticello. Since one of the principal intentions of the master plan is to reserve the maximum amount of open, flat green space for school activities, compacting the new buildings into an urban environment means that attention has to be focused on the quality of space those buildings shape. When space is precious, it has added value, and quality matters. It could be said that an intimate, beautiful small space has greater value than a much larger, ill-formed space. It is what we cherish in the built landscape across Europe.

Whatever one might think of the style of building going up beyond the campus edge, or in the Lugano area generally, Modernist buildings are unquestionably characterized by their quality as discrete objects, as autonomous forms, and not primarily as space-shapers. Traditional buildings, instead, have always privileged their role as shapers of space, whether of the streets and piazzas of villages and cities or the gardens of villas. It is the quality of urban space as a kind of outdoor room that we so appreciate in the great towns and cities of Europe; we feel at home, oriented, and ennobled. For a school like TASIS those urban rooms have the added didactic value of helping to shape a community, a place where students learn to share space, encountering each other as citizens in the best sense; and it affords places where teaching can happen between classes, on the way to lunch, or when the day is done. These urban spaces frame the tableau of daily life on campus, and encourage an intellectual community.

Each of the campus's new building projects contributes something to these in-between places. With the Palestra (1999), not only was the scalinata created between it and Monticello, but the formerly isolated terrace in front of Monticello was enlivened as a point of intersection and a raised piazza, qualities reinforced with the building of the M. Crist Fleming Library (2004). That building also created more open space in front of the Monticello terrace, defining the piazza with its fountain and ilex trees; the piazza is like a basin that collects the traffic cascading down from the hillside, and from there it opens



Şahenk Arts Center, 2012

out to the world beyond—one can almost reach out and touch Certenago. Above the Palestra, the Şahenk Fine Arts Center, Fiammetta, and Lanterna frame a series of intimate outdoor spaces that often surprisingly reveal spectacular distant vistas.

It is important that these communal spaces are not only inward-looking: because of building on the hillside they also can open outward—to Certenago, to San Salvatore and Lake Lugano, and to the near and distant Alps. They create both an intimate, campus-focused environment, and a platform for engaging the world.



Lanterna, 2010

A KING'S AWARD FOR THE TESIS LUGANO CAMPUS



David Mayernik with King Charles in 2016

In 2016, at the INTBAU Excellence Awards reception at Clarence House, London, then Prince Charles was there to present an award for the TESIS campus. Of the campus, the now King Charles III said, “This kind of thing gives me hope.”

The award for the TESIS campus means even

more because of the King’s longstanding interest in traditional building and especially urban design, such as campus planning, and the environment. His Foundation works with communities and partners around the world to champion sustainable community-building and heritage-sensitive restoration.

THINGS ARE LOOKING A LITTLE DIFFERENT ON THE COLLINA D'ORO! By David Mayernik, *TESIS Today*, 2020

In early 2020, Ca Pietra, the stone house in the middle of the field, was bulldozed to make way for an expanded parking area. This shifted around offices which put Admissions in Casa Fleming and the Alumni Office in Villa de Nobili, along one of the busiest thoroughfares on campus!

THE TASIS GLOBAL VILLAGE



- 1) M. Crist Fleming Library, classrooms, & dorm
- 2) Monticello classrooms & dorm
- 3) Casetta offices
- 4) Palestra Sports Center
- 5) Lanterna faculty apartments, classrooms, & dorm
- 6) Lanterna classrooms & dorm
- 7) Fiametta classrooms
- 9) Ferit Şahenk Fine Arts Center & Palestrina gym
- 10) Palmer Cultural Center
- 12) Villa De Nobili dorm, offices, health center, & dining
- 13) Campo Science Center
- 14) Belvedere dorm & classrooms
- 15) Balmelli dorm
- 16) Del Sole dorm
- 17) Ca' Piccola dorm
- 18) Aurora classrooms
- 19) Casa Fleming
- 21) Hadsall dorm & ES classrooms
- 25) Scuderia dorm
- 26) Giani dorm

HISTORY OF THE MASTER PLAN

In 1996, TASIS engaged classical architect and urban designer David Mayernik to develop the Master Plan for the TASIS campus. The result is a long-term plan that is tailored not only to the needs of our School but also serves as a model for the world as an ideal academic community. The guiding idea of the Master Plan is to create a village environment to foster a sense of community, complete with green spaces, open piazzas, and beautiful, multifunctional buildings. TASIS has since become renowned as an example and advocate of sustainable campus design.

- 1999 The Palestra opens with student common room; dance, fitness, music studios; multi-use gymnasium. – 4
- 2000 Campus expands by 40% with Master Plan extended to the north. Villa Del Sole is renovated into a dormitory. – 16
- 2001 Ca' Pietra is renovated.
- 2004 M. Crist Fleming Library opens and wins the Palladio Award. – 1
- 2005 Ca' Gioia is converted for art studios.
- 2006 Aurora opens, providing classrooms and a large multi-purpose room. – 18
- 2007 Alba renovated for three classrooms.
- 2009 The John E. Palmer Cultural Center opens, with theater and arts spaces. – 10
- 2010 Lanterna dorms, faculty apartments, common room, health center, four classrooms – 5 & 6 and Fiametta with four classrooms open. – 7
- 2012 The Ferit Şahenk Fine Arts Center opens with painting, architecture, photography, and ceramics studios above the Palestrina practice gym. – 9
- 2014 Campo Science Center opens with eight state-of-the-art laboratories, three prep rooms, and two general-use classrooms. – 13

FUTURE OF THE MASTER PLAN

- 2020 Campo playing field – 27
- 2020 Expanded temporary parking
- 2021 Valzonico Elementary School Building with six classrooms & science lab – 22
- 2022 Hadsall East Terrace Dining Room – 23
- 2023 Tunnel under Via Collina d'Oro
- 2023 Donald D. MacDermid Music & Student Center – 8
- 2024 Corona Dormitory – 11
- 2027 Hadsall North Circulation Tower & interior renovations
- 2028 Hadsall Elementary School S. Wing – 24
- 2029 Permanent parking – 28
- 2030 Swimming pool & changing rooms – 29

The TASIS Global Village is an internationally recognized model of stewardship and sustainability. Completing the Global Village requires dedication, hard work, and financial support over many years. The challenge is enormous and exciting! Since its founding in 1956, TASIS has established its reputation as the oldest and finest American boarding school in Europe. As we realize our Global Village Master Plan, we strive to also have the most beautiful campus in Europe: a shining light for Ticino and a proud expression of America's contributions to international culture.

Help us complete the vision: to crown the Global Village with Corona Dormitory (11) to replace Hadsall and Giani dorms. All donations are welcome, however large or small, or name the building with a gift of CHF 2 million! Please discuss your gift intentions with the Headmaster christopher.nikoloff@tasis.ch

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN 2004 - 2019

Founded in 1956, TASIS is the longest-established American boarding school in Europe. All TASIS schools and programs are based on Mrs. Fleming's educational principles, which are symbolized in the TASIS crest.

TOWER SUMMIT

The Tower stands for culture (humanitas)

Donald MacDermid '61	\$3,100,000	Donald D. MacDermid Center
Ferit Şahenk '83	\$3,000,000	Şahenk Fine Arts Center
John E. Palmer '64	\$2,600,000	Palmer Cultural Center

SUNBEAMS

The Sun represents truth (veritas)

Nicholas Major PG'68	\$400,000	Valzonico ES Classrooms
David & Maria Chan	\$400,000	MCF Library & Campo Science
Paulise & Rick Bell PG'65	\$350,000	Palmer Center & Campo Science
Helsinn Healthcare	\$310,000	Campo Science
Ambassador & Mrs. John Pritzlaff	\$300,000	MCF Library
Robert S. Perkin PG'66	\$300,000	MCF Library, Palmer Center, & Campo Science
Birgitta & Jan Opsahl '68	\$275,000	Palmer Center & Campo Science
Ambassador Holland Coors & family	\$250,000	MCF Library & Palmer Center
Anonymous	\$250,000	Campo Science
TASIS Parent Association	\$250,000	Campo Science & Valzonico ES Classrooms

LAMPLIGHTERS

The Lamp symbolizes wisdom (sapientia)

Yvonne & Steve Maloney PG'61	\$150,000	MCF Library & Palmer Center
Debora & Gabriel Brenner	\$150,000	Campo Science
Sergey & Ekaterina Nesterenko	\$150,000	Valzonico ES Classrooms
Curtis McGraw Webster '75	\$130,000	MCF Library & Palmer Center
Jane Goldman '74	\$125,000	MCF Library
Donald MacDermid '61	\$120,000	MCF Library & Palmer Center
Barnes Brooks '90	\$100,000	MCF Library
VF International	\$100,000	Palmer Center
Carlo & Giuseppina Pagani	\$100,000	Campo Science
Pioneer Hi-Bred Int'l. Foundation	\$100,000	Campo Science

BOOK CIRCLE

The Book means knowledge (scientia)

Anonymous	\$100,000	Campo Science
Hixon Glone	\$90,000	Palmer Center
Anonymous	\$86,000	Campo Science
Minoru & Nayara Yumi Dondo '16	\$85,000	Campo Science
Amy & John Gage '60	\$75,000	MCF Library & Palmer Center
Anonymous	\$60,000	Campo Science
Curtis W. McGraw Foundation	\$50,000	Palmer Center
Harry Belin	\$50,000	Palmer Center
Roberto & Claude Vaglietti	\$50,000	Palmer Center
Richard & Anne Mastain	\$50,000	Palmer Center
Gov. & Mrs. Bola Tinubu	\$50,000	Palmer Center
Maude PG'67 & Frederick Glone	\$50,000	Campo Science
Lam Wai Leung & Deng Ru Jun	\$50,000	Campo Science
Zvetan Zanev	\$50,000	Campo Science
Menno De Kant	\$30,000	Palmer Center
Kathy Pitner '62	\$25,000	MCF Library
Richard & Penelope Hansen	\$25,000	MCF Library
Lloyd & Annegret De Vos	\$25,000	Palmer Center
Martin Vogt '64	\$22,000	Valzonico ES classrooms
Alexandra Heumann Wicki '80	\$20,000	Palmer Center
Max & Melissa Gygax	\$20,000	Campo Science
Gianni & Beatrice Patuzzo	\$10,000	Campo Science
Leon & Kathy Streit	\$10,000	Campo Science
Orlun Zorlu	\$10,000	Campo Science

SUSTAINABLE TASIS, 2020 AND BEYOND

TASIS Master Architect David Mayernik discusses the eco credentials of his stunning building designs

From the first master plan of 1996, the TASIS campus has been developed as a sustainable community. At the broadest levels, that has to do with land use—preserving open green space by concentrating buildings into a village environment—and the related aspect of walkability. Developing the campus on sloping ground makes the experience of moving between the buildings not only exciting, but healthful. The campus is built to be durable, with ecological clay block walls as the standard form of out-of-the-ground construction, and timber roof framing; not only appealing for their traditional character, these systems of construction are long-lasting,

sustainably produced, and non-toxic, not to mention attractive and sympathetic with their environment. Privileging natural light and air starts with building planning—relatively narrow footprints and multiple exposures facilitate daylighting and cross-circulation—and extends to operable windows and shutters. As part of a group of buildings crowning the campus village, the MacDermid Hall will weave together positive open space, a variety of exposures, and the enriching ambience of music in the piazza to complete TASIS’s sustainable community of buildings, a beacon of prudent planning and a model of how we can live together and with the environment.



PLANNING CHANGES

By David Mayernik, *TASIS Today*, 2022

The Master Plan we developed in 2020–21 and submitted as our Piano di Quartiere (zoning plan) to the Comune of Collina d’Oro at the end of December in 2021 coincided with the Comune’s approval of a drastically revised Piano Regolatore, which changed the rules governing building heights and setbacks; moreover, we have since learned that the Canton has revised the setbacks from

the roads along the upper campus boundary to allow for eventual road widening. We were therefore forced to withdraw the application and redesign, under the guiding hand of Lynn Fleming Aeschliman ’63—meaning we were undaunted and creative in doing what’s best for TASIS, maintaining the philosophy that has guided our master plans for 26 years while satisfying the new regulatory requirements.

THE TASIS GLOBAL VILLAGE: OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

By David Mayernik, *TASIS Today*, 2023



The 2023 TASIS Campus Master Plan is a response to recent developments in the life of the school and the world at large, which have offered us an opportunity to make the most effective use of the available building sites on campus with an economy of means. The plan fundamentally reconceives the parameters of the former master plan to maximize the effectiveness of each future phase. The result is an even more

compelling vision for the future.

A primary goal is to get all academic levels—Elementary, Middle, and High School—on the main side of campus. This allows them to take advantage of shared facilities like art, theater, library, and gymnasium, affords proximity to drop-off (eliminating the need for a tunnel), and provides convenient access to the new dining hall.

Simplifying the construction around what was formerly known as the Corona buildings in the former master plan, a single main classroom and residential block, MacDermid Hall sits above and behind the MacDermid Music Center. To arrive at sufficient classroom space around the Aurora and Belvedere Elementary School classrooms, Le Pergole for MS classrooms is inserted between Belvedere and Campo Science. All of this results in Hadsall being reserved as an

upper-level boys' dormitory to be completely renovated. The new, large dining hall adjacent to the kitchen and rooftop dining maximize efficacy of service, provide scheduling flexibility, and create concentrated kitchen delivery away from the sensitive areas of Certenago. The result of all of these projects is a more effective distribution of functions on both sides of the Via Collina d'Oro, and as always a more beautiful and sustainable campus environment.



NEW GAZEBO

TASIS is lucky to be located in one of the safest countries and areas in the world. But as the student population increased, TASIS had to consider campus entry points. In 2007 TASIS added a wooden gazebo to the area between the parking lot and Casa Fleming which was replaced by a permanent space for our reception and security team. TASIS works alongside a Swiss security firm to ensure the campus has a presence 24 hours a day when students are present and coverage from 06:00 until 23:00 when the school is closed.



CASSETTA: THE NEWLY-RENOVATED JEWEL ON CAMPUS

from *TASIS Today*, 2025



Constructed in the 17th century, Casetta has served many purposes over the past four centuries. Built over a well, the building originally served as a laundry for Villa de Nobili but was later turned into an aviary for exotic birds.

When TASIS arrived in 1960, the charming building was initially converted into a classroom and student store. Over the years it has served as a student dormitory, faculty housing, the Admissions Office, and a workspace for many TASIS administrators and department heads.

After a meticulous renovation that spanned 15 months and included everything from the



foundations to hand-painted brick walls and frescoes, Casetta re-opened in January 2025. It now serves as the Headmaster's office and a conference room for the TASIS community.

As Headmaster Christopher Nikoloff says, "I couldn't ask for a better building or location; it is iconically beautiful, centrally located, and private at the same time. It allows me to be in the center of the life of the school while affording the ability to carry out the functions of a Headmaster's office. And everyone who enters it says it feels like TASIS and home at the same time."

TASIS GLOBAL VILLAGE UPDATE 2026

A big, and in some ways final, portion of the Global Village is under construction and on schedule for opening in August of 2026.



The Donald D. MacDermid classroom and dormitory building and Music Center building will in many ways complete the hillside village after a brief stop on the hill to complete Le Pergole, a four-classroom building for the Middle School. A compact series of buildings organized around public spaces like piazzas, terraces and stairways has become a landmark on the Collina d'Oro, and recognized in 2024 by *Architectural Digest* magazine as first of the nine most beautiful boarding schools in the world. In addition to their classroom and

dormitory functions, and a new art gallery, these projects are also woven into the system of walkways and spaces that make the hillside a lively village environment, and their prospect from near the top of the campus offers a variety of dramatic views of the immediate surroundings and Lake Lugano and the Alps.

Looking beyond these projects that are underway, perhaps the most complex project TASIS has ever undertaken will soon follow. Collina Bassa: a new arrival and drop-off

court, underground parking with a sports field above, a new secure entrance to campus, a study greenhouse for the sciences, an ES science lab, and a purpose-built large dining hall and kitchen.

This last will provide ample, elegant dining both inside its main hall and on outdoor terraces at that level and at the rooftop. The new building will improve dining service and kitchen logistics. Mrs. Fleming always understood how important the food quality and community aspect of dining were to the

life of the school, and this new facility will make the dining experience even better.

The TASIS campus has always been an integral part of the formation of its students, by fostering an appreciation of beauty and community. We are within sight of the completion of a more than three decades-long process of making the TASIS campus a leading international example of what can be done with the lessons of the past in building a sustainable and beautiful future. —David Mayernik, Master Architect, 2025

3. THE NEW ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

IT'S ELEMENTARY

The first TASIS lifers graduate as the Elementary School celebrates its first 12 years



Teacher Susanna Zangheratti with joyful students

The Class of 2017 included our first TASIS Lifers: two students who began attending TASIS when the Elementary School opened its doors in the fall of 2005. In the ensuing 12 years the School has grown to a vibrant international community of 190 children from over 25 countries speaking more than 20 native languages.

Luxembourg-born Dominikis “Mino” Kronwitter '17 was one of the students sitting in the white

tent outside Hadsall on the first day of TASIS ES. “It was a very happy time, looking back,” he remembers. “There was a lot of change every year, since it was just starting up, but it was an adventure every year, a good one. Growing up with a place, it becomes a part of you.”

Mino was fortunate to have known some English before starting at age five, but Adam Novak '17 came to Lugano from Ukraine,

speaking only Russian and Ukrainian. “I was absolutely terrified,” Adam recalls of his first day as a five-year-old. “It was hard, but then again some of my fondest memories are from elementary school.”

The proof of the long-term effects of the Elementary School can be found in our recent graduates. “I liked how the teachers instilled in me this sense of curiosity for learning, and I’ve kept that since,” says Mino. “I’m always curious about all of my subjects and I’m never really bored. My elementary teachers taught me how to become academic.”

Adam agrees: “We had very good math classes,” he says of the Singapore Math curriculum, “and I got a good linguistic foundation.” Indeed, Adam was Valedictorian in 2017 and took nine AP classes during his junior and senior years, achieving 4s or 5s on all of his exams.

Mino and Adam are two of many success stories of this fusion of Core Knowledge and Mrs. Fleming’s values of culture, wisdom, knowledge, truth, and beauty. Lynn echoes Mino’s comments that one of the highlights of the past 12 years is “the success of our students in really learning and loving to learn. This is especially gratifying with students who come to us with no English and are speaking fluently and writing correctly within a year or two. One memorable case was Carlo Pagani '12, whose parents later gave a classroom to our new science center in gratitude for the education he received. He went on to Northeastern University.”

Lynn showed great vision when planning the Elementary School despite wariness from



Elementary School children thrive at TASIS

many. So how did she feel watching Mino and Adam walk across the stage, knowing they spent every year of their academic lives so far at TASIS? “Of course I am very pleased with what they have achieved as students and, we hope, as good, growing human beings, and I’m sad to see them leave the fold,” she says. “I believe they are well-prepared.”

from *TASIS Today*, 2017

NON SCHOLAE, SED VITAE DISCIMUS

We do not learn for school, but for life: Twenty Years of TASIS Elementary



Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63 with students who all attended or attend TASIS Elementary: Amira Bekmyrza '32, Federico Bonaccorso '30, Chloe Hassan '25, and Leonida Volpi '35

Mrs. Fleming said it couldn't be done. Some said it wasn't needed, or was too ambitious. The Ticino authorities had countless obstacles in place. But finally, after 25 years of frustrations and challenges, TASIS Elementary School opened its doors on September 5, 2005 with 45 children and a dream.

THE BEGINNING

Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63 and her family returned to Lugano in the mid-1990s after nearly a decade in the US, where Lynn started and ran an architectural restoration business in Virginia, dismantling and moving early

American post-and-beam houses and log cabins. "I love the challenge of creating new uses for existing spaces. It's problem-solving, because there is always a solution, one just has to be creative," Lynn says. With this in mind, Mrs. Fleming put her to work restoring derelict buildings, stately homes, châteaux, and building new, classical buildings, always for TASIS schools.

A few years after Lynn's return, Mrs. Fleming and the family donated the TASIS schools and properties to the nonprofit TASIS Swiss Foundation to ensure the independence of the TASIS schools in perpetuity. As Lynn, her brother Tom Fleming, and Mrs. Fleming began structuring this development, they realized each school should have its own Board: a new concept for TASIS, which used to share funding from school to school. Lynn understood that TASIS Lugano had to be independent and began diving into the numbers.

This is where her dream of opening an elementary school came in.

For years families in or moving to Ticino had been asking for an Anglophone elementary school. Lynn had considered this for 25 years—initially for her own children—but was unable to get the permissions in place. For others, it wasn't a priority: enrollment in the middle and high schools was high and the School was already squeezed into a tiny footprint of the Collina d'Oro with little space to expand. But suddenly the timing was right: Lynn saw the potential of acquiring more land surrounding the existing buildings and also understood that to maintain profitability and

secure its institutional future, the School had to expand enrollment. Currency fluctuations, business relocations, international political turmoil, and many other uncontrollable factors affect international schools. Lynn's foresight to open the TASIS Elementary School has subsequently ensured that the School remains in good health and with a promising future.

But the road to a TASIS school has rarely been smooth, and choosing the mid-2000s to finally push things through was tricky. At that time, Ticino law required all children to attend schooling in Italian from the ages of 6 to 15, with the exemption of two years. Decades of tireless lobbying and discussions with the Ticinese authorities were, at first, futile, but eventually the Ticino authorities realized that to be attractive to multi-national companies considering relocating to Ticino an English-language elementary school was critical. TASIS collaborated with Pioneer, a subsidiary of DuPont that moved its headquarters to Ticino, and the Swiss American Chamber of Commerce Ticino Chapter to put pressure on authorities. This, coupled with invaluable advice and assistance from TASIS lawyer Emanuele Verda, led to persuading the Cantonal authorities to expand the law limiting schooling in a language other than Italian. TASIS has kept its promise, too; to this day children are taught in both Italian and English and nearly all students finish fifth grade fluent in both languages.

As soon as cantonal permission was granted, Lynn got busy; there was more work to do.

“LEARNING BUILDS ON LEARNING”: CORE KNOWLEDGE

Lynn’s scholar-husband Michael Aeschliman was instrumental in choosing the curriculum for the TASIS Elementary School. A longtime admirer of educator E. D. Hirsch, Michael believed that Hirsch’s Core Knowledge curriculum was perfect for TASIS; indeed, he also encouraged its use at TASIS England and Puerto Rico, and eventually in Portugal. Hirsch was an enormously distinguished professor and literary theorist at the University of Virginia and subsequently founder of the Core Knowledge Foundation (www.coreknowledge.org). One of the great theorists of language and interpretation in the post-World War II era, Hirsch came to understand that a student’s ability to comprehend a concept or

passage was directly related to the student’s background knowledge. This led Hirsch to developing his concept of “cultural literacy”—the ability to understand and participate fluently in any culture comes from repeated, systematic exposure to its written language, in its works of literature, history, science, and the arts. The process of building comprehension in the early grades of school works like Velcro—specific deposits of culture, shared by all students at each grade level, form adhesive materials to which subsequent bodies of knowledge can be systematically and effectively attached.

Michael, who is a scholar, literary critic, writer, Professor Emeritus of Education at Boston University, retired Professor of Anglophone Culture at USI (Lugano), and formerly TASIS

Curriculum Advisor, considers Hirsch one of the great literary intellectuals of our time and has been writing about Hirsch’s curriculum since 1987. In several publications Michael has made compelling arguments for schools to adopt Core Knowledge at the elementary level. In a 2013 article in *National Review* entitled “Restoring Our K-12 Schools” Michael argued that Core Knowledge “systematically exposes young students to [the] humanizing patrimony of history and literature,” in addition to the primary, indispensable goal of facilitating their literacy. “Without early literacy, no sustained future educational growth is possible. Thus, learn to read well early so as to read to learn for the rest of your life.”

Michael also believes that the historical and cultural contents taught in the Core Knowledge curriculum are critical for students, and should be especially for beneficiaries of a TASIS education:

History may be the last durable matrix, measure, and mirror in which the human person can dependably seek ethical self-knowledge. As autobiographical reflection is the means of individual self-knowledge, history is the means of collective human self-knowledge: Instead of looking vainly at the screen (Milton Shulman’s “ravenous eye”) or drunkenly looking (to paraphrase Housman) into the pewter pot and seeing the world as the world is not, we look into the mirror of personal and collective history to see the world as it really is.

TASIS is a school with students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and the carefully sequenced, cumulative, content-rich Core Knowledge curriculum becomes

an equalizer that closes the opportunity and diversity gaps by giving all children an opportunity to learn the same essential academic knowledge and skills in English. They develop cultural literacy in a systematic way while leaving room for teacher creativity: the content is specified, grade by grade, but teachers are free to teach the subject matter in any way they wish.

Families have been delighted with the love of learning they see in their children’s school experience and how they begin to understand and connect topics from a young age. Two current Italian TASIS Board members had two children each who went through TASIS K–12 and then on to competitive English-language universities. With the Core Knowledge curriculum, students gradually become aware of how history influences contemporary events and subjects relate to each other, and they begin to comprehend complex ideas. Indeed, our Headmaster, Christopher Nikoloff, has seen this in his own children. “I have noticed in informal conversations that my sons can draw upon background knowledge in a variety of subjects, which helps them better understand current situations or contexts,” he says.

Core Knowledge is supplemented with the Singapore Math program, which connects to Core Knowledge math objectives. Using a three-step learning model of concrete, pictorial, and abstract, mathematical concepts are introduced in a progression that ensures that students master a specific set of skills before moving on to more complex topics.

With the curriculum set, it was time to take things to the operational level.



PREPARATION TO OPERATION

Lynn and her team began planning in earnest in January 2005. Initially, the school was to be housed in Ca' Gioia, a brutalist cement home (now demolished) tucked behind Belvedere with three classrooms for grades 1/2, 3/4, and 5/6. This would be sufficient for the 25 students who were enrolled.

But more and more students enrolled, and Ca' Gioia would never be big enough for more students. So the Elementary School moved to Hadsall. "We were still in the throes of tearing down one wall and putting up another when the new teachers arrived," recalls veteran TASIS teacher Perri Sartorelli, who worked closely with Lynn on getting the ES ready. "There was a sense of panic." But in true TASIS fashion, improvised solutions succeeded as enrollment continued to rise. "And the foundation of the school was laid," says Perri, "not just in bricks and mortar, but in vision, flexibility, and heart."

Initially, ES classes were divided into Kindergarten and 1st grade, 2nd and 3rd grade, and 4th, 5th and 6th grade, along with spaces for ESL, Art, Music, Italian, and PE. And on September 5, 2005, the school opened with 45 children and 8 teachers and administrators—and a deep sigh of relief from everyone involved.

THE FIRST YEARS

Perri remembers taking Mrs. Fleming on a tour of the ES during its first month. "She was visibly moved by what she saw—the thoughtfully

designed classrooms, the warm and inviting spaces for children, and the overall sense of care that had gone into creating the school," Perri remembers. Mrs. Fleming's blessing sprinkled a bit more magic on the nascent school.

Throughout the fall, Hadsall was busy with continued renovations. A robust white tent with a wooden floor was erected in the garden for assemblies, events, and after-school activities. A playground was completed in early November. Classes began to go on age-appropriate excursions around Ticino, echoing Mrs. Fleming's mandate for student travel experiences. Most importantly, children were learning and growing, and families were delighted to be a part of something special. The fact that the curriculum was specific at each grade level meant that it formed a mutually understood contract between administrators, teachers, students, and parents—between school and home.

Perri says, "There was a vision everyone had and a deep bond between the school, teachers, and parents began to grow. The parents weren't just buying into a program; they were becoming part of a community. That shift made it clear this wasn't a temporary experiment. We ended the year with a huge sigh—and over 40 students!"

By the second year, TASIS had to hire a teacher for every grade; staff doubled and the ES was truly on its way. For several years Phonics and Core Knowledge specialist Susan DeWinter of Boston (a former NY State Teacher of the Year) gave initial workshops to faculty in the autumn.



Perri, who worked for TASIS in the ES and MS until she retired in June 2025, cherishes her years with the ES. "It taught me so much about teaching, about teamwork, and about building something from the ground up. One of the biggest lessons was how important flexibility is. We had our plans, of course, but things shifted constantly—enrollment grew faster than expected, classrooms moved. You learn quickly to stay open, calm, and adjust without losing your sense of purpose."

In the first two years, the ES had three different heads, so TASIS was thrilled in 2008 when Lynn found an outstanding principal with deep knowledge and commitment to Core Knowledge. Nyman Brooks discovered Core Knowledge after reading E. D. Hirsch's book *Cultural Literacy* (Random House, 1987) while working at the US Central Intelligence Agency. Despite not being an educator at the time, he found Hirsch's arguments compelling. He quit the CIA in 1990 and returned to Utah where he studied education at Weber State and got his M.Ed. from the University of Utah. He became

head of the new Odyssey Charter School in Utah, a highly-regarded K–6 Core Knowledge school that is also celebrating its twentieth anniversary this year.

"I think it is an interesting coincidence—Lynn actually called it Providence—that the Odyssey Charter School and TASIS ES both opened their doors in 2005," Nyman says. "I was the founding director of this fledgling school that was experiencing the same hopeful exuberance and the same founding difficulties that TASIS ES was experiencing. Lynn and I had this in common. So, in addition to CK, our common struggles with our respective fledgling schools immediately drew Lynn, Michael, and me together at a Core Knowledge conference in Washington D.C. in 2007. We were instant friends and comrades."

Nyman deeply believes in the impact of Core Knowledge. "The real crux and power of E. D. Hirsch's thoughts sound so commonsensical," Nyman says of Core Knowledge. "Kindergarten



Liz Zanecchia reading to students

through eighth grade is a very short period of time, and those minutes and hours in school are precious. If you're reading good literature that is congruent with other topics, it builds a structure. Core Knowledge ensures that the curriculum flows vertically but also is coordinated horizontally, ensuring the topics and disciplines are connected." Many schools, particularly in the US, leave curriculum decisions up to individual districts, schools, and even teachers, and there is little or no coherence.

"Children need a framework for knowledge," Nyman says. "Those who possess knowledge and skills are actually more capable of acquiring more skills. Children progress at an exponential rate because they have a framework to put everything in context." He continues, "There is a big difference between how novices think and approach problems and how the expert does,

and that difference is due to thinking more efficiently. They're able to absorb more because it makes sense."

Michael says, "Lynn and I consider Nyman Brooks a major reason for the success of the ES. No other ES principal, administrator, or teacher played as crucial a role in establishing and legitimating Core Knowledge at TASIS. Like our veteran teachers Marcia Page, David Jepson, Bill Eichner, Carolyn Heard, and my brother Mark, he is a truly outstanding educator and person. His departure was a great loss to TASIS."

Nyman's influence goes beyond TASIS, as his recommendation of Core Knowledge specialist Gina Anderson for TASIS Portugal was hugely successful. "She has done an outstanding job," Michael says of Gina's work with teachers and families in the Lisbon-area school. "She is a big reason for TASIS Portugal's immediate and growing success."

A CHANGED LANDSCAPE

In 2005, the iPhone hadn't been invented yet. Dial-up internet was still common, and social media use was rare. The world has evolved in the ensuing two decades, as has TASIS—but, as Mrs. Fleming said, "times change; values don't."

When the Elementary School was added, the atmosphere of TASIS began to shift. While day students were in the mix, TASIS had been primarily a boarding school for older students. But as the ES grew, a youthful energy burst onto campus, with children running around and families dropping off students in the morning and picking them up in the afternoon. The rhythm on the hill began to change.

"We started seeing more families who lived in the area full-time and wanted their children to grow up in a bilingual, international setting," Perri Sartorelli remembers. "At the same time, there were also families who were in Europe for just a few years and wanted to maintain continuity in their children's education. You could feel the school becoming more rooted in the local community. That shift changed everything and made the TASIS community feel connected and grounded."

"The growth of the Elementary School had an impact on day student enrollment in the Middle and High School as these students moved up to the higher grade levels," says Bill Eichner, Director of Institutional Advancement. "In recent years our overall day student enrollment Pre-K through 12 has hovered close to 500." TASIS decided in 2011 to shift 6th graders into the middle school, eventually

admitting 6th grade boarding students too. TASIS was now a fully pre-kindergarten through 13th year (postgraduate) school, and the first "TASIS Lifers"—those who attended from kindergarten through 12th grade—graduated in 2019.

"With more day students come parents!" Bill says. "The expansion of the local parent community has resulted in more active parent involvement, which has been a tremendous benefit to the school. Whether it was the TASIS Parent Association, which increased its involvement tremendously under the direction of Jennifer Zanarini, or the Parent Support Committees, which are more focused on school operations, the active parent community has been a big boost to the school."

The TPA has annually delivered events and activities that celebrate and connect our community. Of note is last year's spectacular Gala, which raised 4M Swiss Francs for the TASIS Global Village and was the culmination of months of work by parent volunteers.

THE CORE KNOWLEDGE STAMP REMAINS

For the past two decades, the ES has given hundreds of children a foundation that has resulted in English-language fluency, excellent exam scores, desirable college and university admissions, and strong career paths, no matter what their individual talents and challenges. "Core Knowledge works well with all kinds of learners," Perri Sartorelli says. "It is clear that a structured, explicit approach makes a huge difference. It uses a spiral method, meaning ideas and content come back again and

again—each time adding a bit more depth. Over time, this builds real understanding, not just surface knowledge.”

In a presentation to parents earlier this year, Headmaster Christopher Nikoloff highlighted how Core Knowledge best prepares children for the future. “The more you know, the easier it is to learn,” he told the audience. “Thinking is effortful, and students aren’t naturally motivated to think. Knowledge improves thinking because it helps develop schema [mental frameworks], makes connections between content, and allows students to solve problems and think critically.” Too much new information can overwhelm; background knowledge stored in long-term memory frees up cognitive space for reasoning and problem-solving.

The “jobs of tomorrow currently do not exist, but will still require knowledge,” Christopher told the group. “There are no shortcuts.” Even AI prompts require specificity, and substantial knowledge and understanding is needed to evaluate the output.

“You cannot think unless you have something to think about. For instance, you cannot make inferences in geometry, history, or biology unless you know something about these subjects. We have learned through cognitive science that what are called ‘thinking skills’ are specific to a domain; we think within mathematics, literature, history, science, etc., so we need to know something about these subjects to think within them.” Velcro.

He continues, “Hence we get a double benefit from a knowledge-based curriculum: one, we obtain background knowledge which makes

our thinking and learning more efficient in these subjects over time, and two, we gain the ability to think critically in these subjects, which we could not do without knowledge.”

Director of Admissions Emily McKee is impressed with how Core Knowledge affected her own children. “I often talk about my daughters’ progression with prospective families,” she says. “For example, if they are learning about weather systems, in Pre-K they might draw a picture of clouds, then in first grade they’ll write a paragraph about rain, and in 4th grade they’ll discuss precipitation. The girls learned about Mesopotamia in 1st grade, then built a ziggurat in 4th grade.”

Emily also mentions the Singapore Math program, “which is conceptual and groups types of math—algebra, geometry—at a foundational age. This provides a strong base as students move forward in mathematics education and gives kids confidence and understanding in higher math courses such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate.”

