

# ACS Welcomes You

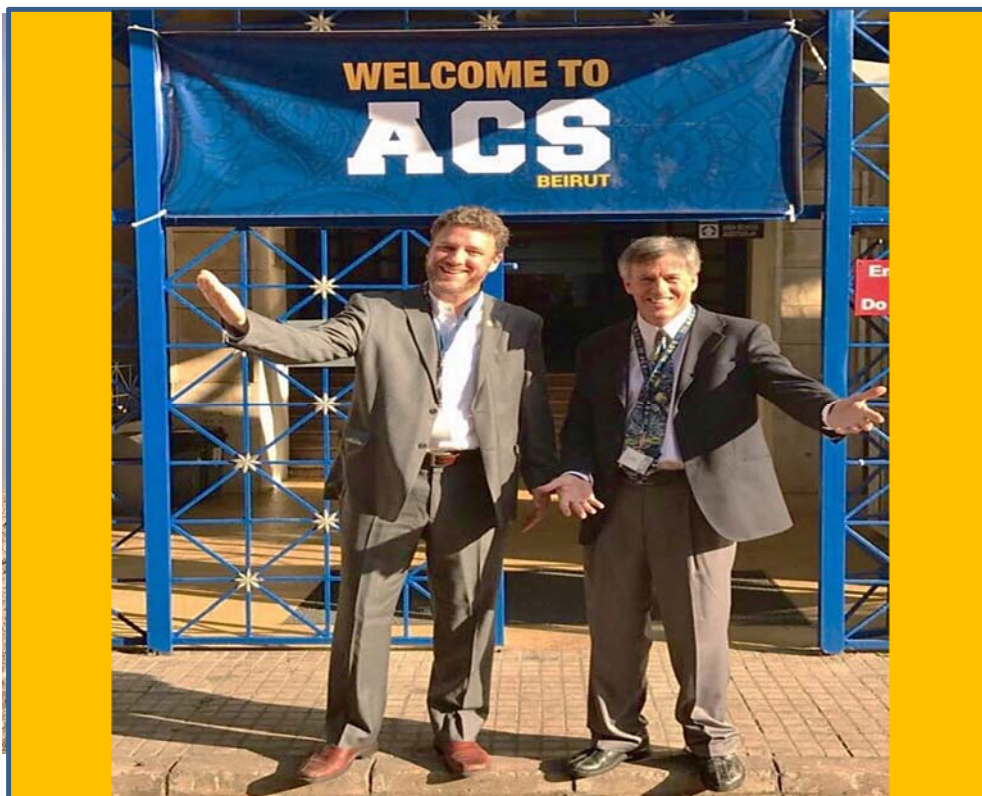


AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Volume 7 Issue 1; March 26, 2019

Welcome to our first issue of the welcoming committee newsletter. In these newsletters, we will try to answer most of your questions. We will also assign you a buddy soon; please feel free to contact them with your questions as well.

## From Our Head of School



On behalf of the entire ACS Community, I am so excited to have you that much closer to being on our campus, in our country, and, most importantly, with the children that you will inspire and help grow. As each of you know, we have been serving children in Beirut as an American school for over 114 years, and today we serve over 60 nationalities. But ACS is more than that: we are a symbol of the success of American education here, we represent the polarity of long-standing traditions and 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and

learning can apply, and we are a happy, engaging place for young people to take leaps and learn to have an impact in their own communities.

Our Welcoming Committee has the charge of assisting with your transition from where you are now to Beirut and ACS. As a group of staff and faculty, some of us have lived here a few years and others for their entire life; we all call ACS and Lebanon “home” and we all bring different perspectives and knowledge of how to help you settle in. Whether you are interested in what you should bring, what to look forward to on the weekends, or just opinions on the best za’atar manouche in town, we are all eager to help.

Over the next few months, you will hear from our Welcoming Committee, our Human Resources department and your colleagues. Please feel free to ask any questions that may help you with your transition. We are looking forward to being all together in August!



