



ACS MATTERS

The American Community School at Beirut Newsletter | Spring 2014



in this issue

ACS students get 'caught reading'	3
Seniors ready for take-off	12-13
Parents and Faculty Fun-Raise the Night Away	14-15

*Celebrating
the Legacy of
Catherine C. Bashshur*

Head of School Speaks

Hamilton Clark, Head of School

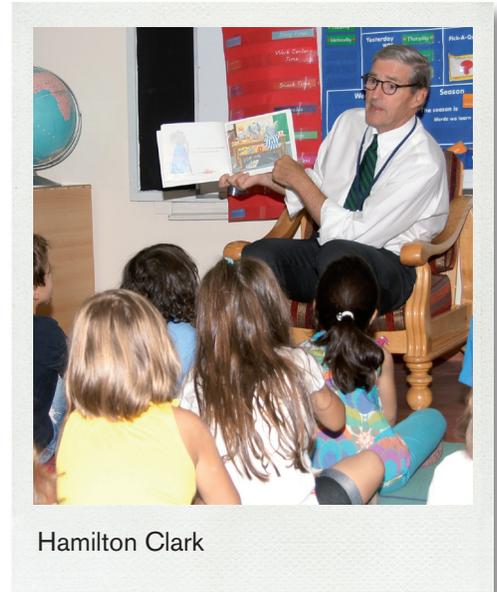
This issue of ACS Matters focuses on two important themes: remembering our indomitable former Head of School Catherine Bashshur, and sharing the spirit and energy of our school-wide literacy campaign. To capture these stories for you, we have enlisted the help of two former ACS students and teachers. Maria Bashshur Abunnasr (Class of 1984 and an ACS history teacher from 1993-1999 and 2000-2006) writes poignantly about her mother. Nick Boke (ACS student 1957-1961 and a recently retired English teacher) describes our efforts to kick off our literacy campaign and to sustain its momentum. I am grateful to both Maria and Nick for sharing their talents and passion for ACS with all of us, and I know that you will enjoy reading their words.

Sadly, I only had the opportunity to meet Catherine Bashshur one time in the last month of her life when she was very sick. Even then however, I could sense her strength and determination, her grace, and her love for children and for our school. Since that time I have enjoyed hearing numerous Catherine Bashshur stories, and you will find some of the best of these in the pages that follow. I am convinced that Mrs. Bashshur saved our school, and that we would not exist today were it not for her courage and determination to keep us open during the darkest days of the Civil War. She is the stuff of legends and I am delighted that so much of this issue of ACS Matters is devoted to remembering and memorializing this most important woman in the history of our school.

I am delighted also to reintroduce Nick Boke to ACS. Nick taught at ACS from 2008-2012, but continues to write and to travel. With his experience in teaching reading and writing at ACS, he was the perfect choice to catalog our current efforts to promote literacy at school. Nick appreciates that learning good English in Beirut is particularly challenging. Whether Arabic is the first or second language for our students, most of our students do not have full command of it, many never learned to write Arabic, and that makes acquisition of a second language infinitely harder. Fluency in English will only come with very hard work, lots of support at home, and our continued efforts in school. English fluency is also helped along with full command of another language, and we will be pushing our students forward and striving for literacy in Arabic and French as well. Literacy is imperative for success in the 21st century, and I am asking our faculty to raise the bar and help all of our students to strive for excellence in all their communication skills.

Finally, I would simply add that this has been a busy and productive year at school. We have had an excellent senior class leading us forward and our students have been enormously productive at every grade level. We continue to make a difference locally with our community service to Lebanon and to the increasingly numerous and needy population of Syrian refugees. Community service is pervasive at ACS, and we are doing a good job of living out our new mission, "ACS empowers students to solve problems with creativity and integrity, to lead well balanced lives, and to serve Lebanon and the world community with understanding and compassion."

I am delighted to be with you at ACS, and I am grateful for your ongoing support for our school.



Hamilton Clark

ACS Students Get Caught Reading

Nicholas Boke, ACS Former Teacher and Alumnus



If you think reading—the traditional kind, involving books and magazine articles, heated debates, intimate discussions and life-altering revelations—seems a thing of the past, don't tell the students and faculty at ACS.

Responding to Headmaster Hamilton Clark's December, 2013, proposal to initiate an English Language Campaign at ACS, administrators, teachers and students from Early Years all the way to the High School have responded actively and enthusiastically to the initiative.

Eleventh grader Wael Awada leapt at the opportunity to help develop the project: "The cause itself meant a lot to me, being a reader myself, so that's why I joined." Elementary School Teacher Librarian Jinan Chehade developed a list of ways parents could increase their children's interest in reading. Phil Wendell, who'll take over the Middle School Principalship next year, says the Middle School has been inspired by the initiative, commenting that, "literature circles, online blogging, author projects, debates, author talks, reflective writings, and buddy readings" are among the strategies and activities now in the works.

It didn't take long for the twenty-member Literacy Committee with its representatives from throughout the school to get things going. They agreed to devote the week of March 24 to seeing how many people—students, teachers, coaches and parents—could "Get Caught Reading."

It would have been hard to find a nook or cranny on the ACS campus where somebody wasn't reading and talking about what they were reading. And, by all accounts, enjoying doing the reading and the talking.

Let's start with the High School. The student-led group formed in response to the announcement of the initiative surveyed students to see what they would like to read, then led an assembly to launch the program. Tenth and eleventh graders read and discussed works by J. R. R. Tolkien, John Green and George Orwell. Ninth and twelfth graders read to elementary-school students.

High School English Department Chair Hayat Shehab recalls her feelings: "When the High School literacy campaign kicked off, hesitant and spluttering, I watched the most

book-fearing students groaningly leave the gym to engage in reading and discussion activities. I... was more than a little skeptical, but found myself pleasantly surprised (flabbergasted, in fact, if you must know) when I visited a number of 'reading rooms' and observed that students were calmly and intelligently talking...about books, and without the guidance or intervention of teachers."

English teachers went on to provide their students with a wide range of literacy opportunities from sustained silent reading to comparing essays about rock musicians with their music to an emphasis on self-selected books.

The Middle School injected literacy activities into many—sometimes unexpected—settings.

Sixth and seventh grade English students engaged in a "reading exchange" with Early Years students. Arabic and French students took more time for reading and giving presentations about what they were reading.

Math students read news stories with some connection to math, as well as writing "proofs that involve analysis of a given situation and the verification of its truth value." Sixth-grade science students read science-related articles. Seventh-grade social-studies students read and wrote about child labor, while eighth-graders investigated the Crusades.

Even Physical Education teachers got involved. Success on a physically demanding scavenger hunt relied on reading and writing activities at each station and culminated in a soccer match for everyone!



In keeping with the theme of the week, photos of Middle School students and faculty who'd been "caught reading" were prominently displayed on a bulletin board.

Early Years and the Elementary School students, in addition to buddy-reading and talking about books with middle- and high-school students, engaged in a variety of other activities.

For EY students, reading with parents or siblings on "Read at Home Day" on Tuesday—a holiday—was followed by reading with friends and Elementary School buddies and picking a classroom-favorite book.

On Friday the students attended an assembly that began with everyone singing a song about reading. Then Principal Sawsan Yaseen read Mirra Ginsberg's *The Clay Boy* aloud, accompanied by projections of pictures from the book. This was followed by each class sharing a poster that described its favorite book.

The Elementary School's activities ran the gamut, including book talks and book reviews, a buddy-reading day, a parent-information session and letters by students to their parents and ... of course ... a display showing students "caught reading."

The work has just begun. It fits well with the EY's commitment to the Reggio Emilia approach, which includes regular reading, journaling, and parental involvement, and the Elementary School's long-standing and deeply-rooted commitment to improving student literacy. The Middle School anticipates continuing to find ways to expand students' involvement with reading. High School student Awada hopes that reading will continue to be discussed and may even "spread reading outside ACS by donating books and such."

Sawsan looks forward to continuing the work, noting that "we'll continue to meet as small groups, and as a community, to foster the love of reading in children through daily story-telling, reading, reflection and dialogue," as well as reaching out to parents and offering a wide range of engaging reading-related opportunities.

Incoming Elementary School Principal Diann Osterland is excited about the project, since it fits so well with her desire to "empower and inspire each child to acquire the knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to strive for personal excellence."

Acknowledging the complexity of literacy and literacy instruction, Wendell says that the Middle School "is committed to working on establishing a culture of literacy as we design and plan literacy strategies that will be crucial in promoting all components of literacy throughout the school."

Incoming High School Principal Robert Evans is firmly committed to the program, believing that it will be of great benefit to the students, commenting that "No matter, which program the student is enrolled in... we will include targeted reading and writing in every lesson [to] ensure our students are immersed in a rigorous, literacy-based curriculum."

Headmaster Clark is pleased with the first steps ACS has taken to ensure that engaging, effective literacy instruction is school-wide, saying, "My sense was that as many of our students aspire to attend the most selective colleges and universities, we owe it to them to equip them with the requisite skills.... The faculty has gotten behind this and my hope is that every teacher at every level in every discipline is thinking about how to raise the bar for student literacy."

Members of the ACS School-wide Literacy Committee

Salwa Madbak, EY Arabic Teacher

Ingrid Thornton, EY & ES Music Teacher
 Maysa Boubess, Grade 1 Homeroom Teacher, ES Literacy Curriculum Mentor
 Anne-Marie Campos Infantino, Grade 2 Homeroom Teacher
 Alex Ray, ES Academic Support
 Claire Chalhoub, MS English Facilitator
 Tim Livingston, MS English Teacher
 Jared Peet, HS Social Studies Teacher

Else Saoud, HS Social Studies Head of Department
 Hayat Shehab, HS English Head of Department
 Andrea Norman, Head Librarian
 Tracie Landry, HS IT Facilitator
 Midge Livingston, MS IT Facilitator
 Jinane Chehade, EY & ES Teacher Librarian
 Hanadi Dayyeh, Arabic Coordinator
 Hamilton Clark, Headmaster

Tips for Reading to Children

What follows is a list of suggestions from several ACS literacy experts for ways parents can involve themselves in the process of creating fluent readers who enjoy the act of reading.

--Early Years Principal Sawsan Yaseen calls our attention to the words of noted children's author Cynthia Rylant, who says:

I have come to realize that ... reading that makes us awake to our lives. All of us know what it is to open a good book and be opened by a good book., because by reading, we see more, hear more, feel more, think more, learn more. It's like breathing some new kind of air."

--Elementary School Library Teacher Jinan Chehade notes that reluctant readers usually face one of two sets of problems: They may lack good reading skills, speed, and the ability to comprehend; or they may have the skills but lack motivation and interest.

--In-coming Middle School Principal Phil Wendell hopes to engage parents in the complex process of literacy engagement, which, he says, "requires a multi-faceted approach in helping our students grow in their literacy skills that will enable them to achieve their potential and build a better society.... [by] establishing a culture of literacy," which parental support can enhance.

--High School English Department Chair Hayat Shehab says, "There is only so much we can do in school and in the classroom to build a reading community.... [W]hat happens in the classroom is, sadly, not always enough... Parents could play a valuable role in this regardless of their children's ages."

What Can Parents Do?

Model Reading

When your kids don't see you channel-hopping or playing on your device or feverishly glued to your Facebook page, and when instead they watch you smiling, sighing and sobbing in front of your book, this cannot fail to influence them. There should be books in every room in the house. If you're not a reader, your child most likely won't be one.

Read to Your Children Regularly

Make your read-aloud time comfortable and intimate, a time when both of you can snuggle around a good book. Read to your child with a level of "concentration and care in which you both lose yourselves and find yourselves.... Reading aloud and talking about books is part of the education of the heart" says internationally recognized literacy expert Lucy Calkins.

Have Fun Together

Read what you enjoy. If you don't like what you are reading, your child won't. Sing, tell stories (from your life), read or recite poetry, share non-fiction information (like "I read that papa seahorse carries the babies in his pouch until ready to be born! What do you think of that?"). Take into consideration their listening and emotional levels but, ultimately, read what feels right for you and your child.

Share Their Experiences

Read what your child is reading for school or for pleasure, and talk about it with your child. Encourage your child to read to a younger sibling. Find an outlet for your child to "publish" a book review. Suggest books from movies he or she has enjoyed. Listen to audio books in the car. Read on different platforms, such as iPad, kindle, cereal boxes, street signs, newspapers, magazines, cooking recipes, birthday cards, etc. Take your child to bookstores. Give books as gifts to your child and his or her friends--this shows that you value reading.

Chem 10 Learners' Interactive Learning Experiences!

Dania Maaliki Tarabishi, Science Department Head,
Chemistry Teacher (IB & 10), Grade 12 Coordinator
and Georges Abchee, grade 10 student

"Our goal is to nurture and inspire scientific curiosity among all of our students by providing them with interesting, challenging programs and activities, which increase their science curiosity and understanding of the world." ACS Science Department Mission Statement

In living up to the mission, learners in the chemistry 10 class are asked throughout the year to volunteer for 5-10 minute presentations on a chemistry topic of interest to them, one student each cycle. Learners enjoy these moments that are completely theirs, moments in which they take charge and share with their peers their interest in and knowledge of the

subject. The presentation requirements are that the topics have to be chemistry related and have to be genuinely and clearly interesting to them. The learners are required to prepare well, have a good understanding of the presented topic, and pay careful attention to the requirements of a good presentation (eye contact, voice projection, good articulation, no reading from paper or screen, attract the attention of the audience, enthusiasm, clarity, etcetera).

