

Hello, this is the second issue of the welcoming committee newsletter. In these newsletters, we will try to answer most of your questions, at least those that might apply to all of you. For individual concerns, please contact your social and/or academic buddy accordingly. You should have received an email from at least one of your academic or social buddy by this time.

Snapshots around the school



ACS e-mail account

Once you arrive, you will notice that the school relies heavily on the use of the school email for its communications. It is important that you get yourself acquainted with how to use your school email from outside school. An e-mail account is created for you as soon as you sign a contract with ACS.

Instructions to login to ACS Outlook Web Access

- 1- Go to www.acs.edu.lb
- 2- Click on Quick links → Mail.
- 3- Enter your username: ACS email address i.e: jdiabbitar@acs.edu.lb
- 4- Enter password:

In case you face any problem, you can send an e-mail to ithelpdesk@acs.edu.lb , using your ACS e-mail account only.

PLEASE CHECK YOUR ACS EMAIL ACCOUNTS AS YOUR BUDDIES WILL BE TRYING TO CONTACT YOU

Note from the Head of School

Building Your R.A.F.T.

You need to leave well in order to enter well.

For those who have moved a number of times in your lives, particular to different cultures, the acronym R.A.F.T. (Reconciliation, Affirmation, Farewells, and Think destination) is a known concept about using each of those 'logs' as part of a process of leaving and arriving. This idea of building a raft can help with the journey from where you are to where you are going.

How you leave one place has a profound effect on how you enter the next place: how we leave (Russia, Brazil,

Kuwait, U.S., etc.) will have an effect on how you enter ACS Beirut in August and the years ahead. The R.A.F.T. model might shed some light on how you may leave 'well'.

Going through and strapping each of the four logs together to form a R.A.F.T. will ensure that you not only leave well, but that your transition journey will be a psychologically healthy one that will help on the other side. Allow yourself to reconcile relationships, affirm those things important to us, to say farewell, and to think about what is special about where you are now is necessary.

Here are some thoughts about each log:

- **Reconciliation:** Making the relationship right. Just because we leave a place doesn't mean the problem(s) go(es) away. They don't – instead they go with you. Research has been done on health related issues due to lack of forgiveness and lack of resolution. Take the time now to figure out what needs mending and then move forward.
- **Affirmation:** Is there anyone or any part of your work that you are super thankful for? Any person in your life now that has been helpful, inspiring, special to your work at school? Tell them. Let them know how much you appreciate them and what they did for you, for your teaching, for your profession. Is it a program or a space or a tree? Take a photo and post about it or make note how you can replicate it. Awkward? Write a letter to tell the person or publish about the place- but do tell them. You have the opportunity to make someone or group of people and projects feel appreciated – and you'll feel great that you did it as you move forward.
- **Farewell:** Before I left my home last year in Costa Rica, I stopped and took a picture of the zip line and amazing set-up on the soccer right before a field day and sent it off to a few people. I needed to say goodbye to zip lines! While the goodbyes and farewells are the hardest part of the raft, it is important to say goodbye. This may sound strange, but many transition blogs and accounts describe how this really helps to bring closure.
- **Think Destination:** It's just that – think about ACS and Beirut! How will it be different from where you are now? How will it be the same? In your own classroom, in your own daily schedule, go through this dialogue with your inner self and with your students as well. It may help them in the process as well. Reminder: It's okay to feel excited about your new destination as you say goodbye to all the old places here. It's normal.



Take the time personally and professionally as a new ACS community member to build the R.A.F.T. and leave your special place in order to join a special community in August.

Accommodation

Faculty Apartments

All ACS foreign-hire teachers are provided with apartments within easy walking distance of the school (one-half hour or less.) Apartments vary in size according to family size and the design of various apartment buildings. After your first year at ACS you will be given a choice of continuing to live in the same apartment, bidding on another vacant apartment or being paid a cash stipend to find your own accommodations.



Furniture

All apartments are furnished with a basic set of furniture. The furniture allotment includes sofas, armchairs, coffee and end tables, bookcases, desks and beds. All apartments have a refrigerator and a stove, and access to a washer and dryer. Kitchen appliances and electrical goods are readily available in Beirut. New residents will receive brand new kitchenware (utensils, dishes, cookware, etc...), bedding and bath sets (sheets, pillows, towels, etc...)

Water

A small initial supply of bottled drinking water is provided upon your arrival. After that, there are several companies in Beirut who will deliver drinking water to your apartment. Information about these companies will be supplied in the welcoming packet which will be in your apartment when you arrive. Tap water in Beirut is considered safe for all purposes other than drinking.