### *Important*

- . We need your photo and a short introductory paragraph for our next issue.
- . Please note that entry to Lebanon is not granted to people with passports showing **Israeli visas or stamps**. If this applies to you, please get a new passport immediately.
- . Your first paycheck will be available on **September 30, 2019**.
- . Arrival date at Beirut should be between **August 16, 2019 and August 17, 2019**.

# ACS Welcomes You

## From Our Deputy Head of School



**Karim Abu Haydar**

I would like to welcome you to ACS at Beirut. The ACS community is a wonderful mix of people that are committed to working together to provide our students a rich educational experience. Lebanon and Beirut have a great deal to offer in the fine arts, delicious cuisines from around the world, the outdoors and history that is over 5000 years old. I look forward to meeting you in August.

## Meet Your Divisional Leadership

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the ACS Beirut community. I am in my third year here as the High School Principal, and I think that--like me--you will quickly come to love the combination of stimulating professional environment afforded by the school rounded out with the cosmopolitan culture of life in the neighborhoods of Beirut and larger Lebanon. Whether collaboration or cuisine, visible learning or visits to vineyards and Roman ruins, ACS faculty enjoy a heady mix of intellectual and social stimuli that we are excited to introduce to you.

With me here in Beirut is my wife Julie, one of the Elementary School Counselors. Our daughter, Hannah, is in her final year at University of Southern California and our son, John, is in his first year at a-university-he-has-yet-to-decide-upon-by-the-time-of-this-writing, the first stretch living full-time in the United States after growing up overseas for both. Prior to Beirut, we have been a part of international communities in Caracas, Mumbai, Sydney, Bangkok and Cairo. Welcome again!



**Rob Allison**  
HS Principal

Hello, and welcome to the ACS community! I'm sure you're going to love both the school and the city. The coming year will be my third at ACS and my second as the Associate Principal as I transition from my initial here role as an English teacher. In the past I have served as a principal in Cairo and have taught English at the University of Montana and at American School of Sao Paulo and the American School of Bombay, among other places. Outside of work, I enjoy running and golfing, both of which are easy to do here.

When I arrived at ACS two years ago, I felt welcome in the school community immediately and was at home in the city, too, as the school planned a full set of weekend activities to introduce new faculty to the various glories of Beirut and the surrounding areas. I look forward to enjoying these outings with you and to getting to know you in a professional capacity as we begin the new academic year.



**Joe Campana**  
HS Associate Principal

My name is Andrew Buckman and I will be arriving at ACS as the new Middle School Principal in August. I have been an educator for 23 years, 19 of those in international schools. Currently, I am the Secondary School Principal at Tashkent International School in Uzbekistan where we have been living as a family for eight years. As an educator, I am passionate about learning and the well-being of children in schools, especially teenagers and adolescents. For young people to learn effectively, they must feel happy, safe and connected and I believe this must be a priority in schools.

My wife, Siobhan, will join ACS as the Middle School Drama teacher; Evie, my eldest daughter will enroll in Grade 9 and Isobel, my youngest, will be in Grade 6. My family and I are all very excited to make this move, we look forward to meeting and becoming a part of the school community, and diving into life in a totally new and exciting part of the world. The dynamic energy of the city, the Mediterranean Sea, and the warm hospitality of the Lebanese people are some of the things we are especially looking forward to.



**Andrew Buckman**  
MS Principal

# ACS Welcomes You

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**Medeha Zahid**  
**MS Assistant Principal**

Medeha is coming from the United Nations International School of Hanoi. During her six years at UNIS, she has served in various roles including teacher and Head of Department for Middle and High School Mathematics, Enrichment Coach, and co-chair for school accreditation. She began her teaching career in inner-city New York and taught there for six years before moving overseas. Medeha has a Bachelors Degree from the University of California, Berkeley, a Masters in Teaching from the City University of New York, and a Masters in International School Administration from Endicott College. Medeha is from the United States and will be arriving with her husband, Nathan van der Most.