Here is what Georges Abchee mentions about these presentations:

"In chemistry class we follow a very methodical strain of learning, but individually we can all deviate in our own ways. One of those ways for each of us to show our ability is through our individual presentations. Each person is assigned a date and everything is left to choose, including what to talk about, from what perspective, whether or not we will give a demonstration, and whether or not it will be interactive. We each make our own terms and do what we will, within very few constraints, and that is self-teaching at its finest. I specifically am interested in many fields of science, and those may not lie within our lessons. So when an opportunity arises to learn and present about a subject that interests me, I take it. During my first presentation, the first of the year, I had a generally good feedback to my presentation. But the one comment I heard repeatedly was, "How do you know so much"? The simple answer is that I am interested in the subject. I read and read about my subject, and because it is interesting to me, I take pride in my presentation. Although the project is only supposed to

be between 5 and 10 minutes long, my Q and A session took over 15 minutes. I had the answers to every question because when I read about it, I was interested. I guess the point I am trying to make is that when you are interested, you will learn more efficiently, and the information will stick with you for a while, and that is what our presentations are. They are the epitome of our interest in chemistry, a moment to be free and learn what we want, not necessarily what the course wants."

This is a good testimony of our mission in action...



ACS 2nd Annual Lower School Fitness Food Drive

Lucy Frembgen, ES PE Teacher

Lower School students participated in the 2nd annual fitness food drive, which combines fitness and community service. The event celebrates "Healthy Heart Month", where students learn and develop their fitness and the importance of healthy hearts.

Students in Early Years and 1st and 2nd grade participated in the "Pump it Up" work-out with food cans, which included a fitness warm-up walk, a strength-building can lifting work-out, the cha-cha slide dance and finished with a cool-down walk around the beautiful AUB track. All food cans were donated to the Al Layan Syrian refugee camp, which ACS helps to support through community service.

ACS 3rd, 4th and 5th graders did a "walk-run-a-thon" to raise money for the Syrian refugee camp and school. They got sponsors to pledge 1,000 LBP for each lap they completed in 30 minutes. The students did a phenomenal job in the walk-run around the AUB track and many students ran the entire 30 minutes! Over \$7,000 USD was raised by the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students. This money will be spent to provide support for the school at the refugee camp.

It was a beautiful day at the AUB track and parents, teachers and students enjoyed the work-out and each other's company. After the work-out, all students received a healthy snack and a "Healthy Heart" wrist band.

The ES student council organized a food drive to support this event and over 1200 food cans were collected. In addition to the food cans, 66 bags of salt, sugar and flour, 88 containers of cheese, and 78 tea/coffee boxes were divided up for family food boxes to be delivered to families in the Al Layan refugee camp.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this day a success, and hopefully it will become an ACS tradition!



Grade 11 Science Ecology Field Trip

Yasmina Tabbal, Grade 11 IB student



The 11th grade Science Ecology trip was an enjoyable day spent exploring outdoor science activities. All students in grade 11 (all programs) got to spend a day n ACS's land in Deir El Qamar in damp, cool weather that made everything seem greener. After being split into groups, we went around in stations to execute experiments that helped us understand how concepts we learn in the classroom are applied in nature. We performed various experiments such as testing water and soil, estimating the population of different plant species, and exploring the relationship between force and distance by throwing balls at different angles. After lunch and some downtime spent playing Ping-Pong and rugby, we went on a hike and found different insects and fossils.

This trip was a great bonding experience, for the activities required us to work patiently and cooperatively with our classmates. We also got to spend some time applying what we learned in our science classes to real life.

Lebanon's First Lego League (FLL) Event!

Claire Chalhoub, Middle School English Teacher



FLL is known around the globe not only for what they do (the Robot Game and Project), but also for how they do it, with Core Values at the heart. In the early fall, FLL releases a challenge which is based on a real world scientific topic. Teams of up to ten children, with one adult coach, participate in the challenge by programming an autonomous robot to score points on a themed playing field (Robot Game), developing a solution to a problem they have identified (Project), all guided by the FLL Core Values. Teams may then choose to attend an official tournament, hosted by one of our FIRST LEGO League Partners.

The theme of this year's challenge was "Nature's Fury". Worldwide, over 200,000 children ages 9 to 16 from over 70 countries explored this theme by studying the awe-inspiring storms, quakes, and waves that we call natural disasters. Teams discovered how disaster response programs reacted when intense natural events met with the places people live, work, and play in. Past challenges have been based on topics such as nanotechnology, climate, quality of life for the handicapped population, and transportation. By designing challenges around such topics, participants are exposed to potential career paths within a chosen challenge topic, in addition to solidifying the STEM principles that naturally come from participating in a robotics program. Team members also learn valuable life and employment skills which will benefit them no matter which career path they choose.

Under the guidance of Mrs. Talar Partiyani, a self-selected group of middle school students had the privilege to participate this year in the First Lego League Lebanon event held at AUB on Saturday, March 8th. Under their team name, "The ACS Knights", our middle-schoolers performed well on the various tasks that were part of the program, including Core Values, the project, and robot design. ACS was one of the few teams participating in this event for the first time, and competed against 39 other teams from schools including "Tic Tac Toe" from Hasan Kasir High School, and "Fast and Curious" from Cedars Cultural School, the two winning teams. Among the ACS participants were Fawaz Al Maasarani, Ali Pour Hakimi, Michael Geday, Samy Hamdellah, Kareem Dalloul, Kareem Wali, Andrew Fouladfar, Riad Saab, Danny Eter, Liana Safa, Alex Assaad, Ameer Abiad and Jad Ghorayeb.

A major part of the FLL program is the "Core Values" event, in which ACS scored its highest. This round of judging looks to see if students have learned that friendly competition and mutual gain are not separate goals, and that helping one another is the foundation of teamwork. It also emphasizes the team's community outreach - that is, the team's effort to work with their local community on spreading the theme of the competition and how they are working on solving issues for a better tomorrow for us all. Teams who also showed gracious professionalism were more likely to score high on this part of the competition by being a cohesive team, respecting one another and their elders, the other teams, dividing tasks to finish faster, and spreading the warning of natural disasters in their school and community.



In the end, ACS students were ranked 18 out of 39 teams, and were very pleased with the results. Students saw the event as a great learning experience, and they plan on putting in more effort and being even better prepared next year. So, keep an eye out for the "ACS Knights" team at next year's competition!

Tamanna Project

Ayah Fadlallah, Rawan Farage, Sarah Ibrahim, Tania Kombarji,
Grade 12 Students, International Baccalaureate

Tamanna is an organization that works to make the wishes of young children with terminal illness come true. As a CAS project for the IB Diploma, we formed a group and worked in coordination with Tamanna. We worked hard to raise over \$5000 through donations, bake sales, and a talent show called Wish Upon A Star.

Wish Upon A Star was an event that featured talented performances from three schools: ACS, IC and CPF, as well as a hysterical bit by the famous Lebanese comedian Nemr Abou Nassar. During the event, we brought a young girl whose wish was to receive a laptop. She watched the show and we brought her on stage and gave her a brand new laptop, along with a few toys. She was very happy after her wish came true. Over 300 people attended this event and we received great feedback about it.

After successfully raising enough money, we used it to make the wishes of two different children come true. The first was a 10-year-old girl who wished for a VIP shopping spree and a tablet. We picked the girl up in a luxurious limousine and took her on a trip to LeMall where she went shopping, had a makeover, had a photo-shoot and got a tablet. The second wish was of a young girl who wanted a newly decorated bedroom. After careful discussion with the girl, a beautiful bedroom was gifted to her. We went to her house when the room was ready and surprised her with cake, toys and balloons.

Both young girls were ecstatic that their wishes came true, and we greatly enjoyed working to help make this happen. It was a wonderful accomplishment to see their beautiful smiles.



If Every Soul Did Sing...

Yasmina Tabbal, Grade 11, International Baccalaureate

Giving Back

Mustafa Jachi, Grade 12 LB and NHS member

"Reaching out" was the theme in the National Honors Society (NHS) this year. We decided to extend the use of our funds and manpower to whichever community service group(s) showed the most drive in their respective causes. This allowed NHS to provide aid to the community and highlight the idea of service, one of the four main pillars of the organization. In doing so, we exercised another pillar, leadership. NHS students are known for their take-charge attitude, and this was a chance to build a new bridge between the smaller and larger student groups. Also, the funds in the NHS treasury are always allocated towards good causes, something ACS is not short on and could always use help with. During this trial run, we received requests from three groups, and scheduled presentations and interviews with the heads of these groups. The first was Yasmina Tabbal and her Green Thumb initiative, with the idea to plant trees nearby ACS to add diverse greenery to the school's surroundings. The second was Natalie Nasr and her "Project Congo," an anti-rape group to help raise awareness and fight rape in the Congo. Finally, Jenna Ezzeddine brought fourth her aqua phonics idea to create the ecosystem of plants and fish on the rooftop of an UNERWA-owned building to support refugees. These three gave excellent presentations and were awarded the sums of money that they asked for, with any labor requests to be fulfilled upon demand. In short, this effort yielded successful contributions to the local and global communities and will continue to produce results, hopefully for years to come.

There is a whole other side to the world that most people are blind to. It is a whole language, the most beautiful language, that most people can't read. It's a whole history, a whole evolution that isn't studied enough these days. Music to me is genuine magic. I'm helplessly enchanted by its genius. Gladly, I'm not the only one, because every year I meet 120 other people who share my passion. The Association for Music in International Schools (AMIS) holds dozen of music festivals annually to bring together the musical students around the world and have them create a beautiful ensemble. Being a part of the AMIS Honor Choir feels like being a part of a miracle. I've been singing in a choir for as long as I can remember, but singing with the AMIS choir is another level of sensation. The three days spent in London at AMIS this year were three days where I was drifted out of this world. It was countless, aesthetic hours a day indulging in song with a hundred people I've never met, each person more passionate, musical and expressive than the next. With each chord, overwhelming talent flooded the room, flowing in smooth melody and close harmony. The whole experience was the most sensational I've ever had. Each morning I would walk into the rehearsal room helplessly clueless of the magic that was about to happen before me, for the choir was increasingly improving with every measure, thanks to our outstanding choral conductor. This conductor, Edith Copley, was hilarious, incredibly musical, and fantastic at her job, for she made us enjoy every minute of each rehearsal. I thought we'd get restless with six hour rehearsals each day, but it was the contrary, for the energy and talent at AMIS ensured that no enthusiasm was mitigated throughout the entire trip.

The group of nine ACS AMIS students, one of the biggest groups at the festival, had an absolutely wonderful time. It felt like we were in our natural habitat because music never left us there. From training in rehearsal to harmonizing on the tube to watching the musicals of London, the airs of music followed us to every London corner. Also, the bond made with friends was like no other. During rehearsal, I'd look around and see tens of faces of people I didn't know, people who spoke different languages, ate different foods and came from different cultures. But all of that didn't matter, because when we sang our last concert we all shared one voice. That is the magic of music: it unites us all. Music is a universal passion that has always existed in our human nature. It's hard to describe what AMIS is, but the lyrics to our finale sums it up. Imagine the world today if every soul did sing. AMIS is that world, and I feel its magic again just thinking about it.

Seniors Ready for Take-off!

The Development and Alumni Affairs Office held the 6th annual Celebration of the Seniors. The event featured the Happy video put together with the seniors and announced them ready for take off! Special thanks to the senior moms committee consisting of Nina AbouFakhr, Joumana Dalloul, Nadine Husseini, Amal Kombarji and Rima Nawfal





Parents and Faculty Fun-Raise the Night Away

The Alumni & Development Office organized a “fun-raising” night at the Marina Marquee, Mövenpick Hotel. Thanks to our alumni Lara Kays’04 and Ahmad Ajam’00 AKA Madjam, who did an awesome job MC-ing the event, and to our student auctioneers, Maryam Badran’15 and Roy El-Khechen’16. Special thanks to our Parent Volunteer Committee consisting of Carma Barakat, Rima Dagher, Chirine Haykel, Majdolene Hijazi, Nadine Husseini, Maya Kheireddine and Patty Zeidan





Celebrating Pi Day

Tania Kombarji, Grade 12, International Baccalaureate



IB senior math students of all levels got together and enjoyed an extraordinary joint class on March 14th (3.14), otherwise known as Pi Day. Seeing Pi as a number of great importance, our teachers Mrs. Daoud, Mr. Abdallah, and Mr. Pederson took this day as an opportunity to explore with us a good estimate value for pi through an activity that they designed especially for this occasion.

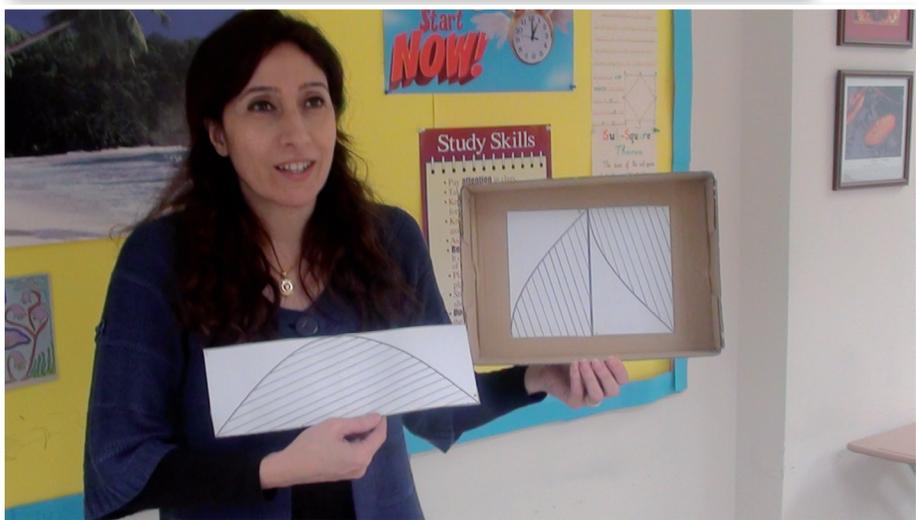
Our grade 12 IB students from Math Higher Level, Standard Level, and Studies came together and we used our mathematical knowledge to obtain the value of pi through the use of trigonometric graphs, calculus, geometry and probability. We split up into small groups and performed an experiment that enables the calculation of the “theoretical probability” and the “empirical probability” of dropping a pin in a specific region. After comparing these two values, we found an estimate of pi and calculated our percentage error.