Jane Wilson ’22 credits Core Knowledge for inspiring her medical studies. “My ES experience propelled my passion for science and learning,” she says. “The hands-on and practical approach to learning and experimentation was key to my engagement, especially at a young age. This included making play-dough models of plant cells and fish dissections! I attribute so much of my later academic success to my early years at TASIS where I learned to be a consistent and committed hard worker.” Jane recently earned her bachelor’s degree in biomedicine with first class honors and is studying graduate entry

medicine at the University of East Anglia in the UK. She is also a member of the Swiss Startup Association and continues to develop med-tech devices. She’s also a podcaster, hosting The Periodic Podcast which interviews women in STEM. Not bad for a young woman inspired by her time in ES science classes!

LOOKING AHEAD

Last year, Lynn was thrilled when Zareh Bezikian, father of Annie Bezikian ’24, generously donated funds for the Annie Bezikian Elementary School Center. Remember how Lynn loves creating new uses for existing spaces? Local architect Luca Pagnamenta has worked to transform Belvedere into a state-of-the-art childhood learning hub. This building will finally incorporate the ES into the main campus.

Nyman Brooks isn’t surprised that Lynn is achieving this ES dream. “She is a woman of action and of outstanding focus. She can see the forest and the trees, but she can also see each leaf, the squirrels in the trees, the bird nests, the insects buzzing about.” He credits her focus and drive, but also her devotion to the ‘rhetorical’ power of architecture, and how the TASIS campus speaks through its aesthetic. “The ‘power’ of architecture is not merely a building’s practical usefulness, nor merely a building’s beauty,” Nyman says. “Rather, the buildings themselves teach as assuredly, and perhaps even more powerfully, than textbooks.

“Churchill said it well during the Blitz when the House of Commons in Parliament had been bombed, utterly destroyed, and needed to

be rebuilt. There was controversy over what form the new chamber should take. Churchill was adamant that it should take the original form and not follow the American semicircle arrangement of seats. He said, ‘We shape our buildings and afterward they shape us.’ I think that sentiment on the holistic and ‘rhetorical’ power of architecture, how it shapes us, is very much what Lynn believes. The campus has Lynn’s vision top to bottom; she is a remarkable person.”

Verum, bonum, pulchrum: The extraordinary placement of our campus and its buildings embody “beauty.” Those who teach our children with loving-kindness and generosity are the “goodness”. And our well-organized, coherent, effective curriculum and the global community that surround our students give them access to the “truth”. Says Emily McKee, “My daughters are fluent in Italian and can easily navigate multicultural environments with confidence. They have a network for life, and that is exciting.” Jane Wilson attributes her commitment to advanced, productive learning to this beginning. “I grew to understand that a consistent work ethic was central to learning. This is a life skill that guided me through middle school, high school, and more recently, my biomedical and med-school studies.”

Herself the daughter of school founders, Mrs. Fleming would be proud of her daughter’s tenacity and ambition, which has led to transforming TASIS into a school that is ready for whatever the twenty-first century has in store while staying true to the values and virtues that all who know TASIS hold dear.

from *TASIS Today*, 2025

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL AT BELVEDERE:

Separate, but Together



The 2010–2011 year marked a big change for the TASIS Middle School. In August 2011, our 6th graders moved into the Middle School, joining our 7th and 8th graders to create a 116-strong MS with children from 27 countries. Along with joining the MS in Service Learning and after-school activities, our newest Middle Schoolers were active and vocal members of our Student Council and enjoyed getting to know each other and their leaders through our Advisor Program.

In keeping with the goals of the TASIS Strategic Plan, the Board of Directors made a strong commitment towards enhancing our Middle School by choosing Belvedere as the new MS center and boarding home. “This will bring so much more cohesion to the Middle School,” says MJ Breton, MS Dean of Student Affairs. “The TASIS campus is big for a child who is 12 years old. Focusing all of our activities in one area gives these students a much-needed physical point of reference.”

Belvedere will provide a common area big enough for the entire MS population to spend time together playing games or music, watching movies, and attending special events and activities. Additionally, the Belvedere kitchen will give students, proctors, and dorm parents the chance to have meals together.

But it isn’t just about the space. Thanks to the strong leadership of MJ, our MS has a new vitality that has helped this group of students make their mark on campus. The MS Dorm Team includes teachers and interns with many years of experience with this age group. “Working with Middle Schoolers takes a certain type of person,” MJ says with a laugh. “These kids need extensive support

and encouragement, especially our boarders, and our Dorm Team understands that there is a fine line between too much support and too little.” An age-appropriate academic schedule, advisor program, and assembly schedule are tailored to the needs of these children. Special activities such as the popular Ski Club, Academic Travel, and the spring musical keep these students excited about opportunities at TASIS. “The MS campus will ensure our students are comfortable and happy in an age-appropriate space, and will help them develop confidence in themselves, which will ultimately help prepare them for high school and beyond.”

from *TASIS Today*, 2012



THE BRIDGE TO ADOLESCENCE:

A Brief History of the TASIS Middle School



Simona Bellini with students

Middle school students, ages 10 to 14, are navigating an unmapped bridge between childhood and adolescence that is unique to each student. As they cross, they learn how to manage their emotions, responsibilities, and challenges, and how to find themselves in the world.

Before the TASIS Elementary School opened twenty years ago, a handful of TASIS middle schoolers—as few as three, as many as a dozen—were folded into TASIS. As the day community

grew, the Middle School (MS) grew. In 2010, the Board of Directors decided to create a dedicated MS division to ensure that these children received the academic and social support required and the tools needed to start crossing their bridges on their own. TASIS shifted 6th grade into the MS to align with the Ticino school system, and this drew even more day students to the Middle School.

In the past 15 years, the TASIS MS has evolved

to become a vibrant, dynamic, close-knit family. “I credit that to our teachers,” MJ Breton, Head of MS Student Affairs, says. “The kids sense that the adults in our community understand them, and they feel valued.” Faculty retention is high, and some teachers have been at the MS since its inception.

Another core benefit of a dedicated MS is a bigger day-student population, resulting in more parent involvement. “Support from our families who live locally is critical. They bring fresh perspectives that help us reflect on our programs and make improvements for the good of all the children,” MJ says.



Middle School students at Zermatt during Winter Adventure

INSPIRING GLOBAL CITIZENS

By Guia Berera, Assistant Head of the Elementary School and Italian Section Head



I began my career at TASIS during the inaugural year of the Elementary School. I was hired to teach Italian by Perri Sartorelli. I will always be deeply grateful to Perri for encouraging me to accept an opportunity that profoundly changed my life and offered me extraordinary personal and professional growth.

In the second year of the Elementary School, a cantonal law required the creation of a parallel Italian-language track for students who had been resident in Ticino for more than six years. Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63 asked me to design the Italian language, history, and geography curricula for what would become the Italian Section. This was an intense and deeply stimulating period for me, as I have always had—and continue to have—a strong passion for knowledge, learning, and culture.

It was already evident from the school's inception that TASIS would become a point of reference for international students whose local families believed in a rigorous education combined with a global vision and a holistic understanding of the student as a citizen of the world.

In 2019, to align the School's vision with cantonal requirements, we created a bilingual English-Italian program for all students. This program ensures the integration of strong cultural traditions in both languages. It combines Mrs.

Fleming's extraordinary vision with an American pedagogical framework that places the teacher-student relationship at the very heart of the educational process. The program has also enabled the successful integration of Core Knowledge into History classes taught in Italian.

I have been part of TASIS for more than twenty years, and every day I go to work with genuine joy, in a place I love and consider not only a school, but a true home and community. This sense of joy and enthusiasm is clearly reflected in our students. They are curious, open-minded, respectful of differences, and attentive to those around them. In my role as a leader in the Elementary School and Italian Section, I strive to ensure that students grow intellectually while also becoming responsible global citizens. It is a privilege to work alongside extraordinary faculty whose passion, dedication, and attentiveness to students I witness daily.

I firmly believe in the values upon which this prestigious institution is founded: Verum, Bonum et Pulchrum. My philosophical training has taught me that only by knowing the good can one truly act well. And goodness also manifests itself through beauty and the capacity to appreciate it. For this reason, now more than ever, it is essential to continue promoting these universal and timeless ethical principles.

I would like to conclude by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to Lynn, who believed in me from the very beginning and gave me the opportunity to nurture my passion and develop my talents.

4. ACADEMICS AND THE TASIS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Excerpted from the 2012 Commencement speech by TASIS alumna **Carla Arimont '94**.
Carla joined the Board of Directors in 2022.



Change is confusing, puzzling, and can even be painful, but there is always a bright side to it. I love the Emerson assertion, introduced to me by Cynthia Whisenant: For everything you have missed, you have gained something else, and for everything you gain, you lose something else.

I work as a headhunter. I source, assess, and recruit talent. I interview more than 500 senior-level executives per year and have been in the business for 10 years. And the single issue which has caused the most struggle for these people is change. Our capability to adapt to change is the most important behavioral competence today.

Facing change is difficult, but can be made easier by remembering a few things. First, dream. Dreaming is one of the few things in life that is crisis-free, so go ahead and dream as much as you can. Dream of your future and envision your development, because dreaming is the first step for making something happen. For if we cannot come up with a vision, chances are it won't happen.

Mrs. Fleming said, "Make a difference in the world. These are big hopes and dreams, but you have to hope big and dream big to have bigger dreams come true." Remember to dream your dream, not anyone else's. Make sure your vision is true to yourself. Don't allow someone else to influence your dreams; you may end up living someone else's life. Have full ownership and accountability. Be flexible and adaptable in applying your dream to reality. It's about empowerment and making your own choices.

I spend all day interviewing top senior executives and identifying talent across all industries. Most of them possess what we call 'hard skills' – the knowledge that is accessible to anyone with the will to excel. The edge of talent is found in 'soft skills'. Hard skills will allow you to be an outstanding individual contributor, but to lead, influence, and really make a difference, you need to have these soft skills. You must be a listener, and a communicator. You've got to relate, persuade, and collaborate.

TASIS has already helped you develop these skills. TASIS has given you the opportunity to live in a culturally diverse environment that has fostered sensitivity towards others. This inherent adaptability is something you don't even think about; cherish it, and learn to see this as a competitive advantage.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS: TASIS ACADEMICS DURING THE PAST DECADE

By Mark Abisi, Ed.D., Head of High School



Every year, TASIS strives to improve academics at TASIS through large-scale initiatives. A number of improvements, ideas, programs, and projects stand out as shining examples of how TASIS challenges and inspires our students.

Curriculum Mapping: Whole-school and divisional teams have improved the vertical and horizontal articulation of the TASIS curriculum in all subjects, intentionally enhancing the quality, coherence, and specificity of our knowledge-based curriculum. Our curriculum maps are published via an online platform called Atlas Rubicon where they can be viewed by all members of the TASIS community.

Online Grade Books: We provide live, published online grade books for students and parents.

Professional Development and Growth & Evaluation: We provide teachers with targeted professional development through summer reading assignments, workshops provided by

external experts during faculty orientation, teacher-to-teacher professional development sessions, and collective efficacy groups. We have also refined and improved our Professional Growth and Evaluation program.

Planning Time: The high school provides daily common planning time for all academic departments.

Office Hours: Office hours have been built into the high school schedule to provide time during the school day for students to connect with teachers outside of class to ask clarifying questions and receive additional support.

Extra Class Meetings: While full credit TASIS courses meet four times per week, we have modified our schedule to include five class meetings for IB HL classes and AP mathematics and science courses to better support our students.

Advisory Program: We are working to infuse more intentionality and coherence into our advisory program curriculum, using the Positive Action framework.

Improved IB and AP Scores: Since 2015, there has been a sharp increase in the number of students in advanced courses. The AP pass rate jumped from 65% to 92%, and the average IB score jumped from 31.2 to 35.5.

Academic Policies: We created an Academic Integrity Policy and a TASIS Honor Code, which all students sign and must adhere to.

Cum Laude Society: We remain the only Cum Laude Society chapter in Switzerland

Expanded Course Offerings: We have added several new courses in the last decade, including many IB and AP courses.

Competitive Academic Clubs: We now have a Robotics Team and a Mathematics Club that are competing internationally.

Academic Travel: Our Academic Travel program has been modified and provides students with more experiences and choice. We have also launched the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award program.

Students with Additional Needs: We have expanded our Learning Resources Center (LRC) to offer more support and services to TASIS students K–12.

College Counselling: TASIS students are assigned a college counselor in Grade 10 who assists them with course planning. We frequently collaborate with alumni and provide Meet and Mentor events throughout the year. We also host on-campus University Days and University Fairs.



TASIS DEFINITION OF HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING May 2021

TASIS is committed to promoting both academic and personal excellence within its students. TASIS believes that education should not only prepare students for life but to ask and to seek what is a good life.

TASIS believes that the past has much to teach us about today and tomorrow, and that students ought to pursue values that transcend the self, which yet fulfill the self. TASIS identifies the following principles as foundational to a complete and excellent education. Each of the following elements represents the values of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty towards which all students should stretch.

- *Specific, coherent, and cumulative academic knowledge across all subjects.*
- *The ability skillfully to use and apply that knowledge in familiar and novel settings.*
- *A positive attitude and effective approach toward lifelong learning.*
- *An appreciation for and an understanding of the collective wisdom of the ages.*
- *Respect for, knowledge of, and appreciation of both Western civilisation and world cultures.*
- *Active development of the moral virtues, of excellence, and of healthy habits.*
- *Motivation to engage in service for the sake of the goodness and welfare of others.*
- *Appreciation for, knowledge of, and participation in the fine arts, athletics, and our natural environment.*
- *A sense of joy and wonder in life, buoyed by hope and faith in the human spirit.*

HUMANISTIC LITERATURE AT TESIS: DANTE AND BEYOND

The joys & challenges of encouraging young people to read, write, deliberate,
and evaluate in today's world



Has the role of literature changed in the past decade? English Department Chair Dr. Chris Love doesn't necessarily think so. "What I have seen is a world changed such that literature has taken on an almost prophylactic role in the lives of young people," he says. "The sustained attention required by quality reading and writing is sapped by the exponential increase of distractions. We are overwhelmed by information, but deprived of the empathy and focus that helps us understand it."

One of the most important roles that the TESIS English Department plays in the lives of our students is to counter this inattention with a love for reading, writing, deliberation, and evaluation. For decades, TESIS has offered juniors and seniors the opportunity to take advanced literature courses via honors, AP, or IB curricula. In 2014 the Department added an Honors World Literature course, and in fall 2018 a 9th Grade Honors English class was added to ensure all underclassmen could engage with literature

at a higher level. The innovative coursework is memorable; for example, the 10th Grade Honors students are asked to write a Modern Adaptation, where they are the protagonists of their own Dante-esque voyage. They write their own canto and workshop their writing.

THE DANTE CLUB

Dante has become quite important at TESIS. In 2009, after Dr. Love's 10th grade Honors class finished reading Dante's *Inferno*, they asked to form a club where they would continue reading the entire *Divine Comedy*. They began *Purgatory* the following September, and in spring 2018 they began *Paradise*. As Alexander Secilmis '19 says, "The way Dr. Love guided us through Dante has made nearly everyone in our class join the Dante Club. He has an analogy-based way of explaining things that simplifies the text while simultaneously adding another layer of meaning."

For Chris, the club's success is a delight. "To see this merry band of Dante fans meet each month to discuss the intricacies of a profound but challenging epic is a testament to the importance of great literature in the lives of our students," he says. "Dante forces us to ask the big questions, and he brings the full force of his erudition and his intellect to the task of formulating and pursuing ends rather than means. In wrestling with this forceful but subtle early Renaissance mind, my students understand the stakes of humanistic pursuit, but they also understand the disciplined delight of such an encounter."

The Dante Club is now a 10th Grade Academic Travel trip. Chris chaperones students to Florence where they walk the streets Dante walked some 650 years ago, see original



manuscripts, and tour the city from which he was eventually exiled. "We get to understand him in a political and cultural context," he says. "Students can touch on the physical, tangible markers that are found throughout the text."

The soul of this trip echoes the crux of what the entire TESIS Literature program is about. "One of our central missions at TESIS is to stretch our students," Chris says. "Their studies, sports, artistic pursuits, and social lives tax their time and energy. Why do they make time to read and discuss an early 13th-century epic about the afterlife? It's a question I can't ignore. I think they make time for Dante because he forces them to seek meaning in life, and it's this meaning that goes beyond the shallow exigencies of social media, predefined careerist ambition, and mere happiness."

from *TESIS Today*, 2012

YOUNG SCIENTISTS ARE OUR FUTURE

Pacesetter Riccardo Braglia on the importance of Science in Education



TASIS father Riccardo Braglia has always been fascinated by science, and spent his teenage years working in the labs of the family pharmaceutical business. As the company grew, so did Riccardo's involvement, and he now serves as CEO of The Helsinn Group. It's not surprising that Riccardo is outspoken about the need for high-quality science facilities for students. "The real scientific mind of any person is built between the ages of 14 to 18 years," he says. "I believe it is fundamental that all students in middle and high school study the sciences well, and can put scientific principles into practice in proper, high-quality labs."

He sees the need to inspire young people to embrace science. "It is important to help students develop their ideas and challenge them inside the framework of science lessons and put them into real practice in the labs."

Riccardo's sons attend TASIS and he hopes to enhance the learning for them and future students by supporting the Campo Science Capital Campaign with a CHF 310,000 donation. "I've been involved for many years in the sciences, and while the Arts are very well-taught and supported, Science is still a little bit behind. This was the main reason behind my donation, with the aim to start the building of Campo Science as soon as possible." Encouraging students to push themselves is crucial to creating the scientists of tomorrow, and, as Riccardo says, "It is important to build science knowledge from youth. TASIS is now a good school; in the future, it will also be a great science school."

from *TASIS Today*, 2011

HOW TASIS BUILT AN EXCEPTIONAL, CUTTING-EDGE SCIENCE PROGRAM

An Innovative Curriculum

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) has been a rising movement in recent years as schools strive to improve competitiveness in both scientific and technological development. TASIS teachers have worked for years to continue crafting the



science and mathematics parts of the equation, and MS Science Department Coordinator Dr. Brett Merritt and teacher Amy Bloodworth recognized that there was work to be done on the technology and engineering side.

"We needed to update our program and enact a curriculum for a world that does not yet exist," says Amy. "Every UK university and most US college science courses now include at least one compulsory module on coding. In order to properly prepare our students for this, we can't wait for High School. We need to introduce new technologies in the Middle School and even the Elementary School."

HS Science Department Chair Alec Ogilvie often drops in on MS lessons and has been struck by the level of student interest and enthusiasm. "That's what matters more than anything because you are switching

science on to be this cool thing," he says. "This has massive repercussions later on. If students believe that science is fun, cool, and interesting, we're on our way."

An Innovative Building

A combination of great teachers, an inventive curriculum, and first-rate facilities has made TASIS a very attractive destination for science enthusiasts. "I think we've put science very much on the map here, which it wasn't, to be honest, a number of years ago," says Alec Ogilvie. "People didn't come here to do science particularly, and now they can, and do."

The transformation was years in the making, but science began to really take off at TASIS when the Campo Science Center was added to campus in the fall of 2014. Alec was involved in the process of designing the labs,

and he consulted teachers to see exactly what layout they preferred for their labs and how they wanted to equip them. “As a result, we have individual labs that fit perfectly for each subject,” he says. Much like the Science Department’s innovative approach to teaching, the new center has done a great deal to generate enthusiasm in students of all ages. “When kids walk into our labs at the beginning of the year or when the Elementary School kids come up to visit for their Shadow Day, what they see and what they feel tells it all because they are wide-eyed,” says Brett. “We’ve created an experience here at TASIS where all our kids are walking into a classroom and it’s not really a classroom—it’s a laboratory first. It just happens to be a classroom, but they feel that it’s a place where science happens.”

The Science Center has dramatically changed the trajectory of a department that desperately needed a facility worthy of its innovative and ambitious group of teachers. “Campo Science has made all the difference in the world,” says Brett. “Before 2014, our 6th graders learned in classrooms with no running water and two or three outlet plugs, so try doing an Engineering and Invention unit when you can only plug in a few devices. It would have taken days of logistical planning.”

Teachers who were already excellent are now reaching new heights. “I feel like Campo Science is pushing our teachers to be as good as the building,” says Brett. “It’s pushing our creativity, dedication, and abilities to grow into a building that we know can handle just about anything we want to do.”

The Long View

“We are always keeping an eye on the immediate picture, which is to sustain and try to generate even more interest in scientific topics and scientific skills,” Brett says. “Our medium focus is to try to prepare students in their skills and knowledge for High School classes. But we also have a long-term view, knowing that these kids will have an opportunity to actively participate in the major social- ecological problems to come—climate change and global warming trends, loss of habitat, loss of diversity, threats to the food system, overpopulation, and the many doomsday scenarios. We are trying to prepare students to be able to participate thoughtfully and intelligently in the debates, votes, and conversations that are going to happen around them no matter what.”

Alec similarly recognizes that while the short-term goals of the High School are to help students perform better on IB or AP exams and get into the universities of their choice, his department’s most important job is bigger than that. “The long-term goal is enjoyment of science, and that enjoyment springs from understanding science—applying it, comprehending it, and being able to think for themselves. Who knows what jobs will be out there in 20 years? Whatever line they follow, whether it is in science or other fields, they’ll benefit from being able to logically decipher data and understand trends and patterns and connections. I’m not interested in regurgitation at all. I’m interested in students being able to think.”

from *TASIS Today*, 2016

A STATE-OF-THE-ART SCIENCES BUILDING

By Alec Ogilvie, High School Science Department Chair



I clearly remember running science labs at the back of De Nobili. There was a very small chemical storage area and a makeshift fume cupboard with a pipe to the outside which didn’t work that well. We managed to do lab work there, but with limited space and facilities.

When I learned about the proposal for Campo Science, it was very exciting news, and it was great to be involved with the laboratory and prep room designs and layout. The science team looked at the general floor layout and together with the architects decided where the walls would be, creating the lab and lab prep room spaces.

It was really interesting to be involved from such an early stage of the development of Campo Science. I was also involved with the planning of the lab layout, where the sinks and desks and gas taps would be, and how that design was different depending on the specific needs of the lab. The set-ups for chemistry, physics, and biology are different and specifically suited for the subject matter and the type of lab work

that occurs there. In the end we chose the best quality in terms of lab top surfaces and materials. I was very thankful that Lynn Fleming Aeschliman ’63 allowed us to choose these more expensive but higher quality fittings.

When Campo Science was finished and we moved in, it immediately transformed the possibilities of laboratory work, as the space and layout was perfect for practical work. In addition, more lab equipment was purchased, such as digital probes and sensor equipment, and the labs were very well set up. Large white boards and interactive projector systems meant that the explanation of the concepts and display of content was much better for the students. There was a definite increase in the amount of lab work that occurred, and it enhanced the quality of it. Campo Science suddenly put science at the center of the campus and much more of a prominent feature at TASIS. Indeed, even now, every tour with prospective students and parents comes through Campo Science, often via the side door into the chemistry lab, and the layout and quality of the lab space remains impressive.

I still very much enjoy working and spending a lot of time in Campo Science. It is a vibrant and creative learning space that has helped engage students, some of whom have gone on to further scientific studies at prestigious universities, and it is always a pleasure to see them come back and visit TASIS and Campo Science.

HISTORY: PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

Foundation Document by Dr. Thomas Mauro PG'81,
longtime Chair of the History Department



History has a uniquely important role in supporting the School's mission, and it is the only academic area explicitly mentioned in the TASIS Paideia: "To a degree perhaps unmatched, TASIS has made its natural and cultural setting in Europe its classroom. This is the School's signature. Consequently, the priority of TASIS's academic and travel programs is a deep and informed appreciation for European culture and history and its worldwide influences" (sec. 7, emphasis added). More generally, TASIS defines itself as the flagship institution of a "consortium of educational institutions and programs sharing a common culture rooted in classical ideas and Western civilization." In comparison with many schools operating today, TASIS is distinguished

by "a profound respect for the past" (Paideia, introduction).

Aristotle argued in his *Poetics* that poetry offered profound and universal truths, while history could tell only what a given person did or suffered. Cicero had a much grander view of history. For him it was the *testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis* (witness of time, light of truth, life of memory, the teacher of life, and messenger of antiquity). Historians, conscious that everything in the present comes from the past, naturally tend to prefer Cicero's view to Aristotle's. The History Department aims to complement the teaching of poetry and other important subjects, and to support the mission

of the School in educating integral, thoughtful, flourishing persons whose understanding of the present has been shaped by a generous and discriminating appreciation of the past.

In line with the School's emphasis on Goodness and character education, we believe that teachers should stress the "power of one," or the pivotal role of single individuals in shaping history, as distinguished from that of impersonal "forces". While recognizing that everyone is conditioned by her or his environment, we reject the notion that all outcomes are "determined" in advance, wholly independent of the individual's will and character. Hence in exploring with their students the various aspects of the historical record, teachers are urged to call attention to biographical details, and especially to individual acts of heroism or exceptional performances of the cardinal and theological virtues (Paideia, introduction) as exemplars and sources of inspiration.

The emphasis on Beauty that is characteristic of the School's identity (Paideia, sec. 2) is apparent in the prominence that the Department gives to Art History, requiring it as a graduation requirement for all students not in the IB Diploma program, and offering it as a standard-level option to IB students. This is unusual for a school of this size and type, but has become one of the distinguishing features of the School. This emphasis is owed largely to the founder's almost Platonic philosophy of education, which gives a transcendental value to Beauty along with Truth and Goodness. It could also be said to indirectly support the theistic thrust of the School's mission (Paideia, sec. 3: "to promote a due reverence for God and his creation"), inasmuch as beauty in many cases seems to point beyond itself. Or



as Abbot Suger (12th cent.) put it in speaking of religious architecture: "The dull mind rises to truth through that which is material."

There is much in history which is true, but whose beauty and goodness is by no means apparent. Despite the School's emphasis on beauty and on the positive accomplishments of six thousand years of civilization, our devotion to Truth demands that students should not be spared a look at the harsher side of history as well. Along with the glories of the Acropolis were the miseries of the silver mines. Along with universal literacy and health care was the barbarism of the Gulags. One of the cardinal virtues TASIS tries to instill in its students is a reverence for "justice" (Paideia, introduction). Students will come to see that the course of history exhibits more than a small share of injustice. Although those who have hungered and thirsted for justice are to be praised (and imitated), the simple fact is that the good guys

have not always won. Many, through no fault of their own, were doomed to a life that was “poor, nasty, brutish, and short,” and not infrequently ended in violence. While some may object that taking cognizance of injustices throughout history may undermine the theistic thrust of the School’s mission, we believe this is not necessarily so. History merely affirms, as the critical theorist Theodor Adorno argued, that if there is no Afterlife, then God is unjust.

The concerns of theodicy are treated briefly in our philosophy course, Theory of Knowledge. Issues of justice also play a role in our political science courses (International Relations; US Government) and in our AP and IB Economics courses. The Department is therefore multi-disciplinary, but unified to the extent that its curriculum is “content rich” and centered on European civilization, its offshoots and influences. This does not mean that other cultures are disparaged. On the contrary, we are solemnly bound by the School’s mission to foster “mutual respect” among cultures and nationalities. This is to be distinguished from mere “toleration,” and entails the civil and courteous (but honest) treatment of all, including students with beliefs and values that may not be shared by their teacher. Not believing that education is synonymous with indoctrination, we condemn in the strongest terms the ridiculing or disparagement, whether overtly or subtly, of those students whose religious, cultural, or political opinions or values may differ from our own. This is not to be understood as a capitulation to relativism, nor does it mean that certain historical subjects should be treated as taboo, but rather that all care should be taken to encourage at all times a climate of “courtesy” (Paideia) and true “mutual respect” (Mission Statement).

Finally, although issues of Goodness and Beauty are by no means ignored, the Department’s primary concern is with Truth. “All men by nature desire to know,” as Aristotle famously observed. That desire, which in the earliest grades leads one to distinguish between fairy tales and history, in later grades leads students ideally to distinguish between history and propaganda, and to be sensitive to political, cultural, religious, and anti-religious bias in both primary and secondary works. Students need not become Hegelians in order to see that “ideas have consequences” (alas, often tragic), nor elitists to predict that history will continue to be made chiefly by creative minorities. In Theory of Knowledge, we are committed to a “critical realist” stance that is incompatible with Pyrrhonism, solipsism, or a thoroughgoing relativism. On a more general level, this emphasis on the objectively real also helps to explain why, in the traditionalist spirit of the Core Knowledge Curriculum, the Department tends to stress content over process, and knowledge acquisition over social activism. Marx’s dictum about the priority of changing the world plays less of a role here than at many schools because we feel that children first need to understand the world – no simple task. A content-rich world with thousands of years of written history demands a content-rich curriculum based on Cicero’s premise that “to be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child.”

Dr. Mauro studied at Columbia (BA), Oxford, the University of Chicago (M.A., Ph.D.), Princeton, and in Rome, and served as an officer in the US Marine Corps. He is a specialist in Medieval, Renaissance, and Modern European history.

ENHANCING THE HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA: INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE AND ADVANCED PLACEMENT



AP and IB Scores Continue to Rise

School records are set annually as students flourish in the TASIS AP and IB Programs. The number of AP Scholar Awards has risen nearly every year. Around 90% of TASIS students achieve a score of 3 on their AP exams, and AP Scholars achieve a score of 3 or higher on at least five exams.

For the past decade, IB students have consistently scored well above the world average on their exams. The IBO Accreditation body continues to be impressed with the School’s commitment to peer-to-peer coaching and the inclusive admissions approach to the IB Diploma Programme. They also praise the ongoing professional development for IB teachers.

25 Years of the IB

In 2021, TASIS celebrated its 25th anniversary as an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School. In early 2019, the TASIS IB Program went through the organization’s rigorous authorization and evaluation process and was determined to demonstrate “strong programme implementation across all areas” while earning 31 commendations. Longtime IB Coordinator Howard Stickley shares his experience with the IB at TASIS:

Being an IB student is far from easy. Six academic subjects, Theory of Knowledge, Creativity Activity Service (CAS), and the Extended Essay generate a workload for all IB students which is unequalled in high school programs. These students deserve much respect. The near-perfect pass rate at TASIS compared to the worldwide pass rate, which has dropped below 80% in recent years, is testament to our students’ efforts and their success. They become truly independent thinkers and often do not realize how well-educated they are until they arrive at college. TASIS alumni would tell them how much better prepared they will be compared to their fellow undergraduates. They may well find the first year of university easier than the IB and continue to outperform non-IB students well into their undergraduate studies. This is all justified reward for two years of late nights!

LEARNING FROM OTHERS

The TASIS Senior Humanities Program, now TASIS Speaker Series, promotes truth, goodness, beauty, international understanding, and humanitarian action.



Founded in 2008, the Senior Humanities Program was created to offer seniors and postgraduates the richest possible intellectual and ethical experience, granting them special access to accomplished scholars, artists, leaders, and innovators. This signature educational experience has brought professionals at the top of their fields to campus to present lectures, visit classes, and meet with students. These visits create opportunities for all high school students to interact with people and ideas of significance that are concerned with the world beyond our campus.

Funded through a CHF 100,000 gift from TASIS parents Michael and Jane Grindfors, the program revived a TASIS tradition beloved by the Seniors

and PGs of the 1970s and 80s. It allows our oldest students to share in a range of special conversations, and lectures which focus on five of the key elements of the TASIS identity: truth, beauty, goodness, international understanding, and humanitarian action.

Reorganized in 2005, the Senior Humanities Program became the TASIS Speaker Series. Funded through the Grindfors donation, the M. Crist Fleming Endowment for International Understanding and Leadership, and support from the TASIS Board of Directors, the program also aims to bring TASIS alumni at the top of their fields back to campus. Connecting with alumni in this way has proven particularly inspirational to our students.

TASIS HONORED AS FIRST CUM LAUDE SOCIETY CHAPTER IN SWITZERLAND



Following a long and detailed application process, TASIS gained approval to launch a Cum Laude Society chapter in 2017. The first school in Switzerland to be granted this honor, TASIS became the world's 383rd chapter of the prestigious Society, which was founded in 1906

to honor superior scholastic achievement in secondary schools. The remaining chapters are located primarily in independent schools in the US, the Philippines, Canada, England, France, and Spain.

Unlike the National Honor Society, which primarily works with public high schools in North America and strongly considers a student's leadership, service, and character, the Cum Laude Society places its greatest emphasis on a student's scholarly contributions to his or her school. Only the top decile, based on GPA and strength of schedule, of each graduating class at TASIS is considered eligible for membership.

5. COLLEGE COUNSELING

THE TESIS ADVANTAGE: GLOBAL STUDENTS PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE

One theme emerges time and again: college admissions officers love the internationalism of TESIS. “When college admissions officers visit our campus, they’re impressed with our kids and impressed that we are, so to speak, the United Nations,” Greg Birk, former Director of University and College Counseling, says. “They see how many different nations are represented in the room and understand that we truly are an international school.” Admissions officers are impressed not only with the sophistication of TESIS students, but also with the overall level of preparation they’ve had in their high school years.

TT 2016 (excerpted)

A FORCE FOR CHANGE



*TESIS Director of University and College Counseling
Johanna Fishbein
Recognized by CIS for
Excellence in Counseling*

We are delighted to celebrate that Johanna Fishbein, Director of University and College Counseling at TESIS since 2020, was recognized for Excellence in Counseling at the Council of International Schools (CIS) Global Forum in Basel, Switzerland, in November 2024.

This highly prestigious award is conferred annually by CIS to “acknowledge the exceptional contributions of a CIS school counselor who actively advances international guidance, counseling, and transition support for secondary students.” At the 2024 forum, Joanna was described as “a force for positive change in the world of university counseling” and as someone who has “touched the lives of myriad students seeking advice and support through their university choice and enrollment processes.”

“We are thrilled to see the entire CIS counseling and admissions community celebrate Johanna for what she is: a true professional and a leader in her field,” said Headmaster Christopher Nikoloff. “We feel incredibly fortunate to have Johanna leading our College Counseling Office.”

Joanna and her dedicated team work tirelessly to help every TESIS student find the best university fit, and the results are impressive year after year. Never one to seek the limelight, she was taken aback when her name was announced at the forum. “It was humbling to receive such huge recognition for a job I love every day from the CIS community and from my peers and colleagues, for whom I have so much respect,” she said. “I feel very lucky to work at a school where college counseling is so supported, and where our College Counseling team is so wonderful!”

from *TESIS Today*, 2025

6. VISUAL ARTS AT TESIS

A CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS



The annual Arts Festival is one of the most cherished TESIS traditions. Rooted in Mrs. Fleming’s passion for the arts as the “heart and soul of education”, the Arts Festival is now a cultural pillar for all four TESIS Schools. Established in 1974 by legendary faculty members Horst Dürrschmidt and Fernando Gonzalez, under the direct encouragement of Mrs. Fleming, the Arts Festival aims to celebrate the artistic ambitions and achievements of those in the TESIS community.