Welcome to ACS Beirut! My name is Damon Rickett and I am the Elementary School Principal. I am incredibly excited that you will be joining our caring, professional team of educators and I look forward to welcoming you personally very soon. I will be starting my fifth year at ACS and I am proud to share that my wife and daughters are also members of our ACS community. My family and I come to Lebanon by way of Vietnam, Mexico and Bulgaria. While in Lebanon, I've continued to explore my personal passions of photography and SCUBA diving. Lebanon has provided a rich cultural experience and an exciting environment in which to learn and grow as an educator. I am looking forward growing professionally and exploring this amazing country alongside you.



**Damon Rickett**  
**ES Principal**



**Alexis Redmond**  
**ES Assistant Principal**

My name is Alexis Redmond and I am originally from California. While I claim San Francisco as home, I have spent the last decade working and living internationally. Professionally, I hold an administrative license and Masters Degree in Education from the University of California, Santa Barbara. I focused on student independence, educational ownership, personal agency, and group dynamics. It is these themes that continue to be the cornerstone of the partnerships I build in my work life.

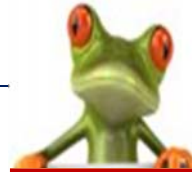
Personally, I am a dedicated book nerd who enjoys live music, good eats, traveling, and staying active. I am always up to try new things and recently tried my hand at jujitsu and Pilates.

Welcome to the Early Years Division at ACS! You'll be a great addition to a team whose members are very professional, dynamic and passionate about children and their learning, and I trust that you are, too. Together we will embark on a learning journey as we dialogue and communicate to build relationships with children, parents and colleagues. This journey will be joyful as it reflects the Early Years vision, "Nothing without Joy" for everyone. I look forward to meeting you in August!



**Sawsan Yaseen**  
**EY Principal**

# ACS Welcomes You



## Finances & Your First Pay Check

- Allowances for all overseas hires will be received during orientation week. This is the only money you will receive before pay day of September 30.
- Beirut can be an expensive city, depending on the types of items you purchase. Getting your apartment set up, buying groceries, stocking your new home with the essentials and generally being out and about with friends, for the almost two months, is costly.
- As of last year, singles reported spending around an additional \$1,500 USD.
- In Lebanon, both USD and Lebanese pounds are accepted in all places.
- You are entitled to ask for an advance in salary from the Business Office. It is expected that you may need to do this. (jtanas@acs.edu.lb)

**YOUR ALLOWANCE  
WILL BE THE ONLY  
MONEY YOU WILL  
RECEIVE BEFORE PAY  
DAY. YOU WILL  
RECEIVE YOUR  
FIRST PAYCHECK  
ON SEPTEMBER  
30, 2019.**

## Travel Arrangements

Jocelyne, our HR Manager along with our HR Officer Ghada Temsah, will be handling your travel arrangements.

To facilitate your transition, kindly advise Jocelyne of your departure city (home city) and specify airport name so we may reserve and book your flight to Beirut.

This is especially important if you are traveling with pets, as we are familiar with the pet friendly airlines.



**Raouche or Pigeon Rock**

## Shipping

There are two options that most people choose to ship to Lebanon.

- For most people we recommend that you bring your belongings with you on the airplane as extra luggage. Please check with the airline in regards to luggage allowance before departure.
- If you have a larger shipment, we recommend that you contact the HR manager Jocelyne Diab Bitar at [jdiabbitar@acs.edu.lb](mailto:jdiabbitar@acs.edu.lb)



## Reservation guidelines:

- Arrival date at Beirut should be around August 16 - 17, 2019. Keep in mind that orientation begins on August 19, 2019.
- Jocelyne or Ghada will advise your flight information and arrange for a member of our welcoming committee to meet you at the airport.
- If you will be traveling with a spouse/dependent they will need a copy of their passport.
- If you are traveling with a pet, let Jocelyne or Ghada know ASAP, so they can choose an airline that is pet friendly.

# ACS Welcomes You

## Your Mail

Whenever you are settled in Lebanon, you may forward your mail to either of the following addresses. People usually do not have mail delivered to their flat.