There was a competitive feeling in the air, as the team with the closest value to pi (or the lowest percentage error) was to receive a big box of Oreos, not to mention

the sense of competition between the students from different course levels. After this educational activity, the results showed that the winning team came from the Math Studies class. The class was thrilled with the results, and happily accepted their box of Oreos. However, our math teachers were kind enough to give everyone Oreos, in the spirit of making everyone a winner.

This math class was one well spent. It was a nice break from all the stress that seniors have ahead of them because of their IB exams coming soon, and it was an enjoyable way to learn about pi on its special day. We encounter pi every day, so it was nice to get to know that pi is so friendly and it is not so “irrational” after all!

It was interesting to watch how the value for pi could be practically estimated. More surprisingly, when we put all our values together, we obtained quite a close estimate! All the teams combined attained a value of 3.19, which is quite close to 3.14!



Delegate Report from LEBMUN 2014

Feryal Berjawi, delegate of North Korea in the General Assembly

I represented North Korea in the General Assembly in the 11th Annual LebMUN Conference. We discussed three major topics that affect nations and international affairs: enhancing the quality of education in post-conflict areas as a means of reaching the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education, the development of an international framework for the distribution, protection and conservation of fresh water, and the revision of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action as a means to ensure the quality of international co-operation

In the emergency situation, where countries had to come up with resolutions to solve the nuclear power issues between North Korea and the United States of America, the US declared war on North Korea with the encouragement of the majority of the delegations. The debate was fun and intense. The perks of the emergency situation included attacking Western nations by using phrases such as "western capitalist disease- spreading monkeys chasing their capitalist bananas of instant gratification" and "these puppets of capitalism that have caused all the suffering and agony in the world". Moreover, I had to constantly glorify North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un to prove my loyalty to my assigned country, so I used in my emergency-situation speech phrases such as, "Kim Jong Un, with his right hand, causes fire to rise from the earth, and he will use his brain to cause psychological destruction to all you capitalist monkeys. He will open your minds delegates" and "the wrath of Kim Jong Un will be unleashed upon your nations: the crops will no longer grow and the rains will no longer fall, so you must fear him."



Another memorable moment of the conference was when the delegates were lobbying and merging the second topic (as listed above), and around 30 minutes before the end of the time allocated for writing the resolutions, the delegate of Jordan decided to abandon his bloc, extract his clauses from the resolution submitted by Paraguay, and write his own resolution, which, unfortunately, was never debated. This act, even though it was bold, was shocking and caused a lot of distress and chaos. It also caused the failure of Paraguay's resolution since it still had many of the delegate of Jordan's clauses.

Lastly, I would like to thank the chairs Salah Ghazzal and Ramsey Katul for their help and patience, and the president Malika Hajj Hassan. The conference would not have been as fun and organized as it was without the instructions of Malika. I believe this was an empowering experience for all 70 students in the forum, who came from different schools from around Lebanon.



Empowering Women, Enhancing Education and Combating AIDS at LEBMUN 2014

Jad El Tal, Secretary-General of LEBMUN 2014

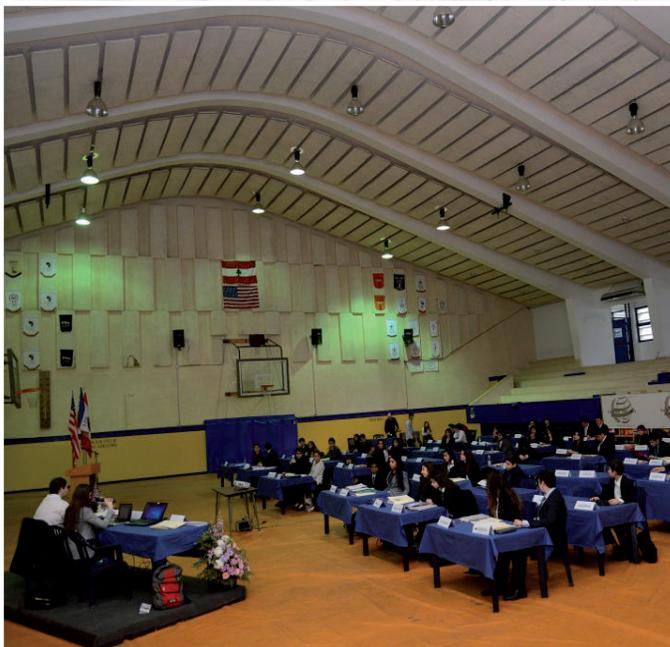
The Model United Nations program at ACS has enjoyed several staggering successes, and undoubtedly our greatest achievement is in hosting the annual LEBMUN conference. As the first MUN conference in Lebanon, LEBMUN invites schools from across Lebanon and Eurasia to a comprehensive three-day conference at ACS' campus. In this time, students from local and regional schools will debate some of today's most pressing global issues, construct resolutions to these problems, work as a team, and develop friendships. As an ACS student-run event, LEBMUN has been internationally recognized as being a challenging, well organized, and educational conference.

For the eleventh LEBMUN conference, ACS hosted delegates from various schools in the surrounding region. A record breaking number of 161 delegates participated from: International College, Brummana High School, Sagesse High School, the Rafic Hariri High School, the Jesus and Mary School, and of course, the American Community School at Beirut. Each delegate represented a country in one of our four forums: the General Assembly (GA), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Historical Security Council (HSC), and the International Criminal Court (ICC).



Every year, our conference focuses on a particular theme. This year, we chose the theme of "Global Safety". The globe we currently live in is one that is culturally diverse where citizens from different nationalities can intermingle swiftly. Nonetheless, with this globalization, citizens should be aware of their surroundings and make sure that they are implementing peace, security, and righteous actions. In order for a nation to maximize its security, it has to follow the regulations concerning globalization set by the United Nations – an organization dedicated to the safety and rights of citizens around the world.

All in all, the LEBMUN forums managed to pass 10 resolutions on topics spanning from the Suez Crisis to the empowerment of women to education in post-conflict areas. From what I saw, delegates in LEBMUN and MUN around the world are able to solve problems and compromise better than delegates in the UN. My term as the eleventh Secretary-General of LEBMUN ended with the final words of wisdom by Dr. Samira Atallah, the director of the Centre for Women at ESCWA. LEBMUN 2014 was an amazing yearlong experience, and the LEBMUN secretariat were the perfect counterparts to host an outstanding, unforgettable LEBMUN conference.



The 11th Annual LEBMUN Conference

Wael Awada, Deputy Chief Justice of the International Criminal Court

The 2014 11th Annual LEBMUN conference was hosted, for the first time, at the American Community School's campus. It went on for three days, between February 14th and February 16th. There had been a struggle to find a venue this year because of the ongoing security situation, but it was decided that ACS would be a perfect venue. The Secretary General, Jad El Tal, said that all that "we were sitting in the perfect venue all along."

Over 200 delegates participated in the various forums in the conference, coming from different Lebanese schools. The schools that attended were Saggesse High School, Rafik Hariri High School, Brummana High School, International College, the Jesus and Mary School, and of course, ACS's own delegates. All of these delegates had spent months preparing for the event, as they had received their country allocations and the topics they needed to know about in December. The conference was a success, and the Secretariat members, who were all ACS Students, received overall praise from advisors for their professionalism and diligence.

This year's forums included the recurring General Assembly, Historical Security Council, and International Criminal Court from LEBMUN 2013. However, President Marya Al-Hindi replaced last year's ECOSOC with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Africa. The General Assembly, under President Malika El Hage-Hassan, passed three resolutions which addressed issues concerning the enhancing of education, fresh water distribution and the revision of the Durban Declaration. The UNECA passed five resolutions concerning problems present in Africa, which included combating AIDS, the empowerment of women, and the prevention of child soldiers. The Historical Security Council, under President Sinan Abi Farraj, went back to the Cold War era to solve the Suez Canal Crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis. The conflicts were successfully contained with a resolution being passed for each while the delegates faced the return of Adolf Hitler – an emergency situation which tests the ability of the delegates to reach solutions spontaneously. After many discussions, the crisis was resolved. Finally, the ICC tried Ivorian war criminal Laurent Gbagbo. Under the charges of murder, rape, and other sexual acts of violence, he was found guilty. However, he was found not guilty under the charge of persecution. Chief Justice Chris Deroca declared the final verdict.

During the closing ceremony, Deputy Secretary General Mark Deroca said that the conference was a great way for him to end his MUN career and that he "could not have asked for a better team" and praised Secretary General Jad El Tal's successful efforts in organizing this event. Finally, Deroca thanked Director Rima Zein for her long hours of work with El Tal and himself to make this conference happen, saying that it "couldn't have happened without [her]." The ACS gym was filled with applause as Secretary General Jad El-Tal made the closing speech, declaring the end of LEBMUN 2014.



2014 ACS Track Season Comes to a Close

Rebecca Sue Naughton, HS History World / ME Teacher



The 2014 track season has come to a close. This year the team worked hard, competing and improving both as individuals and as a team from the first meet hosted by ACS at AUB to the last meet hosted by ABS Amman. The boys won first place at both ACS invitational meets, and the girls won second place at both meets, beating out some tough competition along the way. The competition increased even more at the Amman meet, with 5 other teams competing in Jordan. The Under 14 and Under 16 boys took first at the METS championships in Amman. The Under 14 girls took 2nd, while the Under 16 girls, Under 18 girls, Under 18 boys, and Under 12 boys all took 3rd place. At the Amman meet, the team took home 61 medals in total. Following two intense days of competition, the team was able to soak up some sun at the Dead Sea Spa before heading back to Beirut.



Mechanical Energy Project with KG1 C

Seema Afsh, Grade 10

Mrs. Khoury Saab's 9th and 10th grade physics class was given the opportunity to make their ordinary physics lab experiment more fun with the interaction and involvement of KG1 C students. Instead of completing trials with objects and physics gadgets, Mrs. Khoury Saab's students felt more engaged in their tasks as they worked with younger students to gather data for their Mechanical Energy Project. The KG1 C students had already experimented with ramps and pathways, and that provided the opportunity to perform our experiments with them. Not only did the collaboration between the two ages satisfy the high schoolers, but the younger ones too! We noted, as teachers of the project, that the KG1 C students were fully intrigued by learning about the energy that they have and how it could vary. We explained the project to the younger students, on a very simple note, by stating that this assignment was mainly about calculating how much mechanical energy each child has before and after they descend from a slide. Instead of the children battling over who attained the most energy, the competition was mainly focused on who got more chances to skid down the slide.

We would like to thank Ms. Maha Faisal and Ms. Amal Alaeddine, the KG1 C teachers, for their cooperation and for making this project happen.



NHS Soccer Tournament

Rashan Ghandour, Grade 11 LB & NHS member



One Day. Two tournaments. Two fields. 29 teams. 174 players. The NHS Soccer Tournament, planned by NHS members, took place on Saturday, April 12 2014. It was an athletic event running from 10 am to 4:30 pm on a beautiful, sunny day. It has become an annual fundraiser with the aim of using the funds to assist our "Adopt a Janitor" project at ACS.

From Middle School students to High School students, to Alumni to ACS staff and cafeteria staff, the NHS Soccer Tournament consisted of a wide variety of ages where all participants enjoyed exhilarating matches on a fun day. Through these games, it showed the sportsmanship and fair-play existing in our ACS community. Despite losing, ACSers continued to show their support for their fellow classmates along with the crowd of cheering supporters that remained on the field until the end of the tournament. This event highlighted one essential aspect of ACS, which is the fact that ACS is a community that works and plays together.

With all the excitement before the games and the tense moments during the matches, the ambiance was filled with eagerness and the desire to win. All participants came out of the games with a smile on their faces and an urge to continue. Players also indulged themselves with delicious treats such as cookies and brownies from the bake sale.

In the end, although it was a tough effort that had to be put in by the NHS members to establish this event, the NHS tournament emerged as a triumph which will hopefully be repeated next year!

Thank you to all of the participants, athletic department, administration, physical plant staff and supporters who attended this event, as it would not have been successful without all of you!

YES! We Celebrate Success at ACS and outside!