At TESIS, the Arts Festival is always held near the end of each school year. In addition to being a community-wide celebration of the arts, it serves as a final assessment for students in visual arts, theater, and music. It aims to celebrate and support the unique contributions that the arts and humanities make to TESIS life while offering an opportunity to showcase, through both performance and exhibition, the arts across all three divisions.

The Arts Festival began from a series of small student showcases to a multi-day event that attracts families and the wider community. An opening assembly includes a sneak peek of the events and exhibitions to come and includes honoring students through Spark Awards for those with emerging talent and Leadership Awards for graduating seniors. Various campus buildings serve as pop-up gallery spaces for visual art exhibitions featuring student work from all three divisions, from photography to ceramics, watercolors to architectural models. Students are able to participate in workshops facilitated by professional artists in areas such as conducting and directing. Performing Arts events often include scenes from plays, recitals, band jam sessions, and poetry slams. Since 2023, the Performing Arts Department has created thematic productions that feature over 200 student performers in a capstone concert extravaganza, giving them a chance to experience a full-scale production.

THE LEGACY OF CREATING: MARTYN DUKES



The juxtaposition of teaching and art can be complex. Art is subjective, yet requires emotion and perspective to make an impact. Technical skills and conceptual understanding can be taught, yet each person brings his or her own experiences to the medium. Balancing these can be a challenge for art teachers, yet for nearly two decades Martyn Dukes guided his students to becoming confident in their individual ways of seeing. “I have never been sure the title art teacher is a good fit for me,” Martyn says. “I feel more like a facilitator or guide. I have always been more interested in developing the individual through [art], and creating an environment in order for them to make discoveries for themselves.” Martyn doesn’t think student artists can be “good” or “bad”; “it’s about the journey they have in discovering who they are.”

In 2006, when Martyn was in his early forties, he moved to Montagnola with his family. He already knew about TASIS; as an International Baccalaureate visiting examiner, he had assessed TASIS IB exhibitions for a number of years. “Even then there was something about TASIS I couldn’t quite put my finger on, something special and quietly attractive,” he recalls. Within days of their arrival, his credentials as an art teacher were discovered and he began helping out with art electives, supporting IB students, and working as a dorm parent in Del Sole.

After his sabbatical year, Martyn applied for an open post as Head of Expressive Arts at Beau Soleil, and he and his family moved to Villars, on the other side of Switzerland. But we know this story isn’t over. “Two years later, I received a phone call from then-Headmaster Michael Ulku-Steiner asking if I might be interested in filling the role of Chair of Fine Arts, which had recently become vacant. Without hesitation, I said I was, and I vividly remember driving across Switzerland to the interview the following Friday evening in a snowstorm, treacherous conditions meaning I reached Montagnola eleven hours later. The rest is history, as they say, and as colleagues then often pointed out, my sabbatical year had turned into what was probably the longest job interview on record.”

There have been many moments that mark Martyn’s time at TASIS. One is the first elusive seven IB score by a student. Another is the year that fifteen graduating students found places in art and design programs, while selected archived TASIS artwork shown at a major art

show gained recognition from both galleries and professional artists alike. Portrait work in this show was selected by the College Board from some twenty-thousand artworks for use as a standard in their teaching material. Martyn also fondly remembers In-Pro and Academic Travel, print workshops in Spain, ceramics in Toulouse, and “any number of anecdotes and memories that go with them.” Martyn will also look back fondly on a favorite event for all alumni, the annual Spring Arts Festival. “They naturally stand out as a highlight and although they always meant many hours of work, they remain an amazing testament to both colleagues’ and students’ abilities to shine.”

Throughout his time as a teacher in France and Switzerland, Martyn has remained an exhibiting artist. “Despite the challenges posed by my artist’s career alongside the demands of teaching, I have always derived great satisfaction from both, each complementing and enriching the other.” Looking back, is there a legacy Martyn hopes to have left behind at TASIS? “If there is one, it lies in having created an environment for students to simply spend time making art and, in particular, in developing individual studio spaces,” he says. “And if I had a magic wand, I would dearly like to see a dedicated purpose-built gallery space on the campus in the future to both showcase and celebrate student artwork and to host professional exhibitions.”

Martyn’s influence remains with hundreds of students who found their creative voices in his classroom. And while some became artists themselves, Martyn is just as proud of those who didn’t. “Of course, I am very happy about those who continue on into the world of art and

design, but equally I am content to recognize that being guided to look, envision, problem-solve, explore, and be aware of a history are things every student takes away from the art studio. After all, art speaks a universal language, one that everyone, regardless of background, should and can understand and appreciate.”

Martyn studied at the Canterbury College of Art and Design and Fine Arts at Loughborough, then in London, where he also obtained his teaching qualification.

A LEGACY OF ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

After a remarkable career that inspired countless students, Mr. Dukes is retiring from TASIS, leaving behind not just a legacy of artistic excellence, but a classroom that felt more like a safe space for creativity. To those of us who had the privilege of learning under his guidance, art class was a break in our busy schedules—it was our favorite time. His class provided a space of joy and freedom. Many of us would eagerly seek out time after school to linger in the studio, either to work on our projects or just to have a friendly chat with Mr. Dukes while he would paint his own artwork.

—Ekaterina Ikononova ’12 and Yulia Gusarova ’12



7. PERFORMING ARTS: A PROMINENT INTEREST

By Erika Cramp, Performing Arts Chair



The Performing Arts at TASIS is a vibrant, talented, enthusiastic community of students and faculty who support each other as they stretch themselves to rehearse, produce, choreograph, play, and perform.

Dance involvement has grown 332% since 2021. A robust dance program includes courses for younger students such as Dance for Joy, Street Jazz, Mini Hip-Hop, and Aerial/Contemporary, as well as Street Jazz, Hip-Hop, Aerial, and Contemporary options for MS and HS students. The annual Sweet November Dance Concert gives dancers the opportunity to perform for our community and also showcases student-led dance troupes. HS dancers travel to Paris

during Academic Travel weekend to compete at Future Cheer Brings It On Paris, and in 2025 the dancers achieved first places.

Music involvement has grown 285% since 2022, in part due to mandatory music classes in the ES and for many MS students. The HS offers Music 1 and 2, Honors Music, and AP Music Theory. Each divisional choir has between 40 and 50 students participating. An Honors Choir challenges talented singers capable of learning more complicated music. The MS Choir travels to Zurich each year to perform as part of the Singing Christmas Tree, and the HS Choir performs annually as part of Disneyland Paris' "Let's Sing Christmas"



program. The ES choir performs every year at the tree lighting ceremony at the Principe Leopoldo Hotel near campus. An all-school orchestra includes talented students from all three divisions playing violin, cello, flute, clarinet, tuba, saxophone, percussion, piano, and classical guitar. The orchestra tours Paris in November where they perform at St Sulpice, the second largest cathedral in Paris.

Drama and Musical Theater involvement has increased by 72% since 2021. Annual divisional musicals and the HS Fall Play have become integral parts of the School calendar and tickets always sell out. MS and HS students can also take Theater Arts courses.

Instrumental Music and Voice Lessons involvement has grown 181% since 2021. TASIS has over 180 students taking classes in piano, voice, cello, clarinet, saxophone, ukulele, violin, flute, guitar, bass guitar, and drums!

The Annual Performing Arts Showcase

A collaborative project featuring all three divisions, the Performing Arts Showcase in May encourages creativity and commitment from our students. Student numbers grow every year, and in 2025 over 225 students and faculty took part! The event truly brings together the TASIS community.

The Annual Christmas Service

Every year, the TASIS family ushers in the holiday season with a special Christmas service at Sant'Abbondio. Set against the backdrop of this breathtaking 16th-century place of worship, the event brings our community together through a beautiful program of musical performances and readings by faculty and students. The evening features moving carols sung by the congregation, alongside traditional performances by our Middle and High School choirs, instrumentalists, and featured soloists.

8. RESIDENTIAL LIFE: BEING TOGETHER

By Dan Kirsch, Longtime Dorm Head and History Department Chair

In the past 18 years, TASIS dorm life has changed a great deal. Certenago is now just Giani Left and Giani Right, but it used to include Panorama and Norma and housed more than twice as many students as it does today. It was also co-ed, as were De Nobili and Belvedere/Balmelli. De Nobili housed middle school boys and girls, as well as 9th Grade boys and girls, and it was all kept in order by one dorm team of six dorm parents. Belvedere and Balmelli housed 10th Grade boys and girls with one dorm team for both. Certenago, De Nobili, and Belvedere/Balmelli all had more than 45 residents each, with some years having more than 50 in each building.

Lanterna opened in 2011, allowing the Grade 12/PG and a few Grade 11 girls to move into their own dedicated facility on the hill with views of the lake. About that time, the middle school boarders moved up to Belvedere as a dedicated Middle School dorm, giving more space to Grade 9 and a few Grade 10 students to reside in De Nobili. De Nobili was split into two dorm teams, one for boys and one for girls, allowing for more attention to the residents living there. A few years later, the Monticello and Lanterna dorm teams expanded from teams of five to teams of seven to better serve the residents.

Looking to the future, the new MacDermid Hall will open for the 2026–27 school year, giving the Grade 12/PG boys a new home on the hill with



A Hadsall dorm room with a view

views of the lake. It will also bring the boys in line with the girls by having a private bathroom in each room of two students. Belvedere will be renovated into an Elementary School hub, which will move the Middle School dorm. Further down the line, Hadsall will be renovated and expanded.

In addition to the physical changes on campus, the program continues to assess team structures and curriculum to ensure the needs of all boarding students are met. A new Dean of Residential Life was appointed in 2025, and 2026-27 will bring a change to dorm team structures, with a dedicated full-time residential life team member on every dorm team, further expansion of the residential life curriculum, and the introduction of friendly, ongoing dorm competitions designed to build community across campus. Residential life at TASIS continues to move forward and build from strength to strength.

9. NOBLESSE OBLIGE: THE TASIS SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMS

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM (CSP) AND SERVICE LEARNING



Students in Zambia

It's difficult to walk around the TASIS campus without seeing bright posters and flyers educating students about recycling, promoting a No Dress Code Day, or advertising an upcoming bake sale. This spirit

of service was important to Mrs. Fleming's vision for the school. As she wrote in *MCF: What a Life!*, "It's rather like *noblesse oblige*. If you receive a privilege you are supposed to return it in some measure."

Service has always been a fundamental part of the TASIS experience. For nearly 60 years, students have been expected not only to embrace TASIS and all it offers, but also to give back. Michael Ulku-Steiner, former TASIS Headmaster, thinks service was integral to Mrs. Fleming's vision. "Decades before people were talking about globalization or multicultural education, she dreamed of students coming to TASIS from all over the globe. She envisioned them getting real practice with that world-changing experience during their time at TASIS. This is why campus and community service has been part of TASIS from the beginning."

At first, community service was less formalized; students helped out in a variety of informal ways, like assisting in the photo lab or serving on Student Council. In 2009 the School formalized this and added a curriculum which connects classroom content to community needs, inspiring awareness of the underlying issues that different communities face.

NOTABLE LONG-TERM SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

- The Environmental Club has been a mainstay on campus for many years, educating students about recycling and limiting consumption.
- From 2006 until his retirement in 2020, IB Coordinator and UK College Counselor Howard Stickley regularly chaperoned groups of students to Botswana and Zambia for a service trip, where students taught

at an elementary school, led leadership seminars, and visited rural villages benefiting from TASIS-donated mosquito nets and clothing.

- HIV/AIDS Awareness, originally Assisting Children with AIDS (ACA), a club founded at TASIS in 2001, has since grown into a global charity, with the help of the TASIS community.

from *TASIS Today*, 2009

THE OPSAHL GLOBAL SERVICE PROGRAM

In 2013, Jan Opsahl '68 had a vision. It began when speaking with his then-100-year-old mother, who was keen that some of their family assets be used to benefit others. But for Jan, giving money to an existing organization was too intangible and setting up a family foundation did not appeal. Jan, who was serving on the TASIS Board of Directors at the time, was also considering how he could help TASIS. "What is the school known for?" he asked at the time. "When you ask people who have been here, they say the atmosphere, the ethos, the beauty, the travel. But those things are so difficult to convey." He and then-headmaster Michael Ulku-Steiner began discussing options, but Jan was insistent that it be something that would make a real difference in the lives of students as well as set TASIS apart as a school.



They landed on the concept of service learning, which was a perfect match for a man who understood the impact of service. Jan spent seven years as chairman of a sports club in Hamar, Norway, which provided activities for children. Through his work with the Rotary Club he began funding a project that provided eye clinics in remote parts of Nepal. And as the first international student at TASIS, Jan also understood how experiencing other cultures firsthand can affect teenagers.

The result was the Opsahl Global Service Program (GSP), a program unique to TASIS. The program's mission is to transform *lives by providing every High School student with a unique opportunity to connect across*

borders—whether geographic, economic, or social— through comprehensive experiences that build empathy and encourage personal responsibility. The Program awakens students to humanitarian needs, inspires them to build enduring, mutually beneficial relationships, and leads them toward a life of active citizenship and committed service.

In spring 2013, Jan, Michael, the Board, and then Service Learning director Zach Mulert began considering how a unique service program might work. Thanks to Jan's generosity, TASIS could dream big and deeply consider the impact this sort of program could have. The ambition was to create a global program where all students have the opportunity to experience something life-

changing, when at the same time helping others, and where students would come to understand what commitment really means.

Of critical importance included cultivating partnerships directly with organizations, many of which are still in place today. TASIS doesn't use third-party organizers, as many schools do; the relationships are real and deep, continuing from year to year.

THIRTEEN YEARS...AND COUNTING!

Participation in the GSP, and at least one service trip, is a requirement for all 11th graders and new 12th graders. TASIS does not take this commitment lightly, and thanks to Jan's endowment, along with some support from the TASIS Foundation, these trips are free for all students. While the aims of the GSP are many, the ultimate goal is fulfilling one of the tenets of TASIS. "Cultural understanding... takes away the perceived fear of our differences and prevents misunderstandings," Jan said, in an interview celebrating his philanthropy. "I learned English by being immersed in the TASIS environment, and I want students to learn about the world through cultural immersion. This immersion, with all of the discomfort and challenge and fear and awkwardness, will lead to an eye-opening, life-changing experience."

The School's commitment to Jan Opsahl's vision extends to a special GSP Committee that meets regularly to review and support this signature program. Consisting of founding donor Jan, the GSP Director, the Headmaster, and select board members,

the committee considers philosophical and pedagogical questions that could affect the program, advises on the impact and results, and reviews locations.

So far the GSP has provided tangible and meaningful experiences to hundreds of TASIS students. Jan's hope at the beginning was to provide an awakening to humanitarian needs leading to a life of active citizenship and service. It only takes one stone to cause a ripple effect which can change lives. "Whenever people talk about doing dramatic things in the world, it always comes with some sort of dramatic revelation," Jan said in 2013. "What students do with this experience is up to them, but I feel it will stay with them for life."

Excerpted from various articles for *TASIS Today*

**OPSAHL GLOBAL
SERVICE PROGRAM
PARTNERSHIPS, 2026**

9th Grade Service Learning

This compulsory program includes weekly meetings that feature discussions, guest speakers, films, simulations, readings, and other activities. Students are exposed to a number of themes and topics that the Opsahl Global Service Program seeks to address: Education, Water/Sanitation, Poverty, Gender Equality, the Environment, and Marginalized Populations

10th Grade Local Community Focus

Animal Welfare: students discuss world events and the impact they have on various species. They learn about animal testing and habitat loss and workshop possible solutions, including raising awareness among their peers about the treatment of animals.

Environmental Action: students implement environmental change on campus, visit local recycling centers and compost systems, and

take initiative to make our campus more sustainable.

Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders

Borders: Students discuss the history and impact of this international organization which has changed lives for nearly 50 years. They learn about MSF's goals and projects and help raise awareness to the causes they support. The group annually sponsors a community viewing of a documentary related to MSF.



Students in Cambodia

Joe Dusing Annual Blood Drive: students learn about the myriad ways that donating blood can help people globally. They also organize a blood drive on campus each March.

Rare Disease Awareness: students explore the challenges faced by more than 300 million people worldwide living with rare diseases, learning about the science, lived experiences, and impact of limited access to specialist care. They organize a number of events such as Santa's Village, a Family Fun Day, and the annual Rare Generation concert, to build community and raise awareness and funds for research to support a young TASIS student affected by a rare disease.

Mission Bambini: students support children facing educational and social challenges in Italy and beyond. Through learning about the organization's mission, fundraising initiatives, and a hands-on service experience in Naples, students understand how their time, empathy, and financial support can make a meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of young children and their communities.

Intergenerations: students visit a local retirement home regularly to engage with the elderly, practice their Italian, and forge connections with our local community.

11th and 12th Grade Global Community Focus

Cambodia: students work with PEPY, an organization that aims to empower youth, and VBC, an organization that provides locals

with secure housing. Both NGOs facilitate an enriching cultural encounter between the locals and our students.

Moldova: students work with EcoVisio, an NGO that has built an environmentally-friendly village in the small town of Riscova, promoting sustainable living and community development.

Nepal: with the help and insights of the Jampaling community, students raise funds and travel to Nepal to help develop infrastructure for the Jampaling and other local Tibetan refugee camps.

Gram Vikas India: this NGO works with the rural people of Odisha, India, providing educational opportunities.

Serving Southern Africa: students learn about the challenges of development and economic growth in Zambia and Botswana and visit to volunteer at a local orphanage.

WISER Kenya: WISER is a girls-only boarding secondary school in Muhuru Bay, Kenya, a struggling rural community on Lake Victoria. Students get to know the community and assist with local projects.

Thailand: OurLand is a wildlife reserve and education center in an area heavily impacted by habitat loss, degradation, and human-wildlife conflict. During their visit, students visit three wildlife sanctuaries and learn about ethical elephant tourism and how to help locals.

10. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: COMING A LONG WAY

TASIS IN SPACE!



What were you doing on February 1, 2018? If you'd been on the International Space Station (ISS), you'd have experienced code written by a group of TASIS Middle School students! Khan-Page Master Teacher Award-winner Amy Bloodworth has pioneered bringing coding and robotics to TASIS and got her students involved in the Mission Zero project,

a collaboration between the European Space Agency and the Raspberry Pi Foundation. The students were asked to write code in the Python programming language that measured and displayed the ambient air temperature on the ISS, as well as displayed a short greeting to the crew.

The group submitted their code in November and soon after Christmas their code was approved and ran on February 1. The children each received a certificate signed by an ISS scientist including the time and position of the ISS when their code ran.

“I know they are only in seventh and eighth grade, but what these students have done is a big achievement,” Amy says. “This is something that will still look impressive on a college application in five years time. Not many kids have run code on the International Space Station at the age of 12. I’m impressed with them.”

from *TASIS Today*, 2018

TASIS ROBOTICS TEAM AMONG THE BEST IN SWITZERLAND— AND THE WORLD!

Amy Bloodworth is thrilled at the incredible journey she and her robotics team shared during the 2021–22 academic year, which led them to a highly selective international tournament in April. The 2016 Master Teacher Award winner, Amy teaches Middle School science and coding and High School computer science, and she has coached the TASIS robotics team for many years.

“It’s so much more than just one day,” Amy

says of the tournament. “This is months of work and dedication for these students. They not only have to perform under pressure in a high-stakes robot game, but they are judged on programming and engineering design and must present an unbelievable research project—and do it all with gracious professionalism and resilience. I also owe an incredible thank you to their parents and dorm parents who hosted many late-night practice sessions and were there with just the right pep talks when needed.”

The competing students have been honing their skills in the Middle School’s After-School Robotics Club, which Amy co-founded in 2018 with former Middle School Math Teacher Claire Thomas.

A few weeks after the FIRST LEGO tournament, the TASIS Tigers 1 team was chosen to represent Switzerland at the FIRST LEGO League CARGO–CONNECT World Festival in Houston, Texas, from April 20–23—one of only 108 teams worldwide to earn an invitation! A total of 35,140 teams from 110 different countries competed for a place at the festival.

from *TASIS Today*, 2022

ROBOTICS ON A ROLL

By virtue of a stellar performance at an official VEX Robotics Competition in Basel on February 2023, the all-female TASIS High School Robotics team of Olivia Su Canga ’26, Maddy Costa Felix ’26, Camille Giroto



Amy Bloodworth with the Robotics team in Basel

’24, Chuqiao Huang ’24, Yixin Lu ’27, and Mariaurora Rosso ’24 qualified for the 2023 VEX Robotics World Championship—the largest robotics competition in the world—in Dallas, Texas.

The latest triumph continued a steady ascent for Coach Amy Bloodworth’s Robotics Program, which last year saw the Middle School team of Canga, Costa Felix, Rosso, Serafina Ballerini ’26, and Diana Xiao ’26 proudly represent Switzerland at the FIRST Championship World Festival in Houston, Texas. Known as TASIS Tigers 2, this year’s team competed against the top high school coders and engineers from around the globe in Dallas from April 25–27. We’re very proud of our young scientists!

from *TASIS Today*, 2023

LIST OF ACHIEVEMENTS Recent Robotics Teams

- 2025**
TASIS HS VEX Robotics team made it to the VEX World Championships in Texas
- 2024**
TASIS MS FLL Robotics team made it to the Swiss Finals
- 2023**
TASIS HS VEX Robotics team made it to the VEX World Championships in Texas
- 2022**
TASIS MS FLL Robotics team made it to the First Robotics World Championships in Texas.

TECHNOLOGY AT TASIS, 2010 AND BEYOND

By Tim Venchus, Technology Development Director

TASIS has made technology investment a priority over the past decades. This look back at how this investment has been used is nostalgic but also shows the commitment our IT staff and teachers have made to staying on top of technological advances over the years.

Timeline of Major Milestones

● **2010:** Three computer labs on campus + a mobile cart of MacBooks for the ES (to supplement the lab of iMacs and provide lessons to Focolare students)

- An ES Technology Coordinator was hired, the first dedicated academic technology position at TASIS
- The MS & HS used a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) model, but this was not mandatory
- Teachers were also BYOD

● **2011–2016: Lighthouse Projects**

With generous funding by the Board, a technology grant system was developed where teachers could write a proposal for

classroom technology they wanted to explore. The Lighthouse Project committee reviewed the proposals each year and determined how best to allocate the grant funds. This program was crucial for getting our iPad program started, along with exploring a variety of tools, some of which are still in use today (BrainPop, TI Nspires, the Harkness Table).

● **2011–2012: iPad Use Gains Momentum**

- The first technology-focused learning group, The iPad Academy was formed with a dozen teachers—mainly from the MS—to learn how iPads could be used for learning and teaching.

■ MS starts getting part-time academic tech support

- The first iPads for students start to appear, thanks to the Lighthouse Project

■ This started the shift away from student computers being regularly available in classroom spaces instead of mainly in computer labs

● **2012–14: Building Out iPad Programs**

- 3rd grade becomes the first grade level with 1:1 school-provided technology
- 4th grade becomes the second grade level to go 1:1
- Class sets of iPads were purchased for MS use



● **2014–17: Bring Your Own iPad Program in the MS**

- This was the first shift in the MS to a more standardized technology integration approach
- We ran into some issues with compliance (i.e. some students were still bringing laptops)
- 2015–16: Shared Chromebook carts were introduced to assist with certain situations when a laptop-form factor made more sense than an iPad.

□ The program ended when it was clear that the iPads were not yet ready to be a primary device, even though some students found success with them. However, we resumed in 2017–18 with a more general BYOD program and made it mandatory. This was important for allowing MS teachers to continue finding the right technology tools and teaching methods that worked well.

● **2015+:**

- A new Robotics after-school program starts up
- This grows year after year, under the direction of Khan-Page Master Teacher Amy Bloodworth

● **2016–17: TASIS starts providing laptops to all faculty**

- Prior to this, faculty had a BYOD system
- A loan system was created in 2014 for faculty to purchase Macs and iPads through the School at a discounted rate
- With the proliferation of online services (including more regulated use of the School's information service and management platform, Veracross) and expectations for faculty to use technology, we were able to persuade the main stakeholders that providing a laptop to all employees would be beneficial
- More widespread adoption of Google Workspace suite for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, and collaboration

● **2019–20:** More emphasis put on adopting technology refresh cycles (e.g. laptops refreshed every four years, classroom technology refreshed every seven years) to ensure we always have reliable equipment and the Business Office has better predictability around costs

● **2020–21: COVID injects a boost of technology skills development among faculty and students**

- Google Classroom plays a more prominent role in the MS/HS, remote/hybrid learning becomes possible, further exploration of digital resources
- TASIS creates the role of Technology Development Director to support the whole school in developing technology skills
- Culture of remote/virtual meetings begins

● **2022: First international TASIS Robotics Team competition**

- Led by Master Teacher Amy Bloodworth, all-female team of Serafina Ballerini '26, Olivia Canga '26, Maddy Costa Felix '26, Mariaurora Rosso '24, and Diana Xiao '26 were one of only 108 teams in the world to compete at the 2022 FIRST Championship World Festival in Houston, Texas

● **2022–23: HS BYOD program becomes an official policy**

● **2023–24: TASIS provides iPads for all MS students**

- Also, our first interactive displays were installed (in Campo Science and Monticello)

● **As of 2025–26**

- Every student from K–8 has a school-provided iPad
- HS students bring their own devices, mostly Macs and iPads
 - We have seen an increase in digital notetaking on iPads (benefits: still handwritten versus typed; notes tend to be more organized; can add images and diagrams; digital worksheets stay with notes; can search notes)
- Every faculty and staff member is provided with a MacBook Air and optional iPad
- Google Workspace for Education is our main office and communication suite
- Every classroom has a projection system with a display and speakers (either projector/screen or interactive display), wireless projection through Apple TVs, and document camera
- College Counseling has gone fully digital
- Most AP exams went digital in 2025, with a fully digital experience expected in 2027.
- Boarding program documentation, reporting, and boarding student locating all happens via the REACH student life management software
- Increased usage of e-textbooks to lighten loads, keep texts updated, and utilize formative assessment features of books

- Increased usage of tools to automate repetitive tasks to save time
- Campus is secured with electronic locks, cameras, and connected alarm systems
- Campus has fast and reliable internet access
- We have seen a reduction in copiers/printers due to less need for printing
- Learning Technologies Board Presentation, May 2024
- The adoption of Google Gemini as the School's official generative AI platform
- The adoption of a Generative AI Policy for Academics and accompanying classroom poster

Additional Information

● Network improvements over time were crucial for expanding technology usage

● How we use tech:

- Faculty
 - Lesson/trip/event planning & material creation
 - Lesson delivery (slideshows, videos, interactive quizzes)
 - Lesson documentation (Rubicon Atlas)
 - Collaboration on digital documents with students and colleagues
 - Communication

- Virtual meetings, including parent conferences

□ Students

- Access digital resources, build and reinforce content knowledge
- Research and gather information
- Write, organize, and share ideas
- Practice foundational skills (e.g. math fluency, grammar and vocabulary development, historical facts, musical sight reading)
- Use slideshow, graphic design, and photo and video editor tools to create media to demonstrate learning and develop creativity
- Document learning with photos, videos, and audio through portfolios
- Use accessibility features to support learning differences (e.g., text-to-speech, dictation, spell check, translation)
- Collect and analyze scientific data with spreadsheets, probes, and other scientific equipment
- Take digital notes
- Collaborate with peers on projects
- Conduct and participate in surveys
- Communicate with teachers and peers
- Develop digital citizenship skills
- Beginning stages of learning appropriate and effective use of generative AI

Future Planning (next 5 years, projected)

- Interactive display in every classroom
- Develop a K–12 digital skills and knowledge scope and sequence to ensure consistency of student technology development
 - Potential addition of typing instruction to prepare students for digital AP/IB exams
 - Development of computer science curriculum in ES and potentially beyond
- Improvements to Digital Citizenship curriculum, especially in the HS
- Exploration of how Artificial Intelligence tools can improve learning and teaching (and if those benefits outweigh the potential environmental impacts of AI data centers)
- Review of current device choice (iPad) in ES and MS to see if there is a better fit or if new devices are available
- Continue developing teacher and staff tech skills and knowledge
- Possible increased adoption of e-textbooks
- Review of learning management systems (currently Seesaw, Google Classroom, and to an extent, Veracross) and exploration of new platforms
- Automate as much as makes sense
- Explore virtual/augmented reality devices for potential academic uses

11. ACADEMIC TRAVEL: EUROPE AS A CAMPUS AND BEYOND

Alumni often say that school-related travel is among their fondest TASIS memories. Throughout the years, students have had the opportunity to explore European capitals, tour Mediterranean islands, and romp across the mountains of Switzerland as part of the School's extended curriculum. In keeping with Mrs. Fleming's vision and the spirit of travel as enrichment, this year TASIS 're-invented' In-Program Travel as the Academic Travel Program.

A logical evolution from In-Pro, Academic Travel adds broader knowledge and focus to an already strong program. It is now more directly connected to course work. "A travel program is an excellent opportunity to complement classroom learning, to expand a young person's mind and intellect, and ultimately to form well-rounded human beings," says Natalie Philpot, who has served as In-Pro and now Academic Travel Director for four years. Along with the Academic Committee, she has spearheaded this change, aiming to create a travel curriculum that reflects the School's curriculum objectives as a whole. All Academic Travel trips are directly linked to a class, a sport, or a service-learning club. "This takes coordination, but will ultimately enable student growth," Philpot says.

from *TASIS Today*, 2010



TRAVEL AT TASIS!

By Natalie Philpot,
Academic Travel Director

When Mrs. Fleming founded TASIS, she intended for it to be an opportunity for American students to spend a year visiting the iconic sites of Europe. She is known to have had a small block of wood where one could carve a small dent to check off one of the places or experiences every student should have had while at the School, such as seeing an opera or visiting Rome. As is the case with all Swiss boarding schools, TASIS also placed great importance on taking advantage of the surrounding mountains, and relocated every winter to spend a term skiing alongside student lessons, usually in St. Moritz, Andermatt, or Crans-Montana.

Over the years, the School's travel program evolved to In-Program Travel, which allowed teachers to curate experiences around Europe for students. It also allowed for independent travel for seniors, who were allowed to create their own itineraries and budgets and propose these to the Director.

BUDGET AIRLINES CHANGE EVERYTHING

In the early 2000s, the low-cost flight boom resulted in students travelling regularly throughout Europe on their own and with their friends and family. The TASIS travel program had to adjust so it remained relevant to young people and ensured that each missed school day was put to good use.

As students started travelling on their own, it became challenging to prevent students from dropping out of their assigned trips. Many

thought “been there, done that” for many locations. However, some trips perhaps viewed as less glamorous, such as an Honors Biology trip collecting data for a unit of the course, remained popular. As did Outward Bound, an outdoor education trip linked to the leadership chapter of the PE curriculum and a requirement to pass the course.

These observations resulted in a program linked to classwork or curricular programs: Academic Travel. Students may have been to Rome, but had they been with their Ancient History teacher? How is Florence different when focusing on Dante? Is Geneva different when visiting CERN with classmates from Physics class?

As the School grew, Ski Term became unwieldy and unsustainable. It worked when TASIS was a small, fully residential prep school or year-abroad school, but as TASIS became more academically-focused, the benefit of taking class days to ski seemed unnecessary. Ski Term became Ski Week for a decade or so, then was shortened to five days and became optional, and ended as an experience for 10th graders.

COVID AND BEYOND

During Covid, the School could not close over holiday breaks, as testing and quarantine measures made sending students home across the world impossible. This resulted in changing the School calendar to remove two week-long travel sessions and shift them into four-day weekends. The School pivoted, and many faculty members created learning-rich itineraries that took students throughout Switzerland. It was an opportunity to dig deep and examine the overarching goals of

the TASIS travel program, including the parts that both destination and programming play.

THE BLUE/GREEN/WHITE PROGRAM

With a new calendar, shorter travel times, a student preference for choice and experiences in the outdoors, TASIS had to adapt to remain a leader in youth travel. Coupled with increasing mental health issues and anxiety often credited to the excessive use of smartphones and social media, TASIS felt students were in need of and deserved the beneficial effects of being in nature and the character development that happens when uncontrollable things (like nature) can upend plans.

As Academic Travel Director, I looked to the local Swiss system for inspiration and introduced the tri-color model: Green trips for outdoor experiences, White trips included snowsports, and Blue trips to cover historically academic trips. The School began requiring three trips per year for all students but they got to choose what

trips to take. Every long weekend of the school calendar offers trips for students.

Academic Travel is no longer a program that takes place twice a year, but a rolling program that can serve all departments. Examples include alpine hut overnights for the Residential Life program (Green), or performing arts programming that can serve dancers at a Paris competition (Blue) during Thanksgiving weekend. Five trips are included in tuition for boarders and three for day students.

In 2021, TASIS became licensed to deliver the world-renowned Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. This allowed the robust Adventurous Journeys, a mandatory part of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, to be included within the existing Academic Travel program.

Bringing back mandatory skiing, albeit shorter and with a non-ski/snowboard option for students who don't like skiing or snowboarding, has been a massive success. White trips are separated into underclassmen and seniors only, which has become a favorite trip that includes independent free skiing and time together before exams and graduation.

The best thing about this new model is that students have choice. They can try new things, so they are excited about the trips. Many young people can have difficulties with their attention spans, and they're under pressure to always succeed. On these trips, they can try new things; the stakes are low, so students are able to fail and learn from mistakes. And we know that failure can be the way to success.



An Academic Travel group on a Swiss mountainside

12. SPORTS AT TASIS: TEAMING UP



Masa Yo '04

Over the past 27 years, sports at TASIS has witnessed tremendous growth. Critical to this transformation was the School breaking ground on the Global Village Master Plan. Alumni may recall “the Bubble”, a temporary gymnasium that was the heart of athletic and other events at TASIS for many years. Then in 1999, the grand Palestra was built, a beautiful gymnasium with a floor of Canadian wood, soaring wooden beams, and windows to the sky—and spaces for dance, music, a fitness center, offices, and changing rooms. In 2012, the Palestrina added a much-needed smaller gym which now includes a state-of-the-art climbing and bouldering wall.

These facilities, alongside dedicated teachers and coaches, inspire students to find physical activities they enjoy. They discuss the connection between mental health and well being and physical activity, and students get to experience

how fitness affects their lives. And for the current generation of students, sports facilitates a chance to get away from screens and challenge themselves as they focus on shared goals with their peers.

TASIS has also started collaborating more with the local community, practicing and hosting events not only in the Palestra but also with Centro Sportivo di Collina d’Oro as well as FC Paradiso for soccer and track & field, Go Academy for tennis and padel, and hosting large tournaments at the Centro Sportivo di Gioventu in Tenero.

Before the Palestra, competition opportunities for TASIS student-athletes were limited. Former Athletic Director Sonny Lim expanded this to include four conferences: the Swiss Group of International Schools, International Schools Sports League, Northern International Schools Sports Association, and European Sports Conference. This means students not only have the opportunity to explore Swiss cities for sports but also destinations in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and of course, Italy.