American Community School Beirut  
PO Box 11- 8129  
Riad el-Solh, Beirut, 1107-2260 Lebanon

This will get delivered to the school's PO Box; we empty the PO Box 2 to 3 times a week

OR

If you'd rather have it delivered to the school's post office station, simply use:

American Community School Beirut,  
67 Nigeria Street, Jal al-Bahr, Ras Beirut  
Beirut, Lebanon 2035-8003

You may use the ACS NY office address for important mail such as bank statements, financial statements etc. Only small (5"x 9") light weight (up to 2 oz) envelopes are forwarded weekly via courier to Beirut. Bulk mail, parcels, catalogues, pamphlets etc. will not be forwarded.

American Community School  
3 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza 8th floor  
New York, New York 10017

There are services now that ship items to Lebanon for a charge. If you are an active online shopper, you can get your own Aramex box for a fee. Remember custom charges.



**Kaak Seller on the Corniche**



**Early 20th Century Beirut house**



**Scotch & Baby  
Mimi**



Cats and Beirut are "symbiotic." The city provides a safe haven to them and cats give us a reminder of spontaneity and playfulness. These particular cats, "Mimi", "Fluffy", "Asfar", "Scotch" & "Baby" belong to the school and, yes, they have been spayed and had all their vaccinations with regular visits to the vet. In Lebanon, cats are found everywhere, however there are several nonprofit organizations that can help in sheltering and relocating cats and dogs.

We, at ACS, have helped in moving some of our cats to lovely homes and families. For dog lovers, they are becoming more prevalent in the country and more accepted. There is limited green space to walk your dog around the city especially if your dog is not used to concrete pavements.

Some of our school buildings do not allow pets, so if you are planning on bringing an animal or adopting one please make sure your apartment is in one of the designated "pet apartments."

## CATS and Other PETS

**Fluffy**



**Asfar**



# ACS Welcomes You

## Pre-Work Visa/Work permit/residency requirements

Make sure the visa is a work visa and not a tourist visa and have the equivalent of \$40 dollars in LBP ready at the Visa desk.

If you are an ACS Foreign hire, please read the following carefully.

- ACS personnel cannot enter the baggage or passport area. Upon your arrival at the Beirut Airport, people with a work visa will get a work visa entry stamp on their passport. The work visa stamp fee is approximately US \$40 and must be paid in cash. During orientation you will be reimbursed upon presenting your receipt.

- A school representative will await your arrival at the greeting area and will verify that a work visa stamp is complete on your passport.
- Please look for a sign that reads ACS and your name on it.
- **Based on the work visa stamp on your passport, the process of granting your work and residence permit will take approximately 10 weeks after your first entry into Lebanon. During this time you cannot make travel plans to leave the country.**
- Medical tests will be completed with the assistance the school nurse & the Expat/Ministry Affairs Coordinator.
- Photos will be taken at school with the assistance of the Expat/Ministry Affairs Coordinator.
- Other legal documents will be provided by the school.
- Your passport and all other original documents will be attached to the residency application, submitted and retained by the security office for a period of time.

The process of granting the work and residence permit will take approximately 10 weeks.

During this time your passport will **not** be in your possession.

**Do not make travel plans to leave the country during this period of time.**

Entry to Lebanon is not granted to people with passports showing Israeli visas or stamps.

## Visa/residency requirements for accompanying dependents and/or wives.

Potter at Souq al Tayeb



In Lebanon, men may sponsor their non-working wives and children but women cannot sponsor non-working husbands. They can sponsor their children.

Visa/residency requirements for dependents and non-working wives are as follows:

- US, Canadian and European citizens are some of the nationalities who are offered a free tourist visa upon arrival at the Beirut Airport.
- An accompanying nonworking wife and/or child(ren) will apply for a yearly residency after residency has been granted to the husband/father.
- **The original marriage certificate is required for granting the residency of a non-working wife and the original birth certificate is required to obtain the residency for accompanying children.**

# ACS Welcomes You

## Meet Your ACS Welcoming Committee

Starting at the beginning of each New Year, the Welcoming Committee starts to meet to plan for your arrival in Beirut and at ACS. We want to make sure your transition to living and working in Lebanon is a wonderful experience.