Reigna Yashruti, Elementary Counselor



Every teacher was given an elegant tray engraved with the date and their name, a souvenir that we will no doubt use for years to come, though the chocolate on the tray has probably all been eaten by now (group diet time anyone? Who's with me!). We all returned to our classrooms and offices to end the day on a positive note, no doubt spreading the joyous vibes we were surrounded by as we laughed and shared stories at lunch. Then came the evening "Teacher's Party", which was organized by the Social Committee and was the perfect continuation to the day. The dinner (and show and dance) was held

Being a teacher is far from easy. Too often we hear the phrase "those who can't do, teach." To everyone who spreads these words, I challenge you to a single day as a school teacher. As the counselor in the Lower School, I have the luxury of passing through classrooms for portions of the day, and what I've seen from our teachers is far beyond anything I've seen from any other employee in any other industry (and trust me, I've seen a few). Our teachers know that every word that comes out of their mouth has the power to change someone—every smile, every hug, and every life lesson can drive a human life to reach their fullest potential. Choosing to work in a school is choosing to participate in raising the future leaders of our world—a choice that comes with long days (teacher's leave at 4? Yeah right!), heart wrenching tough love, and the pride that can only come with the success of students. Our teachers give and give and give, and I am so happy that they are told, even if just for a day, how much we appreciate them. Thursday March 6 was my first experience with Teacher's Day, and I was pleasantly surprised at the effort that went into making it so wonderful. The parents organized an excellent catered luncheon, and while they watched the students, we were able to reflect on our own efforts via an emotional slide show (I may or may not have seen a tear or two throughout the laughter).

at Loubnane (owned by Pop Star Rami Ayach), a high end Lebanese restaurant in Monot with delicious food (yes, more food) and great entertainment! The live musician, folklore group, and DJ kept us going until the late hours of the morning, and as we danced and laughed I could feel the energy of the room recharging our spirits and our bodies. Every detail from the welcoming smiles of the Social Committee standing at the door, to the friendly waiters and managers, to the cute school-themed cake at the end was carefully planned and wonderfully executed.

Thank you Social Committee, thank you parents, thank you 'Loubnane', and most of all thank you teachers... just stay as wonderful as you are!

AFL Caters to Students' Needs

Nada Nimeh (Gr.1-2-3-4 AFL teacher)

To successfully learn a new language, it's important to cater to students' needs and to create a safe, comfortable learning environment. In AFL, students play an active role in their learning. They discuss how and what they want to learn. Through this process, we hope to enhance their motivation and enjoyment.

We train our students to be prepared to use the Arabic language in real life situations. For example, grade 3 students recreated a store and restaurant setting and used Arabic to buy products or order food. While students are engaged in role-playing, they are excited to practice using the new vocabulary learned in class. Students also practice their writing skills by creating a restaurant menu and labeling 'merchandise.'

AFL students also enhance their skills in writing and speaking via different projects. For example, grade 4 students prepared a presentation about an Arabic country they visited where they had to discuss its geography, currency, flag, touristic sites, and national food. These projects allow students to improve their language skills while being immersed in the Arabic culture. During Literacy Reading Week, the students aimed to improve their Arabic reading level. Whether they were in pairs or alone, in class or outside of class, students were constantly reading their leveled storybooks and challenging themselves.

The AFL program also emphasizes character education through creative plays about human values such as responsibility, self-control, and honesty.

In May, Mrs. Amale Freiji, renowned author of several Arabic children's books, is expected to visit the grade 4 AFL classroom to talk about her book, "Atyab Ta'aam." This book will expose the students to different Lebanese foods and will help them gain insight into Lebanese traditions.

Communication, reading, writing, cultural immersion, plays, songs, and activities are just a few things that characterize the AFL elementary school program. With children from various cultural backgrounds with a range of Arabic language competencies, AFL caters to each student's style of learning. Our students achieve personal and classroom goals—and they enjoy doing it!





The Giving Tree

In loving memory of Catherine C. Bashshur
ACS community remembers the giving mother, teacher and head of school



MARIA BASHSHUR ABUNNASR '84

Most people knew my mother as Mrs. Bashshur. Before that she was known as Miss Carlin. Family and friends called her Kathy/Cathy; at one point the K became a C, but I'm not sure when. And in her later years, some called her Catherine. But to me, she was always Mom. Depending on where and when we were in life together, she took on different incarnations, sometimes many simultaneously.

Mom-the-nag, Mom-the-teacher, Mom-the-protector, Mom-the-head of school, Mom-the-friend.

Mom transitioned from just my Mom into "Mom" for a wider audience in 1984 when she, my brother Michael, and I took refuge in Cyprus and my father stayed back in Beirut. The war

took a sudden turn for the worse that February, and we left Beirut by U.S. evacuation to settle in Nicosia where Michael and I enrolled in TASIS (The American Schools in Switzerland). Those months at TASIS were relaxed and painless, largely because it was such a breeze academically after ACS! But for me the best part was coming home after school to find Mom with a delicious dinner prepared (she was a fantastic cook), our clothes washed and ironed, and from my myopic 17-year-old view, dedicated to us full time! In that time, Michael and I had Mom all to ourselves. This was all the more special because we as a family were about to begin our separate lives: Michael was to stay in TASIS because Beirut was still too dangerous, I was off to college in the U.S., and Mom was back to Beirut to rejoin my father. Michael and I learned after the fact that the ACS Board of Trustees in Beirut had offered Mom the job of Head of School on condition that she would not leave the country; a country in its ninth year of Civil War. We knew that Mom was, as she put it, "bored out of her mind" in those six months in Cyprus after years of an active life as a full-time teacher. But we didn't realize then that in taking

the job as school head she had made a lifetime commitment. Then again, given her track record as a teacher, I don't know why we were surprised.

Indeed, those early associations of Mom-as-teacher conjure up endless hours of waiting for her either to finish correcting papers, to advise students, to host some afterschool club meeting, to watch a basketball game, to head the yearbook club with Elayn Rifai, to plan the Spring Carnival with the Student Council, or to attend some kind of faculty/administration meeting. As I progressed from Middle to High School it occurred to me that her all-consuming activities might work to my advantage. I could do as I wanted. Instead, I found that at the most inconvenient times of my life, Mom was omnipresent, and most prominently so when I was in her 7th grade geography class. The first weeks of class I avoided eye contact with her and kept my head buried in my book, only looking up when she turned to write on the board. Even worse was the excruciatingly painful experience of having her chaperone all the ACS dances, from my very first gawky 7th grade one all the way

My Mother, Mrs. Bashshur





up through High School. My preoccupation at those dances was not with whom I was dancing or how I was dancing (evidently quite awkwardly with my fingers blistered from snapping so hard to the music), but to maintain the greatest possible distance from her. I also mastered the art of keeping the High School courtyard tree in between Mom's line of sight and me, because her classroom overlooked the courtyard. In those days of student strikes, Mom's classroom's strategic location meant that all she had to do was tilt her head through the louvered windows and holler, "Maria-Ann-Bashshur, get right back in here this instant," as most students marched out of the gate in defiant protest. And on my way out of 10th grade history class one late morning, she caught me lightly on the arm and complemented me on my over-enthusiastic application of eye make-up, but then whispered quietly, "You know, Maria, sometimes less is more." Even though I huffed and puffed away, her comment stuck with

me and became a mantra of sorts that I have since applied to situations involving much more than eye make-up.

After 1984, Mom-as-teacher became Mom-as-the Head of School in wartime Beirut. Faulty phone lines and no email made communication intermittent. I saw her on Christmas visits to Beirut and a couple of summers in between. So, those early days of Mom-as-Head of School, from 1984 to 1992, are pieces of her life I'm still trying to reconstruct from conversations with the dedicated people who accompanied her on that incredible journey. From my distance, intense worry for her and my father consumed me, especially in the darkest days of the Civil War. While they sought shelter from the bombs in what is today the Physical Plant, my father suffered a life threatening brain aneurism that I only heard about a month post-op. I sometimes felt that the school was not worth the risks they took with their lives.

In those years of visits to Beirut, at least one constant remained the same: I still had to wait interminable hours for her to leave the office at the end of the day and would have to insist that at least one weekend day be office-free. But she always found an excuse to go down to the office "just for a few minutes." Vacations, I don't recall her taking, except tagging on a few days to a New York BOT Meeting, or an ACS Alumni Reunion to see her younger sister in New Hampshire, or to see her older sister in California if the reunion happened to be on the West Coast. Throughout those years of travel, she never complained of jetlag or the cramped conditions in economy class (even with those long legs of hers). And always, after a late-night arrival in Beirut, she'd be in the office first thing in the morning.

In 1992, I decided to return to Beirut to give life in post-war Lebanon a try. I learned quickly that though ACS looked more or less the same from the outside, it was a different place. And Mom was different too. With the war over, she had taken on a revered status in the eyes of the students, faculty, administration, and the community at large. Indeed, her reputation stretched beyond Lebanon to the Gulf, where new international schools proliferated, such that she regularly turned down attractive offers to run schools in Qatar, Bahrain, and I'm not sure where else. She, however, chose to stay at ACS in Beirut and was greeted as a local hero wherever we went, grocery shopping, for lunch, or just walking around town. I think that's when I realized her impact on so many lives. It always made me proud to be greeted with "ah, so, you're Mrs. Bashshur's daughter!"





After three years teaching part-time at AUB, Ms. Manahil Bitar, High School principal at the time, convinced me to teach full-time High School history at ACS. Mom was nonplussed and she made sure to let all know that she had nothing to do with me being hired. Now, she kept a professional distance between us in our shared workspace. I decided to adopt my husband's surname, Abunnasr, to keep the assumptions sometimes implicit in the "ah, you're Mrs. Bashshur's daughter" to a minimum. Without fail and without malice, though, after the first few weeks of class, my students would inevitably remark, "Did you know that Mrs. Abunnasr is Mrs. Bashshur's daughter?" Nevertheless, Mom managed the situation with grace and allowed me

to grow in my own way and in my own time. But, just as she had been for so many others before me, when necessary she was always there with a kind word, well considered advice, a nudge in the right direction, or even a kick in the rear.



Today, Mom continues to live on at ACS through her grandsons, Zayn and Jad, and the lives of the many faculty, staff, and administration that work at ACS or whose children go to school there. The dedication of the olive tree, "The Giving Tree," in the Rabbit Field this June 7th is indeed a most fitting tribute to all of Mom's roles as teacher, advisor, school head, friend, wife, mother, and grandmother. As her roles changed and grew, so did the school's roles. But ACS still pulses with the energy of her life. Her roots are intertwined with the lives of generations of ACS-ers, her adoptive country of Lebanon, and our hearts.

BARBARA C. SAMPSON
Board Member and Treasurer (1998-2014)

Tall, properly dressed, and a bit reserved, I first saw Catherine Bashshur walking across the Deerfield Academy campus on a spring morning in 1997. Nothing about her demeanor revealed the passion and sheer audacity of her life's work, as she quietly introduced ACS to me. "Our purpose," she said, "is to build and to sustain a

multi-cultural K-12 school dedicated to educating students to become active and informed citizens of the world." Wow! I imagine saying that for a school located in a country still finding its way out of the discord of a brutal 15 year civil war. But Catherine

Bashshur could say it so simply and live it so completely.

Cathy was beloved by students and faculty, and respected by colleagues world-wide. As trustees we were at once humbled by her dedication, challenged by her determination, and delighted to do our part in fulfilling this bold mission she so easily embraced. Cathy was a remarkable teacher, a visionary unencumbered by challenge. She inspired many, among whom I consider myself one, to invest some part of ourselves in ACS. What a great legacy dear Cathy!

Board Members Remember

MARTIN GIESEN
Chairman of the Board (1984-1985)

People familiar with the civil war in Lebanon remember the plight of boarding schools during that period. Schools which relied to a great measure on students from the international expatriate community working in the Middle East saw their enrollments shrink inexorably. The already compromised operation of ACS was dealt an almost fatal blow in the aftermath of the attacks on the US Embassy in Beirut and the bombing of U.S. Marine barracks in the southern suburbs. The assassination of AUB president Malcolm Kerr, and increasingly western-targeted kidnappings, all speeded the exodus.

By 1984, ACS had lost most of its students and faculty. At that time, other Lebanese private schools were urgently seeking alternatives, and relatively safe, locations in Ras Beirut, where the underutilized and largely empty ACS campus seemed an attractive piece of real estate.

The ACS board of trustees, itself affected by the exodus of expatriates, was faced with difficult decisions. Close the boarding department? Rent out space to other schools? Fully phase out operations after the transfer of remaining students? Even if an unlikely quick solution to Lebanon's problems was to happen, how could a school that offered exclusively an American high school diploma attract enough students to survive?

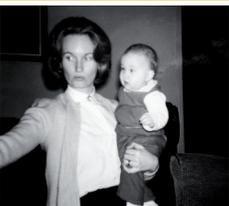
August 1964 | December 1964 | September 1966 | 1967-1968 | June 1969 | 1973-1974



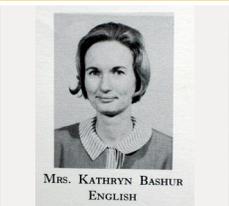
Arrival in Beirut - Started teaching English and social studies at ACS



Married Munir Bashshur



Maria was born



Back to teaching at ACS



Michael was born



Master's Degree from Florida State University

SAMUEL D. CONSTAN '53
Trustee (1990-2008),
Chairman of the Board (1993 - 2006)
and Trustee Emiritus (current)

Cathy was simply wonderful. From the ACS perspective, I think she may be one of the most important people ever to have toiled on its behalf. When the troubles started in 1975, she was steadfast in her work to keep the school together and functioning. When it no longer served the American expat population, she led the transformation of ACS into a school serving as an option for all students in Lebanon. When the student body diminished, at one point to into a small preschool, Cathy found ways to keep the doors open amid the chaos and dangers of war.

By 1990, under her direction, ACS was on its way back to being a real school. Cathy held forth under extremely difficult conditions. That is when Walter Prosser, Secretary of the small Board of Trustees, introduced me to her. What a ride it was, as she steadfastly and confidently assembled a team of administrators and educators to restore ACS, both physically and academically. She travelled and worked endlessly and tirelessly on behalf of ACS. Many of us contributed to the effort to make ACS what it is today, but it was Cathy who rescued it from the brink of collapse at a time when it wasn't much fun to be in Beirut.