Sports at TASIS continue to be an integral part of the student experience where students learn life skills such as teamwork, commitment, communication and sportsmanship. With the increasing presence of technology, having the opportunity to develop these skills is a vital part to creating well-rounded individuals who thrive at TASIS and beyond.

by Kristin Pedroja and Masa Yo '04, March 2026

13. THE WORLD ON EDGE: TASIS AND COVID



Students checking in at Casa Fleming, fall 2020

TASIS began communicating with our community about Covid-19 in January 2020, with a note from Headmaster Christopher Nikoloff indicating that the School was in discussions with risk management partner Healix. Normal life continued throughout February, and students were able to attend their spring Academic Travel trips (including Ski Week), though due to the outbreak in northern Italy, many trips were re-routed through Zurich. On February 25, Ticino announced its first positive Covid-19 case.

On March 7 Lombardy, along with 14 Italian provinces, were effectively “closed”.

On March 8, TASIS announced a shift to a distance learning model beginning March 16, a

bold move by the Board of Directors as Ticino was still weeks from school closures. Also the right call, as all of our boarding students were able to get home or join their families in a safe place.

By March 25, the situation in Ticino and worldwide was escalating, and TASIS decided to resume the distance learning model after spring break until everyone could safely return to campus. Advanced Placement exams shifted online, and the International Baccalaureate had canceled its 2020 exams. TASIS held extensive conversations with families and teachers to ensure distance learning was working for our students.



CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2020!



On April 17, TASIS announced that high school students would complete their year with the distance learning model. While disappointing, this decision aligned with federal and cantonal guidelines, not to mention international travel restrictions and the general uncertainty that was facing the world.

On April 29, the Swiss government announced that Pre-Kindergarten through 8th graders could return to school on May 11.

On May 25, campus opened for younger students who wanted to be back on campus or families could continue distance learning. The final two weeks of school included smaller class sizes, a two-meter distance rule everywhere, morning-only classes, and mandatory mask-wearing.

KEEPING TRADITIONS GOING

Despite the upheaval, our community was determined to keep at least a few TASIS traditions alive, even if only on a screen. Our Communications team worked tirelessly alongside Performing Arts and Visual Art teachers to put together a Virtual Arts Festival from May 21–24 to showcase student work. This included a number of student videos, instrumental and vocal recitals, and a special Finale concert. The Visual Arts were celebrated with over 40 galleries of student art, including portfolio pieces sent in for AP and IB assessment. One of the biggest delights was a gorgeous rendition of Ben E. King’s song “Stand By Me” including dozens of students, parents, teachers, and staff singing alone, but together.

The Class of 2020 missed out on so many rites of passage, but TASIS was determined to create a virtual graduation experience that made each student feel special. The YouTube ceremony was a collaborative effort between the students, teachers, administrators, the Performing Arts department, and the Communications team. Students congratulated each other on awards, gave shout-outs, and shared memories, and sent in videos with messages of support and love to each other. Lynn Fleming Aeschliman called it “a fabulous and most memorable graduation...my mother would be very proud, as am I.”

Headmaster Christopher Nikoloff introduced the virtual ceremony: *I’d like to offer my congratulations to our extraordinary class of 2020 on the tremendous achievement of your graduation. This achievement is not diminished by the fact that we cannot celebrate together at this time; in fact, the way that you have handled the challenges of the last few months is a demonstration of the TASIS values we hold so dear and makes this graduation all the more meaningful. You have shown resilience, courage, and commitment to scholarship; all values Mary Crist Fleming, our Founder, hoped to foster in graduates of TASIS.*

No matter where you are around the world, the TASIS community is together in spirit, and I look forward to the time when we can celebrate this milestone in person.

from *TASIS Today*, 2020

FALL 2020: THE SPIRIT OF TASIS

Headmaster **Christopher Nikoloff**
on the start of this special school year

During these historic opening days of school, I have been working outside as much as possible. Why? This month marks the first time all students and teachers have been on campus together since March 2020. We do have some students who haven’t yet arrived, whether due to travel complications, required quarantine, or other delays. Thanks to the resourcefulness of our teachers and the ambition of our students, classes can continue with these learners through the long reach of technology. But the majority of students are here, and this is a historic moment for the School.

Some things have changed, of course. Each class has plexiglass on the desks, providing some horizontal protection between students. Most of the students and all of the adults are wearing masks most of the day. We have had to alter or move our co-curricular classrooms and spaces like visual arts, performing arts, physical education, to ensure proper spacing, ventilation, and individual use of materials. In classrooms, lunches, and advisories, we have assigned seating for contact tracing purposes.

We opened up new dining spaces to ensure distancing between our diners, and we have made significant improvements in the dorms by adding bathrooms and reducing occupancy in each room. We have required

Covid-19 testing of all our boarding and day students. These changes and more were implemented to increase safety on campus, especially at the beginning of the year, when we welcome back everyone from all over the world.

from *TASIS Today*, 2020

REMARKS ON COVID BY THE BOARD

True leadership is shown through courage when facing extensive and unexpected challenges. When Covid-19 hit Ticino in March 2020, the TASIS Board of Directors immediately rose to the occasion, taking many hours out of their lives to deliberate on the School's response. While they were making decisions that would impact current students, they also each understood that these decisions could impact the trajectory of the School's future. TASIS is fortunate to have such a dedicated, thoughtful, and intelligent Board, and we thank them for their continued service to our school.

SOME EXCERPTED REMARKS BY BOARD DIRECTORS:

Alexandra Heumann Wicki '80

I found the most challenging decision the Board had to make for TASIS during the Coronavirus crisis to be the suspension of boarding and moving to distance learning mid-March 2020. It

was a sombre and sad moment, but the safety of the School and its community was paramount, and the Board made this pioneering judgement before any other peer schools or governmental authorities in Switzerland. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the TASIS administration, faculty, and staff, all students returned home safely, and online classes commenced as smoothly as possible.

Mathias Muehlhofer '95

It seems obvious in hindsight, but the decision to move the entire school to online learning for the first time in TASIS history, when everything else was still open in March 2020, was a tough call to make. But with boarding students from all over the world and looming travel restrictions, we felt that it was the right thing to do. And only a few weeks later most of the Western world moved online.

Marco Ornaghi

I write this as we approach the end of the academic year. I look back with great pride at how we have supported each and every one in these difficult moments and the simple fact that we have managed to keep our school open throughout the academic year is a tremendous achievement in itself.
from *TASIS Today*, 2021

COVID'S IMPACT ON ADMISSIONS

Covid has transformed the way TASIS, and indeed the world, does admissions. "It was wall-to-wall Zooms: Asia in the morning, and the Americas in the afternoon," Director of Admissions Emily McKee recalls. "Lots of evening Zooms to accommodate Mexico, Brazil, and California, and early morning ones for Japan and China. And the rest of the world in between." This echoes the pre-Covid workday but with the added challenge of showcasing our campus through a screen.

Thanks to hours of work by Director of Institutional Advancement Bill Eichner, Emily, and their team of Helen Roowalla and Lucia Soravia, TASIS weathered the Covid storm well. In 2020, TASIS opened

with robust enrollments within the School's Covid limitations for classrooms, dorm room occupancy, and groups. For 2021, we were able to expand these limitations and opened with full boarding occupancy and strong day enrollment, including an increase of students in the elementary school. And after cancelling the 2020 summer programs, summer 2021 tripled enrollment expectations.

"TASIS did a very good job during the pandemic," Bill says. "We began to gain more recognition locally, both in the newspapers and on television. And in turn, more local families began considering us as an option for their children. We didn't just get through this pandemic, we managed to thrive—to move beyond the challenges and emerge as a much stronger school in 2021 than before."

from *TASIS Today*, 2021



BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH COVID

The TASIS Parent Association (TPA) has been an important part of our community for decades. We look forward to their annual events, such as the Fall Festival, Christmas Market, and Easter Egg Hunt, and fundraising activities such as used uniform sales and bake sales. But over the past 18 months, the TPA really stepped up their game, providing our community with support, kind gestures, and unexpected events that have helped raise morale for everyone. “It seemed the TPA were on campus every week doing something special for our community,” says Bill Eichner.

This was quite deliberate, says TPA President Jennifer Zonarini. “There is a fabulous quote that describes how TPA has tried to embrace this challenging year: *Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass, it’s about learning to dance in the rain!*”, she says. “With the pandemic and its resulting restrictions, it was very important the TPA demonstrate fortitude to our children

by being positive role models. Continuing to celebrate school events, keeping school spirit high, and showing gratitude to our teachers and staff were top priorities.”

And despite ever-changing restrictions, some announced mere hours before an event, cancelling was not an option. “We often had to switch gears to accommodate new rules, so we had to be at our most creative”—for example, when traditional trick-or-treating was not allowed for Halloween, our TPA families opened the trunks of their cars and decorated the insides with spooky displays, creating a “trunk-or-treat” event in the parking lot. Genius!

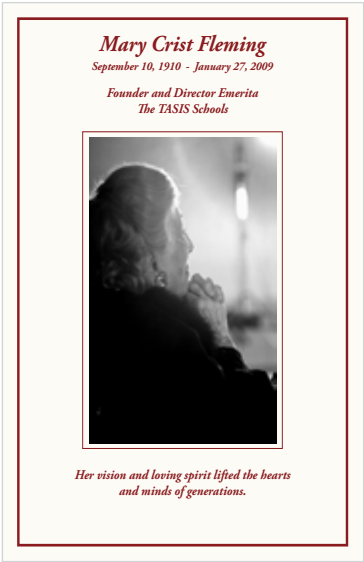
Jennifer is confident that the momentum won’t stop just because restrictions are easing. “The TPA will continue to be a positive force, staying enthusiastic and community-minded, supporting TASIS in every way possible. Everyone should feel proud to be part of this unique and wonderful TASIS community.”

from *TASIS Today*, 2021



14. REMEMBERING MCF AND HER LEGACY

September 10, 1910–January 27, 2009



The Service of Thanksgiving for the Life and Work of Mary Crist Fleming took place at the Church of S. Abbondio, Collina d’Oro on February 1, 2009 at 15:00.

MARY CRIST FLEMING, INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PIONEER, DIES AT 99

Mary Crist Fleming, founder and director of American international schools in Europe and a pioneer in the field of international education, died on 27 January, 2009, at her long-time home in Montagnola, Switzerland, in the middle of the campus of The American School in Switzerland (TASIS), which she founded in 1956. Mrs. Fleming also founded TASIS, American School in England, in 1976, and several other schools and programs, many still in operation, in Europe. A dozen years ago she donated the schools, programs, and campuses

to the non-profit Swiss TASIS Foundation, which Mrs. Fleming set up to continue her legacy. The schools are widely considered the finest American international schools abroad. Mrs. Fleming has been recognized for her contributions to American and international education by commendations from the US Department of Education (1983), President George H.W. Bush (1990), and Harvard University (1984), which is her alma mater. She was given an honorary degree by the American College of Greece.

REMEMBERING MRS. FLEMING

Tributes to our remarkable Founder
by alumni, friends, and colleagues

I see her spirit in the beautiful buildings and grounds of the Montagnola campus. I hear her voice in the multitude of student languages. I feel her presence as I sit down to a lovely meal at Casa Fleming. She will always be present for me, a constant reminder of the possibility of world peace through educating young people from around the world. In my life's work as teacher and mediator, I see a foundation created by my exposure as a young girl to MCF.

She had a way with words and with people that I've rarely seen matched. In those early days, we only knew bits and pieces of what it took to keep TASIS going. Was she really being courted by a count...or maybe a duke or prince? She made us believe that anything was possible if you set your mind and heart to something. —Kathy Pitner '62

I am glad I was able to see her in March 2006, clad in signature black, bejeweled in gold, with perfectly coiffed hair. Her passing ends the era of 1940s elegance, of white gloves and cocktail stops on the autostrada, of great halls and lavish indulgence, with a firm eye on the goal of educating young people through beauty, culture, and travel—her impeccable 'recipe'! Mrs. Fleming will always be remembered as an incredible missionary and visionary, and her legacy, through her adoring students, will carry on with her spirit. —Elisabeth Crawford PG '66



Mrs. Fleming with her children Gai, Tom, and Lynn

Mrs. Fleming was deeply interested in the lives of all those she knew in all the schools she founded. Each of us felt included in her vision—teachers, cleaners, students, gardeners, secretaries, cooks. She always had an encouraging word for us, and we were all part of her extended family. And most importantly she trusted us to live out her dream. —Marcia Page, longtime teacher at TASIS and TASIS England

As we think back on the remarkable people who truly changed our lives, many of us will include both Steve Jobs, a legendary figure in technology, and Mrs. Fleming, a dynamic leader in education. Both leave legacies that are important to us all. Seek excellence, pay attention, and respect wisdom. Seek excellence because style matters, beauty matters, and grace matters. Pay attention because the angels of perfection are found in the details. And respect wisdom, because only those who are truly wise can give us the guidance and inspiration we need to stretch ourselves, examine our lives, think differently, and change the world. —David Jepson, Upper School Head of TASIS England, from his 2012 Commencement Speech

FOUNDER'S DAY

In 2010, a year after Mrs. Fleming passed away at the age of 99, TASIS began a new tradition. September 10 is Founder's Day, celebrating both Mrs. Fleming's birthday and the "birth" of the School in 1956. On campus, the community gathered for the first assembly of the year to mark what would have been Mrs. Fleming's 100th birthday. The event included excerpts

from "Pushing All the Buttons" and songs from the musical *MCF: What a Life!*. The afternoon ended with everyone tossing yellow rose petals into the MCF fountain and enjoying pistachio ice cream on the Fleming Piazza.

In addition, alumni around the world gathered to toast Mrs. Fleming with her favorite drink, an Old Fashioned; to have dinner by candlelight with flowers on the table; to have a picnic, take a trip, or throw a party full of interesting people from around the world. Some donned Mrs. Fleming's lipstick of choice, Revlon's Cherries in the Snow—and who among us fortunate enough to have known Mrs. Fleming, has not had traces of Cherries on both cheeks following a Fleming triple-kiss?

Students now celebrate Founder's Day during the first weeks of school by doing something Mrs. Fleming loved—getting off campus to explore. Middle school students go on class hikes that are local to the area, such as San Salvatore, Gandria, and Morcote. High school students visit a local lido.

The Founder's Day assembly, which celebrates Mrs. Fleming through stories and song, has been moved to the Friday of Family Weekend so our TASIS families can more deeply understand how Mrs. Fleming's influence resonates at TASIS. These assemblies always end with the annual tradition of tossing yellow rose petals into the MCF fountain.

The local, non-teaching staff of TASIS supports an annual Mass in Mrs. Fleming's memory at Sant'Abbondio Church.

from *TASIS Today*, 2021



Agnese Salvatico '24, Isabella Powell '24, and Aissatou Dieng '24 celebrate Founder's Day

M. CRIST FLEMING ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING AND LEADERSHIP

A Memorial to our Founder

The M. Crist Fleming Endowment was established in 2008 through a \$500,000 bequest from Tasis alumnus John E. Palmer '64. This seed money was subsequently augmented by a generous gift of CHF 100,000 from the Grindfors family which funds the Tasis Senior Humanities Program (now Tasis Speaker Series) under the auspices of the Endowment. The Endowment is growing

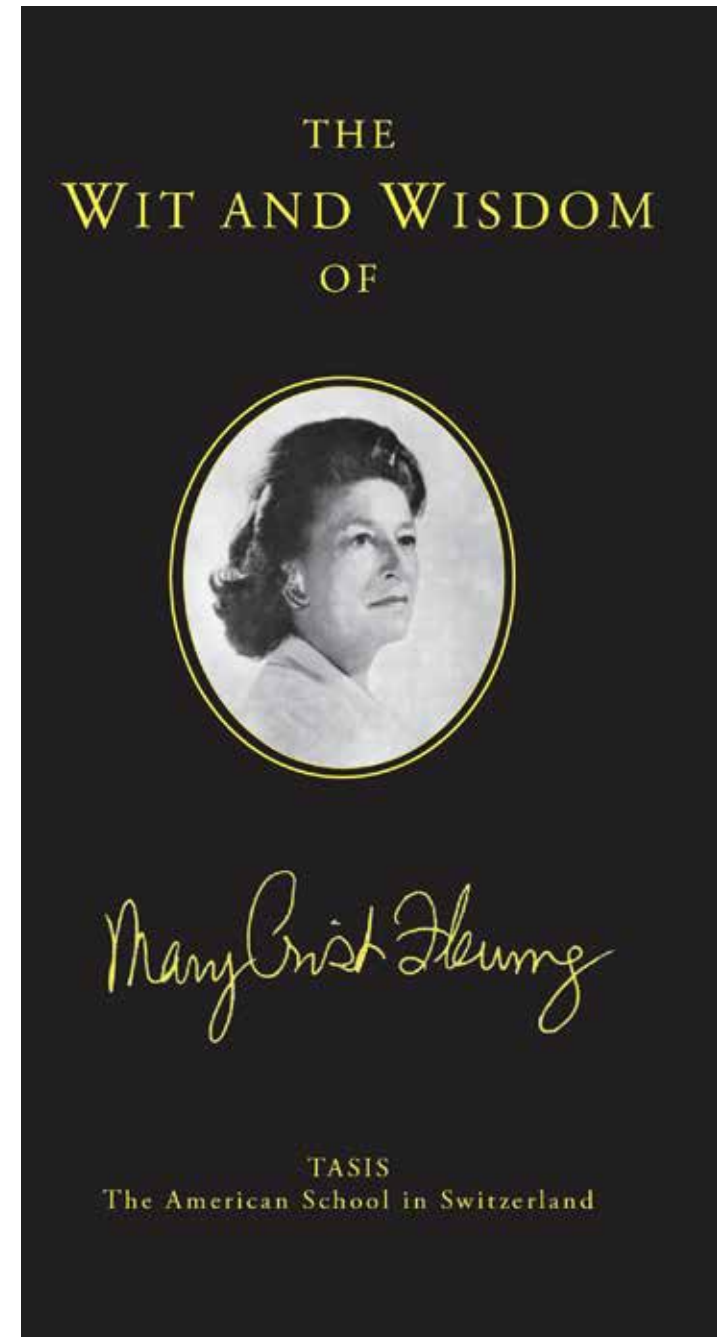
through donations from Tasis alumni, parents, and friends who wish to honor the life and accomplishments of Tasis Founder M. Crist Fleming. The Endowment supports student involvement in international service projects (pertaining, for example, to refugees, immigration, homelessness, health, and environmental sustainability) and aims to cross linguistic, ethnic, and national borders among our students through theater and music, for which we already have an admirable tradition and reputation. The Endowment also provides resources to invite distinguished guest speakers and attract and retain excellent teachers—the soul of the Tasis experience. It is used to fund student scholarships as well as professional development of our teachers. The endowment does not finance capital projects. It is managed by the Tasis Foundation.

THE WIT & WISDOM OF MARY CRIST FLEMING

When she started Tasis in 1956, Mrs. Fleming wanted a school that would provide an outstanding education not just for her own three children, but for many other children as well. Of course, Mrs. Fleming expected her students to learn facts, but for her, a true education was much more than that. Her students were expected to have a solid knowledge of and a deep appreciation for literature, history, languages, the humanities, mathematics, science, and the arts. A true education also included physical fitness, self-discipline, service, civility, and an inner strength based on such timeless values as honesty, courage, manners, compassion, and empathy. Mrs. Fleming wanted them to be open-minded and to have a profound caring for others and a respect for the dignity of all human beings. She saw education as the way to make our world a safer, saner, and better place.

This book was created as a keepsake to remind us of the positive aspects of Tasis. It also may help explain Tasis to the uninitiated, and provide a bit of humor, advice, and inspiration. Hopefully, it will remind readers of how remarkable Mrs. Fleming was, and how we all have the responsibility to help keep her dreams alive.

Every graduating senior receives a copy of *The Wit & Wisdom of Mary Crist Fleming*, edited by Lyle Rigg (1944–2024) and published by Tasis in 2011.



15. TASIS CELEBRATES 60 YEARS



DEVOTED KEEPER OF HER LEGACY

By Lyle Rigg (1944–2024), former TASIS
and TASIS England Headmaster

On this 60th anniversary [2016] of the founding of TASIS, it is a great pleasure for me to have the honor of introducing today's commencement speaker. Lynn Fleming

Aeschliman is a remarkable woman. Lynn possesses extraordinary and diverse talents. Largely because of Lynn, her mother's dream continues. Look around you and you will see Lynn's stamp everywhere. Her vision has helped to make TASIS one of the most beautiful campuses in the world. The Global Village is largely her inspiration and creation.

The TASIS Elementary School also was one of Lynn's dreams and initiatives. Despite many

advising Lynn not to do this, the Elementary School opened in 2005 and has flourished. Two of today's graduates entered TASIS when the Elementary School opened in 2005 and have spent eleven years here. Largely because of Lynn, many of the TASIS traditions established by her mother continue. TASIS continues to have an incredible impact not only on the lives of those who study here but also on the lives of those who teach and work here.

If Mrs. Fleming were still with us, I know that she would be very proud to see her daughter—TASIS's youngest student in 1956—not only as today's graduation speaker, but also as the strongest supporter of her vision and the devoted keeper of her legacy.

from *TASIS Today* 2016

60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

More than 300 TASIS alumni and friends returned to Montagnola from August 19–21, 2016 to celebrate 60 years of TASIS! The weekend kicked off on Friday morning for the PG '66 class, who had a chance to wander the Villa Negroni in Vezia, which was their campus 50 years ago. That evening, guests gathered on the De Nobili Terrace for a *Serata Ticinese* featuring merlot, *luganighetta*, Angelo Piattini's famous risotto, and traditional music from Duo Nostranello.

Saturday's torrential rain didn't stop our alumni from enjoying three special events—a

boat tour of Lake Lugano, an architectural tour with veteran TASIS teacher Mark Aeschliman, and a visit to Valle Verzasca, where five brave visitors went for a swim in the icy waters of the Verzasca River!

Saturday evening's spectacular Gala evening began with an aperitivo on the Fleming Piazza (featuring Mrs. Fleming's signature cocktail, the Bourbon Old Fashioned), followed by a wonderful performance of *MCF: What a Life!*, the original musical by Todd Fletcher written for Mrs. Fleming's 90th birthday in 2000, which featured a host of TASIS alumni and current students. Dinner and dancing rounded off the evening. The weekend celebrations culminated in an encore performance the next day that was open to the community. Over 250 guests watched the matinee performance.

MCF: WHAT A LIFE!

In 2000, in celebration of Mrs. Fleming's 90th birthday, her daughter, Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63, commissioned composer-lyricist Todd Fletcher to create a musical based on Mrs. Fleming's life. The musical had its world premiere in Montagnola in 2000 and was subsequently performed in the West End in London and in New York in 2002 and again in Montagnola in 2004. A 10th anniversary production of the musical was performed in 2011, shortly after what would have been Mrs. Fleming's 100th birthday, and a special performance served as the cornerstone of the School's 60th Anniversary Celebrations in August 2016.

The 2016 performance was directed by Jonathan Morris and Samantha Forrest.



The 2016 cast of MCF: What a Life!

Performer and former TASIS teacher Olymar Marco Brown recalls, “The performance was the result of weeks of dedication and hard work by a multicultural and committed crew. Administrators, students, alumni, and teachers worked tirelessly to perfect every detail, pouring their mental, physical, and emotional energy into creating a sensational show. The musical was not only a celebration of TASIS’s history but also a testament to the power of community and collaboration. As the audience—filled with alumni, former

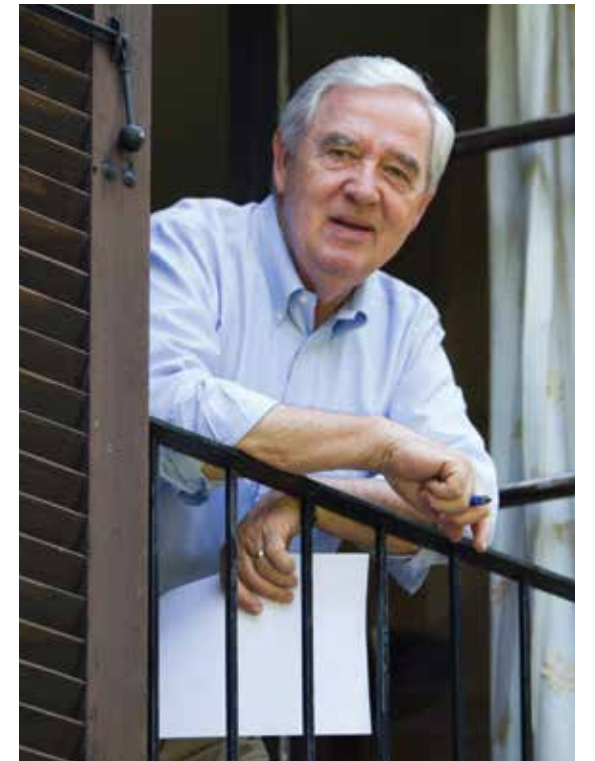
classmates, roommates, and families from around the world—cheered enthusiastically, it was clear that everyone in attendance shared a profound sense of pride. In unison, their hearts seemed to echo the sentiment: *what a life!*”

Note: The musical was also performed as part of the 70th Anniversary Celebrations in 2026 featuring alumni, students, and friends as performers, crew, and production staff.

16. THE HEADMASTER AS PITCHER: LYLE RIGG, STARTER AND RELIEVER

As the Chairman who once again asked Lyle Rigg (1944–2024) to return to TASIS in an emergency, I shared a bit about him and his two-year tenure at TASIS to the School and Foundation Boards in my recent reports to them. I wrote, “He has accomplished invaluable improvements at TASIS in achieving his goals, even though, in his usual modesty, he says this could have been accomplished ‘no matter who had been serving as Headmaster’. Not true! We should all be deeply grateful for Lyle’s putting the School in the strongest position possible to pass on to our new Headmaster Christopher Nikoloff. Once again in a TASIS school, Lyle has left an indelible model of what great professional Headmastering is: in this regard he is the greatest figure in the history of the TASIS schools and is, in some respects, unique and irreplaceable.”

—Lynn Aeschliman '63, 2017



LYLE’S TENURES

- 1979 TASIS England Assistant Headmaster, Head of Residence, History Teacher
- 1982 TASIS Headmaster
- 1984 TASIS England Headmaster
- 1998 Pennington School (New Jersey) Headmaster

- 2006 Retirement #1
- 2007 TASIS Interim Headmaster
- 2008 Retirement #2
- 2009 TASIS England Interim Headmaster
- 2010 Retirement #3
- 2015 TASIS Headmaster
- 2017 Retirement #4

from *TASIS Today* 2017

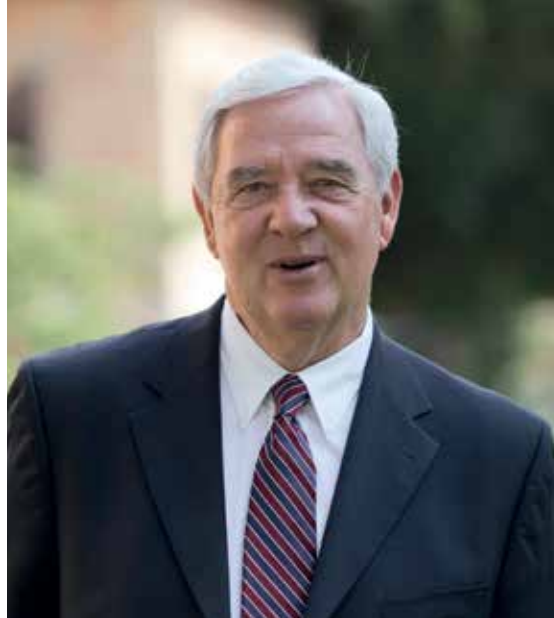
TEN THINGS WE'LL MISS ABOUT LYLE RIGG

During the end-of-year celebrations in May, TASIS presented Lyle with a book of anecdotes and notes of thanks from our community to help him remember just how valuable he has been to the lives of hundreds of students, faculty members, and staff in England and Lugano. These heartfelt tributes had many things in common, and some are shared here.

His wit. Lyle enjoys the absurdity and comedy that often arise from common situations, and even more so when the situation involves serious intent and planned decorum. This helps keep Lyle grounded in a healthy realism while he pursues ideal goals. —John Nelson, longtime Academic Dean

His calm nature. Whatever he would do, he was even and steady, impeccably dressed, never impatient or rushed; Lyle is the calm in the midst of the storm. Most of all, Lyle appreciated and supported people, and he reassured his colleagues through the various crises of school life. No wonder he has so many fans! —Bill Eichner, Director of Institutional Advancement

His empathy. Lyle always seems to formulate a response that assuages anxieties, inspires confidence, or clarifies problems. What impresses me most are the ways in which empathy and perceptiveness inform Lyle's uncanny success in communicating ideas that matter to a human being and to a community. —Dr. Chris Love, longtime TASIS English Department Head



His respect for the handwritten note. Among the things I admire about Lyle are his attention to detail, his thoughtfulness, and his compassion. A perfectly timed note or hand-chosen card from him is sure to brighten your day. The gesture is small but the impact great. —Emily McKee, Director of Admissions

His wisdom. We all know Lyle is wise. But what's really nifty about spending time with Lyle is that one feels wiser afterwards. And, I believe, sometimes, one is. —Alexandra Heumann Wicki '80, TASIS Board of Directors and Foundation Board

His speeches. I had heard it had been a rough spring of 2015 and that morale was low. I didn't know what to expect upon arriving. We gathered in the Palmer Center for an All-Faculty meeting in late August. With no real understanding of the strain many had felt the previous spring, I could feel the room swing in Lyle's favor and understood that he had restored morale in one speech. This would be the first of many brilliant deliveries. —Mark Chevalier, Director of Communications

His affection for George Washington. For some of us non-Americans, Lyle introduced us to his "lucky charm," George Washington. From socks to statues, dollar bills to quotations, even touching the nose of the Washington bust on Lyle's desk for luck, we will remember it all. And not just because he shared this luck with us by giving his admin team dollar bills as end-of-year presents! —Guia Berera, Assistant Head of the Elementary School and Italian Section Director, and MJ Breton, Middle School Head of Student Affairs

His belief in the goodness of people. Lyle has been a mentor unlike any other during his short time here (this stint). Lyle has taught me compassion, temperance, and perseverance simply by being who he is. He truly believes in the goodness of people and brings that out in everyone he interacts with. —KC McKee, Associate Director of Institutional Advancement

Swallowing Toads. On my desks in both Lugano and Durham, I have kept a small ceramic toad—a gift from Lyle and a daily reminder to heed his advice: "Swallow a toad in the morning and nothing worse will happen for the rest of your day." One of many touchstones Lyle has shared with me, this (both object and idea) nicely illustrates some of the magical paradoxes of Lyle's leadership. He is at once humble and inspiring, kind yet courageous, amiable but strong. Lyle has swallowed innumerable toads for all of us, for the schools we love, and for the students we nurture. —Michael Ulku-Steiner, Headmaster 2012–2013 and current Head of School at Durham Academy

His commitment to excellence. Lyle set the gold standard for leadership, and he remains the reference point for administrative decisions: "How

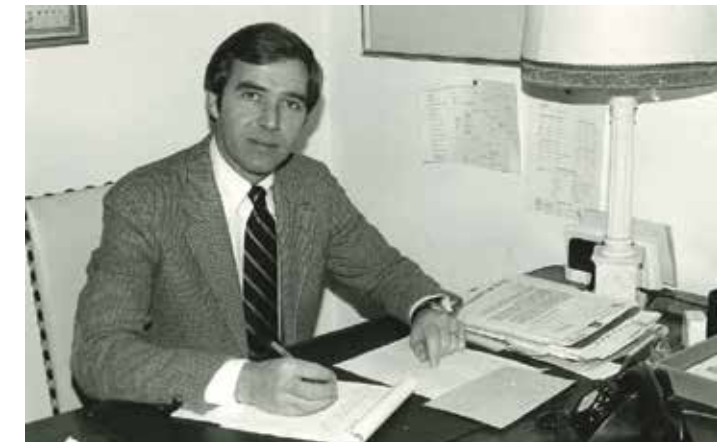
would Lyle handle that?" —Bill Eichner, Director of Institutional Advancement

For all of these reasons and many more, we will miss you, Lyle.

from *TASIS Today*, 2017

Editor's note: The above text was written in 2017 in honor of Lyle's final retirement from TASIS. In the ensuing years Lyle often returned to Lugano for Board meetings and was present in the lives of many through thoughtful emails, notes, and gestures. Lyle was beloved, and the sentiments in the words are even more poignant now. For all of these reasons and many more, we miss you, Lyle

A FINE, FINE HEADMASTER



The TASIS community mourns the loss of Lyle D. Rigg, who passed away peacefully, surrounded by his family, on the evening of February 16, 2024, following a courageous battle with cancer. Lyle is survived by his beloved wife Sharon Creech, two children, and two grandchildren.

The TASIS community gathered on campus on the afternoon of Friday, May 10, to celebrate Lyle's exemplary life. Following a poignant service in the Palmer Center, the guests moved outside and watched as a third of Lyle's ashes were laid to rest under a tree near Mrs. Fleming's memorial bench while Purcell's "Trumpet Voluntary" played. (Lyle wanted his ashes buried in his home town of Camden, Maine, and on the campuses of TASIS and TASIS England. He chose all of the music to be played at his memorial services.)

A wonderful educator and an even better human being, Lyle was the longest-serving headmaster in TASIS history, with 23 years of administrative experience at TASIS Switzerland and TASIS England. He was, in the words of Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63, "one of the noblest and most beloved figures in the history of our schools."



Lyle Rigg with his wife Sharon Creech Rigg

fitting honor for one of the most gifted orators in TASIS history, the Upper School library at TASIS England was renamed the Lyle Rigg Upper School Library in 2012. He would go on to serve on the Board of Directors at both TASIS Switzerland and TASIS England following his retirement as a Headmaster. His impact at both schools will last for generations to come.

To learn more about Lyle and the wide-ranging impact he had on generations of students and educators—and will continue to have through the newly established Lyle Rigg Scholarship Fund—visit www.tasis.ch/lyle.

from *TASIS Today* 2024

TWO CITIZENS OF OUR TOWN

Remarks for Memorial Service for Lyle Rigg, Montagnola, May 2024

By Prof. Michael D. Aeschliman, Ph.D.

I hope you will bear with me while I introduce a second person to be in our thoughts alongside Lyle Rigg today, and I hope to justify your indulgence. Professor Judith L. Kovacs was a very dear friend of my wife Lynn's and mine who died in December of 2020 of cancer. She and her husband David were my colleagues at the University of Virginia from 1984 until we left the University in 1993 and they remained close friends thereafter, spending time with us in Switzerland and Italy; our children grew up together. A picture of her sits on my desk as I write.

Judith was a distinguished scholar of the New Testament and "Patristics," the Greek Church Fathers (she was an expert on St. Clement of Alexandria). She took her Ph.D. at Columbia University and taught Greek, New Testament, and Patristics at Union Theological Seminary in New York and then at the University of Virginia. She was a fine scholar and a magnificent linguist, with a command of several languages, ancient and modern. Her husband is a distinguished Classicist.

Judith had some important characteristics and qualities in common with Lyle. They were both generous persons of sincere loving-kindness, of constant good humor, of enormous professional devotion, and of a modesty bordering on true humility, a virtue held in no esteem at all in the contemporary world. While Judith and her husband were staying with us in Tuscany a few years ago for a few weeks she continued to strengthen her Italian and sang in the local church choir.