- Keep this issue! You will be met by someone from the welcoming committee and your principal in the greeting area after you pick up your baggage and go through customs. Our pictures are in the issue so you can recognize us as we look for you.
- We are also anxious to meet all of you too! If you could e-mail a photo and a blurb about yourself by the 8<sup>th</sup> of April (for our next newsletter) it would be appreciated. You can e-mail them to [jdiabbitar@acs.edu.lb](mailto:jdiabbitar@acs.edu.lb).

### Karim



I am Karim Abu-Haydar and would like to welcome you to ACS at Beirut. Beirut and Lebanon have a great deal to offer. I enjoy attending the various locally developed theater productions, and a variety of music performances such as the El-Bustan and Beit-El-Dine concert series. The outdoors is another wonderful outlet when in Lebanon.

### Nour

Welcome to ACS! My name is Nour Arkadan and next year will be my fourth year at ACS. I am one of two ES learning support specialists. I grew up in the United States, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. I currently live in Lebanon with my sister. My parents and sisters moved to Colorado a few years ago. As a Lebanese-American, I feel that ACS combines both world perfectly! Lebanon has a nice blend of culture, history, and nature. I enjoy exploring new areas, walking around the city, going on road trips, trying new restaurants, and exploring new hiking trails. I love the constant liveliness of Beirut, people are out and about at most hours of the day making the city feel safe and welcoming. Please feel free to email me with any questions. Looking forward to meeting you all! [narkadan@acs.edu.lb](mailto:narkadan@acs.edu.lb)



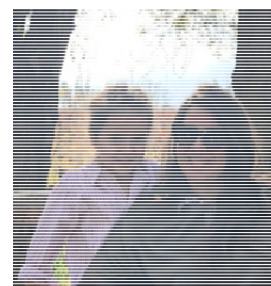
### Nada



My name is Nada Aoun. I'm from Lebanon. I am the Expat/Ministry Affaires/Personnel Coordinator at ACS. I have worked at ACS since 1984 handling several jobs including visas, work and residence permits for all foreign hire and their dependents. Commitment towards my job and colleagues is my priority. I enjoy sightseeing and have visited several countries but I have never seen a country like Lebanon. This country combines endless opportunities of fun, beach, nature and outdoor activities and an unforgettable time awaits you.

### Nicole

Hello! My name is Nicole Kassab and I am the facilities and operations administrative assistant. I would like to welcome you to a very unique and very beautiful country: LEBANON. I am confident you will enjoy its rich cultural diversity, its beautiful weather, the diverse beautiful sceneries and rich diverse delicious cuisine. I am also confident that you will experience ACS as a community and a family.



# ACS Welcomes You

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## Jocelyne



My name is Jocelyne Diab Bitar and I am the Human Resources Manager at ACS Beirut and the chair of the Welcoming Committee. I will be facilitating your transition to Beirut and to ACS. If you need anything just email me and I am more than happy to help. I love Beirut and I know that you will love it too!

## Chelsea

Hello! Welcome to ACS and Beirut! My name is Chelsea and I am finishing up my first year in Beirut. This is my second international post and I have been abroad for 6 years. I moved from Costa Rica to Beirut last year and was welcomed so warmly into the country and I hope to offer you the same warm welcome. Lebanon is full of amazing things to do. This year I have enjoyed visiting many beautiful beaches, snowboarding in the mountains, eating the most delicious food, meeting wonderful people, hiking in the cedar reserve, visiting the farmer's market in the souks and many other amazing things! You will find plenty to do in Lebanon and I hope you will enjoy it as much as I have. Another plus about living here is the proximity to many other countries. There are many wonderful travel opportunities nearby. Good luck as you begin to prepare for your move, please feel free to reach out if you have any questions. [cbarger@acs.edu.lb](mailto:cbarger@acs.edu.lb)