Having someone at the ACS helm during these times was comforting, but to have the added benefit of having someone trustworthy, dependable, capable, committed and fun to work with was an immeasurable blessing. I miss Cathy and always will. She was an essential part of the entire ACS family legacy, and I feel great affection and admiration for her.

BARBARA A. PORTER '71
Board Member (1996 to date)

In September 1965, five Porter siblings entered ACS as we had recently moved to Beirut when our father, Dwight J. Porter, became the U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon. We were spread over the fifth to eleventh grades and my twin sister Joan and I were put in different seventh grade classrooms. I was the fortunate one to land in Catherine Bashshur's English class. That year we tackled Charles Dicken's David Copperfield and for a long time I would proudly mention that feat. It never occurred to me in the subsequent years that this inspiring teacher would become a special part of my later life. This happened when I joined the ACOR Board of Trustees in 1996—essentially thirty years after the class was over. Catherine came regularly to New York for board meetings and as I lived there, it afforded us time to get to know each other again. She had a very special friendship with Walter Prosser, the long-serving Secretary of the ACS Board of Trustees, and she shared this enduring friendship. I felt fortunate to get to know him and served proudly as secretary after him (until 2006 when I moved to Amman). This board service allowed me the chance to work closely with Catherine and I once again learned so much from her as she remained a source of considerable wisdom and thoughtful advice. In the last years of her long service as head of school, I visited Beirut several times when I was leading archaeological tours in the region. The Bashshurs generously opened their home to me and made me feel like part of their family. I cherish those shared times as well. Ever since joining the ACS Board, I have captured board meetings with photos. In reality and in my mind's eye, I have a treasure trove of snapshots of Catherine in action. I can return to the albums and recall the moments. I also know that her spirit prevails in the students she taught early in her ACS career as well as with those who knew her as the redoubtable and remarkable head of school.

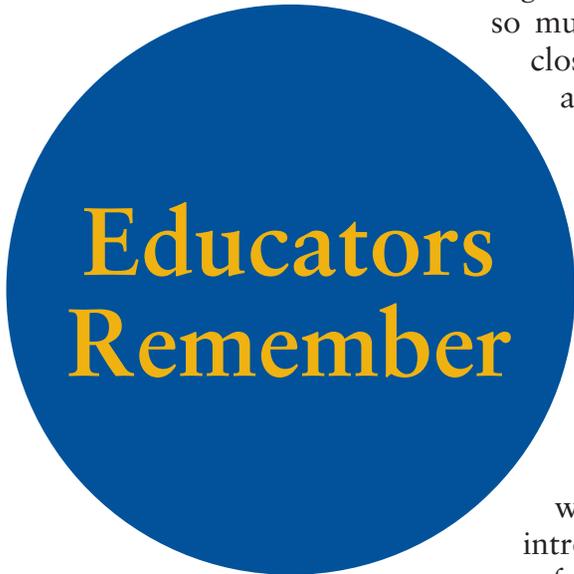
1974-1975	April 1975	1977 -1978	Fall 1984	1984-1985	September 1986
				Arabic was incorporated into the academic program for the first time for native speakers	
Back to teaching at ACS	Lebanese Civil War Started	Back to teaching at ACS	ACS Head of School		ACS gets registered in the Lebanese government as a Lebanese private school

DEIRDRE BALL '75 and PHILIP BENSON
Former Faculty

These past few days Philip and I have been sifting through our memories of Catherine. We agree that our favorite goes back to when we first got (back in my case) to Beirut in 2001. The welcoming party for new faculty was held up on the roof, of course, and it was a perfect buttery Mediterranean evening. We were having

so much fun that we closed out the party and Catherine invited us to stay on a bit under the stars. We had a wide-ranging discussion - politics, education, travels - and it was such a special introduction to our new friend, colleague,

and leader. What a treat it was to have her all to ourselves for that hour! We were so taken with her intellect, her generous spirit, and her dry sense of humor.



DELPHNIE GARDE MROUEH
Former Faculty

“Dears, no one is indispensable,” Catherine once said to us in 1995. And it stayed with me, at first, with great distress, as we were about to finish our first teaching year at ACS. We were a weird bunch of young teachers. She welcomed us into her school and into a foreign city, both of which we quickly called home. She allowed us to belong, embrace, grow, unite, learn, and most of all to never stand still. She always provided space for something different, and a space to talk, share, and be listened to. Indispensable, indeed we were not; we just made it our choice to pursue, to belong because we believed, trusted, laughed, fought and we loved it.

Years later, I often catch myself smiling and stoically saying that same sentence as an empowering argument: be proud to belong by choice. Catherine gifted us with what makes us proud today: to be part of her legacy. I continue to cherish that time as my most constructive years.

EBBA EL HAGE
Former Elementary School Principal

I am privileged because I worked, first as a teacher and later as the elementary school principal, under the outstanding leadership of Catherine C. Bashshur.

It all started in the summer of 1984 when Catherine, the newly appointed head of ACS, called me and asked if I would like to return to teach at the school. The challenge of reopening the school in wartime Beirut was a daunting one. But Catherine was not an ordinary person.

1988 - 1989

School year witnessed the highest enrollment since the early 1970s

October 1988



Recognized by the US Secretary of Education as a National Distinguished Principal

March 1989

ACS has its very first student casualty: Salem Abu Hadba, a senior of Jordanian Nationality

May 1993

The visiting team from Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools visited ACS for the first time

Fall 1995



International Baccalaureate gets introduced

She had enormous courage, was willing to take risks, and worked tirelessly because she believed in the future.

I have a vivid memory of a day after a night of heavy shelling that I dashed down to school to find Catherine in her temporary home in the school infirmary, as it was too dangerous to stay in her roof apartment. Amazingly, she had been able to create a warm atmosphere in that little room lined with sandbags. As the shelling started again, my only thought was to get home and make it to the next day, but as the shells whistled overhead, she led me in a discussion about staffing for the coming academic year. During those difficult years of war, Catherine was a tower of strength, demonstrating unflinching optimism and a belief that we would succeed in rebuilding the school and making it the best school in the region. And, against all odds, she succeeded in making her dream come true.

Catherine cared deeply for the people she worked with. She was there to lean on. She guided us with wisdom and understanding of an individual's needs. She was my inspiration. Her trust in me made me stronger, as well as a better educator. My life would have been very different and much poorer without Catherine as my boss, my mentor, and my guide. I shall forever be grateful for having worked under and with the most remarkable Head of School.

JEN MACTAGGART & COLIN CHANT
Former Faculty

Catherine Bashshur was a builder of communities; a bringer-together of people. She opened her home and her heart to those of us without family nearby, and she became our family. She mentored

us, and she fed us. She laughed with us and cared deeply about us. She hired an incredible faculty of strong, caring teachers and administrators – of all different backgrounds – and never lost hope in the power of an international education.

She was a tall, graceful woman who towered over much of her staff. Colin, at 6'7", was a rarity, as he stood a good head taller than her. Indeed it was her joke, at social occasions, to state, with a twinkle in her eye: "I hired you so I could finally look up to someone!"

For Colin and me, one memory stands starkest in our minds: Catherine, on the day of the birth of our daughter, stopped by our room at Trad Hospital to share in our joy. Without family in Lebanon, her visit was particularly precious to us. She gave us love and congratulations and cooed over our newborn. Only much later did we come to understand that she had come to see us immediately after receiving her own devastating diagnosis of cancer. But she had brought nothing but joy and love, hiding her own travails. That was Catherine's true gift: her great generosity of spirit. Her spirit was such that she lived another unbelievable eight years after that diagnosis. She was a fighter to the very end, fighting for herself and others, and we are all much richer for that.

LAILA FARIS ALAMUDDIN'62
Former Deputy Head of High School & Dean of Students

The first time I saw Catherine was in the 70's when I was at ACS for a drama production. Her height and beautiful eyes struck me, as did her confident walk. I never ever thought that twenty years later we would be discussing my possible employment at ACS.

September 1996



Awarded the 'Medal of Knowledge' by the President of the Lebanese Republic

Early 2000's



The head of school jumps in front of the BD bldg as part of a photography experiment done with ACS faculty & staff

2003



Retirement, while playing a supportive role to new Headmaster, George Damon

2006



Graduation Speaker

September 2013





Educators Remember

In 1992, I approached Catherine about a job I had never worked professionally; but somehow she saw something and hired me almost immediately. It is this prescience that

I found amazing about her. She had an uncanny ability to read situations, intuit people, and lead through instinct.

Shortly after I was hired, I learned that we were going to seek Middle States Accreditation. Coming out of a civil war, this turned out to be an amazing bonding experience for the faculty. However, no one believed we could do it in one winter except for Catherine. Of course we did, and successfully at that. Two years hence, Catherine announced to the faculty that we were going to adopt the International Baccalaureate. I, more confident in my role, pleaded that we were not ready as a high school, that the faculty and community needed more time. Yet once again, Catherine knew exactly what was needed to move the school forward. We not only became the first school in Lebanon to offer the International Baccalaureate, but also the standard bearer for international education.

My last view of Catherine was walking elegantly down the aisle on Maria's arm to attend the 2011 ACS graduation. She was weak and fragile, but her turbaned head was held high, and those piercing blue eyes still glowed.

MICHELINE BEDEIR Current Faculty

Catherine Bashshur is a “doyenne among educators”, as so eloquently described by Dr. Waterbury in his convocation address at the ACS graduation ceremony back in 2003. I had the opportunity and pleasure of working with her for seven years. She taught me how to be patient and understanding. Above all, she taught me to accept things that we cannot change. Mrs. Bashshur immediately and skillfully navigated ACS through a difficult era of conflict and uncertainty. After her retirement in 2003, we stayed in touch until her passing. Throughout her illness, she kept this positive image and will to survive. She is and certainly will continue to be greatly missed.

SIETSKE NOSHIE Current Faculty

I doubt Catherine Bashour ever realized how instrumental she was in my life. The year was 1993, and I had met a man, got married, quit my job and delivered a baby, all in a matter of 12 months. I wasn't very good at any of what that entails. I missed the sense of accomplishment of work, the social interaction with colleagues, the feeling of being part of a society, and the independence.

I had to get a job. I went looking for one, and that is how I first met Catherine Bashshur. It's been almost 21 years since she made the decision to hire me, and that decision has been one of the most important ones in my life. Had it not been for her, I doubt I would have gotten a Master's Degree, I doubt I would still be living here, I doubt I would still be married, I doubt I would have made the group of ACS friends that I have now, I doubt I would have learned any of the things that I have learned at ACS, and I am pretty sure I would not have felt the sense of accomplishment I feel when – at the end of a school year – we send off yet another group of promising youngsters to the Middle School. ACS is a community, and I am glad and proud to be part of this community. A simple decision that Catherine Bashour made, in the spur of a moment, has definitely been life changing for me.

SHERRY MIKDASHI Former Faculty

When I was asked to write about Mrs. Bashshur for ACS Matters, my first thought was that it should be about how I could never call her Catherine or Cathy. When I was an English teacher and later a lower school librarian at ACS, I couldn't do it even though we weren't that far apart in age. And later when she had retired and we met for various social activities as friends, I always greeted her and introduced her to other friends as Mrs. Bashshur. And, she always chided me for doing so, but the tremendous respect I had for her wouldn't let me do otherwise. I would rehearse calling her Cathy beforehand but Mrs. Bashshur popped out every time! It became a real joke between us.

SUHAILA URI FAROUKI
Former Faculty and Current Parent

The first time I heard about The Little Engine That Could was in one of the meetings Mrs. Bashshur held prior to the opening of the academic year. She told us that it was about a little train that was able to do the unthinkable only because it thought it could. She looked at us for a long moment with the book still held up in the air and finally said, "I think I can, and I believe each one of you can." We were in the midst of the Lebanese civil war. These were hard times, but Mrs. Bashshur made things happen. She prompted faculty and staff to reach their full potential, even under the harsh and unsafe conditions in Beirut. She kept the ACS engine going, only because she thought she could.

Mrs. Bashshur not only motivated teachers to give their best, she also wanted us to be life-long learners. Despite financial difficulties that ACS was facing, she was keen on offering us one graduate course per year. She also went on to put me through graduate school with the maximum load of courses, on condition that I become the best teacher that I can be. Two years later, her name was in the acknowledgement section of my thesis.

Mrs. Bashshur continued to invest in me throughout my teaching career at ACS. Whenever I shared my accomplishments, she answered: "That's because you thought you could." The experiences she exposed me to influenced how I chose to raise my children and allowed me to look at things from different angles, when there seems to be none.

NANCY BAKHT
Former Faculty

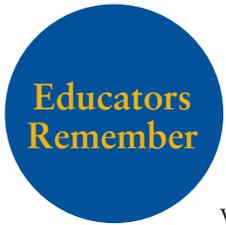
Many people, I am sure, will echo my sentiments of how wonderful Catherine Bashshur was. I have loved her since I was a child, for 35 years. She called me Sunshine and gave me a hug every single day. I lived for those moments. She always listened, shared her stories, and gave me plenty of breadth to express myself and share. We ate lunch together in her classroom for nearly a year. She was truly my best friend when I was in middle school.

Mrs. Bashshur taught me how to love as a teacher. I have tried to do the same for my students, year after year. I feel her presence with me every single day because I remember how she made me feel. So I hug my kids daily and tell them they are wonderful. My students remind me of myself when I was Mrs. Bashur's student. I am a teacher today only because Catherine Bashshur asked me to teach. And I am so glad she did!