But there is another angle to this story. Much modern literature—especially American literature—concentrates satirically or dismissively on the limitations and confinements of small-town life, its pettiness and provincialism. If you know American literature, think of the writing of Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Edgar Lee Masters, Sherwood Anderson. Liberation and fulfillment are depicted as the escape from the restricting small town into the wider world.

We rather rarely think of the virtues of the American small town, so lacking is it in comeliness, excitement, and glamor. Perhaps only Thornton Wilder's play *Our Town*, some of the poems of Robert Frost, and the early years of Lincoln as depicted in biographies and by Henry Fonda in



the film "Young Man Lincoln," have ever effectively contrasted the negative view. And they comprise a quiet minority report against the 76 blatant trombones of New York, Hollywood, and Paris, of the burgeoning audio-visual culture, advertising, and mass media.

But at its best, the small American town was a seedbed of the enduring human virtues, of courtesy and human sympathy. It is true that both Judith and Lyle went on to wider horizons and world travel—Judith to Germany, New York, Virginia, and fellowships on the European continent and at Oxford; Lyle to Texas, Central America, Brazil, Harvard, the TASIS schools in Switzerland and England, and the Headmastership of a prominent independent school in New Jersey.

But in these places they retained, developed, and exerted the human virtues of their youth which have, I am sure, left an enduringly noble and encouraging effect on hundreds of their students, colleagues, friends, neighbors, and even temporary acquaintances. We cannot know the extent of these benign effects, at least not in this life, but it is our justified faith to believe in them, as Lyle so nobly insisted he did in his own farewell address.



Michael and Lynn Aeschliman with Lyle Rigg

In Lyle's case, over the last several years I have found myself thinking of him as Mr. Great-heart, a character in John Bunyan's novel *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Part II, which from its publication in the 1680s until about 1920 was the most widely-read book in the English language other than the Bible. Mr. Great-heart is the guide and defender of two women, Christiana and Mercy, on their pilgrimage to the Divine Goodness. His own earthy guide, called the Interpreter, bids him "to take sword, and helmet, and shield, and "Take these my daughters...and conduct them to the House called Beautiful."

You will, I hope, forgive me for thinking of Lyle Rigg as Mr. Great-heart and of Mary Crist Fleming and Lynn Fleming Aeschliman as Christiana and Mercy, and of TESIS as the "House called Beautiful."

It is true, and should be said, that Bunyan's

theology is too narrow for Lyle, or Lynn, or for Judith or me, or for TESIS. But the pilgrimage towards truth, goodness, and beauty, by means of trusting dutifulness and unostentatious loving-kindness, should not be too narrow for any decent person. If it is for you, you're in the wrong auditorium today and perhaps in the wrong school.

My last observations are biographical details and, I hope, revealing ones that justify my approach to my two dear, deceased friends. Lyle Rigg and Judith Kovacs were both born and raised in Defiance, a small town in northwestern Ohio. They knew each other and both graduated from Defiance High School a year or so apart, then went to small colleges in Ohio. They married spouses from Ohio who went to small Ohio colleges. And then Lyle and Judith (and their spouses) went out and made the world a better place.

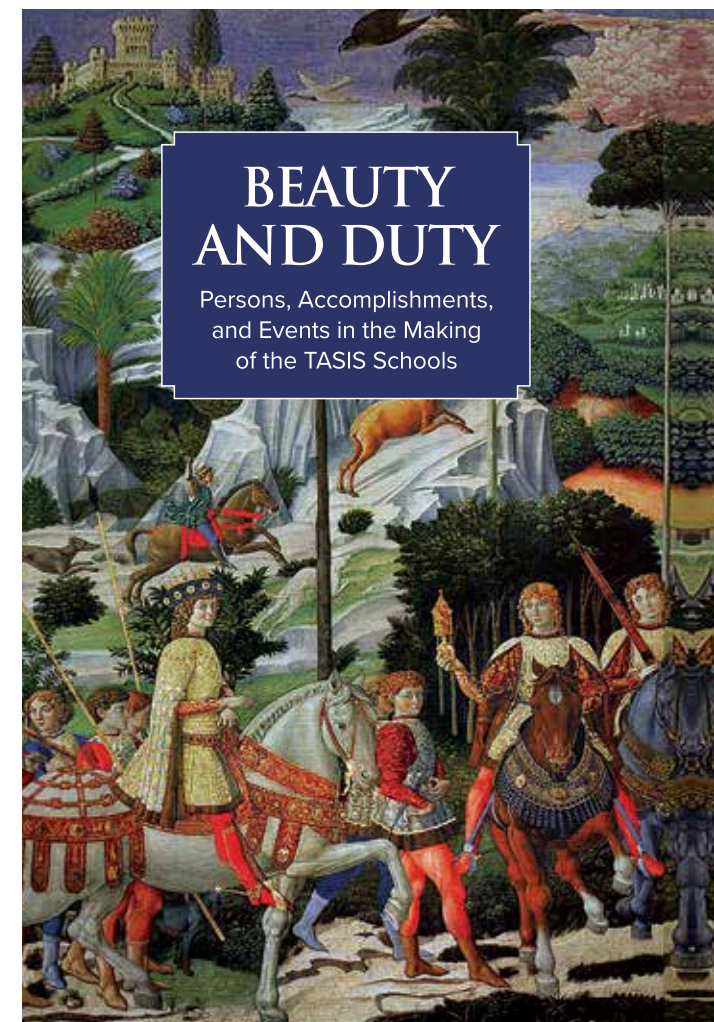
17. BEAUTY AND DUTY, LOYALTY, AND LONG-TERM FACULTY RETIREES

BEAUTY AND DUTY: PERSONS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND EVENTS IN THE MAKING OF THE TESIS SCHOOLS

Big anniversaries often bring contemplation and veneration of accomplishments, setbacks, and legacies. In 2022, TESIS published a volume of essays celebrating a true TESIS legend, Fernando Gonzalez, on the occasion of his fiftieth year with the TESIS organization.

Beauty and Duty: Persons, Accomplishments, and Events in the Making of the TESIS Schools is a set of essays solicited from long-term or prominent TESIS figures or alumni. Fernando is given pride of place in the volume, with words from 20 contributors about a man who has been one of the most important figures in shaping the TESIS Schools.

The second section includes essays and tributes in honor of Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63. Section three consists of essays by major TESIS personalities who have given their lives to making Mrs. Fleming's dreams into reality. Also included is a final eulogy to Horst Dürschmidt by Mark Aeschliman and a series of essays about three benevolent alumni whose generosity is continuing to shape the TESIS schools: Jan Opsahl '68, Ferit Şahenk '83, and Curtis McGraw Webster '75.



BEAUTY AND DUTY

Persons, Accomplishments, and Events in the Making of the TESIS Schools

LOYALTY: A TASIS LIFETIME

By Fernando Gonzalez, 2022

As I approach my 50th year with TASIS, I reflect fondly on my many wonderful memories and challenges that changed a one-year leave of absence from Harvard Design School in 1972/73 into a lifelong experience. Without question TASIS transformed my life and presented me with opportunities most people can only dream of having. TASIS and Mrs. Fleming defined my life and that of my family, for which I am eternally grateful.

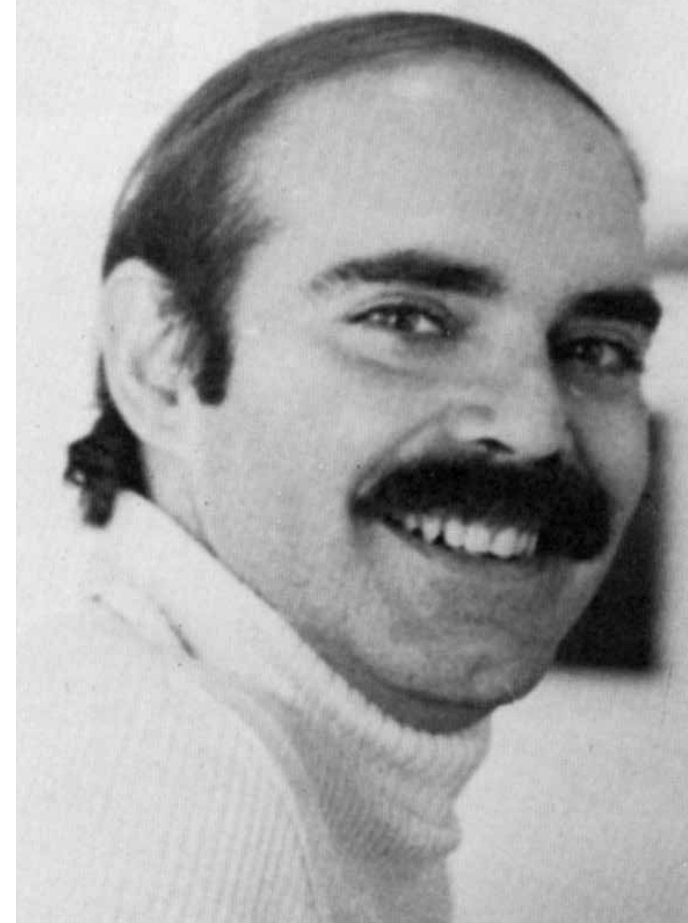
It would take an entire book to describe what TASIS has meant to me over the past 48 years, but I will share some highlights and insights which will hopefully explain why my commitment and love for TASIS has remained steadfast throughout my lengthy career. Perhaps in doing so, I will also touch on some of your own experiences which made TASIS special for you.

While teaching art at Phillips Academy, my Andover classmate Topper Lynn, who was the TASIS Admissions Director, visited and spoke to me about the possibility of teaching art in Europe. I was intrigued but was about to begin my architecture graduate program at Harvard. A year later, a contract arrived in the mail with a handwritten note from Mrs. Fleming, whom I had never met, saying, “I have heard such high praise from a close friend that I am offering you employment at The American School in Switzerland as Chairman of the Art Department for the next academic year. I want you to create the finest art program of any school in Europe.”

Thus began my love affair with MCF who became my second mother, mentor, and inspiration even after her death in 2009. Even today I think of what she would do before making a decision.

The opportunity to build an art program from scratch and spend a year traveling in Europe to see firsthand the great works I had studied in art history was too great a temptation. Furthermore, my Design School instructors strongly encouraged me to take a year off, advising me that it would only strengthen my background in architecture. I had spent a summer traveling in Europe and fell in love with Italy. During my senior year at college, I decided to study Italian, where I met my future wife. When I told Mrs. Fleming that I would be bringing my fiancée to Lugano, she suggested that it would be inappropriate to live together in a boarding school environment and “strongly recommended” that we get married. A teaching contract for my soon-to-be wife followed and TASIS became our honeymoon. Little did I know at the time that Mrs. Fleming’s vision of “Europe as a classroom” was about to become my own.

My first visit to the Lugano campus two days after my wedding was a huge disappointment. Not only was the campus in pieces from having combined the Vezia and the Montagnola campuses into one, but with two weeks left before the start of school, there was no way I thought the campus would be ready. Secondly, the art facilities which I was supposed to convert into the best art program in Europe were in the absolute worst location on campus and would not work for the program I had in mind. I soon learned my



second lesson from Mrs. Fleming: “Do not take no for an answer!” Upon sharing my concerns with the headmaster, he said that he was not in charge of campus developments and that I would have to discuss it with Mrs. Fleming. An appointment was set for the following day which I approached with great trepidation, not knowing whether I would become the shortest term employee in TASIS history. However, her charm immediately put me at ease and when she asked me to make the drinks, including her beloved Old Fashioned, which I had no idea how to prepare, she said, “Young man, anyone who is going to work for me has to be able to make an Old Fashioned!” I was amused many years later when this anecdote was included in the musical about her life, *MCF: What a Life!*



Before long I was absorbed in her fascinating world and soon she knew my entire life story and that of my family, in which she took genuine interest. This was a crash course in MCF 101: her ability to connect with people, from a corporate CEO to a maid, by making them feel like the most important person in the world, is legendary. Over the years, I often marvelled at her ability to motivate people by making them think her ideas were theirs.

Our conversation finally led to the purpose of the meeting when she said, “Now, what can I do for you?” When I explained that my plans for the art department would have to be curtailed and that the art facilities were not adequate to realize her dream, she replied



Lynn Fleming Aeschliman, Fernando Gonzalez, Michael Aeschliman, and Gianni Patuzzo at the opening of TASIS Portugal

immediately, “That will not do...let’s take a walk.” Within 10 minutes of touring the campus to show her a cramped ski storage closet which was to become a photo lab and the back end of a temporary prefab building with paper thin walls that was converted to an art studio, Mrs. Fleming understood my concerns immediately.

By the end of the tour, the art studio was relocated to the lovely brick vaulted ground floor of Coach House which was flooded with natural light where student art work could be easily displayed at the heart of the campus. The new photo lab took over a section of the chemistry prep room and a nearby bathroom was added as the film developing room. I was stunned that what would, in most schools, take months to change had been done in a day. I quickly realized this was a woman who knew what she wanted and did not hesitate to make it happen. I also was convinced that MCF would

serve as an outstanding role model and provide challenges and opportunities of a lifetime.

Despite antagonizing both the math and science departments by stealing their spaces on my first day on the job, I soon became part of an extremely close-knit team of extraordinary educators who were adventuresome, dedicated, talented, hard-working, and above all loved their subject matter and working closely with students. Many of them have remained my closest friends over the years. Above all else, it has been the quality of the faculty and the relationships we have built that have made my career at TASIS so rewarding. It is the special community we built, along with diverse and motivated students who were willing to be challenged. Many of the students from my earliest TASIS years have stayed in touch and become friends. And my two sons, who are TASIS England graduates, are the best reflection of what a TASIS education represents.

One of the highlights in my early years was the addition of an architecture course to the curriculum which enabled me to take a class of 12 students to the South of France to design an abandoned hamlet of six 18th century buildings into holiday homes. I fell in love with the Ardèche and Les Tapies, which, over the years, I purchased and restored into an artists’ community. For the past 15 summers I have co-directed the very successful Les Tapies Arts and Architecture Program alongside TASIS England master teacher John Smalley. Its success is based on MCF’s formula for starting a school: find a beautiful property, attract the best faculty who will serve as role models and have a passion for teaching, create a challenging program of studies and activities which will stretch the students, and sprinkle these ingredients with a generous dose of tender loving care to nurture and bring out the best in the students. I particularly enjoy the opportunity of being back in the classroom again and working closely with students which brings my TASIS career full circle.

I have been fortunate to have been involved in helping to create new TASIS schools around Europe, including TASIS England, TASIS Greece, TASIS Cyprus, TASIS France, as well as TASIS Dorado in Puerto Rico. The latest venture, TASIS Portugal, is proving to be my greatest challenge because converting a commercial shopping center into a beautiful TASIS campus in less than a year is a huge undertaking. I once asked Mrs. Fleming if she had any regrets in her long, successful life and she responded immediately: “I only regret the things I did not do, not the ones I did.” I have tried to emulate this positive approach to life in my own career.



My TASIS experience has been a richly rewarding journey full of opportunities, challenges, friendships, successes and, yes, failures, which have made me grow and reach for the next goal. When I asked Mrs. Fleming at the age of 92 for her blessing in starting TASIS Dorado, she said: “Fernando, if it is in your heart you must do it and, if I was 10 years younger, I would do it with you!” It was this *joie de vivre* that made working with MCF such an inspiration and a privilege to have played a part in helping her realize her dreams, which often became my own.

Fernando Gonzalez has been associated with TASIS since 1972 in several instructional, administrative, and executive roles. A graduate of Phillips Academy Andover, he holds a B.A. from Harvard University in visual studies and studied architecture at the Harvard School of Design. He was chairman of the art department at TASIS, was administrative director of the TASIS Schools for 20 years, served as interim headmaster of TASIS England in 2004, and has also served on the governing boards of all TASIS schools, including the Puerto Rican school TASIS Dorado and TASIS Portugal, both of which he founded, and the TASIS Foundation.

A DEVOTION TO TASIS

by Lyle Rigg, February 2022, excerpted from
an essay written for *Beauty and Duty*



Throughout my association with TASIS, I have had many opportunities to observe Fernando in meetings and to work with him on boards. I admire his ability to present thoughtful arguments not only on building projects and campus developments, but also on other important aspects of school life including academics, the arts, athletics, and overall school culture. Throughout these meetings, I have been impressed by Fernando's willingness to listen to and to consider other arguments. Fernando also helps to ensure that the TASIS mission and Mrs. Fleming's vision remain at the forefront of planning for the future.

During his illustrious career with TASIS it is impossible to calculate how many times Fernando has “stepped up” for the good of the organization. Fernando has always been there to help out: even if it meant agreeing to serve as interim headmaster for a year while also performing many of his other daunting TASIS duties!

Throughout my years as head of school, I was reassured knowing that I always could count on Fernando's help—even if and when the situation looked bleak. Yes, Fernando was often at his best when things were most challenging. Over the years TASIS has benefited greatly because Fernando seems to thrive on challenges.

Although the development of school facilities is probably viewed as Fernando's greatest contribution to TASIS throughout the past fifty years, I think there are many reasons to offer a different argument. Yes, without question, Fernando has helped create some of the most beautiful school campuses anywhere. Nevertheless, as he reflected back in 2005, “No matter how good your buildings and your facilities and your programs are, they are not going to be good enough. It's important to get the right people...” Fernando continued, “TASIS has attracted people who also believed in the vision that you can do things with a lot of hard work and some inspiration. One of the things that I have always enjoyed is that we have attracted wonderful people. We give people tremendous opportunities, but tremendous responsibilities too.”

COMMUNITY TRIBUTES TO FERNANDO GONZALEZ ON 50 YEARS WITH TASIS

Yes, it's the people who make the difference—and Fernando is at the top of the list! Fortunately for TASIS, Fernando's devotion to beauty, duty, and people throughout the past fifty years has done much to create some of the most outstanding schools in the world.

The 50-year career of Fernando Gonzalez with the TASIS organization has been a remarkable history of dedication, wise counsel, a tireless work ethic, exemplary management skills, a no-quit attitude: all the while, throughout this up and down journey, displaying an unflappable disposition. No school organization could have been as fortunate as TASIS, or for that matter no business either, to have 50 years of talented contribution, dedication, and service as the TASIS organization has had from Fernando. May he soldier on forever. —Tom Fleming, Chairman of the TASIS Foundation Board.

Fernando represents many of Mrs. Fleming's values in his life. First and foremost, he is a teacher who loves to share his passion and creative talents in art, architecture, construction and beauty—which he has done in various forms for five decades ... Fernando challenges the status quo as did Mrs. Fleming. Standing still

is falling behind. The physical environment is important. Quality and beauty matter. Challenge, question, design. He does all three well. Thank you, Fernando—an amazing 50 years. You are not finished yet! —Jay and Heather Wyper

It is obvious that the way TASIS has developed, from the early years until now, has been shaped in no small degree by Fernando's significant involvement in a number of major areas. And it follows that TASIS is what it is today because Fernando is not just an architect, designer, builder, photographer, or teacher, and not merely all of those at once; he's an artist, who is, as I understand it, someone in love with beauty.—David Jepson

CONSTANTS AND VARIABLES: TWO IMPORTANT APPOINTMENTS

Prof. Michael D. Aeschliman, Ph.D
on Bill Eichner and David Jepson

TASIS has always been an exciting place, and in its early years under Mrs. Fleming perhaps something of a three-ring circus, with lots of variables and comparatively few constants. The original pioneer-founder herself, MCF used to ask teachers in a talk at the faculty banquet at the outset of each year, “Will you be a TASIS person?” She probably meant in those early days whether the individual teachers would have the adaptability, energy, and multitude



David Jepson and Bill Eichner

of skills and competencies necessary to thrive at TASIS and serve the School's mission—or develop them. Among the challenges in those days and since were the number of variables in the dynamic life of the School: different languages, different nationalities, different curricula, different academic-year and summer programs, and different talents necessary for teaching, coaching, tour-guiding, residential life, extra-curricular activities, administrative responsibilities.

Some people burned out at TASIS, and departed, but others thrived and stayed, and among the longest-serving “TASIS people” have been **Bill Eichner** and **David Jepson**, both of whom have been recently promoted to important new positions, Bill as Director of Institutional Advancement at TASIS and

David as Director of Studies for both TASIS and TASIS England. Both men have extensive experience in TASIS schools, going back in each case a third of a century. Both worked closely with longtime Headmaster Lyle Rigg for decades; indeed, both Lyle and David started their TASIS careers at TASIS England in 1979, and Lyle hired Bill in 1983.

Bill Eichner was educated at Ohio University and Syracuse University, including the Florence Fellowship at the Syracuse University Program in Florence, where he did an M.A. in Art History. He also completed an M.A. in Teaching and Curriculum with Michigan State University. He started out at the American School of Florence, and subsequently he and his wife Melissa have served in various capacities at TASIS schools in Cyprus and France as well

as Montagnola: Bill taught Art History, served with Melissa in residence, was Academic Dean for a decade and subsequently Director of Admissions for many years, becoming not only a professional collaborator with Mrs. Fleming and her daughter Lynn Fleming Aeschliman but also a close personal friend and adviser. Having recruited Emily McKee to work with him in Admissions, Bill has been gratified at her and her husband KC's contributions to TASIS, and Emily now takes Bill's old title as Director of Admissions. His new title, Director of Institutional Advancement, gives formal recognition to the fact that for many years Bill and his wife Melissa have been increasingly important “constants” in the whirling TASIS world of exciting but sometimes disconcerting variables, innovations, growth, and change. Chairman of the Board Lynn Aeschliman has increasingly felt the need for Bill's indispensable role at TASIS to be recognized by the School community, students, parents, and alumni. As Director of Admissions Bill presided over an enormous increase in the enrollment of the School, including the success of the elementary school and the accompanying growth of the day-student population. Bill's and Melissa's son James '07 is a TASIS alumnus.

David Jepson served most of his TASIS career at TASIS England, to which he returns now as Director of Studies for both schools, resident there but visiting Montagnola on a twice-monthly basis. David was educated at Wheaton College (Illinois), the University of London, Boston College, and the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and has taught English, Latin, philosophy, and computer programming

in both schools. He was one of the key figures on the TASIS England faculty and staff, serving as Academic Dean and Head of the Upper School as well as chief publications writer for both TASIS schools and Director, with TASIS veteran theater director Kay Hamblin, of the “ShakespeareXperience” summer program at TASIS England. David returned to TASIS England twice from high-ranking administrative positions at schools in the US, in upstate New York and in San Francisco, proving himself to be a true “TASIS person.” Recruited anew by Interim Headmaster and old friend and colleague Lyle Rigg to help him in his recent two-year tenure as TASIS Headmaster, 2015–2017, David profoundly helped focus and coordinate the School's academic efforts, also serving as both a senior colleague and model for younger TASIS administrators and teachers. Along with Lyle's assembly speeches, David's regular written essays on educational issues for faculty have given guidance and inspiration, as well as knowledge of the TASIS aims and ethos that he and Lyle have done so much to make realities in their intertwined professional lives and careers. Two of David's children attended TASIS England, both going on to study at Harvard after graduation. [Visit www.tasis.ch/Jepson to read his perceptive and eloquent reflections on education and TASIS—ed.]

TASIS Board Chairman Lynn Aeschliman has felt increasingly the need to insure that the impetus, trajectory, and momentum of the TASIS approach to education, developed also by the unique personalities, styles, and contributions of the people who have most sympathized and helped to shape it with

their unique contributions, will not be lost. “Around and around the world is whirled, / And perhaps because she is so whirled she is so called,” and the excitement of liberty and innovation, the newness of the world to every new student and teacher, and to every new generation, is part of the beauty of the world, perhaps especially of the world of TASIS. But an educational institution also needs steady direction, ballast for the long sail in shifting seas, and clear-eyed, far-seeing officers and educators who know the longer-term values, virtues, and accomplishments that good schools should serve: constants, not just variables. Mrs. Fleming liked to quote the saying, “Times change; values don’t,” and along with their many competent colleagues of dedicated goodwill, Bill Eichner and David Jepson help to assure that the TASIS schools survive and prosper as instruments of the good and the true.

from TASIS Today, 2017

THE TASIS AMBASSADOR: BILL EICHNER

Today, the Lugano Admissions & Development office has a team of fourteen talented and creative people. This is a lot different from when I entered Admissions in 1997. I am amazed at what they all accomplish. They are doing all the hard work and heavy lifting.

TASIS has developed its program and campus quite a bit since I joined in ’83, and also since I entered Admissions nearly 30 years ago. Enrollment has more than doubled. This is due to the great team we have in place, plus the establishment of the Elementary School by Lynn twenty years ago, which fueled day student enrollment.

So with such a talented crew in admissions and communications, you might wonder what’s left for me to do, and how I spend my time.

Reunions & Alumni

Today I find myself focusing more and more on the things I enjoy most; in particular, alumni relations and development. I see hundreds of alumni every year. Just this summer I’ve seen well over 100, with four class reunions on campus plus dozens of individual visits.

I’m still involved in the lives of many of my former students and advisees. We’ve all kept in touch since graduation (or expulsion as the case may be!). It’s especially rewarding to celebrate with them the milestones in their lives. Over the years and through development work I’ve come to know all the active alumni since the founding of the school. So I know the alumni from the 50s, 60s and 70s if they’ve remained active.

TASIS has a unique past, which points to some of our distinctives. And my own past, both prior to TASIS and the 42 years I’ve been with the School, very much inform who I am, what I’ve learned, my perspective on education, and what the School has given back to me.



LONG-TERM FACULTY STARS RETIRE

MARK AESCHLIMAN – 45 YEARS



In over four decades at TASIS, Mark was frequently cited as a favorite teacher. His thoughtful, gentle manner and extensive knowledge encouraged students to think in ways they hadn't before contemplated, inspiring countless students to go into artistic or academic careers. Former students have become high-profile museum curators, owners of successful branding and design agencies, proficient artists, and award-winning architects.

Mark is both visibly moved and a bit embarrassed by accolades. He is a few months into retirement and seems slightly dazzled at this big life change. And while he is nostalgic, he also seems ready to focus on his family and himself, to expand his study of art, architecture, and objects, to read and write more. Mark is a lifelong learner. Throughout his life he has aimed to be a better teacher, thinker, and person, and this will undoubtedly continue despite leaving the hum of the daily classroom.

For generations of TASIS alumni, Mark's learned perspective and challenging courses have inspired them and his impact remains today—as solid as the history he taught, as enlightening as a classroom conversation that piqued a student's lifelong passion for art, architecture, and design.

Student Tributes to Mark Aeschliman

.... His classes are some of my fondest memories from TASIS. Everytime I see a Jeff Koons monstrosity I think of those afternoon classes. I think about how we used to laugh about the 60 million-dollar Balloon Dog. I think about how grateful I am for Mr. A. I can genuinely say that

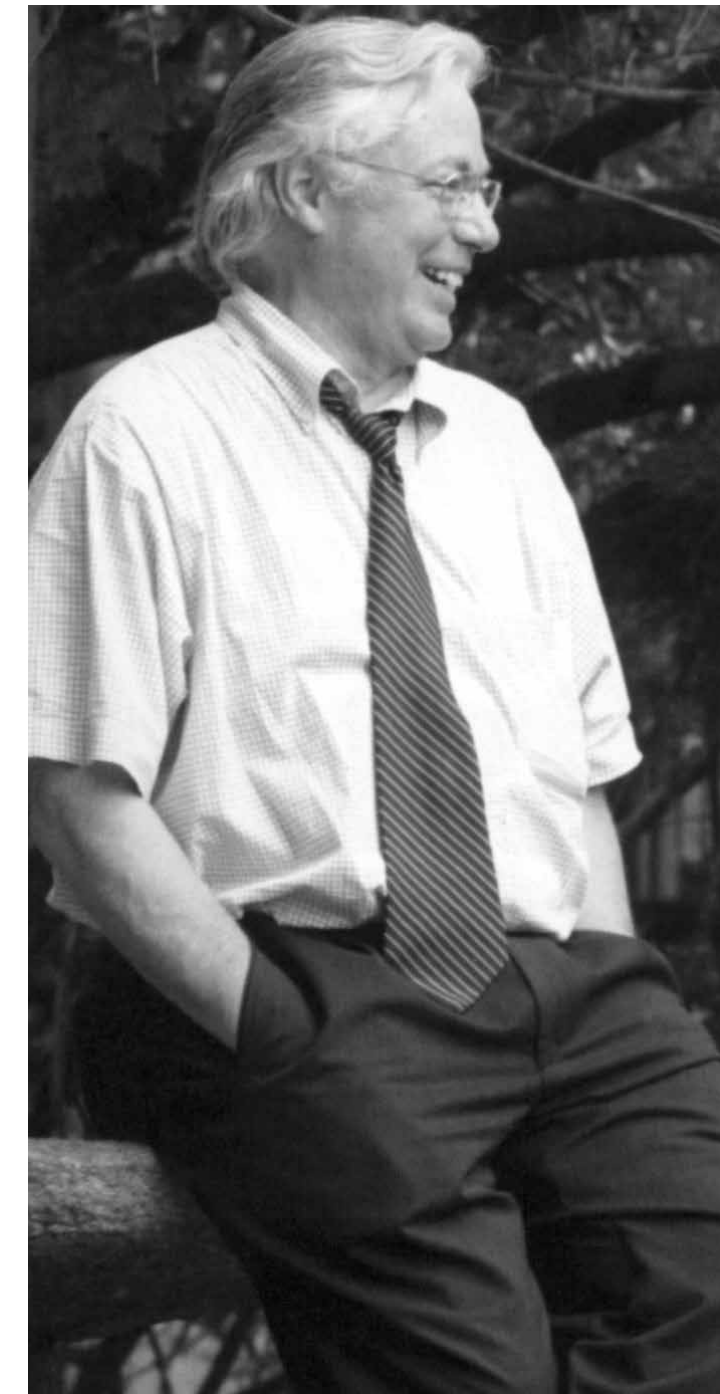
he changed my life. I feel lucky that I got to be his student. Mr. A didn't just teach me about art, he taught me how to love art. —Alex Gabriel '23

I remember in my final year at TASIS Mr. A once said, "You should go to AA [Architectural Association]. It is the most cutting-edge school of architecture in the world." And so I did. As he has recently retired, I have recently graduated from the M. Arch. course, which completed my five-year studies at the Architectural Association. I am incredibly grateful for spending three years in Mr. A's studio and can attribute my success in the field to him. This text could never encompass the true magnitude of the impact that Mr. A had on me, and for that—thank you! His knowledge and passion for Architecture will forever stay with me. —Diana Dulina '18

Mr. Aeschliman's classes were a sanctuary of creativity and learning. One of my fondest memories is how he encouraged us to sketch freely during architecture field trips and lectures—allowing us to incorporate words, colors, and ideas without limits. This freedom not only nurtured our artistic expression but also deepened our understanding of architectural concepts. His openness to our individual styles and interests made every session enriching and inspiring. I am forever grateful for these experiences, as they shaped my approach to architecture and ignited a lifelong passion for creative exploration. Mr. Aeschliman's impact on my journey is immeasurable, and I carry his lessons with me in every sketch, project, and endeavor. —Yulia Gusarova '12

from TASIS Today, 2014

HORST DÜRRSCHMIDT – 32 YEARS



“To be an artist is a way of life,” Horst Dürschmidt says, musing about his three decades of teaching TASIS students. “The photograph is not the only important thing. The process, how it is created, is just as important.” This may seem odd, coming from someone who transformed so many lives teaching them photography. But after interviews with dozens of TASIS artists, Horst’s philosophy is what stuck with them most. Yes, he taught them techniques, and nomenclature, but most importantly, Horst taught his students how to see. “Visual awareness is what is important,” Horst says. “The art of selective seeing, of expressing yourself. That, in combination with finding what form works with the content, is what sets artists apart.”

Tributes to Horst Dürschmidt

“Through photography, Mr. Dürschmidt taught me the importance of observing, prior to creating. This has influenced my entire career in design, as I learned to observe light, shadow, forms and depths, and to understand the meaning and history of the scene, prior to any creative action. This way of thinking also applies to management as it is imperative to understand the full ‘image’ before making any strategic decisions. Through his photography classes, Mr. Dürschmidt taught us the invaluable essence of thinking, rather than just the techniques and chemistry.”—Ken Luis Tobe ’90

“At graduation, Horst presented me with the photography award. I have used skills taught by Horst to have photographs published in various magazines. I now sit surrounded by photographs of children and sand dunes

hanging on the walls, taken in Angola, Namibia, and Malawi while working in Africa. Taking photographs with Horst and living on the Collina d’Oro instilled into my life a genuine, deep-seated love for wandering off well-traveled pathways and stalking images.”—Tom Mullen ’81

Imparting not only knowledge but skill and self-worth is the aim of any virtuous educator, and Horst was one of the finest. He sought to challenge your assumptions without being adversarial; he taught the basics without being condescending; he embodied passion without obsession, and all while never lacking in compassion or sincerity. Horst showed that anyone could peer into the pentaprism, off of a mirror and through the lens to extract the essence of our world. I will be forever grateful for having known Horst as my advisor, my teacher, and ultimately my friend. That which I learned from him can not be quantified or described, but nor can it be forgotten.—Luca Stickley ’07

He taught us to see the beauty in the ordinary.—Ashley Walhaug Garrison ’02

from TASIS Today, 2012

PAUL GREENWOOD – 42 YEARS

“I’ve pretty much done the things on my bucket list,” says Paul Greenwood. Anyone who has been on campus since 1978 has undoubtedly had a conversation with Paul about something fascinating that he has done—be it discovering a new climbing gorge, finding a secret place for off-piste skiing, or, more recently, flying a plane.



Paul began his TASIS tenure as Dean of Students, then Assistant Headmaster. He taught both mathematics and physics and had a stint as Math Department Chair as well.

Travel has been a lifelong passion for Paul. He has particularly enjoyed the smaller trips with students: rock-climbing, skiing, mountain biking, scuba diving, hiking in the Himalayas, and visiting teams of research scientists come to mind. He took students to China, Egypt, India, Nepal, Russia, South Africa, and the Maldives, in addition to countless European and Swiss destinations.

Student Tributes to Paul Greenwood

Mr. Greenwood—or Paul, as I call him—entered my life when I was just a teenager. He was my Physics teacher and helped me achieve goals that as an IB student seemed extremely hard. He has always been exceptionally available and understanding and always pushed me to accomplish my best. Throughout the years, Paul became a friend and shared exceptional moments with me and my family. We spent quality time in front of a cup of tea, we went rock climbing, and even spent Christmas together in 2015. Paul will always find a friend in me. —Alice Landoni ’11

“Science is a process, it’s a way of thinking,” was one of Mr. Greenwood’s great philosophies that has infused my life with both curiosity and inspiration, while taking his physics courses at TASIS, and well beyond. When I began as one of Mr. Greenwood’s physics students in 2006, new to TASIS and far from home, little did I know that I would be so blessed to have a teacher/mentor/ friend that would shine a beaming light of understanding, while also helping to establish in me a continuous awe and wide imagination for the unknown. He started me down a path that would lead to my future, a Ph.D. in materials physics (2018) and a career as a research scientist. I was always impressed by his passion for testing Newton’s laws of motion through activities like biking, running, swimming, and most recently flying planes! To me, TASIS only has ONE physics teacher, an ideal that I will bring with me throughout my life as a scientist and adventurer, Paul Greenwood. —Caroline Gorham ’07

from TASIS Today, 2020

NILDA LUCCHINI – 35 YEARS

“Very early in my relationship with Nilda, she made it clear to me that she doesn’t work for headmasters. She works for TASIS.” — Christopher Nikoloff, May 2020

For over half of her life, Nilda Lucchini has worked tirelessly to make TASIS a better school. Her official roles as teacher, Modern Language Department Chair, Day Student



Dean, Associate Academic Dean, Curriculum Coordinator, and Accreditation Coordinator are only a part of her contributions to TASIS. Nilda was a trusted colleague, source of wise counsel, and strong advocate for students throughout her 35 years at the School.