## Nada



Hello, my name is Nada – which means the morning dew in Arabic and “nothing” in Spanish. I am the upper school nurse and part of the school’s disaster team and coordinator of the “Disaster Squad” in HS. I am a member of several international school nurses’ associations and I represented ACS in several international nursing conferences. We are a group who loves to travel together and plan lots of trips inside and outside Lebanon throughout the year for the ACS community. We’ve been to Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Russia, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Serbia, Belgium, Norway, Sweden & France, Morocco and going to Germany & Luxembourg during Easter break this year. I love to cook and eager to teach you some of our Lebanese mezza dishes. I love animals and I have a 12 year old Himalayan cat who thinks he is a natural born tiger and a 2 year old white Turkish Angora added to my zoo. I am delighted to be part of this group to welcome all of you into our ACS family.

## Dania



Hello! My name is Dania Karame, I am the Middle School Learning Support Specialist, I have been working at ACS since 2001. I am Lebanese, originally from the City of Tripoli which is in the north of Lebanon, but have been living in Beirut for a while. I enjoy reading, traveling, trying new cuisines and getting acquainted with different cultures. I am looking forward to meeting you all in August. Welcome to beautiful Beirut and to ACS.



# ACS Welcomes You

## Nisrine



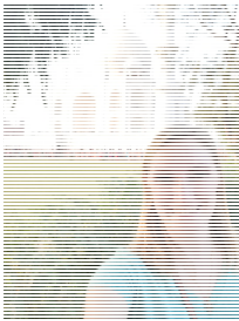
Hello all! Welcome to ACS and Beirut! My name is Nisrine Shehadeh and I am finishing up my second year at ACS as a KG1 teacher in the Early Years division. I am originally from Syria, and grew up in the US and Egypt. This is my 5<sup>th</sup> year living in Beirut, a city that I have grown to love and appreciate for all that it has to offer. I especially love the sunny weather – perfect for strolls along the Mediterranean – and the endless selection of delicious food. There are tons of opportunities to be out in nature and discover Lebanon’s beautiful terrain, and the city itself offers many cultural events. I’m looking forward to meeting you all and helping you discover and connect to this fun, vibrant and multi-layered city. Feel free to email me with any questions you might have! [nshehadeh@acs.edu.lb](mailto:nshehadeh@acs.edu.lb)

## Iman



Welcome to ACS! This is my 7<sup>th</sup> year at the school. I currently teach in Early Years (KG2) and I help out with the high school and middle school athletic competitions. I can’t see myself working in any other school in Lebanon. I grew up in Jordan, Tunisia, and Kuwait before finding my way back to Lebanon. I enjoy traveling, reading, and taking long walks in the city. Lebanon offers a wide variety of outdoor activities and a delicious cuisine. If there is anything you need or have any question, don’t hesitate to e-mail me or to stop by my classroom. I can’t wait to meet all of you in August!

## Christine



Hello! Welcome to ACS Beirut! My name is Christine Hadfield. I am a third grade teacher and will be entering my second year at ACS next year. Prior to moving to Beirut, I lived and taught in Connecticut. This was my first experience in international teaching and I have loved it. Beirut is a fun city filled with things to do. There is something for everyone here such as great restaurants, views, nightlife, volleyball, yoga, hiking, and so much more. The best part about Lebanon is the easy accessibility to the mountains, the sea, and even historical sights. I am looking forward to meeting you! Please feel free to email me with any questions you may have ([chadfield@acs.edu.lb](mailto:chadfield@acs.edu.lb)).

Hello, and welcome to ACS! My name is Eric Bonnett and this is my second year at ACS. I am originally from NH but I have been overseas for the past 6 years. I am the middle school and high school band teacher. In addition to teaching band, I also teach high school jazz band and after school community orchestra. Before coming to Beirut, I taught music in Kuwait for 5 years. Both ACS and Beirut are very special places. There is so much beautiful heritage here in Beirut and so many wonderful places to explore. As an arts teacher, I have found this magical vibrancy to the arts scene here in Beirut. Everything from art shows, to concerts, to museums and much more. There is always so much going and so much to see. What I love about Beirut is how there is always something to do or something to see. There are so many wonderful shops, restaurants and neighborhoods to explore, and I am constantly discovering new places. If you any questions please don’t hesitate to contact me, and welcome again!!