Utilities

Electricity on the ACS campus and in all campus buildings is 220V, 60Hz. All ACS apartments are supplied with 220-240V. Transformers and voltage stabilizers are readily available in Beirut. Power cuts of 3 hours or more are a daily feature of life in Beirut. During these power cuts, the ACS campus and all ACS apartment buildings are equipped with generators. Generator power in your apartment will NOT be as strong as government power. Restoring generator power to your apartment after an overload will probably require intervention by your building superintendent. Therefore, it is essential that you run a very minimal set of electrical appliances during a power cut. An i-Phone and Android app (Beirut Electricity Cut Off) is available to keep track of the scheduled power cuts and warn you when one is approaching. However, unscheduled power cuts can occur. Desktop computers must be connected to a UPS in order to avoid damage while switching to and from generator power. Stoves operate from gas bottles. The first canister is free, and you will be responsible for replacing the gas bottle after that. The canisters last approximately 3 months, and refilled canisters cost \$15.

Electricity is included as part of your housing benefits, up to \$1,000 per year for singles and \$1,500 for couples. Each apartment comes with its own private telephone line. Monthly phone bills are charged to the resident as a payroll deduction.



Maintenance/Pets

Prior to your arrival, the apartment receives thorough cleaning and painting. All new residents will receive an inventory list to be filled out, signed, and returned to ACS Facilities & Operations Department. Please be aware that the apartments are leased and the landlord needs to approve any significant changes in the apartment.

Cleaning and maintaining the apartment and its contents are the occupant's responsibility. The Facilities & Operations department will respond to emergency calls pertaining to plumbing or electrical problems. However, residents are expected to attend to routine repairs and upkeep, such as replacing light bulbs and unclogging drains.

Some property owners prohibit keeping pets in their buildings. Please notify ACS as early as possible of your intention to bring a household pet. It may or may not be possible to find accommodation in a petfriendly building. Aside from the regular wear & tear, residents are liable for damages caused by their pets to drapery, upholstery and other household furniture items.

Keys

It is the occupant's responsibility to safeguard the keys or give a copy to non ACS individuals. A fee will be applied for replacing lost keys and locks whenever deemed necessary.

THE ABOVE IS A SUMMARY OF WHAT TO EXPECT. PLEASE REFER TO THE HOUSING HANBOOK AND HOUSING POLICY.

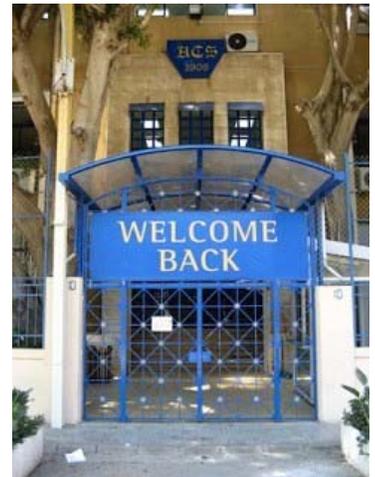
Security

Foremost in everyone's mind, even many years after the cessation of hostilities in Lebanon, is the question of security. Your family and friends most probably raised eyebrows in dismay when you announced your plan to teach in Beirut. But the outside image belies the reality. Many Beirutis claim, with justice, that Beirut is far safer than other major cities of the world such as Paris, London and New York. Of course, occasional crime does occur as it does in major cities everywhere in the world, but the crime rate in Beirut is significantly lower than elsewhere.

Many newcomers may be alarmed at first by the number of military personnel in evidence on neighborhood patrol, at traffic intersections, and along the highways. But you will soon realize that despite this military presence, life in Beirut is more peaceful and secure in almost all of Lebanon. During the war years, a young female student of journalism, apprenticed to a Philadelphia newspaper, declared she felt far safer in war-ravaged Beirut than on the streets of the city of brotherly love. And today, Beirut and all of Lebanon are far safer.

Nevertheless, it is always prudent to proceed with caution and to respect the laws and customs of the host country whenever travelling abroad. While moving around Beirut and the rest of the country, always be prepared to show your identification papers on request. A photocopy of your passport and/or residence permit is sufficient.

Occasionally, uniformed police or army officers stop traffic for security reasons. When approaching a security check by car, slow down, remove sunglasses, and open the window; in the evening turn on the interior light. Most security personnel will wave you through, but make sure you fully understand one another before you move on.



ACS Gates Entry to the ACS Campus is through one of several gates (depending on the time of day), each of which is guarded by ACS security guards. An ACS ID or a visitor badge is needed for entry. Before you receive your ACS ID make sure you carry a photo ID with you, which may be exchanged for a visitor badge at the gate.

Internet

Each ACS apartment is equipped with up to 4Mbs speed internet connection from a local ISP, including a wireless router.

The connection is uncapped: Extra fees will apply if you exceed your quota. The monthly DSL subscription will be domiciled at the local bank, and you don't need to refill the account on a monthly basis, since it will be renewed automatically. The invoices will be automatically sent to ACS bank account and paid. We will then turn around on a monthly basis and deduct the DSL invoice from your paycheck. A copy of the invoice will be provided.

Wireless coverage in your apartment will vary, based on the layout of concrete walls and the shape of the apartment.