Student Tributes to Nilda Lucchini

Ms. Lucchini was named by us as “a TASIS institution” around the school, with her radiant smile for everyone and her little heels tip-toeing around, always asking “Is everyone ok here? Shouldn’t you be in class?” She knew what students needed and her door was always open for a chat or a pep talk. Thank you, Ms. Lucchini, because without you I would not be the person I am now—and especially I would not speak perfect Nicaraguan Spanish! —Margherita Conti ’11

Mrs. Lucchini was truly one of the most remarkable teachers. She had the ability to be endlessly warm and caring, as well as earning the utmost respect from all of us students. I always knew I could turn to her, and I also never wanted to let her down. This is a wonderful quality in a teacher as it made me go the extra step when otherwise I would have given up. I am so lucky to have been one of her students, and I know that everybody at TASIS who had the fortune of learning from her feels the same way. —Jack Savoretti ’01

Mrs. Lucchini is one of the teachers I remember most fondly from my time at TASIS, and, to this day, she’s the one who comes to mind when people ask me “How come your Spanish is so good?” —Tomaso Grossi ’10

from TASIS Today, 2020

HOWARD STICKLEY – 39 YEARS

In his career of nearly four decades with TASIS, Howard held a number of roles, spanning from teacher to department chair to administrator to IB Coordinator and College Counselor. Many alumni will remember him as the environmental guy before “eco” was trendy. Howard’s interest in protecting the environment dates to his childhood, when the London fog would mix with pollution, creating thick grey smog. He started Environmental Awareness Week in the late 90s to help the community begin to consider the consequences of their actions. Events such as Toad Patrol, all-green dress code day, presentations during assembly, and an Environmental Knowledge Bowl were popular events. But perhaps the most lasting influence Howard has had is with his trips to Africa with students.

Student Tributes to Howard Stickley

During my three years at TASIS, Mr. Stickley was the single most influential teacher I had. It was as a result of one of Mr Stickley’s trips to Africa that I found my passion for conservation and sustainability, and it gave me not only a new outlook but also a life path. Two years later, when I thought it would be impossible to receive an offer from the university I wished to attend, his words of encouragement and his support were vital. It was a luxury to meet him in London a few years later, when he was continuing this legacy with another group of students. Oh, and let’s not forget his shortbread! —Ana Muñoz ’09



When I signed up for Mountaineering Skills with Mr. Stickley, I never thought that this courteous and soft-spoken gentleman would take me on some of the most thrilling adventures I would experience at TASIS. During our group escapades I felt the unparalleled adrenaline rush of rock climbing in Bellinzona, and had my hair stand on end when I heard a glacier crack. But above all, I learnt of the bliss of simply sitting in silence on a snowy mountain summit. His understated leadership gave me not only the confidence to tackle any mountaineering challenge, but also taught me that staying calm in the face of fear is the best way to overcome perils of the everyday kind. Quite a few life lessons for one afternoon activity. Thank you, Mr. Stickley, for giving my education so much more than knowledge! —Jeanette Del Valle '86

How do you say thank you to the person who changed the trajectory of your life? Such a lofty statement might sound like hyperbole, but that happened when I joined you on the service-learning trip to Africa in the summer of 2007. Without it, I likely wouldn't have pursued a career in international development, traveled extensively across the continent, or called it home for eight wonderful years. As a teacher, your ultimate gift to me was your willingness to share your knowledge of the region, pushing the walls of the classroom to the plains of the Kalahari, the swamps of the Okavango, and the mouth of the Rift Valley. It left such a positive, indelible impression on me, and I can't thank you enough for being my first guide to the continent. Hopefully, our paths will cross again in the shadows of Table Mountain. —Erica Ryan '08

from TASIS Today, 2020

CYNTHIA WHISENANT – 32 YEARS

Cynthia maintained a simple, solid traditional set of curricula which provided significant literature study for TASIS graduates. She worked to counsel and place students in courses best suited to their skills and talents. In our accreditation reports, the English Department was always commended for being a department dedicated to the 'diagnose and teach' approach in each class, given the fluid nature of the student body. And not surprisingly, Cynthia got immense satisfaction from teaching. "That sparkle in the eye revealing something is in the process of being learned also signals developing personal confidence and a feeling that education is taking place rather than gathering content. Along with that special sparkle is that grin when something has really been grasped," she said.

Longtime colleague Bill Eichner writes, "For so many alumni, senior English with Ms. Whisenant was essential to their TASIS experience. For many, she was the teacher who knew them the best and taught them the most, and indeed, she knew them all well, and taught them all so much. She is in regular contact with so many alumni, by phone and email, and now through Facebook. Her students and advisees really do remain such for life. Years after graduation alumni still look back to her for guidance and reassurance."

Student Tributes to Cynthia Whisenant

The first day of class Ms. Whisenant said, "Every educated person should know..." At that point I truly thought I was lost, because I had no idea what she was talking about! As



time went on at TASIS and in life I often think about that phrase (with a smile) as it takes on new meaning to me each time. Thank you, Ms. Whisenant. You have had a large impact in my life. —Saeed Ali Al Shamsi '92

After a long day of tedious physics formulas and strenuous calculus problems, Ms. Whisenant's English class was more than a breath of fresh air. With her warm smiles, cheerful greeting, and laid-back classroom setting, she made a hard week melt away and a world of beautiful literature and poetry consume our minds. By arranging our desks in a tight circle, Ms. Whisenant's desk included, an intimate and comfortable classroom atmosphere emerged and ideas flowed readily and potently. Ms. Whisenant supports, motivates, and makes every student feel special and important. I was honored to have her as my teacher. —Blair Darrell '12

By interacting with and observing us in classes, she understood our true characters and saw the strengths and potential each one of us possessed. She was confident in her students, and without even knowing it, she would subtly transfer this confidence to us, shaping us into more certain adults, aware of our unique qualities and capabilities. Ms. Whisenant always expressed that it was a privilege to teach. Well, it was a privilege to have been taught and influenced by such a remarkable woman. —Marika Anastassiadis '07

from TASIS Today, 2012

18. LEGACIES: OUR MOST GENEROUS DONORS

TASIS would not be the school we are today without donations from five remarkable alumni whose foresight and generosity have left an indelible mark.

Curtis Webster '75 has been donating annually since graduation to celebrate the Class of 1975 and also served on the Board for many years.

Because of John E. Palmer '64, TASIS has the vibrant Palmer Cultural Center, home to performances, exhibitions, and other events. Jan Opsahl '68 envisioned a student program to transform lives, and the Opsahl Global Service Program has already impacted hundreds of students and thousands of those less fortunate (see page 83 for more information).

The generosity of Ferit Şahenk '83 has resulted in the Şahenk Fine Arts Center in honor of two of his favorite teachers, Mark Aeschliman and Horst Dürrschmidt.

Finally, the crown jewel of Collina Alta was made possible because of Donald MacDermid '61. His love of music and the performing arts will be forever celebrated in the new MacDermid Hall and Music Center.

Read on to learn more about these men who have forever changed TASIS.

THE M. CRIST FLEMING LEGACY SOCIETY

We often talk about Mrs. Fleming's legacy, how her impact has expanded beyond what perhaps she even thought possible. The M. Crist Fleming Legacy Society extends this reach to include our extended School community. All bequests, no matter the size, will make a difference to TASIS students.

A number of vehicles for giving are available, from gifts of corporate stock to life insurance policies to setting up a Charitable Remainder Trust. All are tax-deductible and will play a significant role in the future of TASIS.

from *TASIS Today* 2024

TASIS Legacy Society members as of 2026

Paulise & Rick Bell PG '65
Christian Draz '70
Maude Glore PG '67
Richard Jensen '73
Helen Kochenderfer '75
Ned Lynch PG '66
Donald MacDermid '61
Nicholas Major PG '68
Dieter Metzger '74
Nick & Maggie Miles
John E. Palmer '64
Kirk Pillow '85

“IT’S ALL ABOUT WHAT WE DO FOR OTHERS.” —ZAREH BEZIKIAN, TASIS FATHER

TASIS is thrilled to announce the newest campus extension project of Collina Alta, the Annie Bezikian Elementary School Center. Named for two extraordinary women, the complex will include nine classrooms, veranda dining, and a playground, and will also finance raising the roof and extensive renovation to the current Belvedere building. We are deeply grateful for TASIS alumna parent Zareh Bezikian's generosity, which will ensure the legacy of his beloved mother and very precious daughter impacts lives for generations to come.

Legacy takes on a deep meaning in the Armenian Bezikian family. It has been this way for as long as Zareh can remember, and he believes it will be that way in perpetuity. “These two words, legacy and Bezikian, are married together forever,” Zareh says.

Annie Bezikian '24 told Zareh countless times how grateful she was to be at TASIS, how Zareh could not have made a better choice for her. She has said she wants to send her own children to TASIS. “Annie's happiness and her personality are the greatest successes of my life.” TASIS played a huge role in this. “I believe in the School and what it has done for

my daughter and for our family legacy. And I believe in ending the cycle of eleven years of my daughter's life by giving back to this school.”

Zareh's legacy, and what he hopes he and his daughter can inspire in others, is the importance of philanthropy and sharing good fortune with others. For Zareh, legacy isn't what you own, it's what you are, how you make others feel, how you help others succeed. “People won't remember what you possessed. They will remember that you were there for them,” he says. “Consider the way you are living in the world, and how you will be remembered. That is your legacy.”

The Bezikian family has a long history of philanthropy, including the Aram Bezekian museum in Lebanon, Our Lady of Armenia Annie Bezikian Youth Center in Armenia, and assisting Armenian families in Lebanon. In 2025, Annie and Zareh Bezikian sponsored the building of the Bezikian Convention Center in Lebanon.

The Annie Bezikian Elementary School Center bears the name of two women who have had a profound impact on Zareh's life. His beloved mother, Annie Bezikian (September 19, 1944–March 28, 2024), dedicated her life to her family and taught Zareh so much about life. His very precious daughter Annie is now attending the University of Southern California.

from *TASIS Today* 2024

JOHN E. PALMER: AN UNPRECEDENTED GIFT

Bequest from John E. Palmer '64
will transform the School.



Before TASIS alumnus John Palmer died in April 2007, he told Mrs. Fleming that he intended to remember the School in his will, but we never dreamed he would pass away so unexpectedly soon or that his generosity would be so profound and enduring. The over \$2.5 million that John left to TASIS is a remarkable legacy that will impact the School in many positive ways.

\$1,000,000 of the proceeds of the estate will go toward the Capital Campaign for the new Performing Arts building, enabling TASIS to begin construction on the aptly named John E. Palmer Theater next spring. The groundbreaking ceremony will take place during the 2nd annual Gala Benefit Dinner and Auction on Saturday, May 17, 2008.

The remainder will be used to help assure the financial security of the School in the future and will be used when unique opportunities to benefit the School and Faculty present themselves, such as scholarships, program enhancements, curriculum enrichment, faculty-life improvement, and career development.

John was an unassuming, gentle soul. He gave of himself through many charities during the course of his life and always fondly remembered the three years he spent at TASIS. His generosity is an inspiring example of the impact that an estate gift can have on the School. We are thrilled with the many opportunities his gift makes possible to help TASIS reach its greatest potential. Thoughts of “If only we could...” have become “Just think what we can do!”

from *TASIS Today*, Fall 2007

CURTIS MCGRAW WEBSTER: LIGHTING THE WAY

The pull of TASIS is decades-strong for Curtis McGraw Webster '75, who retired from the TASIS Board of Directors in 2022 after serving since its inception. He has shown remarkable vision, leadership, and commitment to TASIS and continues to be one of the School's most consistent and generous donors. We are very grateful to Curtis for sharing so much of his time and resources with our community.



Curtis first stepped onto the TASIS campus in 1966 when he and his family were visiting his half-sister Debby, who was attending TASIS. Less than a decade later, after attending the Princeton Day School and the Lawrenceville School, he found himself back at TASIS as a student.

Curtis was interested in how TASIS operated even when attending TASIS. He wanted to know why things were as they were, how the budgeting worked, and how and why decisions were made. Perhaps it was inevitable that Curtis would eventually be a member of the TASIS Board of Directors for nearly two decades and also become one of the School's most benevolent donors.

Since Curtis graduated, he has made an annual donation, always on behalf of the Class of '75. His generosity through the years has grown to total over a million dollars. He has always felt a sense of ownership towards TASIS. In the early 2000s, when he was approached by the development director, Dr. Frank Klein, Curtis concerned himself with how the School

was approaching development. He visited the campus to spend time with Dr. Klein and renew his relationship with Mrs. Fleming. At the time, the School was transferring ownership from proprietorship to the TASIS Foundation, and in 2005 Board Chair Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63 reached out to Curtis to be a founding member of the Board of Directors. Curtis graciously said yes.

From 2005 to 2021, Curtis and the Board helped steer TASIS through a number of transitions, world events, and even headmasters (Curtis served on several Head of School searches). And while Curtis doesn't connect the stewardship of his gifts with his time on the Board, his commitment of both time and money is worth celebrating. The work that the trustees of schools do is critical, and the hours that Curtis put in throughout the years have most certainly resulted in a more robust position for the School.

For Curtis to have a regular history with an institution and giving to it regularly for so many years is a testament to his belief in TASIS. One of the fascinating and unique points of the School is the dozens of nationalities and how the community faces world events as united global citizens. The coming together of personalities and cultural history results in a uniqueness that is unlike any other American boarding school, as TASIS is nurturing the future leaders of our planet. We are immeasurably grateful to Curtis for his exceptional commitment to TASIS, which has helped light the way for our School in ways that will echo for generations to come.

from *TASIS Today*, 2022

FERIT ŞAHENK

Inspiring Creativity
with a World-Class Art Center



Business leaders often cite creativity as fundamental to success, and Ferit F. Şahenk '83 found his creativity thanks to legendary TASIS photography teacher Horst Dürschmidt. Horst gave Ferit the Photography Award in 1983 for

his “exceptional talent, creativity, initiative, and seriousness of purpose.” These qualities, present in a teenage Ferit, can be traced throughout his professional life.

As one of Turkey’s most successful businessmen, Ferit has grown his family company thanks to hard work and an emphasis on positive relationships. He is married to Diane, whom he met in Boston while she attended Boston University. Their daughter Defne is a TASIS alumna, Class of 2016. His passion for the arts has become his legacy on the TASIS campus, where, thanks to an incredible donation of \$3 million, the Şahenk Arts Center inspires, challenges, and encourages young artists to push their creativity. The Şahenk Arts Center opened in 2012.

from the 2024 *Galazine*

ABOUT FERIT SAHENK '83

After graduating from TASIS in 1983 Ferit went on to earn his degree in Marketing and Human Resources from Boston College. He also is a graduate of the “Owner/President” Management Program at Harvard Business School. Ferit’s American educational repertoire has been instrumental in his business style and attitude, which echoes both American capitalism and a fierce respect and loyalty to the traditions of his native Turkey.

It seems Ferit knew his destiny even as a teenager. In 1983, TASIS teacher and advisor Mark Aeschliman wrote, “His character is perhaps exemplified by his fine photographs – the products of steady and decisive vision.” Vision not limited to the arts, but exemplified in all areas of Ferit’s remarkable life.

KESINLIKLE: FOR SURE!

Excerpt from Master Teacher Mark
Aeschliman’s essay in *TASIS Today*, 2012

In the early 1980s Ferit was one of our first Turkish students at the school, and he always had an extremely positive attitude. What I remember most about Ferit as a student was his affect, his demeanor, his interaction with me as his dorm resident and advisor. Very often a signature turn of the head for emphasis, and a slight accent as he said “For sure, Mr. Aeschliman, for sure.” In TASIS student parlance of today this would probably be ‘perfect’. I have since learned that the Turkish word for this attitude, this compliance and single-minded positive outlook is *Kesinlikle*: for sure! This must have been behind his thinking as he said these words. It must be behind his thinking as a businessman, as a family man, and a father. His mantra, perhaps. Obviously, it works.

As a dorm resident, I counted on Ferit to keep the De Nobili boys in line, which he did with mastery, with military precision, and with a fun-loving loud laugh. The boys loved him—so did the girls!—and they still do. I have seen and talked to them in Istanbul at TASIS reunions and privately, increasingly so as the Ferit Şahenk '83 Art Center takes shape. I could always count on him to be upbeat, to see that everyone got along and kept quiet. I felt I could count on Ferit, that he was fully three-dimensional as a person and as a young adult. This rock-solid trustworthiness and singleness of purpose are Ferit’s distinguishing characteristics.

Now Ferit is giving back to TASIS. This is the most satisfactory moment in my professional life at TASIS, where I have been working for almost my entire career: to see Mrs. Fleming’s dream of a truly international—now one should say global—school, educating students from all countries, and communicating to them a certain gung-ho American attitude about overcoming obstacles and achieving success. She would be extremely proud of Ferit’s expression of gratitude, of his confidence in life and his entrepreneurial skill, of the success he has achieved.



Ferit Şahenk '83 with Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63
and a model of the Şahenk Arts Center

A TASIS LIFE: DONALD MACDERMID

Historic Legacy Gift to Fund the Donald D. MacDermid Center and Endowment for the Fine & Performing Arts



Lynn Aeschliman '63, Donald MacDermid '61, and Betsy Bacon Newell

We are thrilled and humbled that Donald MacDermid '61 has decided to donate three million dollars as the major gift to build Donald D. MacDermid Hall, which will include classrooms and a dormitory. It will also fund the Donald D. MacDermid Music Center with two music classrooms and seven practice rooms. Finally, his generosity will establish the Donald MacDermid Endowment Fund for the Fine and Performing Arts.

For Donald MacDermid, his three years at TASIS were life-changing. Asking Donald about these years brings a wistfulness to him. "I hadn't done much travel in Europe, and TASIS expanded my experience of the world." In 1960s America, international travel was rare and most people learned about other countries and cultures via books, radio, or television. Experiencing Europe allowed Donald to explore things he'd only read or heard about.

"I had always been excited about travel," Donald says, "but learning about art through the context of history was fantastic." This combination of his passions laid the foundations for a life of wanderlust, taking him to all seven continents in an era when travel wasn't accessible or easy. His favorite destination remains London, and he visits as often as he can to spend time exploring the city and museums with friends. Donald has a passion for museums, particularly those focusing on art and architecture. This dates to his childhood, when his mother would take him to New York City on shopping trips which would be rewarded with a few hours at a museum. His mother also introduced him to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. His mother's influence meant he knew a lot about art and architecture, but "seeing the actual thing on TASIS trips was something else entirely. I loved being immersed in these diverse buildings and communities, meeting new people and actually experiencing their cultures."

Donald says his trips to New York City for his TASIS reunions have brought him sustained joy over the years. Donald extends these trips to have time to meet with the people he's known for decades. "These events are an opportunity to get together with people I wouldn't otherwise see," he says. "The most important thing is to sustain these friendships despite time passing. Seeing a select list of people and spending time with them makes these reunions extra special for me."

The thread of TASIS has remained strong throughout Donald's life. "My love for TASIS hasn't changed. It opened me up, and I stayed open. It's always with me because of

what it did to me. It changed my life." While specific memories may be distant for Donald, the feelings he had at TASIS remain vivid: awe, curiosity, excitement, and a passion for learning. "TASIS has been terribly important to me. It made me larger, in a sense. It made me who I am."

from *TASIS Today*, 2019

A TANGIBLE LEGACY

The generosity of the late Donald MacDermid '61 will resonate for generations of TASIS students. Donald was creative with his munificence. TASIS will benefit from a few initiatives that Donald envisioned beyond the \$3M from the Donald MacDermid Trust that he committed to the two buildings.

Donald had an extensive collection of fine and decorative art collected on his travels throughout the world. The diverse collection reflected his character; he was passionate about international travel and viewed art as a way to understand and remember the places, people, and cultures he experienced.

On September 13, 2023, the New York auction house Doyle facilitated the sale of Donald's collections. With competitive international bidding, the sale surpassed the pre-sale estimate with 98% of the lots sold. The Chester Gallery in Chester, Connecticut, partnered with the Estate of Donald MacDermid for a Celebration of Life and Art Show called "Life of a Collector," an invitation-only event on what would have been Donald's 81st birthday on October 26, 2023. Bill Eichner attended along



Donald MacDermid '61 with Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63

with Donald's many friends from New York City and the local area. Donald's estate also sold his personal property, clothing, props, and sundry. In Donald's honor, a number of businesses in Connecticut made direct donations to the TASIS Foundation including Variety Video in Old Saybrook and Mystic Music in Mystic. In all, Donald's extraordinary collections raised \$1.7 million for the TASIS Foundation, which will establish the Donald MacDermid Endowment Fund for the Fine and Performing Arts.

An artist himself, Donald studied art and art history at Middlebury College and the Rhode Island School of Design, one of the nation's pre-eminent art schools, and took degrees from both institutions.

from *TASIS Today*, 2024

19. THE TASIS PARENT ASSOCIATION AND A MOST MEMORABLE GALA

THE TPA MAKES A DIFFERENCE



The TASIS Parent Association at the International Week Food Festival

When TASIS Elementary School opened nearly twenty years ago, the TASIS Parent Association was transformed. For years, local families had hosted a few events and community-building activities for TASIS, but the advent of the Elementary School brought fresh energy and commitment from local parents.

Jennifer Hung Zanarini, TPA President (2018–2024), sings the praises of TPA Presidents and volunteers before her. “We stand on each other’s shoulders, improving on the legacy that they set for us,” she says. TASIS extends our deepest thanks to the TPA for supporting our community in countless ways. The TPA’s steadfast support of the School, our students, faculty, staff and families is at the very core of our wonderful community

TASIS Today 2022

TO WISH AND TO WILL: THE TREMENDOUS IMPACT OF THE TASIS PARENT ASSOCIATION

The word volunteer derives from the two Latin words *velle* and *voluntas*, meaning “wish” and “will” respectively. As volunteers dedicated to the TASIS Mission, the TPA has wished and ultimately willed into existence an historic TPA 2024 Spring Gala that both shattered records and paved the way (literally) for a better tomorrow for TASIS.

Just as Mrs. Fleming dreamed big for future generations of TASIS students, the TPA, in their daily, myriad contributions and their Herculean efforts towards the wildly successful Spring

Gala, dream big for TASIS’s present and future. As true volunteers who embody and model the spirit of service, the TPA “wished” and “willed” a brighter future for TASIS and have ensured that the TASIS legacy will continue to shine for future generations. With gratitude to our amazing TPA and awe for all that they do for TASIS! — Headmaster Christopher Nikoloff, from the *TASIS Today* Christmas Issue, 2024

SPRING GALA 2024: WE’RE ON OUR WAY

by Mark Chevalier

Everything came together perfectly for a magical night as nearly 400 guests came to TASIS for the highly anticipated 2024 TPA Spring Gala on the evening of Saturday, May 18.

Beautiful weather, a stylish outdoor aperitivo, an unimaginable transformation of the Palestra, a gourmet dinner, incredible live entertainment, and well-orchestrated live and silent auctions all conspired to create an event that was, in short, elegance personified. No detail was spared by the tireless members of the TPA Gala Committee in their quest to deliver an unforgettable evening of celebration and giving in support of the TASIS Global Village Building Campaign.

Thanks to the tireless work of TASIS Parent Association (TPA) President Jennifer Hung Zanarini and TPA Vice-President Prune Clerici, Co-Chairs of the TPA Spring Gala Committee, and unwavering support from fellow parents Sevim Arslan, Marianne Odfjell, Irache Villada, Ana Costa Felix, Muriel Aciman, Laura Colombo, and an army of volunteers working behind the

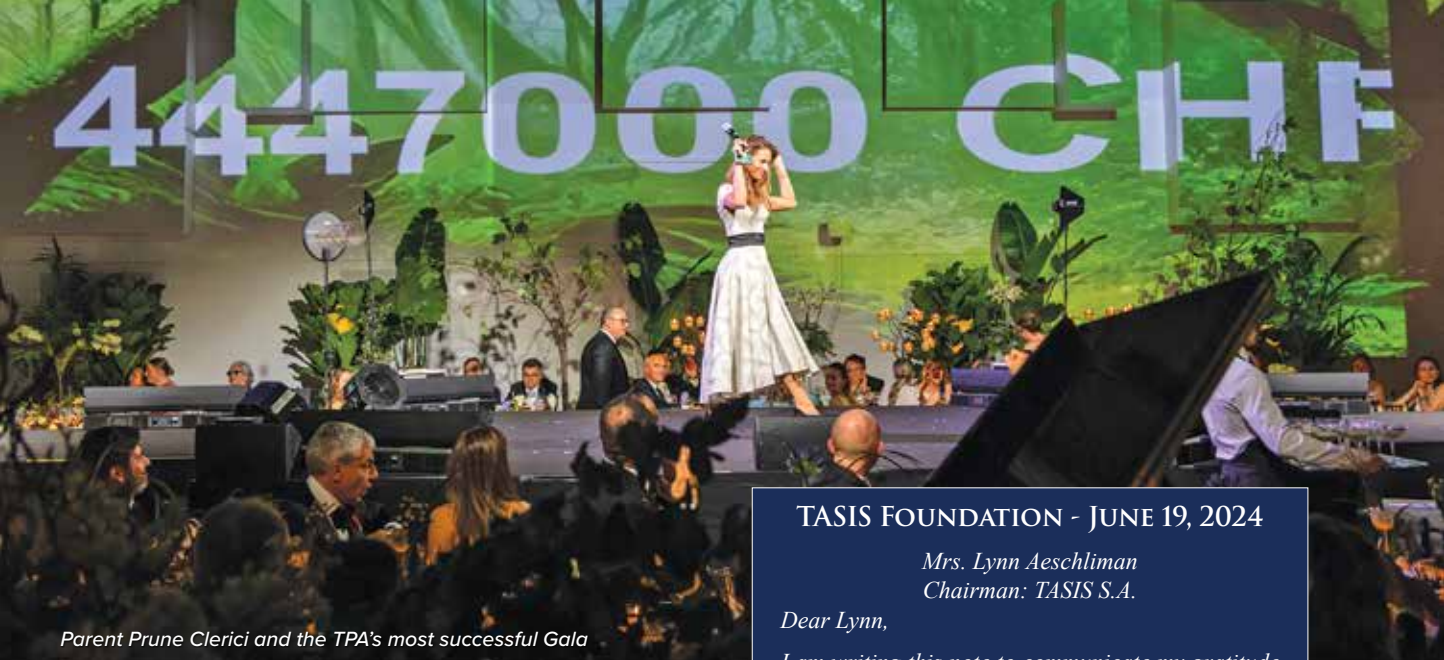


Gala Co-Chairs Jennifer Hung Zanarini and Prune Clerici

scenes, a party for the ages was held.

The enchanting dinner show was sponsored by UBP and consisted of hours of extraordinary entertainment, including stunning aerial acrobatics by guest entertainers from Wow Entertainment and sensational musical performances from TASIS alumna Hilary Aeschliman ’13 and current students Kevin Kraemer ’29, Catherine Clardy ’24, Sarah Mesaric ’25, Lalita Stromayer ’24, Caroline Titland ’24, and Chris Yang ’24.

A number of fundraising avenues connected to the Gala—a raffle, a silent auction, a gift registry, a surprise flower sale that came with a chance to win Sabbadini diamond jewelry, opportunities for major naming gifts, and an exciting live auction conducted by the incomparable Ed Rising—combined to raise more than 4 million francs, all of which will go to the non-profit TASIS Foundation for the TASIS Global Village Building Campaign.



Parent Prune Clerici and the TPA's most successful Gala

"The extraordinary success of this Gala and all it entailed would not have been possible without the countless hours of dedication from TPA volunteers led by the indomitable and visionary Gala Co-Chairs Jennifer Hung Zanarini and Prune Clerici, and our staff members, especially the Communications and Maintenance Departments, and the extraordinarily generous contributions from sponsors, partners, and members of the TASIS community," said Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63. "I am deeply grateful for all of their help and know this Gala will do much to further the legacy my mother began building nearly 70 years ago. I cannot thank Jennifer and Prune enough for channeling her pioneering spirit as we look to create even more inspiring spaces on campus for our students. My heartfelt thanks to them, to the entire TPA Gala Committee, and to everyone else who played a role in planning a community-building event that exceeded even my wildest expectations!"

from the *TASIS Today* Holiday Issue, 2024

TASIS FOUNDATION - JUNE 19, 2024

Mrs. Lynn Aeschliman
Chairman: TASIS S.A.

Dear Lynn,

I am writing this note to communicate my gratitude for the success of the recent TPA Gala and the stunning level of funds raised for the TASIS Global Village Building Campaign. I, like you, am dumbstruck. There are few words to express the sentiment of the TASIS Foundation Board for this remarkable feat.

When we established the TASIS Foundation, now more than thirty years ago, and transferred the schools and campuses to this Swiss not-for-profit entity, we made the decision to seek grants and donations only for campus building projects and not to cover operating costs as is the practice with most independent schools. The support of the TASIS community and the leadership of the TPA reflected by this outpouring of generosity is testament to the wisdom of this decision. This has led, in part, to the creation of one of the most functional and beautiful school campuses worldwide.

While I have always had the example of Mother and you as two women who exemplified the saying "make it happen," certainly the Co-Chairs of this gala event, Jennifer Hung Zanarini and Prune Clerici, should be added to this distinguished list.

Please share this note with the TPA with an expression of my gratitude for their extraordinary contributions and commitment to TASIS.

Warm regards,

Tom Fleming, TASIS Foundation Board Chairman

20. COMPELLING CHARACTERS

Alumni continue to be among the School's best ambassadors for future students



Yvonne Procyk

In a recent essay, former Associate Director of Alumni Relations Yvonne Procyk wrote: *TASIS is special; its compelling character comes directly from its Founder's vision and manifests itself in an international community, a family really, steeped in beauty. TASIS alumni remark on this again and again, especially when returning to campus, and appreciate anew the privilege they had as teenagers growing up in such a rare environment. A privilege that I share and acknowledge wholeheartedly.*

The idea of TASIS as having a "compelling character" extends to those who inhabit it, including Yvonne herself. For nearly a decade and a half, Yvonne welcomed and coordinated hundreds of compelling characters, our alumni, through her meticulous planning of all-class reunions, assistance with local reunions around the world, and efforts to keep in touch with them.

Yvonne retired in 2022 and now lives in Vienna.

from *TASIS Today*, 2022

THE ALUMNI PILLAR

TASIS promoters often talk about the pillars of our community: the teachers, the setting, the buildings that make the experience so special. But Bill Eichner, Director of Institutional Advancement, thinks a very important pillar of TASIS is the alumni. "We sometimes forget to mention that the real success has been the strength of the students we've had," Bill says. The connections, the friendships, what they are doing in the world and how much they took away from TASIS. "Each student was part of the identity of the School." Every academic year, the faculty sit back and think, wow, what an outstanding year, or what a great class that was. "We weren't the ones who were outstanding. They had the experience, and got so much out of it, and left Montagnola with a lot of friends, a certain direction, and certainly with a much better understanding of the world."



The All-Class Reunion in Miami, February 2026

Current students see how important alumni are at TASIS. “We remember our alumni here, we cherish them,” he says. “The contributions the students make are lasting. The success of our students has an impact on the culture of the school. We often refer to students and their achievements, both at TASIS and beyond.” Alumni are often a part of the TASIS Speaker Series: “The students have an instant fascination with our alumni speakers. It shows them where they could be.”

“Every year, we have more and more students who are children of alumni. It’s gratifying, as the parents see their children having a similar experience. There are improvements everywhere—the facilities, the programs, Global Service, the Science Center—but at the

heart it’s the basic TASIS formula that is getting better all the time.”

Bill is constantly amazed by the communities our alumni create; indeed, many reunions happen all over the world every year. “Our alumni have built these communities that exist beyond this campus and the hill. They get together often, all over the world, a network of people who really enjoy being together.”

Reunions are also a time for students to share what they took from TASIS. “They all find their way, and end up doing amazing things. They are exposed to ideas and places and ways of thinking at a pivotal age. It’s remarkable.”

from *TASIS Today*, 2023

WELCOME BACK TO TASIS!

Speech by Bill Eichner at the 60s Reunion, September 2024



Rick Bell '65, Mark Aeschliman, Lynn Fleming Aeschliman '63, and Bill Eichner

The start of a new school year is a wonderful time at TASIS. Think back to your first days at TASIS, whether on this campus or Villa Negroni. It’s not so different today—moving in, making new friends, or your first explorations of Ticino, whether it was Val Verzasca or a hut hike in the mountains. And, of course, your first classes and homework assignments. September is rich with the promise of new beginnings. In the 60s booklet, several alumni referred to their first impressions and first days at TASIS—a reminder that what starts well, ends well.

I love watching students discover the TASIS experience—all the things that make TASIS a unique and powerful school experience. During these opening weeks, we introduce the students to Mrs. Fleming’s vision of what a good school should be.

You all had the benefit of knowing Mrs. Fleming in her prime and were alongside her as she was creating the TASIS Schools. All of you come from the first ten to fifteen years of TASIS, and your generation built the foundation of TASIS. The 60s Booklet isn’t just a nice collection of memories for all of you, but it also contributes to the history of the School. Your thoughts and memories help to articulate the TASIS vision, and I think this will be as interesting to new generations of students as it is to all of you. You are all part of the foundation of TASIS.

Today’s students do not have the benefit of knowing Mrs. Fleming as you did, but I think we have done a remarkable job of preserving her vision and introducing her mission to new generations of students. In fact, some of the most articulate promoters of her ideas are made by people who never had the benefit

of meeting her. Our Headmaster Christopher Nikoloff is one of those people: He meets with all students by class, Pre-K to PG; he lunches with every ES class in Casa Fleming; he teaches seminars to every MS and HS grade level. All of these focus on some aspect of the TASIS mission and include a large portion of MCF history. When we speak to students about our values and traditions, we capture them in the School's motto, the three words MCF had inscribed over the library: *Truth, Goodness, Beauty*.

Mrs. Fleming often said, "Times change, values don't." Her values, and the values expressed in our mission statement, are indeed timeless. Let us look at the School through this lens.

TRUTH

The seeking of truth is the foundation of academics, done alongside your peers and inspiring teachers. Think of all the time you spent with your teachers, in and out of class. The experience isn't really that different today. The technology has changed, but students still get together for study groups, and every year we survey the seniors about their TASIS experience and the names of inspiring teachers pop up consistently.