## Eric



# ACS Welcomes You

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**Manal**



My name is Manal El Kaii, by quick introduction I have joined the ACS family this year as the Administrative Assistant in the Athletics & Activities department. I have been involved in sports my entire life and in most of my career life. I believe that sports is an ideal school for life. The skills learned through sports and physical education such as fair-play, cooperation, confidence, and respect are foundation to the holistic development of the youth of today.

Hi! I'm Jana, and I am going into my second year as a High School English teacher at ACS, and my 9<sup>th</sup> year teaching. This is my first international teaching post after living in Phoenix, AZ most of my life.

When I'm not in the classroom I like to seek out new and interesting restaurants and coffee shops. I am really looking forward to meeting you and showing you all ACS and Beirut has to offer.

**Jana**



**Tom**



Beirut is my home and I know that you will come to love Lebanon as I have. Most special here are my Lebanese colleagues, hikes and drives in the mountains, and *hummus* and *moutabbal*. My name is Tom Pederson and I have been a HS math teacher at ACS since 2005. I have been teaching in overseas schools for more than 25 years. Minnesota is my home in the States.

**Julie**



Hello! My name is Julie Allison and next year I will be in my fourth year at ACS. I am currently one of two ES counselors at ACS and I have also worked in Alaska, Japan, Egypt, Thailand, Australia, India, and Venezuela. I am here with my husband, Rob. Our daughter, Hannah, is a junior at USC in California and is currently studying abroad in Santiago, Chile. Our son, John, will graduate from ACS this year and will attend university in the US. I love walking around the city, but also enjoy the hiking trails, beaches, and historical sites. There is so much to do here and I definitely have a lot left to explore. Feel free to email me with any questions that you might have. Welcome! [jjallison@acs.edu.lb](mailto:jjallison@acs.edu.lb)

# ACS Welcomes You

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## Audra



Hello! My name is Audra and I teach biology in the high school at ACS. My husband, Rex, is the technology integration specialist in elementary. This is my first year at ACS and I look forward to welcoming you with as warm of a welcome as we had when we arrived.

Rex and I grew up in Texas, but have been overseas now for 11 years, teaching in China and Ukraine before coming to Lebanon. I have never worked in a community of teachers so warm and open. Welcome to Lebanon!

## Robb

Hello, and welcome to Beirut! My name is Robb Wainwright and I completing my second year as an international teacher. I am looking forward to my second year at 3rd grade for the 2019-2020 school year. I am joined by my wife Stefanie, an ACS lower school PE teacher, on this daunting, yet incredible learning experience. I have thoroughly enjoyed exploring, hiking, learning, and making Beirut home. I hope to pass on some tidbits that will help make your transition to Beirut an equally awesome experience! Feel free to reach out with any questions and wonderings! ([rwainwright@acs.edu.lb](mailto:rwainwright@acs.edu.lb))



## Stefanie



Greetings! My name is Stefanie Wainwright and next year will be my third year teaching ES PE at ACS Beirut. My husband, Robb, and I made the leap to international teaching 2 years ago quite by accident and have not looked back. Prior to living in Beirut, we lived the suburban life in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. area, where I worked at an independent school for nearly 12 years. I am excited to welcome you to ACS and all that Lebanon has to offer! Lebanon has a diverse mix of activities for you to experience. From hiking, skiing, and snowshoeing, to hanging out at the beach or visiting an art installation or a happening night club; Lebanon has something for everyone. We have really enjoyed the outdoor activities, the Saturday Souks, the diverse food options, and the fact that Beirut is a very walkable city. Put your favorite comfy shoes on and get ready to move! We have also benefited by the proximity to the Beirut airport and Lebanon's geographic location by enjoying vacations in Jordan, Dubai, Slovenia, Greece, and even Kenya. Have a question? Do not hesitate to reach out! I am here to smooth your transition to ACS and Beirut. See you soon!