SAID GHORAYEB
Former Faculty

During my first year at ACS, I had the chance to work with a student who had joined our school from one of the GCC countries. Without delving into too many details, he ended up trying to push some illegal substances on some of our students so, in accordance with our policy, he got expelled. His mother contacted me and asked me to accompany her to Mrs. Bashour's office to translate, and maybe even try to interfere to keep him at school. After trying many angles, the mother finally took a check from her bag and slid it across the desk towards Mrs. Bashour, hinting that our library could use a generous contribution (and it was quite generous). Without hesitation, and with a smile on her face, Mrs. Bashour replied that we at ACS always do what's best for all of our students, present and former ones, and that it was definitely in her son's best interest to get a fresh new start somewhere else. She pushed the check back to the mother, who finally realized that our administration could not be bought. I've told the story many times since that day, as it highlights everything that Mrs. Bashour stood for while leading ACS.





SUHEIR SLEIMAN
Current Faculty

“They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”
- Carl W. Buechner

I may forget what Catherine Bashshur said to me back in 1995, but I cannot forget that my role in the IB program is mainly due to Mrs. Bashshur’s encouragement and guidance. I was a new teacher at ACS then, but her trust in my potential has shaped my career. We may forget what she said, but we will never forget what Mrs. Bashshur did to keep the school going. Her strong will and affection, along with leadership, were the undisputable proof of commitment to ACS’s continuous improvement. We may forget many things, but one thing we cannot forget is that every time we mention ACS her name will always be related to it. Catherine Bashshur, you will be always remembered.

VIVIANE KHOURY SAAB
Current Faculty

Mrs. Bashshur, the elegant, graceful and committed educator. I will always remember the trust that she had in our abilities as teachers, her determination to keep the school open despite the recurrent difficult circumstances, and the professional development opportunities that we were encouraged to attend. I will always remember her love to her career, her caring attitude, and her smile.

WAFSA KAYS
Current Faculty

Who was Catherine Bashshur? She’s my role model, a legend and a silent giant. Ever since she hired me back in 1993, I never stopped looking up to her. She moved things around, faced challenges, and solved problems quietly.

She always made me feel special, valuable and trustworthy, as she delegated work and accepted nothing but excellence in return. ACS would not exist without Catherine’s perseverance, tolerance, patience and hard work during and after the Civil War. She opened the school doors to Lebanese students who were torn between politics and religion. Catherine’s mission will forever continue through the educators of this school.

ZEINA BARAKEH
Former Faculty

In 2006, when the war broke out again, all my childhood-buried memories of the Civil War resurfaced. I packed my bags, took a cab from Beirut, and knocked on Mrs. Bashshur’s door in Dhour Shweir for shelter. With no hesitation, I went to her for strength and support, because I knew I could rely on her.

Now that I am settled in the US, I am even more aware of the challenges Catherine Bashshur must have faced to fit into a foreign culture. She came to Beirut to teach Social Studies, but instead she taught generations how to resist the malignancy of war, by founding a community based on inclusiveness. In my mind she is more Lebanese than the Lebanese. I am so grateful that I have known her.



MAYSA BOUBESS
Current Faculty

“Those we love never go away. They walk beside us every day, unseen, unheard, but always near. Still loved. Still missed.”

It’s almost impossible to sum up in a few lines the impact that Mrs. Bashshur had on our school. No words will do her justice. Every nook of the school speaks of her vision, which she relentlessly and courageously brought to life. I feel blessed that my path crossed with hers, and honored to have taken part in her dream. I would like to dedicate the song ‘Kind and Generous’ by Nathalie Merchant to Mrs. Bashshur.

LINA MUNZER '95

Mrs. Bashshur became head of ACS the same year I entered the school. I was also fortunate because she personally fought to open up the school to Lebanese students after the travel ban on Americans during the civil war.

During the war, while most of my friends and neighbors were spending one week at school and one week out due to shelling, closures, and strikes, Catherine Bashshur refused to ever close the doors of ACS. If we could find our way to school somehow, classes would be held. She believed that the only way to resist the chaos and horror of the war was through education, and through preserving some normalcy of routine. Though we students grumbled at times that we never got a “vacation” when everyone else was enjoying extended shelling-breaks, we were also one of the only schools, if not the only school, where not a single student missed a year of schooling. Even through the darkest days of the war, when the school was finally forced to shut down for a while, our teachers still prepared our lessons and placed them at different drop-off points in the city so that our parents could pick them up and we could keep up with the school year from our desks at home or our little card tables in the shelter. Catherine Bashshur stood tall, both literally and figuratively. She saved us from war’s mundane thievery of future and ambition. She was the sort of hero whose very presence and nature are an act of resistance, who lived and breathed her ideals in a way both simple and impossible for most. The world is a poorer place without her, and a richer place for her. She lived a life that extended life to others, and there is no greater legacy than hers.



VAIRA HARIK '83

In 1978-1980 there was a group of teachers at ACS that anchored the school. They were the rocks around which the tides of war, hormones, and homework surged for a bunch of kids. Catherine Bashshur was foremost among them.

We were a strange and electric bunch, mostly the offspring of college professors, missionaries, and diplomats. She handled us perfectly. She reminded us that regardless of what’s going on “out there”, now you’re here and now you pay attention.

Students Remember

She taught us 8th and 9th grade English and history, and she stood up when she taught. There would be a quiz. And because I lacked filters, I would crow at my success. Knock it off, she’d say. Straighten up. Then you’d look up into those blue eyes--equal parts amused, knowing, caring, and contained. If you were smart you looked through the windows she opened for you. And you looked up because she was tall. She was very tall.

ZIAD AYASS '06

While I didn’t know Catherine Bashshur as well as I would have liked to. She has touched my life with the values she instilled in ACS, and which very much define who I am today. I am also indebted to her for her more direct contribution to my experience as a student and a young adult. I was the student of her daughter, Maria, who taught me IB history, and who undoubtedly shares the same values that her mother Catherine stood for. May she rest in peace and continue to watch over us all.

Reflecting on the Water Project in IB Chemistry Y1

Dalia Awdi, IB Y1 student



This year, the Chemistry Year 1 IB students were fortunate enough to undertake a project despite our rigorous and demanding class schedule. Given the title "Must Be Something in the Water: Creating an Educational Guide on Water Safety and Conservation", the project aimed for the creation of a class guide on water

safety and conservation, which would later be made available to the public. The project was not only pertinent to the unit we were studying, but the current water crisis in Lebanon which we are facing. The Chemistry students performed the project in the following steps: discussion, research, compilation, presentation, report, and reflection.

After completing the research stage of the Environmental Chemistry Water Project, I interviewed two individuals in the ACS community - one adult and one adolescent (both of whom wish to remain anonymous). Prior to the interview, I did not know what to expect when I asked them several questions assessing their awareness of the different water diseases, their consequences, and what we can do to prevent them. Primarily, I interviewed a student who is very knowledgeable and aware of his surroundings. This gave me some hope that the student would provide me with some extensive answers during the interview. However, to my surprise, the student had trouble answering more or less all questions. The student could barely correlate between water and diseases, using basic knowledge of biology and bacteria, but could only name Hepatitis B as a disease. Furthermore, he could not make any distinction between water borne, water based, water scarce, and water related-vector diseases. To him, they all seemed homogenous. When asked how many people died annually in relation to water diseases, he gave me a number of 2 million. In comparison to the factual number of 3.1 million, this student was not as far off as I'd imagined he would be.

When I asked him how he came up with such a number, however, he simply informed me that he had conducted an educated guess. In asking the individual what ways such issues could be prevented, he brainstormed and came up with the morally correct answer: all countries should work together to support

countries such as those in Africa. This is a great answer, but is it practical? How can it be done? In order to answer these very questions, I challenged my interviewee's suggestion by posing a few impromptu questions in order to make his suggestion better. In conclusion, we derived a more detailed plan including suggestions of where to get the aid, such as the UN, and the money derived from sponsors to carry out procedure's such as transporting water from more water-rich areas to those less fortunate.

When interviewing the adult, I found that she was more informed than the student was. Although she also did not know the difference between water borne, water based, water scarce, and water related-vector diseases, she was able to name several more water-related diseases such as malaria, diarrhea, etc. The adult's estimate for the number of people who died annually from water-related diseases was as far off as the student's, with a guess of 4 million. When I asked her how she had derived this number, she too informed me that it had simply been an educated guess. Lastly, when I asked the adult what possible solutions she could think of for this problem, her answer was not far off from the student's. She provided me with a similar answer, which was that the world simply had to work together to solve problems such as this which, consequently, are a global issue rather than national issue.

After informing the interviewees of their results, they were intrigued and surprised by the information I had to offer. This made me realize that it was not lack of interest and ignorance which plagued ill-informed minds, but the lack of awareness on such topics. Still, it is difficult to understand why such important information is surpassed in this day and age given all the technology and resources we have to enhance our communication and awareness. Perhaps it is due to the fact that human beings place importance on other matters, but they don't know the importance of such a water-related issue. Thus,



a cycle is introduced: people are misinformed on such topics, causing them to place importance on other things which they are aware about, causing awareness to spread in these “less important” things and not on water-related issues, bringing us back to the beginning of being misinformed. The question lies in the possibilities for breaking this ill-fated cycle.

In conclusion, I was surprised to find both the student and the adult ill-informed about the topic at hand. This, however, should make sense, as I was also misinformed before conducting my research. Here arises the fundamental problem that environmental water awareness is lacking in our community, according to our data, and perhaps all over the world. Still, comparing the student and the adult, I find that the adult was generally more informed than the student was. This could be due to the fact that the adult is older than the student, which provides opportunity for more experience and knowledge on general things of the world. However, the problem could also lie in this generation, and the ignorance that has sprouted from all things which distract and pollute the majority of our minds. Whichever the case, it is inevitable to accept that something must be done. Thus, I believe that this project will be very helpful in contributing to this necessary awareness campaign. I very much liked this project and I love that our website is attractive and eye-catching. This will contribute to the raising of awareness, as it will attract people’s attention and help aim for an overall higher goal.



Earth Day At ACS!

Samar Khalil, IB Y1 student, on behalf of ACS Go Green and the IB Y1 Chemistry Class

Marking the 44th year in existence, Earth Day was celebrated worldwide on April 22, 2014. Now, over one billion people participate in Earth Day activities each year, making it the largest civic observance in the world. While the day itself provides an opportunity for us to reflect on the environment we live in and the natural resources we share, the Earth Day mindset must be present in our everyday thoughts and in every activity we take part in.

On April 11th, marking the American Community School at Beirut’s celebration of Mother Earth, the day’s festivities began with a school-wide Earth Hour simulation in which all electric appliances (or at least a large portion of them) were turned off. Then, a high school assembly was brought to us by ACS Go Green, the IB 11 Chemistry class, and some of the 10th graders taking the chemistry course. As a part of the high school chemistry syllabus, Mrs. Maaliki stupendously incorporated the “Something in the Water” Fresh Water Project. Through this, we accomplished not only raising awareness for our own attitudes towards the environment, but we informed the student body, the leaders of tomorrow, that the Earth needs saving. When Mrs. Maaliki suggested that we share our project and website at the assembly, I did not hesitate to say ‘YES’. I am thankful to have been provided with this opportunity to fully appreciate Earth Day in its entirety by being an active participant in it.



As the day continued, ACS Go Green members made it their mission to enlighten the youth of ACS at the elementary school. We ventured from class to class, showing presentations and singing songs and mediating activities to enrich their tiny minds in a fun way.

To be completely and unfortunately honest, when our IB chemistry class was assigned this project, I had no idea how to answer some of the research questions for this topic. I was also surprised at how little the people ignored the clear and blatant truth in front of them with the five simple quiz questions. Nonetheless, after our research of Topic 2 was put forth, I'm sure their minds were as enriched as ours the first time we came across the various topics. I found some answers just completely hilarious, to say the least.

Personally, I think water is essential for any living thing and any daily function. I couldn't imagine a life without it. Even though Earth is hypothesized to have a few billion years before it "resets itself", I think we can make a change for our future, for the generations to come. After all, as I see it (and I doubt anyone would disagree), this is why we celebrate Earth Day. In fact, we should treat every day as if it were Earth Day.

Last, but certainly not least, we would like to give a special thanks to all those who participated in making ACS Go Green's spectacular Earth Day happen. We would like to thank Ziad, Charbel and Abbas as well as all of the physical plant members. The day's events would not have been so well done if executed by another. Your helpfulness and cooperation is greatly appreciated by all of the ACS Go Green members. We would also like to thank the ACS community for actively participating in Go Green's Earth Hour simulation, and give cheerful regards to all those who wore blue or green in support of Earth Day. We would also like to thank Ryan Harake, Roy Alkeshen and all of the IB Year 1 Chemistry students for presenting during the assembly. Additionally, we would like to give a genuine thank you to Safia Qureshi for setting up the Water Project website. We would like to thank D & A for helping make the marvelous banner for Earth Day. For her exquisite photography skills, we give thanks to Clara Assi for cataloging the day's events.

Most importantly, I think the biggest thank you goes to Mrs. Maaliki and all ACS Go Green members, you "Earth-hearted" persons, for making this event possible!



Le droit des adolescents-

Les grades 8 unis s'expriment en français.

Nathalie Bouttereux, Middle School French Teacher

Les élèves de grade 8 de français sont tous là. Par groupe de trois, ils participent à des activités minutées et passent de table en table. Sept tables animées par sept élèves de grade 8, super motivés, sans oublier Nicolas, qui, très sérieux derrière son micro, assure le bon développement de l'activité.