You can be proud of TASIS today, as we keep our focus on academics. Scores don't mean everything, but it is testimony to the hard work of students and teachers that our profile continues to be strong. Students at TASIS discover the excitement of academics, and they

are motivated because they really enjoy their classes and surroundings.

During Academic Travel, so many of your educational experiences occurred outside the classroom, and that is still true today. Just as so many alumni from the 60s still talk about their academic trips—like the one to the USSR—today's students really enjoy and learn on these trips.

Of course, travel in the 60s had a style of its own, and some of you even arrived by ship! Our students today are fascinated by this. But the places we visit are timeless. Florence was always my favorite trip to lead, and I never tire of seeing the David or a Botticelli painting, because I'm usually sharing that experience with a student who is seeing them for the first time.

GOODNESS

Of course, we want our students to be good people, and to do good things in this world. There are so many opportunities at TASIS for developing this, such as making good friends and learning to be a good friend. We are spending time with each other on School trips, and looking out for each other is part of it. We are sharing meals with each other, on campus and off. There are many opportunities for socializing together at TASIS.

On ski trips, TASIS students still ski together, but maybe not with the same style as in the 60s...they probably couldn't manage the long skis!

Dorm life is still about learning to live in a



The Class of '85 in front of Villa De Nobili

dorm with a roommate—an opportunity to make friends for life, but also a chance to learn cooperation, tolerance, compromise—essentially, how to be a good friend.

A fantastic feature of TASIS today is our Global Service Program. All students are involved in Service, but all eleventh graders participate in a global service project. We focus on about half a dozen projects around the world—in Nepal, Cambodia, Moldova, Ethiopia, India—projects

where students have real interaction with the local community, and a real opportunity to make a positive difference.

We recently celebrated ten years of the Jan Opsahl Global Service Program with a celebratory banquet, and students spoke about the transformative experiences they have on these trips. And each year in the senior surveys, the GSP stands out as a highlight of the TASIS experience.

BEAUTY

Mrs. Fleming wanted our students to be surrounded by beauty, to appreciate beauty, and to be creators of beauty. I am sure you all recall how important beauty was to Mrs. Fleming, and above all, beautiful surroundings. She had a talent for finding beautiful locations for TASIS, which in the 60s was still moving from one potential location to another. Like a security blanket, the beauty of TASIS would provide comfort for the remainder of your life.

When you think of school mottos and mission statements, it isn't unusual to find truth as one of the guiding values. Just think of how many mottos include veritas, and even goodness, but Beauty is rare, and central to TASIS. It even figures prominently in the Paideia of the TASIS Foundation: "Beauty matters. Graceful settings, inspired architecture ... in Beauty we show our regard for one another and for ourselves. It is a form of courtesy."

Mrs. Fleming found beautiful and inspiring locations for TASIS. She loved nothing more than finding a beautiful villa or chateau and renovating and repurposing it as a TASIS school. Her legacy is continued by her daughter, the builder. It was Lynn who started the Global Village concept back in 1996, and since then, we have focused on developing the campus with beautiful, state-of-the-art facilities. You can see how this hillside has been transformed. This is Lynn's vision, and today we have one of the most beautiful campuses in the world. And that's not just my opinion. In Spring 2024, *Architectural Digest* magazine named TASIS "the most beautiful boarding school in the world".

Mrs. Fleming found this beautiful location and lovingly converted the Villa DeNobili and other buildings into a home for TASIS students, but Lynn has planned and executed the development of Mrs. Fleming's campus. She continues the legacy. The job isn't done, but we're on a roll, and the completion of the Global Village is in sight.

All of this has a big price tag, and you can take pride in the fact that we are increasingly more successful in our fundraising efforts. If you have attended our NYC reunions in recent years or followed our progress in the alumni magazine, you know that Donald MacDermid made a significant gift toward the music building and dormitory, and more funds have been donated and pledged by other alumni.

For the first time ever, we have also seen keen interest among our current parents to support development. After all, we now have students who are with us for the entire arc of their academic career—more than 12 years. At an extraordinary Gala, our TASIS Parent Association raised CHF 4 million, equalling funds raised from alumni.

I would like to remind you of some of the ways we keep alumni involved. There are our many reunions, and several over the summer, culminating in large US reunions in various cities. Most of you have attended some of these large reunions. As you know, they are a lot of fun, and a great time to catch up with old friends. Every year, I get to see some of my former students attend their children's graduation. So, send your grandkids to TASIS or have them attend one of our summer programs!

21. SUMMER ENTHUSIASTS
FOR BEAUTY LIVES WITH KINDNESS

By Betsy Bacon Newell

My first year as a student at TASIS was at Swiss Holiday, 1956. I have spent either all summer, or part of each summer, at TASIS since then—nearly 70 years.

Philosophers debate if one's reaction, the aesthetic experience, will be as profoundly emotional as the first time you saw it or heard it, if it happens every day? I have seen the view of the lake of Lugano every morning in the summer for as many years as the school has been in Montagnola, and my heart always sings.

In the 1990s, Mrs. Fleming invited me to become the Director of the Château des Enfants, the summer program for children ages 4–10. I wondered if little children could appreciate the beauty of the campus, which had brought such joy to me since I was a little more than a child myself. How would it affect a child's future aesthetic development as it did mine?

Mrs. Fleming believed in the importance of surrounding her students with beauty. She found spectacular places for the schools, and filled their rooms with wonderful furniture, art, and always fresh flowers. As the school grew, Lynn conceived of and built a village of buildings that are in exquisite harmony not only with the land, but with the history of Ticino, as we can still see in the 17th century hunting lodge, the Villa de Nobili.

It is remarkable that current students still walk through the Villa de Nobili every day, just as I did so many years ago, and are still in awe of



those beautiful rooms and their decoration. That shared experience, the camaraderie, the pure fun together, surrounded by the magnificent Swiss mountains, was for many of us an other-worldly experience. It intensified other feelings and emotions. When we undertook what

was a great adventure for most of us, lasting friendships blossomed against the backdrop of the beauty of the place.

Betsy Bacon Bigelow Newell holds a Bachelor's Degree from Smith College and a Master's from Merton College at Oxford University. From 1956–1963, Betsy worked as a counselor and assistant director of Swiss Holiday and Project Europe. She ran the New York TASIS Office with Gai Fleming, Lynn's sister, from 1963–1971. She served as Director of Le Château des Enfants (CDE) from 1992–2018 and was the Director of Park Children's Day School in New York City from 2001–2025.

An Icon Retires

For hundreds of students from around the world, the term “Mrs. Betsy” is synonymous with summer on the Collina d’Oro. As the head of Le Château des Enfants (CDE) since 1990, Betsy Newell, an alumna of the earliest years of TASIS, has transformed the lives of hundreds of students from around the world. The summer of 2015 marked Betsy’s 75th birthday, and her final year at the helm of CDE. It’s hard to imagine a TASIS summer without Betsy around. This summer of 2015 will resonate at CDE, and indeed at TASIS, for many years to come. In her wake Betsy has left an outstanding summer program, but perhaps more importantly she has changed for the better the lives of hundreds of children, counselors, and teachers who are often reminded of her influence. “I was born under a lucky star that I met Mrs. Fleming. It was all so serendipitous,” she says. But we, too, are lucky that Betsy has shared so much of herself with us.

from *TASIS Today*, 2015



The 2017 Dedicated Performing Arts Team

STARS ARE BORN

How the TASIS Summer Programs Built an Incomparable Performing Arts Program

An indispensable component of the TASIS Summer Programs known simply as DPAT, this Dedicated Performing Arts Team of actors, musicians, dancers, and writers runs comprehensive musical theater courses for middle school and high school students and performing arts workshops for younger students; prepares students of all ages for a variety of musical theater, drama, dance, and music performances; showcases its own considerable talents with a staff talent show while encouraging students to do the same; and offers a musical revue, classical music evening, and other cultural events that often bring leading professionals from the region to campus.

The genesis of DPAT

The arts have played a central role at TASIS since its founding in 1956 by M. Crist Fleming, who believed “a love of literature, the arts, and the performing arts is the heart and soul of education.” Chairman of the Board Lynn Fleming Aeschliman ’63 has followed in her mother’s footsteps as TASIS’s greatest champion of the arts, and while the performing arts have long been an integral part of the School’s summer offerings, it was the creation of DPAT in 2013 that pushed the program to new heights.

from *TASIS Today*, 2017

SUMMERTIME ROLLS

The world has changed since Mrs. Fleming brought American students to Switzerland for the summer nearly seven decades ago. In 2022, TASIS welcomed 740 students from 55 countries to the Collina d’Oro. There were waiting lists for each program, and parents are already signing up for 2023. So what will the Summer Programs look like in the future?

As with our academic year program, the pandemic pushed the Summer Programs to consider operations, management, and structure. The School’s first response was to create an overall Summer Programs Director to oversee all three programs: Le Château des Enfants (CDE, ages 4–10), MSP (ages 11–13), and the High School Program (HSP, ages 14–17, formerly TASIS Summer Program, or TSP).

Marc-Pierre Jansen, a TASIS veteran but newly-



Marc-Pierre Jansen



Abby Gagnon

appointed Summer Programs Director, says, “The short-term goal is to solidify the foundation of this new structure. But parallel to that, and the five-year goal and beyond, is to consider our market, which changes every year.” For a long time, the majority of students came to TASIS to learn English. For the first time in 2022, every student arrived at TASIS with at least some English, which is a first that Marc-Pierre can remember. Now,

international students want to come to TASIS to study something else but use English in the course. The first HSP classes to waitlist are Lean Startup, La Cucina Italiana, Introduction to Investment, and Fashion & Textile Design, and the other experiential learning courses. “In 2019, we had six English classes in MSP. Now we’re down to four. We need to ensure we’re sensitive to what families want, what students want. And doing a course is an exciting way to practice English.”

VERUM, BONUM, PULCHRUM

More important than adapting to the market is ensuring the core values of TASIS remain and ensuring our families understand the value of a TASIS education. Director of Summer Admissions Abby Gagnon says, “I tell families that our Headmaster teaches a freshman course in the academic year on Aristotle and moral reasoning to let them know that ethics is important. I tell them about Mrs. Fleming’s commitment to spreading an understanding of culture, goodness, beauty, nature, languages, and how her vision began with a summer program. Thirty percent of our academic-year students have done a summer program. It’s a taste of what TASIS can offer students. The summer programs are the best parts of TASIS, squeezed into a month!”

LEARNING, CULTURE, FUN

When students leave after a TASIS summer, they are often bewildered by how much they have done in a few short weeks. “The summer is really intense,” Marc-Pierre says. “There are three pillars for our programs: learning, culture, and fun. The kids want the fun, the parents want the learning, and as

an institution we want the cultural element. Their schedules are packed with things from morning to night that adhere to these pillars.”

The amount of experiences on offer is critical to how Abby communicates with families: “I need to know about their child before I can explain what we do here. And once I know the child’s age, interests, personality, I can paint a picture for the family of that child’s life at TASIS.” Abby is also very honest: “I never sugarcoat the fact that it can be tough in the beginning. It’s a lot, and it’s busy. But then everything clicks. I’ve never seen anything like it.”

from *TASIS Today*, 2022

Experiential learning is at the heart of the Summer Programs, and robust course offerings include languages, STEAM, Digital Photography & Filmmaking, Architecture & Design, Musical Theater, Introduction to Investment, and Lean Startup Masterclass for the High School Program; English as an Additional Language, French, Italian, Creative Writing, STEAM, Digital Photography, and Musical Theater for the Middle School Program; and English as an Additional Language, French, or Italian for Château des Enfants and Minnows students.

By the Numbers

2023: 850 students, 63 nationalities

2024: 879 students, 69 nationalities

2025: 888 students, 65 nationalities

STEWARDS
OF HER VISION

By Marc-Pierre Jansen,
Summer Programs Director

Once upon a time, Mrs. Fleming came to Ticino with a dream—to start a summer program. Her boundless enthusiasm led to the founding of the very school that became the mother of all TASIS schools.

Every summer, my colleagues and I have the privilege of recapturing the wonder that first drew Mrs. Fleming to explore the mysteries of Ticino. Since then, we’ve continued to explore this beautiful region—a place that invites discovery and inspires us to share its richness with the world.

Tens of thousands of students have walked through our campus, leaving with memories that will last a lifetime. As we celebrate 70 years, let us honor those who have shaped young minds and dedicated their lives to education through the unique lens of TASIS. Our school thrives because of many selfless individuals, a fact affirmed by hundreds of alumni over the years. As stewards of this vision, we are privileged to carry it forward. Over the past 20 years, the TASIS Summer Programs have been defined by both constancy and transformation. The constant has been our global community. Every summer, students from around the world gather in Montagnola to learn, explore, and grow. Education at TASIS goes beyond the classroom—our breathtaking outdoor campus and access to Europe offer students a unique environment for academic enrichment, cultural discovery, and joyful play. Many students,

after an unforgettable summer, choose to return for the academic year.

The change began in 2020. While the world paused, so did our Summer Programs. But that pause became an opportunity—to reflect, restructure, and strengthen. What was once three separate programs is now four: the High School Program (HSP), Middle School Program (MSP), Château des Enfants (CDE), and Minnows. Now united under a single direction, these programs offer greater continuity, efficiency, and a shared mission across all age levels.

At their core, the programs continue to emphasize language learning in English, Italian, and French. Yet today’s students are seeking more immersive ways to learn—choosing Musical Theater, Finance, Business, and STEAM as creative pathways to develop their English skills. Our goal is to keep the programs dynamic and surprising, so that each new day at TASIS Summer brings fresh excitement.

Every summer, students arrive as strangers and leave as members of a united community. Though hesitant to sing at first, they eventually raise their voices together—louder and prouder—as they prepare to depart. Whether they return after five years or fifty, alumni consistently reflect on the same timeless feeling: the friendships, the memories, and the magic of TASIS Summer.

The summer of 2026 will, in many ways, mirror that of Mrs. Fleming’s in 1956. Though we have grown, we remain committed to nurturing the same spirit of enthusiasm and discovery she instilled in us.

Happy Birthday, TASIS!

22. A TESIS MISCELLANY



UNIFORMS: DRESSED TO IMPRESS

After many years of discussion and planning, TESIS has made the decision to require uniforms for all our students, including those in the High School. After accepting bids and ideas from a number of vendors, two were chosen as finalists. Each gave a presentation to a standing-room only audience in the Palmer Cultural Center, and in the end the students and faculty voted for uniforms designed and produced by Lavinia Romani '90. Lavinia has been producing the Pre-K–6th Grade uniforms since the Elementary School began, and she worked with MJ Breton on the design of our Middle School uniforms.

from *TESIS Today*, 2007



WE ARE MANY, WE ARE ONE: TESIS AT EXPO MILANO

On Saturday, October 10, 2016, TESIS took part in Expo Milano when 200 members of our community performed, presented, and volunteered, taking over the Swiss Pavilion for the day. Over 25 events featured a broad spectrum of students, staff, and alumni, proving that the TESIS community is rich in talent and spirit.

TESIS students from all three divisions led the Parade of Flags and participated in musical, dance, and dramatic performances throughout the day. “I felt very excited and honored because I was representing TESIS in front of people from all over the world,” said Anna Savinova '20. “It was amazing, one of the best experiences of my life.”

from *TESIS Today*, 2016



THE FLEMING CUP RETURNS

More than 100 high school students attended at least one of the skiing, snowboarding, and sledding day trips to Splügen that were offered over the long weekend of February 25–28, 2021 in place of the School’s traditional Spring Academic Travel session. Students and faculty chaperones were treated to beautiful weather, excellent snow conditions, and the return of a treasured TESIS tradition: the Fleming Cup.

For decades, when the entire High School would relocate to a Swiss ski resort for two whole weeks at the end of the winter holiday—first in 1959 to Andermatt, out of necessity, and later to St. Moritz or Crans-Montana—the Fleming Cup was awarded to the skier who completed a slalom run in the fastest time.

“Everyone looked forward to the Fleming Cup,” said Director of Institutional Advancement Bill Eichner, who joined TESIS in 1983 and competed in his first cup that year. “It was an annual highlight and a major community building event. Every student and faculty member would either participate or watch.”

This tradition was eventually phased out when the schoolwide ski trip was shortened to one week in the early 2000s, and the Fleming Cup was instead

awarded to the winner of an annual hockey game that took place from 2004–2012. The cup then lay dormant for nine years until the beloved tradition was revived on the afternoon of February 27 at the Splügen Ski Resort.

With their friends and faculty chaperones looking on, 22 skiers and snowboarders competed for the 2021 Fleming Cup following a morning of practice runs—with skiers holding an obvious advantage. Matteo Di Bisceglie '23 blazed down the mountain to seize victory and will have the honor of holding onto the cup until a new field of challengers attempts to wrest it from him next February.

Giovanni Ugolotti '23, Mikhail Vasiliev '23, and Marat Kurmanaev '23 collected medals for posting the next three fastest times among skiers while Alexander Nikoloff '24 and Luca Radici '21 were the fastest snowboarders.

Academic Travel Director Natalie Philpot, who coordinated the Splügen trips, hopes to see the Fleming Cup become an annual event once again. “It is wonderful to see this tradition return to TESIS,” she said. “Now that the word is out, we expect to see many more students participate next year, and perhaps we can restore the faculty competition as well. We want this to be an exciting event the whole High School can look forward to.”

from *TESIS Today*, 2021

A NEW CREST

In January 2020, TASIS announced a new crest for the TASIS family of schools. The impetus for the new crest sprang from the TASIS Foundation Board's desire to see the TASIS motto—*Verum, Bonum, Pulchrum*—included within the crest itself. With the support of the TASIS Foundation Board, we worked with Weymouth Griffin Design, an American design firm, to find a way to weave the motto into the existing crest.

Weymouth Griffin's illustrators also redrew the four symbols on the crest—the tower (culture), the lamp (wisdom), the sun (truth), and the book

(knowledge)—made minor adjustments to the typography, and modified the color layout while retaining the blue-and-red color scheme that defines the Canton of Ticino and inspired the original TASIS crest in 1956.



1956



1960



1969



1973



1999

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP!

by Elene Lomia '27



The Parade of Flags during International Week

Coming from a normal, local school in the country of Georgia, internationality and global citizenship were concepts that felt distant to me. They were ideas I read about in books, or saw on social media, but not something I experienced daily. Moving to a school with such a diverse and international student body completely changed that perspective. Suddenly, I was surrounded by people from all over the world, each bringing their own language, tradition, and way of thinking. At this age, being exposed to so many cultures at once is something I am deeply grateful for. It has shaped the way I see people and the way I understand different cultures.

Living as a boarding student makes this experience even stronger. It is not just about sitting next to someone from a different

country in class, but rather it is about sharing dorm kitchens, late-night conversations, and academic stress. You learn how different cultures approach things like food, discipline, academics, friendship, and even time management. Sometimes the differences are small but interesting, and sometimes they are bigger and require understanding and patience. But in all cases, undoubtedly, they teach you empathy and understanding in a way that no lesson ever could.

One of the most important and exciting celebrations in our school is International Week. It is something I always look forward to. I especially enjoy the themed dress code days, when everyone can express themselves according to the assigned topic for the day. My favorite this year was Twin Day, when

I matched outfits with my friend. It might seem simple, but it is these shared moments that create memories and make friendships stronger.

Events like the Food Fair and the Flag Parade are highlights of the week. The Food Fair is more than just tasting delicious dishes from around the world. It is about understanding the effort and pride behind every plate. Students spend lots of time planning,

cooking, and setting the tables up in order to proudly represent their country. Standing at the table with our flags around us, proudly representing a country, while serving food to curious students and teachers is a powerful experience. Watching people's faces light up when they enjoy the food that you prepared creates a special feeling of joy. It's not just about food, but it is about sharing a piece of identity. In those moments, we feel culturally connected rather than divided.



Boarding students and dorm parents preparing the Monticello dormitory for a new school year



2024 Parade of Flags

Another meaningful part of International Week is the Flag Parade during the Opening Ceremony. Carrying your country's flag in front of the entire school is a moment of pride. As we walk around the assembly, each flag represents a story, a language, a history—and together we create a powerful visual reminder of what makes our school unique.

Studying abroad can be challenging. Being far from home, adjusting to a new environment, and building new friendships and connections is not always easy. However, at a school like TASIS, where international recognition and

cultural celebrations are so strong, you feel represented and connected to both your new community and to your home country at the same time.

Being part of such an international boarding community has taught me that global citizenship is not just a phrase: it is something that we live every day through our friendship, our traditions, and our shared experiences. It has helped me grow not only academically but also socially and personally. And that is something I will carry with me long after the International Week is over.

COMMENCEMENT 2026

TASIS The American School in Switzerland celebrated the outstanding Class of 2026 with its 70th Commencement Ceremony



Students in the Class of 2026 received 317 Offers of Admission from 155 Universities in 13 Countries



23. THE TASIS LEGACY: TOWARD THE FUTURE WITH TRUTH, GOODNESS, AND BEAUTY

By Christopher Nikoloff, Headmaster



Headmaster Christopher Nikoloff

TASIS as a school aspires to serve as a call to our best selves. The Latin *educare* means to instruct, rear, and lead forth, and Mrs. Fleming said that “Education is man’s best hope to defeat chaos.” TASIS calls us to our best selves through the concepts of beauty and duty, the twin themes of a book of tributes to the School and its great figures. Beauty and duty are TASIS’s distinctive call to *our best selves*.

TASIS understands more than most schools that beauty is a calling to something beyond the finite boundaries of ourselves. *Kallos*, the Greek word for beauty, is related to *kalein*—to call. TASIS is in a beautiful, nearly magical setting, and has painstakingly sought to infuse its campus with equally stunning beauty. The entire campus calls all of us who step onto it towards our highest and best selves. This is true not only of its physical beauty but of its conceptual beauty too.

For instance, the words **verum**, **bonum**, and **pulchrum** over the Mary Crist Fleming Library are a calling. The quotations from Rumi around the Şahenk Fine Arts Center, such as

“Let the beauty we love shine in what we do,” are a calling. The fresco of Hercules’s struggle between virtue and vice on the Palestra door, half way up the Lanterna stairs, is a calling. But what are we called to?

To answer that we need to move to the second distinctive characteristic at TASIS, which is duty. We do not seek to be our best selves only for the sake of reaching our potential. We do want to reach our potential, but doing so, while a worthy end, is not a final end in and of itself. At TASIS, we are called to be our best selves to be of some good in the world.

This tradition started with our founder, Mrs. Fleming, who said that “Caring is TASIS’s greatest strength” and reminded students that “Even small steps, but taken daily, start producing results—a kind word, a helping hand, an effort to speak another language, an offer to help someone small, weak, hurt, or sad.”

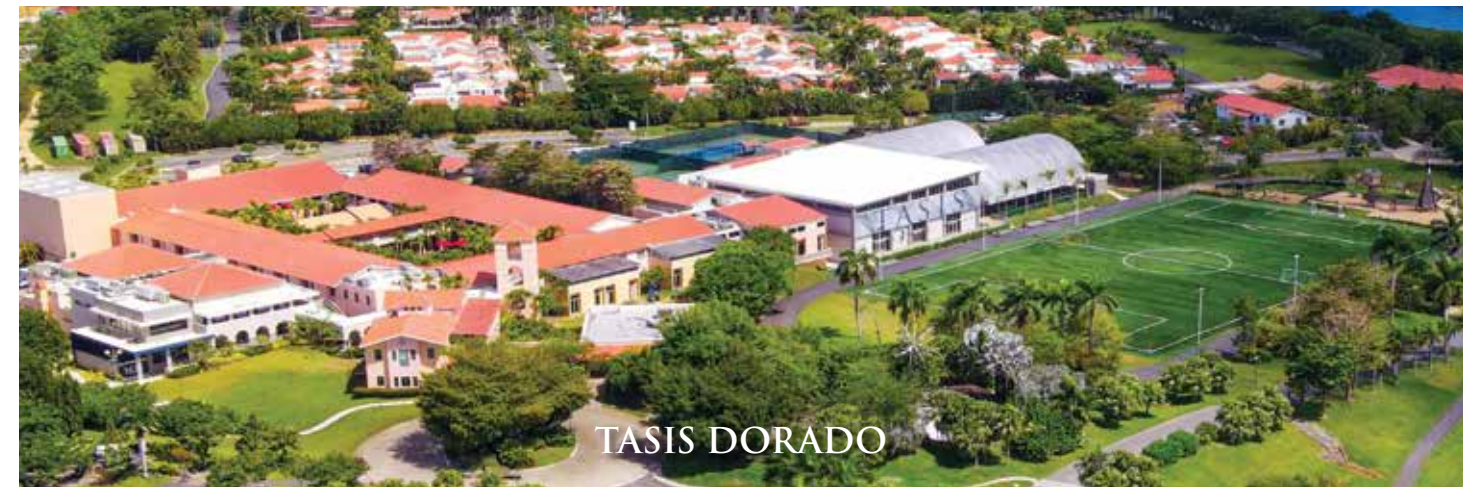
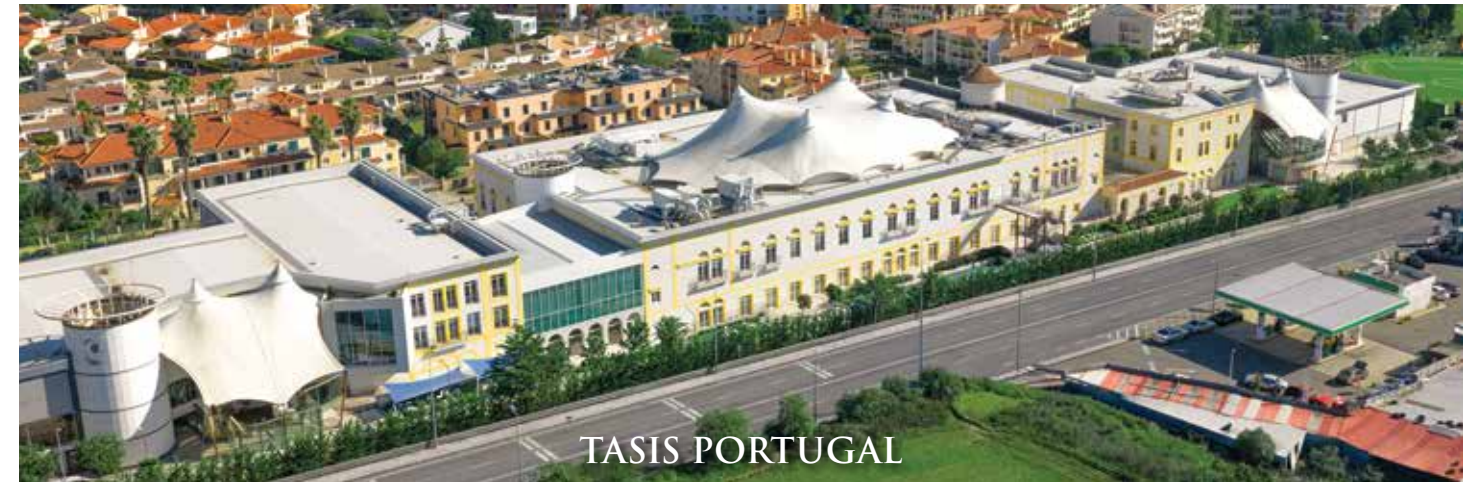
It occurs to me that the worthy goal of self-realization always carries the potential of reduction to the small and cramped trap of self-absorption. While this peril is not new, it has new accelerators in a world where so much of our lives is lived in a customizable, curated, and self-created digital environment. When TASIS asks us to realize our potential, it does not call us to a selfish, self-referential act; *TASIS calls us to our highest and best*

selves, ultimately to serve others. To go even further, TASIS believes that serving others and doing some good in the world is part and parcel with finding and realizing our best selves.

Our call to do some good in the world begins right here on campus, in the small but significant acts we can take towards each other every day. TASIS looks at all of us and says, “I see your best self and will help you find it, but I have a surprise for you. You will find it in the most unexpected of places—outside of yourself.”

It is the great hope of TASIS that its graduates will, through beauty and duty, through a calling to our best selves, find ways to serve others and do good in the world. This service does not have to bend the arc of history. It is also not an event, but a lifelong journey. It can take simple forms such as holding a door for someone or giving someone our undivided attention when that person is in need. TASIS’s great distinction is its ability to inspire in all of us the desire not only to find our best selves, but to give our best selves away, as a calling and a duty, in what ultimately will be our own unique and beautiful gift to the world.

PART II: THE TASIS ADVANTAGE



1. TISIS ENGLAND: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

By David Jepson, Director of Studies, TISIS Foundation



Historians can think about their subjects in various ways (see the History Department statement by Dr. Thomas Mauro PG '81 on pg. 70). Some prefer the “Great Person Theory” of history, viewing the past through the lenses of influential figures like Napoleon or Queen Elizabeth I. Others might emphasize material environments or social conditions. To relate the history of TISIS England in the first quarter of the 21st century, I will start with the categories of Leadership, Curricular Changes, and Buildings; and then I’ll try to tell The Story (aka the “inside scoop”).

LEADERSHIP

So far in the 21st century, nine individuals have served as TISIS England Headmaster (or Head of School, as it is now called). Three of them served in a temporary role, and Fernando Gonzalez did this twice. The number of headmasters in this time period suggests some instability, especially when contrasted with the school’s first 25 years, when there were just four headmasters.

TISIS England Headmasters since 1998

1998–2001 Dennis Manning

2001–2004 Barry Breen

2004–2005

Fernando Gonzalez (interim Head)

2005–2009 Jim Doran

2009–2010 Lyle Rigg (interim Head)

2010–2015 Michael McBrien

2015–2017 Mindy Hong

2017 Fernando Gonzalez (acting Head)

2017 David Hicks (acting Head)

2017–present Bryan Nixon

CURRICULAR CHANGES

TISIS England began the 21st century as a highly regarded American and international school in England with a strong and ever-improving educational program, both inside and outside of the classroom; and so it remains today.

2005

Approval of TISIS England’s application to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma, with IB classes beginning in the 2005–06 school year.

2010

First attempt to develop a public-facing, documented curriculum for grades 6–12, the Dynamic Academic Network at TISIS England, or DANTE (still accessible as of this writing at <https://acidale.on-rev.com/dante>)

2018

New multi-year, internet-based, school-wide documented curriculum project, based on the Atlas framework.

2020

Launch of a new sports tournament association for international schools called the International Schools Athletic Association (ISAA), of which TISIS England is a founding member.

BUILDINGS

Many of the school buildings were renovated or expanded during the time period, and the campus and grounds have continued to be lovingly maintained. However, if new buildings are an index of the confidence and financial health of the school, the 10-year gap after 2014 might be telling. Below are the new constructions and major refurbishments:

2009 Oak Court classrooms

2009 Vicarage Mews boarding house

2010

Magna Carta administration and office building

2011 Science Building

2014 Cloisters boarding house

2014

Tudor House Centre for Innovation, sponsored by Samsung

2024

Thorpe Court classrooms

THE STORY



Despite various geopolitical shocks in the first fifteen years of the 21st century, the good ship TASIS England found the sailing mostly steady and swift. Enrollment hovered between 650 and 750 students during the time period. New buildings were built, and the successful adoption of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program helped attract motivated students from all over the world. Students, teachers, and administrators came and went, taking with them a sense of gratitude for their remarkable educational experience, and leaving the school richer for their contributions. As an example which could be multiplied many times over, a parent wrote a letter to the TASIS England Board of Directors in 2015 thanking the school for the teachers' and administrators' "professionalism and personal approach," the "academically stretching" curriculum, and the "strong nurturing and supportive environment." For this parent's child, as well as for a host of others, the years spent studying at TASIS England were the best. It was a sentiment common in the early 21st century.

But trouble was on the way.

The Office for Standards in Education, known as Ofsted, was established in the UK in 1992 to institute a nationwide system of inspecting and reporting for schools. What this level of government regulation meant was not initially clear to some American administrators, for whom such government involvement was virtually inconceivable in the American independent school tradition, amounting to what would be considered statist intrusion.

TASIS England had its first Ofsted inspection in 2004, when the head inspector was reported to have said: "If I had a school-aged child, this is where I would want him to study." In the 2012 Ofsted inspection, TASIS England achieved ratings of "Good" in all areas and came close to "Outstanding" in several. When the next Ofsted inspection came around in May 2016, expectations were high for another strong result.

However, in 2015 Ofsted published its new "Common Inspection Framework," with updated guidance on Safeguarding. It's not clear that anyone at TASIS England noticed. Although the school earned "Good" ratings once again in the Teaching & Learning areas during the May 2016 inspection, most other areas, including Boarding, Safeguarding, and Leadership & Management were slammed with the rating of "Inadequate," triggering a serious crisis at the school. The consequences were calamitous: within a few months, the headmaster had resigned, and so had several Board members. A flood of faculty followed.

It has been said that the truest test of character is revealed by how someone responds to



adversity. This could be applied to institutions like schools, as well. The school's "character" would be some alchemical combination of legacy and ethos, leadership quality, and creative decision-making; and the school's "adversity" in 2016 was the collapse of its reputation following the devastating Ofsted inspection. How TASIS England responded to this severe blow would certainly determine the school's future—and whether it would have a future.

The first decision was to establish a measure of stability by bringing in veteran TASIS Board members Fernando Gonzalez and David Hicks to serve as acting headmasters for the remainder of the 2016–17 school year. The next step was to hire a large number of new

faculty to replace those who had left. Then the school needed a new headmaster for 2017–18, someone who would be capable of turning the ship around without sinking it. As it happened, the choice of Bryan Nixon for TASIS England's next headmaster was just exactly perfect.

In response to the Ofsted debacle, the school could have decided to mount some kind of resistance, to maintain its existing systems and procedures as much as possible, and to prioritize its "American" identity and heritage. Or the school could have welcomed the UK's bureaucratic educational inspection regime as the basis for a new identity as a "British school with an American curriculum." But under Bryan Nixon's leadership, TASIS England chose a different path.

Starting with a revised Mission Statement developed in the 2017–18 school year, the school in phoenix-like fashion signalled its intention to become the best TASIS school in England possible, under the circumstances. This meant retaining its distinctive, traditional programs and courses (e.g., the Community Service Program, the Senior Humanities graduation requirement, the Sports & Activities Program, the International Sections Program, etc.), while simultaneously aiming to excel at meeting and surpassing the UK government's numerous regulations and standards.

The bold strategy appeared to work. After passing all of Ofsted's requirements in 2017, the school switched to the Independent Schools Association (ISA) as its UK accrediting authority, and it easily passed its accreditation inspection in 2020 by the Council for International Schools (CIS) and the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC). In 2023, TASIS England was named the winner of ISA's Boarding School of the Year Award. In 2024, the CIS and NEASC preparatory report commended the school for its exemplary Safeguarding program, calling TASIS England "a flagship school" in this area. And with the school's reputation out of the ditch it had plunged into, enrollment numbers began climbing to a sustainable quantity. The school had handled the Covid-19 challenges in an exemplary way, emerging from the pandemic stronger than ever, and the future looked rosy once more.

But not so fast. The government wasn't finished with us yet. Wait. What?

In late 2024, the UK's newly-elected Labour government fulfilled a campaign promise by

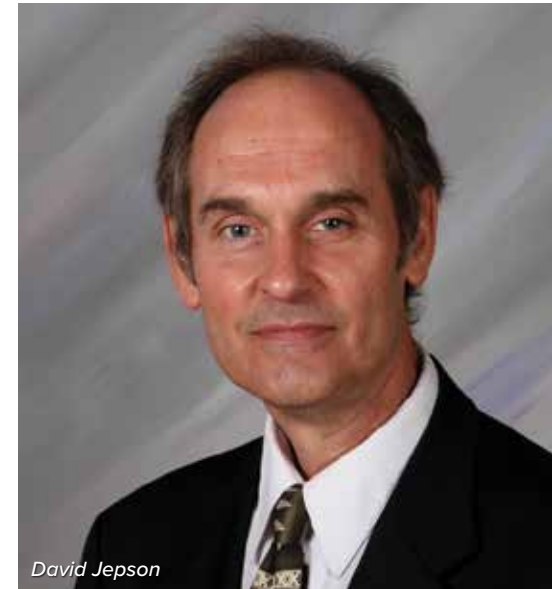
announcing that private school tuition would now be subject to the country's 20% national sales tax. Without any mitigating measures, tuition would have to be hiked by a fifth, beginning in January 2025. This new policy is obviously a major challenge for TASIS England, and as of this writing, its impact on enrolment is uncertain. Just when the school had finally escaped from Ofsted's shadow . . . oh well, time to roll up our sleeves, adopt Mrs Fleming's "can-do" spirit once again, and sort this one out.

There is no doubt that TASIS England's security provisions, safeguarding procedures, and boarding enhancements have transformed the campus in profound ways. But from a student's perspective, the school is a beautiful, well-run, safe, happy, vibrant educational community, with a healthy balance of freedom and order, and where the great majority of students are respectful, considerate, and motivated to achieve. Despite the slings, arrows, and kitchen sink that seem to have been hurled at the school in the 21st century, the culture of TASIS England remains proudly and gloriously that of a TASIS School.

David Jepson started teaching at TASIS England in 1979 as a teacher of English. Since then he has taught a variety of courses, such as AP Computer Science, Latin, IB Theory of Knowledge, and Senior Humanities, and he has served in several administrative roles, including Academic Dean, Director of Information Technology, and Head of Upper School. Since 2018, David has held the position of Director of Studies for the TASIS Foundation.

SENIOR HUMANITIES AT TASIS ENGLAND: A TASIS DISTINCTIVE

By David Jepson, Director of Studies, TASIS Foundation



Forty-four years ago, TASIS England inaugurated its first version of the Senior Humanities course. In the 1980 TASIS England yearbook, Mrs. Fleming wrote: "Humanity, human, humane—what large concepts conjured up by such small words! They have become almost the most significant words in the vocabulary of today, largely I believe, because there's so little that's humane in the actuality of today's world of violence." She went on to say: "The Humanities course, especially created for you, Seniors of 1980, hopes to challenge you to consider seriously the questions of value, obligation, and meaning, to make you aware of the vast wealth of moral thoughts and action to which as rational beings and educated persons, you are heirs."

In that first year, the course met after the normal school day and consisted primarily of watching and discussing the BBC film series *Civilisation* 1969 by Kenneth Clark. In subsequent years, however, the course was timetabled in the regular school day and made a graduation requirement. And, under the leadership of veteran teachers Marcia Page and Karl Christiansen, the film series was supplemented with other materials. Occasional adjustments and changes were made to the course curriculum over the years, and in the 2017–18 school year the current version of the course was set up by Humanities and Art teacher Laura House (who herself had been a student of Mrs. Page's).

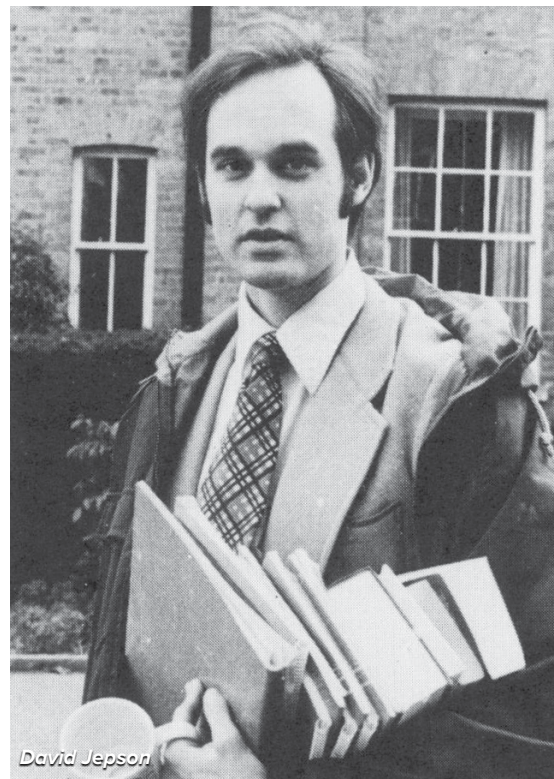
Senior Humanities today is organised around four topics, or primary values: Truth, Beauty, the Good, and Freedom. Each topic is the focus for one quarter of the school year. Study of each topic includes reading books and shorter works, both in print and online; watching movies, both on YouTube and on DVD; and writing, discussing, debating, and presenting. Course objectives involve building students' knowledge of some of the significant ideas and people central to Western Civilisation; developing their reading, writing, listening, speaking, collaborating, and thinking skills; and challenging them both to reflect on their learning and to connect ideas across disciplines and time periods.

The primary works studied in the Senior Humanities course are:

- Plato's *Apology* and "Allegory of the Cave"
- Descartes' *Meditations*
- *Looking at Pictures* by Susan Woodford
- *Man's Search for Meaning* by Victor Frankl
- *Judgement at Nuremberg*, a 1961 movie directed and produced by Stanley Kramer
- *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley

The works listed above should be common to all Senior Humanities classes, but there is teacher autonomy to select, arrange, and emphasise the course materials and to include additional poems, essays, stories, works of art, videos, etc., at the teacher's discretion. In the 2024–25 school year, for example, I supplemented the above works with, among others:

- "The Constitution of Knowledge," an essay by Jonathan Rauch based on his 2021 book *The Constitution of Knowledge: A Defense of Truth*
- Selections from *The Everlasting Man* by G.K. Chesterton (The Rigg Library at TASIS England has a special collection of books by and about Chesterton)
- *Sophie Scholl: The Final Days*, a 2005 movie about the anti-Nazi White Rose resistance movement in Munich, directed by Marc Rothmund
- Selections from *The Abolition of Man* by C.S. Lewis
- Video of the final movement of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, conducted by Leonard Bernstein in Berlin, 1989



It has been said that education at every level reflects our primary assumptions about the nature of humanity and reality (see Richard Weaver, *Visions of Order*, p. 120 and David V. Hicks, *Norms and Nobility*, p. 10). The Senior Humanities course directly explores and reveals these primary assumptions at TASIS, which are largely those of the Western humanistic tradition, such as "viewing humanity as responsible for the promotion and development of individuals, espousing the equal and inherent dignity of all human beings, and emphasising a concern for humans in relation to the world" (Wikipedia, "Humanism"). The structure of the Senior Humanities course—Truth, Beauty, the Good, and Freedom—reflects the pillars of this tradition.

2. TASIS PORTUGAL: OUT OF CRISIS, CREATION AND SUCCESS



A RECIPE FOR A PORTUGUESE SCHOOL

In fall 2020, in the midst of a global pandemic, the families of 256 young people in the Lisbon area entrusted their children to the newest member of the TASIS family. TASIS Portugal overcame a number of obstacles throughout the year and thrived, opening with the highest number of students ever at the beginning of a TASIS school. TASIS Portugal quickly created a deeply connected community of educators, parents, and students representing over 40 nationalities.

The TASIS Foundation had explored many possible locations for founding a new school, but the combination of factors were never totally aligned. It takes a beautiful place near a major cultural center, the right economic and political environment, and a positive market for multinational corporations and families seeking a high-quality education. TASIS Portugal's location in Sintra, the ancient cultural center of Portugal, was the ideal site.

Fernando Gonzalez, an educator who has spent over fifty years in the TASIS fold, was instrumental in the creation of the School. And while no founding of a TASIS school has been

easy, trying to move forward during a global pandemic, with initial resistance from the TASIS Foundation, was a considerable challenge. Selling a vision of an abandoned shopping mall as a beautiful, inspiring place for learning was no easy feat. But the Foundation Board trusted Fernando's instincts, so alongside longtime TASIS Foundation Board member David Hicks, Fernando spent many months laying the groundwork for a new school. Whether coordinating with regional builders or inspiring a new generation of families, the synergy between Fernando and David yielded profound achievements for the school. Of particular note is the time they spent with faculty who had no experience of the magic and privilege of working for a TASIS school, and inculcating these values was critical to the school's success. "Without support from the TASIS Portugal Board and the TASIS Foundation, it would have failed," Fernando says. And indeed, without David and Fernando's commitment and vision, there would be no TASIS Portugal.

Fernando remembers, "In classic TASIS fashion, we kept to our commitment and opened the School with a week of our TASIS Explores trips, an impromptu, miniature travel program designed by our creative administration and faculty." An additional three-week delay resulted in the School temporarily moving to a beautiful 12th-century monastery which forms part of the nearby Penha Longa Ritz Carlton Resort; "it reminded me of the year TASIS had to relocate to Andermatt, Switzerland while central heating was installed on campus," Fernando recalls. "Despite the logistical nightmare of setting up a new school in temporary quarters, parents were impressed

that we kept our word." And that they were able to temporarily set up the school in a five-star resort!

"TASIS Portugal began life as a shopping center," says Keith Chicquen, founding headmaster of TASIS Portugal (2020–2026), "and it will soon be remembered for its own unique journey to becoming the most beautiful school in the country—transformed, from beast to beauty." Thanks to innovative thinking from TASIS Master Architect David Mayernik alongside architects local to the area, the school has been able to repurpose much of the empty mall, transforming it into spaces modified for the school's needs that harmonize with the historic architecture of the Sintra region. Included are spacious areas for dining, study, and play. Classrooms are light and bright. Common learning spaces include libraries, study areas, and sofas. A cinema is now a state-of-the-art theater. Outdoor spaces include an amphitheater and areas for play and relaxation. And true to TASIS tradition, the school has married the new with the old and integrated several antique stone features such as stone arches, a bell tower, and a fountain.

"In creating this new school, we drew heavily upon the ideals that have made TASIS schools distinctive from their founding: truth, goodness, and beauty," Keith says. "Our rich curriculum and our exceptional faculty imbue in every child an appreciation for the diverse cultures of the world, the transformative genius of those who have come before them, and respect for the ideas of the past as they explore the possibilities of the future. This emphasis on the classical and the contemporary, of substantial, directed,

and focused learning, and the development of strong character and empathetic leadership, are what sets TASIS schools apart."

Families in the area are responding well to the TASIS culture, which has been skillfully imparted to the community under the leadership of Keith and his wife Aimee Gruber, Director of Enrollment Management and Marketing. "Our insistence on transparency, tradition, beauty, family values, sustainability, and above all, under-promising and over-delivering were welcome attributes not provided by our competitor schools. We have a very happy parent community which has spread the word of our success," Fernando says.

One of the highlights for teachers, students, and families is the innovative TASIS Speaks program, an annual school-wide rhetoric showcase that students prepare for throughout the year. Winners have their names etched on the Gonzalez Cup, named in Fernando's honor. "I was extremely touched by this gesture," Fernando says. "The talents exhibited by our students during dance and music recitals, theater productions, public speaking presentations, and violin concertos have been impressive and heartwarming. Having originally come to TASIS in 1972 to set up what Mrs Fleming wanted to be the best arts program in Europe, I am thrilled that the arts play a central part in our school."

It was the TASIS tradition and unique history that drew Keith to TASIS. "The entrepreneurial spirit and sheer audacity it took for someone to start an American boarding school in Europe in the 1950s fascinated us. The fact that this founder



Fernando Gonzalez in the beautiful stone arches at TASIS Portugal

was an American woman, in a time when women were not typically doing such things, made it even more extraordinary. Mrs. Fleming's memory inspired our new school in Portugal; though each TASIS school has a personality of its own, each transcends the ordinary in the quest to be a truly life-changing place for children to learn and grow. Mrs. Fleming would have expected no less."

The first graduating class of TASIS Portugal will complete their education in May 2026, and Fernando is proud of these students and what TASIS Portugal has built in the nascent years of this school. "We are proud of the intimate community we have built based on the four icons depicted in our crest—wisdom, knowledge, truth, and culture, as well as our three core values: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty."

A VISION REALIZED, A FUTURE IN MOTION

By Fernando Gonzalez and Keith Chicquen



TASIS Portugal Campus Master Plan

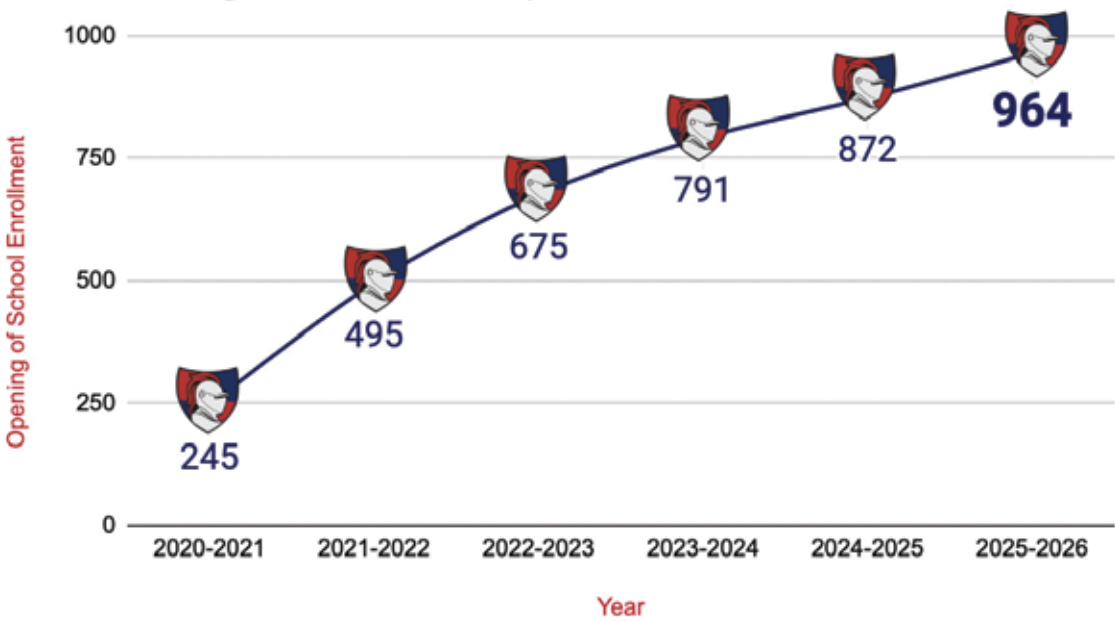
Where Innovation Meets Education:

Once a commercial center, now a state-of-the-art academic village—TASIS Portugal was founded by Fernando González, Chairman of the Board, with a bold vision. This transformation reflects the TASIS Foundation’s commitment to beauty, tradition, innovation, sustainability, and student-centered design, offering students a vibrant and challenging learning environment.

A School in Demand

In just six years, TASIS Portugal has become one of Europe’s most sought-after international schools. With 95% re-enrollment for the upcoming school year and projected 964 students in 2025–26. Its growth and success is largely due to the highly respected TASIS brand and its strong reputation for offering challenging academic programs within a caring, nurturing family-style community.

TASIS Portugal Enrollment Expansion



Class of 2026: Our First Graduates

The Class of 2026 marks a historic milestone in our school’s evolution. This group of 49 students blazed an impressive trail and our expectation is for a successful university acceptance record.

Global Roots, Local Heart

- 65+ nationalities
- 57+ languages spoken in family homes
- Deep integration of Portuguese language and culture

The annual International Day celebration in May brings everyone together to celebrate our diversity, inspiring and uniting the whole TASIS Portugal community. Our strong TPA adds a special dimension to our community and provides strong support to the School. In fact over €1,800,000 has been raised for diverse

capital projects which has enabled TASIS Portugal to accelerate its building campaign, which is highly unusual for such a young school. In addition, thanks to the generous support of one family, an innovative Faculty Village project is in progress to provide subsidized housing to attract and retain outstanding faculty.

Excellence in Curriculum

TASIS Portugal delivers an internationally respected education grounded in both rigor and relevance.

Core Knowledge “School of Distinction”

Only 9 worldwide,
First-ever international recipient

Cambridge International School

IGCSE curriculum followed in Grades 9–10

IB World School

Authorized in 2024–25,
First IBDP class in progress

MAP Assessments

Ensure personalized learning for every student.

University & Career Counseling

Begins in Grade 9 and continues through graduation

World-Class Faculty

Our diverse team brings global insight and pedagogical expertise to every classroom. We employ over 150 educators and staff who represent 20 nationalities, including Portugal, the US, the UK, South Africa, Canada, France, Brazil, and beyond. Average annual turnover has been between 8–10%, a low number for international schools.

A Campus Built for the Future

Our evolving campus reflects our belief in space as a catalyst for inspiration.

2025 Additions:

- New Grade 12 wing opened August 2025
- 3rd outdoor playing field
- Innovation Hub Planning: Robotics & Makerspace Labs
- New Gymnasium & Gallery
- Construction underway for a Performing & Visual Arts Center

Signature Programs

TASIS Speaks: An annual rhetoric showcase for students in grades 1–12, culminating in finalists from each grade vying for the coveted González Cup.

TASIS Guilds & Internships

Real-world learning and student-led inquiry.

Service Learning

Active partnerships with two local partner charities and global outreach.

Violin Program

An innovative program for all students aged 5–10.

House System

At TASIS Portugal, every student and staff member is a member of a House named after the historic palaces of Sintra, celebrating the rich cultural heritage of our region. Each House is represented by a mythical creature, blending tradition with imagination. Throughout the year, students compete in spirited academic, artistic, and athletic challenges for the coveted House Cup—a celebration of community, character, and friendly competition. To date, three of the four Houses have claimed the title.

Dance, Music, and Language Academies provide additional revenue streams.



Keith Chicquen and Aimee Gruber



The innovative TASIS Portugal campus



3. TASIS DORADO IN THE 21ST CENTURY: GOOD NEWS FROM PUERTO RICO

By Federico Stubbe, January 2025



Over the last two decades, TASIS Dorado has experienced remarkable growth and achievements, solidifying its position as the premier educational institution in Puerto Rico. From academic successes to campus developments, TASIS Dorado has consistently prioritized excellence and community engagement, positioning itself for a bright future. The mission of TASIS Dorado is to challenge and nurture students to pursue academic and personal excellence so that they become engaged global citizens and

innovative, selfless leaders. The most recent Strategic Plan centers on four key initiatives: fostering innovative learning in a changing world, cultivating curiosity and exploration beyond the classroom, nurturing a caring culture of engagement and solidarity, and growing a sustainable future by investing in people and places. Through effective governance, a visionary Board Chair, and strong school leadership, the future of TASIS Dorado is bright and we are reaching for the stars to ensure our students thrive!

Academic Success

TASIS Dorado's students continue to excel academically, with impressive college acceptances and national recognition. Seniors have been regularly admitted to prestigious universities such as Harvard, Princeton, Dartmouth, Cornell, MIT, UPenn and Georgetown, among other elite institutions. Student achievements include over 22 National Merit Scholarship Finalists, five US Presidential Scholars and 12 Semifinalists. The School's AP program remains robust, with 80% of students scoring 3 or above on their exams. For the second year in a row, TASIS Dorado has been recognized with the AP School Honor Roll Platinum with Access distinction, the highest award presented by the College Board. Additionally, the integration of cutting-edge programs and enhancements in the Core Knowledge curriculum has further enhanced the academic foundation for students across all grade levels, emphasizing critical thinking and interdisciplinary learning.

Notably, TASIS Dorado has expanded its focus on STEM education. With 33% of recent graduates pursuing STEM degrees and numerous students participating in international competitions, such as the International Math Olympiads (IMO) and the International Artificial Intelligence International Olympiads (IAIO), the School's commitment to fostering a culture of innovation is evident.

Campus Developments

The past few years have seen significant investments in campus infrastructure, creating an environment that supports academic and extracurricular excellence. Key developments include:

- Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL): Opened in 2023, CITL serves as a hub for inquiry, collaboration, and technological advancement, hosting workshops, virtual classrooms, and professional development sessions, among other innovative programs for faculty and students.

- Wellness and Athletics Center (WAC): Inaugurated in 2023 at a cost of \$12 million, this state-of-the-art facility has enhanced the School's athletic programs and wellness initiatives, fostering community pride and spirit.

- Planned Center for STEM Excellence: Set to open in 2026, this \$8 million project will house advanced STEM programs, aligning with TASIS Dorado's strategic goal of becoming a leader in science and technology education.

- Planned Music and Visual Arts Center (MAC): Set to open in 2026, this \$4 million project will house music and visual arts learning to enhance innovative and creative skills that complement the STEM Center and advance interdisciplinary STEAM programs across campus for all grades levels.

- Planned Faculty Residences: Envisioned as part of our focus on faculty excellence and growing a sustainable future by investing in people and places, these on-campus housing units aim to attract and retain top teaching talent and mentor teachers, further supporting the School's mission of academic excellence.

Endowment and Transformational Donations

TASIS Dorado has benefited greatly from substantial philanthropic contributions that have strengthened its financial position and propelled key initiatives. The School recently received a transformational \$22 million endowment gift from a generous family. This unrestricted gift will focus on enhancing teaching excellence and curriculum development. Additionally, a previous \$10 million gift funded by the same family has focused on professional development and faculty excellence. It has also helped pay down the low outstanding debt on the Wellness and Athletics Center. Finally, these and other donations are supporting the development of future faculty housing and new scholarship opportunities.

These contributions have allowed TASIS Dorado to increase its reserves, fund professional development for faculty, and launch ambitious new projects like Reaching for the Stars: The Campaign for STEAM Excellence.

Accreditation and Programs

TASIS Dorado maintains its accreditation with the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA), ensuring continuous improvement and adherence to high educational standards. In 2015, MSA recognized TASIS Dorado with a “Program of Distinction” Award in Early Childhood Education. TASIS Dorado is the first school in Puerto Rico and the second one worldwide to achieve this prestigious accomplishment. The School is pursuing additional distinctions, such as the MSA’s STEM Program of Distinction and the Responsible AI Learning (RAIL) endorsement, reflecting its commitment to innovative and ethical education.

The implementation of the Core Knowledge curriculum in Elementary and Middle School has strengthened foundational learning in both English and Spanish, preparing students for future academic success. Furthermore, the School’s emphasis on teaching excellence has been bolstered by a record \$20 million endowment, which funds professional development and curriculum enhancements.

Enrollment and Community

Enrollment at TASIS Dorado has remained strong, with a record high of 903 students in the 2024–2025 academic year. A \$250,000 annual gift from the Stubbe Family supports financial aid for students from local communities, ensuring a vibrant and inclusive student body. The current composition of local versus mainland and international families is about 55/45, and the School seeks to maintain strong matriculation of local students as part of its vision and foundational values, as well as the mission of fostering engaged global citizens. The School has become a magnet for families from all over the world that wish to relocate to Dorado. Additionally, TASIS Dorado has wholeheartedly embraced the TASIS Paideia as its preeminent value statement, successfully aligning parents with our mission, garnering their enthusiastic support, and enabling faculty to deeply understand and embody our vision and values.

Future Plans

As TASIS Dorado looks ahead, its priorities for 2025–2030 focus on raising the bar in teaching excellence, expanding curriculum offerings, and enhancing special programs in STEM, character education, and wellness. The School also continues to strengthen its collaboration

with TASIS sister schools and further its Legacy Project, preserving its history and values for future generations.

Central to these plans is the development of the Center for STEM Excellence and the Music and Visual Arts Center. The STEM facility will house advanced programs designed to inspire innovation and scientific discovery. The Music and Visual Arts Center will provide dedicated spaces for our vibrant music and arts programs, thereby fostering greater creativity and artistic expression by strengthening and expanding our music and visual arts facilities. These are distinctive features of TASIS Schools. Together, these projects underscore TASIS Dorado’s holistic approach to education, blending rigorous academics with dynamic co-curricular programs.

With a strong foundation built over the past 23 years, TASIS Dorado is poised to continue its trajectory of excellence, innovation, and community impact, shaping the leaders of tomorrow.

President of the Board of Directors Federico Stubbe, Jr. is President of PRISA Group, a family-owned developer and builder of green residential communities and resorts, hospitality, and gaming projects in Puerto Rico and Florida. Under his mentor father Friedel Stubbe’s leadership, the firm has developed residential projects with over 3,000 residential units. Mr. Stubbe embraces his father’s development philosophies and core values and has leveraged them to fuel PRISA Group’s expansion into other business ventures. PRISA Group projects include Sabanera Dorado, Gran Vista Toa Alta, the Dorado Beach Resort, four Hyatt Select Hotels, as well as future



developments such as J.W. Marriott Dorado Beach, an entertainment center in San Juan, and a hospital in Dorado in association with a renowned US brand. Mr. Stubbe, Jr. is currently Director of the Home Builders Association in Puerto Rico, Vice President of the TASIS Dorado Educational Foundation, Inc. Board, a member of the Young Presidents Organization, and above all, a proud parent, with his wife Wanda, of Hanna '25, Katerina '27 and Federico '31. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Georgetown University and MBA and Civil Engineering degrees from MIT’s Sloan School of Management.

ALL-SCHOOL FACTS

TASIS THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN SWITZERLAND

Founded 1956

Boarding and Day School

118 Educators, 79% hold advanced degrees

Pre-K–12 & Postgraduate

Total Enrollment: 727

Elementary School: 206

Middle School: 126

High School: 395

Boarding Students: 241 (grades 6–Postgraduate)

Day Students: 486

Nationalities: 70

Core Knowledge

Singapore Math

American Diploma

Advanced Placement

International Baccalaureate

English as an Additional Language Program

Bilingual instruction in English and Italian for students in grades 1–9

English is the primary language of instruction for grades 10–12

Global Service Program

Academic Travel

TASIS Speaker Series

21,000+ alumni worldwide (all programs)

TASIS ENGLAND

Founded 1976

Boarding and Day school

117 Educators, 60% hold advanced degrees

Pre-K–12

Total Enrollment: 650

Boarding: 250

Nationalities: 70

Core Knowledge

Singapore Math

Advanced Placement

International Baccalaureate

TASIS Leadership Academy

Travel and Expeditions

TASIS PORTUGAL

Founded 2020

Day School

120 Educators, 80% hold advanced degrees

Pre-K–12

Total Enrollment: 959

Nationalities: 64

Early Learning Center for Pre-K and K

Core Knowledge

Singapore Math

International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE)

International Baccalaureate

TASIS DORADO

Founded 2002

Day School

120 Educators, 53% hold advanced degrees

Pre-K–12

Total Enrollment: 900

Nationalities: 35

Core Knowledge

Elementary Innovation Sciences Program

CUB/BEAR (K–5) program & Leadership Academy (3–5)

Sustainable Future Leadership Program

Secondary Project-based Learning

TASIS Dorado Leadership Academy

Global Online Academy

THE TASIS *Paideia*

Paideia is the ancient Greek word meaning both education and culture. It fits TASIS, a consortium of educational institutions and programs sharing a common *culture* rooted in classical ideas and Western civilization. Whereas much of modern education appears to be about advancing new theories of utilitarian learning and providing settings for utopian social experiments, the TASIS *paideia* begins with a profound respect for the past and for traditional ways of doing things. Although research and theory are important in our quest for knowledge, we believe that they are only helpful in the field of education when matched with experience.

We believe, therefore, that schools should conserve and convey the rich inheritance of intellectual, social, moral, religious and artistic wisdom of generations and centuries. This wisdom provides each young person with the best path to his highest human potential and a happy, productive and virtuous life. A school without the traditional virtues of civilization – faith, hope and charity; prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude – may be elegant on the outside and impressive in its academic accomplishments, but its influence will ultimately be pernicious and foolish.

To preserve this *paideia*, the Founder and the Foundation Board have outlined the following standards and principles to guide future Directors and Administrators in their policy and decision-making and to provide some context for the rules and regulations already presented in the Schools’ Student and Faculty Handbooks:

1.

We teach good manners by modeling them. We strive for courteous behavior at all times, even under stress. “Manners maketh man,” wrote William Wykham, founder of Winchester College. We agree. Courtesy keeps us – teachers and students, adults and children – happy, purposeful and poised, able to show the respect for one another we ought to feel, and quick to treat one another with cordial dignity. Courtesy is the necessary ground for our communal and scholarly lives.

2.

Beauty matters. Graceful settings; inspired architecture. Paintings on walls, candles and flowers on tables, fire in fireplaces, fine dress and a comely appearance. A well-crafted essay, a curving corner kick in soccer, a canvas on display at the Arts Festival, and a solo at the Christmas concert. In beauty we show our regard for one another and for ourselves. It is a form of courtesy. In beauty we also show our desire for the truth, the two being mystically bound together in our cultural inheritance.

3.

“Let knowledge grow from more to more,” wrote Tennyson, “but more of reverence in us dwell.” TASIS is non-sectarian; however, it respects and encourages the religious beliefs and observances of its students and families, and it seeks to support a due reverence for God and His creation in all its students. It acknowledges and teaches the profound influence of Judeo-Christian beliefs and practices on Western civilization.

4.

TASIS supports and promotes traditional family values. TASIS expects its teachers and administrators to assume in loco parentis responsibility for students, to model traditional moral character and to respect the ethos of the School as expounded in this *Paideia*. Those who occupy School accommodation, whether or not on campus, are required to lead their private lives accordingly. TASIS regards sex as a private matter, but those who by their words or deeds make their sexual or other private acts public have stepped over this line and forfeited their “right” to privacy and so invite public consequences. In all cases, the public standing of the School, especially in the eyes of parents and in the educational world, will be a determining factor.

5.

TASIS recognizes the importance of teaching fitness and healthy habits of living. This recognition requires that the Schools take special care in offering nutritious meals, insisting upon timely sleeping arrangements, and encouraging students to participate in a wide range of outdoor and physical activities. It also means proscribing certain types of activities and substances. For example, illegal and recreational drugs are not tolerated at TASIS.

6.

Much of what makes TASIS distinctive results from the entrepreneurial style of its founder, whose ability to see and seize opportunities and to respond to needs with alacrity is legendary. Thanks to her, TASIS enjoys a culture that encourages and rewards initiative and creativity. This may account for some of the American “style” of the schools. In addition to individual initiative and creativity, this culture demands an acceptance of risk, flexibility, patience, a positive attitude, and perseverance.

7.

Committed to academic excellence, TASIS has made its natural and cultural setting in Europe its classroom. This is the schools’ signature. Consequently, the priority of TASIS’ academic and travel programs is a deep and informed appreciation for European culture and history and its worldwide influences. No school can do everything, although many schools are awash in curricular confusion and constituent politics by trying to please every personal preference and cultural demand. Not TASIS.

We, the Founder and Directors of TASIS, believe it is our responsibility to define what our schools stand for and what habits of heart and mind they exist to preserve and pass on to the young. This is *paideia*, the soul of any true school’s mission. Consequently, we have herein stated what we believe is right and proper for TASIS. We do not want our institution’s *paideia* to be diluted or compromised; therefore, we insist that those who govern our schools, administer them, and teach in them share these values, not because we demand obedience to our norms, but because we want only those who already share these norms to join us in these roles at TASIS.

THE TASIS QUEST

By Prof. Michael D. Aeschliman, Ph.D.

Those of us who have been involved with TASIS for many years are aware of its unusually appealing qualities as a school, set of schools, and educational organization, but it is sometimes hard to get the right words to describe these qualities or any essence to which they all relate. Thus, the need has been felt for this volume and its predecessor, *In Pursuit of Excellence* (2009), also ably edited by Reni Scheifele, and others such as *Beauty and Duty: Persons, Accomplishments, and Events in the Making of the TASIS Schools* (2022), edited by Lynn Aeschliman and focusing on long-serving TASIS personalities such as Fernando Gonzalez.

Of course the large-scale personality of TASIS Founder Mary Crist Fleming (1910–2009), “MCF,” always comes to mind, and rightly: she had great charm, humor, elegance, courtesy, and **panache**; but she also had something even greater, to an exalted degree, a sympathy for her fellow human beings—students, teachers, colleagues, employees—that was a true instantiation of the chief Christian virtue, loving-kindness. She loved American musical comedies (one was commissioned, written, and performed to honor her), and one she liked was *Brigadoon* (1947), which appeared as a film in 1954, just about the time she was getting ready to leave on her own European quest. It was about a marvelous little Scottish town that appears only one day every hundred years. She hoped that TASIS would keep alive the wonder and excitement that she felt in

starting and building it, and not disappear as a ‘brief, shining moment’ like *Brigadoon* or *Camelot*. And it has.

Although it is important in our confusing age to reiterate the over-arching educational devotion of TASIS to goodness, truth, and beauty, it is also good to acknowledge the truth that the schools have always had to fulfill a **utilitarian** criterion—recruiting and serving students of many kinds and in effect surviving in the educational marketplace. It has been—is—far from easy, and being ‘nonprofit’ does not mean that the schools have an assured future survival: they don’t. The world is full of change and risk. (*Camelot* and *Brigadoon* disappeared.)

But one facet of the TASIS ethos that we believe helps make the schools more likely to survive, and survive as positive and vital, is the fostering of a kind of traditional but energetic liberty in students and teachers alike. This kind of exertion can be seen as contrasting with and offsetting two equal and opposite negative temptations, tendencies, and defects. The first temptation or defect is the kind of mentally **centripetal** force whose logical, illiberal extreme is indoctrination, which exists in educational systems all over the world. But in the TASIS world of many variables and many moving parts, the second defect is more insidious and less obvious: a kind of **centrifugal** ‘liberation’ from common factors, from tradition, from ethics, from

a civilizing rational idiom. Indoctrination, conformity, and lack of diversity have never really been TASIS problems; rather, the need within TASIS has always been for recognition of a common humanity, beyond variables such as ethnicity, nationality, language, sex, or race—beyond particularities, without undervaluing or annihilating them. Ideally, this dynamic balance between centripetal and centrifugal forces gives the TASIS schools an orbit that respects liberty while also shaping ethical individuals and an ethical community, in light of the traditional trajectory and momentum of civilization itself.

In a time when individuals and institutions are under the stress of disintegrating concepts and forces, often alluringly and profitably promoted, TASIS has strived with some success to maintain its fidelity to an ethos, internal and partly intuitive, that makes the schools forces for virtue, as well as for educational effectiveness more narrowly defined. Neither nonprofit status nor good intentions guarantees the schools’ survival and prosperity, which is partly up to everyone reading this book who shares the noble intentions of the schools’ founder and directors.



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FROM TRADITION
to TOMORROW

Adapting to Change in Challenging Times

2006-2026