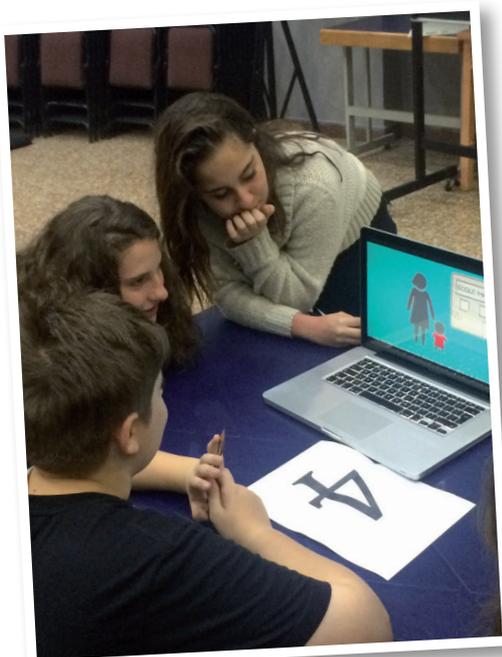
Il faut dire que ces huit élèves présentent, là, le projet final d'une unité de travail consacrée aux droits des enfants. Au-delà de l'aspect ludique de cette présentation, Céline, Mohsen, Jad, Yara, Sarah, Karim, GP et Nicolas ont discuté des droits des enfants au travers de recherches, de lectures, de chansons. Ils ont aussi étudié le subjonctif (mais miss, ça sert à quoi ça ?), ont acquis du vocabulaire, ont eu des quiz pour enfin aboutir à cette tâche finale.

Alors quand à l'unanimité, ils ont demandé à faire partager ce travail avec leurs autres camarades, cela a été un plaisir de les encourager à montrer leur esprit de travail d'équipe, de décision, de créativité et d'organisation.

Chacun a pris son travail au sérieux, tout a été pensé et mis en commun sur google drive, pour que ce petit événement se déroule sans incident. C'est donc dans le calme et la bonne humeur, que l'audience découvre ces activités. Des rires fusent, chacun essaie de s'exprimer en français...

Bien joué !!

Je suis très fière de vous grade 8- francophone!





100 jours d'école 100 phrases en français

Joelle Yacoub, French Coordinator

Cent jours d'école ... ça se fête:

Chaque classe de Grade 3 a été capable de se souvenir et a écrit 100 mots en français.

Les Grade 4 qui ont un bagage de vocabulaire plus important ont écrit chacun 100 mots à l'ordinateur avec «Tagxedo».

Quant aux Grade 5 niveau 1 ils ont eux aussi fait un «Tagxedo» de 100 mots tandis que les classes de niveau 2 ont rédigé 100 phrases en français.

La Francophonie à ACS - Elementary

Nathalie Bechara & Mira El Zein

Due to its success last year and the wonderful memory that the students had about it, the Elementary French team decided to invite the grade 3, 4 and 5 students down to the lower school auditorium to celebrate " la francophonie " again. Students enjoyed singing some French songs with the guitarist, watched the PowerPoint presentations they worked on that describe the Francophone countries, and of course ate the delicious CREPES made by the moms. It was a great experience to see all of the students engaged and participating!

Chaque année durant le mois de mars la Francophonie est mise à l'honneur dans tous les pays francophones du monde:

Belgique, Algérie, Liban.....

A ACS nous faisons de même !

Les élèves des grade 3, 4 et 5 ont participé à cet événement organisé par l'équipe de français de l'École primaire.

Chansons françaises avec un guitariste qui a enthousiasmé les élèves, plusieurs power-points faits par les élèves ont été projetés, et finalement le français et la francophonie avec une touche culinaire à la française: des crêpes préparées avec amour par les mamans ont ravi grands et petits.

C'est vraiment formidable de voir nos élèves aussi impliqués et heureux de célébrer la Francophonie.



ACS Celebrates the 100th Day at School

Nathalie Bechara, French teacher & Mira El Zein, French teacher's assistant

To celebrate the 100th day of school, the grade 3 students decided to write 100 words in French, the Grade 5 (level 1) wrote 100 words in French using Tagxedo, and the Grade 5 (level 2) students wrote 100 sentences in French. The grade 4 students used the Tagxedo as well to write 100 words in French. It was fun! :)

Cent jours d'école... ça se fête:

Chaque classe de Grade 3 a été capable de se souvenir et a écrit 100 mots en français.

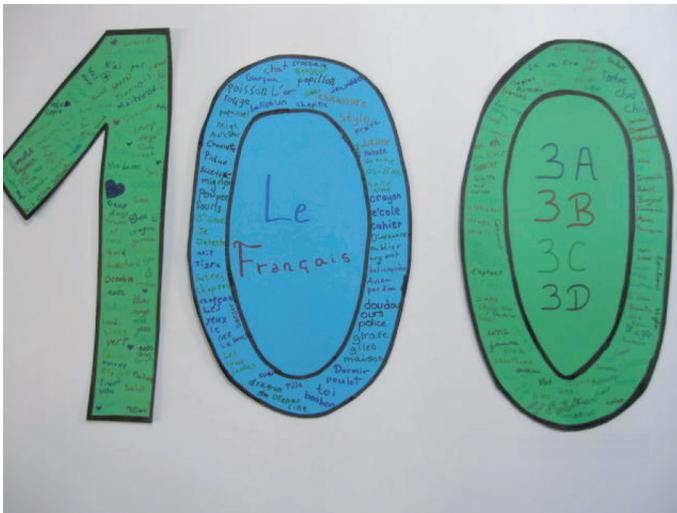
Les Grade 4 qui ont un bagage de vocabulaire plus important ont écrit chacun 100 mots à l'ordinateur avec «Tagxedo».

Quant aux Grade 5 niveau 1 ils ont eux aussi fait un «Tagxedo» de 100 mots tandis que les classes de niveau 2 ont rédigé 100 phrases en français.

GRADE 4 WORK



GRADE 3 WORK



GRADE 5 LEVEL 1 AND 2



Students Design the Perfect Outdoor Camp

Rana Accawi, High School French Teacher

Earth lovers and nature enthusiasts, listen! This March, the Grade 9 French students showed us the perks of living in the outdoors and the joy and excitement felt at a camp in the wilderness. Guided by a unit in our French book entitled "Un Week-end en Plein Air" (A Weekend in the Outdoors), the students were divided into four groups and were asked to design the perfect camp! Some chose to set their camp in a tropical island, some in the desert, others in the mountains, and others in Brazil. Regardless of their destination, each group needed to make a 3D plan of their camp site accompanied by a brochure and a specific program for the camp, using all of the vocabulary that they learned about nature, extreme sports, camp gear, etc.

It was amazing to see the students' creativity, sense of adventure, and communicative skills in French, and all in one project!

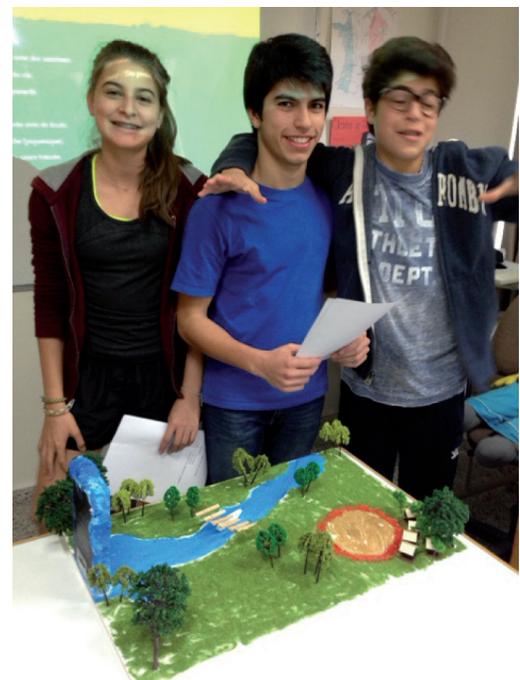
FRENCH:

Partisans de la terre et de la Nature, en Mars, les élèves de français de la classe de 3ème (grade 9) ont révélé les avantages de vivre en plein nature, la joie et l'enthousiasme, les émotions ressenties dans un camp en plein air. Inspirés par une unité de notre livre de français intitulée «Un week-end en Plein Air», les élèves divisés en quatre groupes ont imaginé le camp idéal!

Certains ont choisi d'installer leur camp dans une île tropicale ou dans un désert, d'autres dans les montagnes ou au Brésil.

Chaque groupe devait faire une maquette en 3D de l'emplacement accompagné d'une brochure et d'un programme spécifique du camp, en employant les champs lexicaux de la nature, des sports extrêmes, des équipements et du matériel de campement.

J'étais ravie par la créativité des élèves, l'esprit aventurier dont ils ont fait preuve et leurs compétences quant à la communication en français!



What a Busy Year!

Victoria Raad, French HS Teacher

It has been a rich journey and a special academic year. In addition to the IB self study and the accreditation process, we had a new headmaster for the school and a new coordinator for the French Department! We are fortunate here at ACS that Mr. Clark and Mrs. Yacoub have both a vision and a will to advance beyond what has already been accomplished. Also, we are lucky that they are continuously active and supportive!

I am confident that the coming years will be more positive and enriching.

Now, I would like to share with you how the year went with the students in the intermediate track. We had what we call in French “Un projet pédagogique”. In English, it is an educational project. Normally, it is about a concept we approach at the beginning of the year and we reflect on it throughout the year using different means. So, let me convey to you the main steps of our “projet pédagogique”:

Phase 1: Back to School in September 2013

Welcoming the students and sharing the concept:

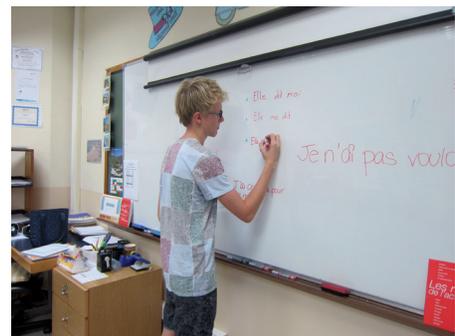
“...Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.” By Samuel Beckett.

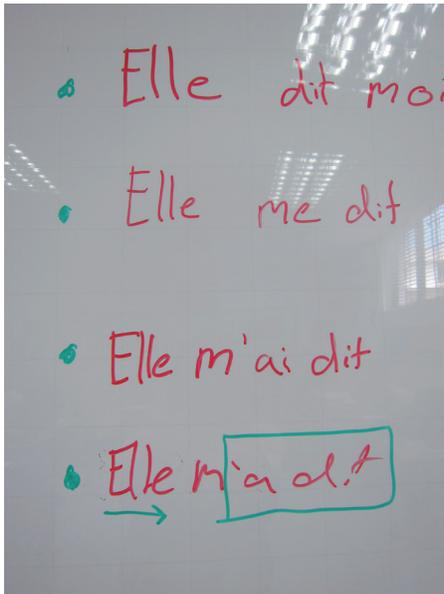
Students, depending on their French level, discussed and reflected upon this quote, as you can see in some pictures. However, in the Grade 11 IB Standard Level, students had more elaborate work to provide. They had to research further about the quote, interview their parents, and give their opinion in writing.



Phase 2: Dealing with Mistakes

In the following weeks, what was common in my classes was that the quote had become an internal joke especially when someone was on the board trying to write correctly. We would hear a voice saying: “Fail! Fail better!” During those moments, the application of the quote was “live”. Though, to maintain a safe learning environment, when someone was on the board, the entire class was asked to do the same on their French note book. Each one would think and seek the right structure or the right rule. Healthy competition, clarification, reminders and re-explanation would take place. It became a game where students had fun identifying mistakes and reflecting on them. In fact, it motivated them to improve their writing and consequently their learning process. Fortunately, Students became aware of the importance of those spontaneous activities taking place amidst a bigger and larger activity. Personally, even though it takes away some time from my set plan, these spontaneous experiences have proved to be very effective and valuable.





Phase 3: Planting a Seed

Quizzes, tests and all students' production were perceived through the idea of "...Fail again. Fail better." When I was talking to a colleague about the positive and delightful atmosphere, and the energy created and the results of the "projet pédagogique", she urged and encouraged me to share it at the Mini-Nesa conference. Guess who this colleague was? It was Mrs. Rima Halabi! I have to thank her for having planted that seed since I ended up promising that I would do something.

Phase 4: Preparing a Workshop

I started my research and wanted to surprise Mrs. Halabi. So, I discussed the matter with three highly knowledgeable persons to whom I owe many thanks from all my heart, Dr. David Warren, Ms. Amira Hachem and Dr. Elie Feghali. They generously accepted to be my advisors. They each advised, encouraged and gave support. Finally, I prepared my 4th workshop for Mini-Nesa: "What

Do Educators Do Differently than Instructors?" Also, I will not forget my students who definitely were my utmost inspiration and resource. Yet, the fun part was at the end, the many hours spent with Mrs. Andrea Norman who corrected my speech. Besides the fact that I was a student again, we had vast discussions intermitted with some great laughs. She would make sure before every correction to undoubtedly understand the idea I was battling with. She has been extremely patient and generous. She added here and there, salt, pepper and green herbs. Furthermore, she helped me practice my pronunciation. I do not know how many times I asked her to repeat for me the word "chaos"... Thank you, Andrea.

Phase 5: Mini-Nesa

Finally, the "projet pédagogique" led to a Workshop at Mini-Nesa. I had the opportunity to share with colleagues through sixty slides how students are learning in the 21st century. And in reference to the quote, when students keep trying and we help them, making sure that they are failing better each time, they end up succeeding. Actually, the good part about this entire story was when students themselves enjoyed seeing the workshop: pictures and stories were about them! And above all, we continued reflecting about the students' learning process. Of prime importance were the slides showing videos about Carol Dweck, a professor of Psychology at Stanford University, explaining the difference in behavior and attitude towards learning whether we have a fixed mindset or a growth mindset. Dweck has been researching on achievement and success for decades. However, the good news according to her is that we can teach students to have a growth mindset by praising their effort and their process.



Phase 6: Inviting Faculty, Staff and Students, April 2014

Teachers from elementary, middle and high school, as well as staff members, have kindly accepted the invitation to room 301 and to converse in French. They talked about an experience where they had put in effort, faced difficulties or failed somehow, and then succeeded beautifully. Higher level IB French students were also invited to this session. We had a nice crowd. I would like to thank Mrs. Yacoub, their teacher, who made sure that everything would go perfectly well.

The following day, intermediate level students wrote about this wonderful encounter. Each one reported about one of the stories heard, and described its impact on him or her. Many talked about their joy. Furthermore, they overcame a challenge: understanding other people speaking French, other than their own French teacher.

The pictures will show you our francophone speakers on that day. Even though all the stories were very interesting and inspiring, the "winner" is Mr. Elie Kassis. His story impressed several attendees. He talked about technology and how he stopped a hacker in another institution. Anyway, I would like to thank every person who made that activity a success. And say to the Francophone at ACS: "I give you 'Rendez-vous' next year with other activities."



C'est notre perspective sur la vie dans notre classe de français. Beaucoup de gens pensent que le succès est notamment un chemin sans erreurs, mais nous pensons autrement. En début d'année, nous avons entendu que pour obtenir le succès que nous recherchons nous devons pratiquer notre français régulièrement et nous devons toujours essayer de corriger nos fautes. Ainsi, un jour nous franchirons les obstacles et nous aurons la satisfaction d'avoir appris de nos propres erreurs. En fait, les fautes sont les marqueurs des accomplissements de la vie. Ce n'est pas une raison pour être sous-estimé, pourvu qu'on essaie toujours d'être meilleur et apprendre plus.

Dans notre classe de français, nous sommes incités à corriger et à apprendre de nos erreurs chaque jour, quand nous faisons des corrections des travaux écrits ou simplement nous corrigeons notre expression orale. La classe ne fonctionnera jamais sans la réflexion et l'application de ce message, et nous devons aussi l'inculquer dans notre vie pour avoir une perspective plus ouverte sur l'apprentissage. Finalement, je comprends que c'est un enrichissement. Car les connaissances se connectent après les erreurs du passé pour finalement rendre le succès dans l'avenir.



Phase 7: A Student's Perspective, May 2014

Carmen Rodríguez González, Grade 11 IB Standard Level

Try Again."Ever tried?. Ever failed? No matter. Fail again. Fail better".- Samuel Beckett

Phase 8 : Conclusion

Facing challenges, persevering, and succeeding in French might hopefully teach students to persevere in life in other matters. Educators in the 21st century care about teaching the whole person to prepare students to become responsible citizens ready to face the challenges of the future.

Jolly Good Fun!

James Mc Lean, Department Head for Fine Arts, High School



Murder mysteries are popular for so many reasons. Some people love to play along and figure out “whodunit,” while others enjoy the thriller aspect and the tension that comes from not really knowing what will happens next. So, what would happen when the classic drawing-room mystery play is taken out of the English countryside and dropped into Beirut?

The ACS High School Performing Arts presented Tim Kelly’s “The Butler Did It”, directed by Robert Iyer & Jim McLean. This play parodies every English mystery play ever written, but it has decidedly American Melodrama flair...

A mysterious voice on the radio!

A menacing face at the window!

A mad killer on the loose!

Who is that body in the wine cellar anyway?

A huge reward for the “detective” who can bring the killer to justice and an assortment of zany would-be sleuths!

When they’re not busy tripping over clues, they trip over each other!

Laughs collided with thrills, and the climax, a real seat-grabber as the true killer is unmasked, and almost everyone turns out to be someone else!

The play’s characters are all supposed to be authors who are disguising themselves as their own creations. They are together for a weekend of “jolly fun for financial reward” at Miss Maple’s estate, Ravenswood Manor, on Turkey Island off the coast of San Francisco. The island is , of course, isolated and fogbound. Instead of outwitting one another, each character/author is in his or her own fog.

Lurking about is a hapless house maid, Haversham (Hanna Sobh), who is really a convict serving time in Miss Maple’s manor as part of a prison work program. She was found guilty of “some unpleasantness with a hatchet”.

Rita (Aya Hashem) is a bee-bop gum-smacking social secretary who stalks around clutching her hat box and sneaking up on everybody.

Miss Maple (Tracy Jawad) seems too preoccupied with proper pronunciation to pay much mind to the foul parlor play in her midst, or to the news about an escaped “killer of 40 faces” who may appear out of the fog at any moment.

Louie Fan (Felix Ruble): nobody can get his name right. He elicits so many memories of Charlie Chan and Mr. Moto that even he gets lost. His revelations, pronouncements, proclamations and accusations are tied together by one indomitable truth; they are always wrong.

Rick and Laura Carlyle (Sari Nuwayhid & Leen Harasallah) are a charming and sophisticated New York crime solving duo, who could they possibly represent? Nick and Nora Charles? Well, maybe, but their marriage is a little rocky. Laura’s major contribution is to expose Charity Haze.

Charity Haze (Sima Bajawdeh) is a gorgeous woman and the last to arrive at the Turkey Island gathering. And, wow, does she ever arrive! She clammers down a ladder dropped below a helicopter during a raging storm. 007, eat your heart out. Could she be a Russian aviatrix?

Chandler Marlowe (Wesley Rhian Davis) is the quintessential Sam Spade character – hard boiled, hard living, talking-out-of-the-side-of-his-mouth tough guy. Humphrey Bogart, take note!

Father White (Karim Nimeh) plays the role of his detective creation, a very intellectual cleric. In the end, he is exposed as neither of these; he is really an actor taking the place of the real Father White in preparation for that same role in an upcoming movie.



Peter Flimsey (Jad Kaiss) is the very model of a proper English gentleman of the Sherlock Holmes school of detectives. He prances about with a magnifying glass and hooked neck pipe. He can explain almost everything except, “what happened on the cricket fields of Eton?”

The Victorian Parlour set design by IB student Ghinwa Husari captured the mood of a time gone by, complete with a secret passage wall.

Period costumes were designed by IB student Julie Pedersen with incredible attention to detail, to period and style, complementing each character's persona.

This was an incredible journey for these students; developing each of their character's idiosyncrasies, complete with accents, as well as learning new styles of theatre: Satire and Melodrama.



ACS IB Visual Art Show 2014

Mary McKone IB Visual Arts Teacher

This year's 2014 graduating IB Visual Arts students hosted a public art exhibition displaying their artworks in the Jewelry Souks of the Beirut Souks. Foremost in this year's exhibition, viewers noticed the dramatic impact that events of the region have had on the artworks created by these young artists

"My work was to a large extent inspired by the art in my surroundings, including both the Middle East and the Balkans. My research has led me to go outside the region I am familiar with and explore different art like Maori art, which allowed me to express my theme from a completely new perspective." - Iva Dim

"I use art as a tool to express concepts that I sometimes cannot explain using words. Many of my pieces reflect the way I feel when I analyze something. To me, a successful art piece is one that satisfies the artist in the way that it fulfills its purpose and the way that it aesthetically pleases the viewer." - Lamis Awdi

"The IB art program allowed me to experiment and broaden my understanding and skills. All my pieces revolved around the theme of chaos because I could relate to it personally from my surroundings. I found it relevant how chaos and political turmoil affect the region and its people." - Pinar Mansour

"My theme focuses on the varying aspects of society and the impact it has on people's mental/emotional health. In my work I'm trying to challenge the viewer to question how independent their thoughts are, especially in a traditional culture." - Rayan Yamout

"My pieces, rather than being simple wearable jewelry, have deeper meanings that reveal emotions and hidden thoughts. Through this course, I expanded my understanding of art by examining the social and political context of the current Middle East and its people." - Riwa Hafez

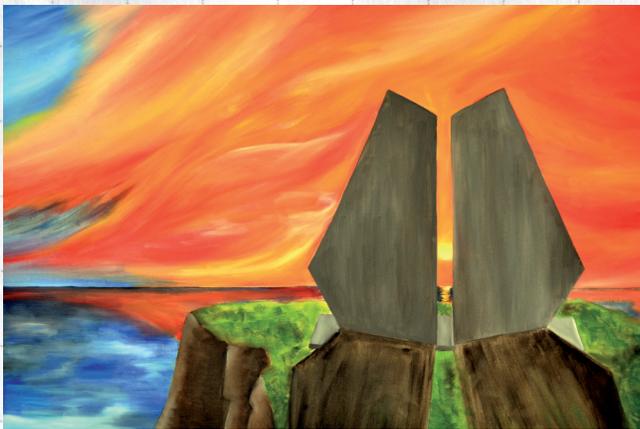
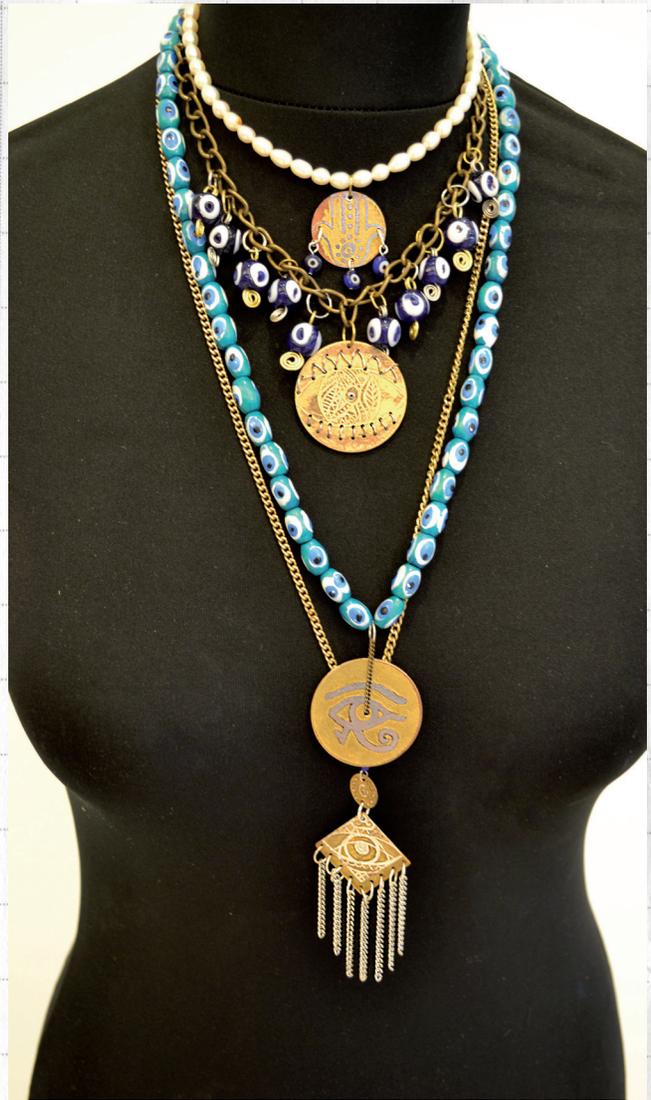
"Film is the art that brings my imagination to a visual reality. I view the world through the 3rd dimension of my perception; sound and music." - Giorgio Khachwajian











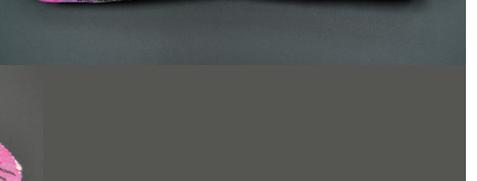
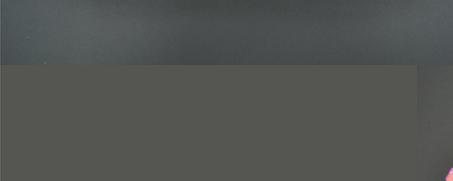
Grade 9-10 Art Foundations

Lynn Salha, Grade 9 and 10 Art Teacher

In Grade 9/10 Art Foundations, one of the major projects was Exploration of Color. Students completed various exercises including a color wheel based on doodling. They also created explorations in complimentary, warm, cool and tertiary colors using drawings from the Rabbit Field as their design source.

A second project was Plaster Tattooed Arms. Students researched the history of tattooing in different cultures, made a plaster cast of their arm, then designed and chose personal tattoos to paint or draw onto the arm.





Grade 10 2D Art

Lynn Salha, Grade 9 and 10 Art Teacher

In Grade 10 2D Art, students have been participating in a series of 10 minute exercises at the beginning of most lessons. These exercises have been focusing on using many techniques in watercolor to refine knowledge in the elements and principals of design and also atmospheric and linear perspective.

Another unit of work was based on the history of blue and white ceramics. After researching some of this fascinating and global history, students created a simple form from clay, then decorated the surface with a detailed design. These pieces were then fired in a kiln to 1000° C, glazed with a clear glaze, and then fired again.



67 Nigeria Street, Jal el-Bahr
P.O.Box 11-8129, Riad El Solh,
Beirut 2035-8003, Lebanon
Tel: 961 [1] 374 370 Fax: 961 [1] 366 050
www.acs.edu.lb

ACS Matters is prepared and produced
by the Development
and Alumni Affairs Office
development@acs.edu.lb