If you choose to:

1- Upgrade your ADSL plan, the upgrade fee will be 10,000 LBP and you need to send us a helpdesk ticket before mid-month, and this is subject to feasibility. When you leave ACS

you need to revert back all adjustments to their original (4MB without any service) and this will cost another 10,000 LBP and also needs to be done before mid-month. This process will be part of the sign out sheet.

2- Freeze the internet connection while you are away for the summer (freezing connection means, the account is active but no internet connection). The freeze option can only be activated for 1 full month (i.e. July 1 to July 31), no partial month freeze is allowed, and the request must be submitted before the 20th of the month.

Instead of paying the monthly internet fees, freezing the account will cost \$8 Tax Included per month only. You will be responsible for those fees. Note that freeze option can be activated for a maximum of three consecutive months.

P.S: Generally speaking, you will find the quality of internet in Beirut slower, less reliable, and more expensive than other countries.

Unlimited night service:

\$3 for 2Mbps & 4Mbps plans
 \$6 for 6Mbps & 8Mbps plans

Extra Traffic:

- For postpaid 'Extra Traffic fee \$1.3 per 1 GByte

Notes:

- Above indicated bandwidths are "Up To" based on your location and the quality of your copper phone line.



ADSL—Plans and Rates

Plan	Download	CAP	Monthly Fees*
2M - 10GB	2 Mbps	10 GB	\$ 12
2M - 40GB	2 Mbps	40 GB	\$ 16
2M - 45GB	2 Mbps	45 GB	\$ 19
2M - 50GB	2 Mbps	50 GB	\$ 25
4M - 15GB	4 Mbps	15 GB	\$ 19
4M - 25GB	4 Mbps	25 GB	\$ 25
4M - 50GB	4 Mbps	50 GB	\$ 33
6M - 60GB	6 Mbps	60 GB	\$ 43
8M - 100GB	8 Mbps	100 GB	\$ 67
1M - Unlimited	1 Mbps	Unlimited	\$ 27
2M - Unlimited	2 Mbps	Unlimited	\$ 50
4M - Unlimited	4 Mbps	Unlimited	\$ 75

All prices are subject to VAT
 All plans are subject to [Fair Use Policy](#)

A sample of prices in Beirut

Beirut is an expensive city to live in. You will notice that many items that are cheap back home are sometimes double or triple the price in Lebanon. However, there are items that are far less expensive here than the prices you are used to paying. Here is an overview of prices in USD to give you an idea.

Grocery Shopping

Milk (1 liter) - \$2.50
Loaf of fresh bread - \$1.50
Sliced bread - \$3.00
loaf wheat, 1 ft., 3 pieces \$0.70
loaf cereal, 1 ft., 1 piece \$0.50
Bag of large pita bread - \$1.00
Rice (1 KG) - \$1.50
Boneless chicken breasts (6) - \$10.00 (1 KG for \$15.00)
Bottled water (6 x 1.5 L) - \$ 3.00
Dozen eggs - \$5.00
Apples (1 KG) - \$2.50
Oranges (1 KG) - \$1.50
Yogurt (4-pack) - \$4.00
Box of Cheerios - \$8.00
Local Cheese (1 pack) - \$4.00
Limes, imported (1 KG) - \$20.00
Lemons (1 KG) - \$2.50
Potatoes (1 KG) - \$1.00
Tomatoes (1 KG) - \$2.00
Shampoo (Herbal Essence for example) - \$5.00
Conditioner (Herbal Essence for example) - \$5.00
Olive oil (1 liter) - \$7.00
Tide liquid- \$16.00
6 pack local Beer - \$6.00
Bottle of local wine - \$8.00

Restaurants

Meal at an inexpensive restaurant - \$15.00
Meal at mid-range restaurant (PF Changs for example) - \$35.00
Combo meal at McDonalds - \$7.50
Bottle of local beer in bottle - \$3.50
Mixed cocktails - \$10.00
Wine- \$7.50
Coffee- \$5.00
Soft drinks - \$3.00
Fruit juice - \$5.00
Large bottle of water - \$2.00

Fitness/Leisure

Gym membership (these vary depending on the gym) but on average - \$100 to 150 per month
Daily swim at AUB pool - \$10.00
Entrance to beach club for a day (depends on the club and beach) - \$20 to 40.00
Car rental for a day - \$20 to 30.00
Taxi ride: cabs here are not metered. A Taxi fare in Beirut is LL 10,000. Trips outside Beirut will obviously cost more. You can call a cab company and they will give you a set rate on the phone before you get picked up.
"Uber" or "Careem" services: (pay by credit card or cash. Prices vary depending on time of day and travel distances.)
Within Beirut - \$7.00
Beirut suburbs - \$12.00
Bus ride - \$.50
Movies - \$8.00
Bicycle rental - \$5.00, per hour

*When buying produce it is much cheaper to buy it at a local vegetable and fruit stand than from the super market. Many brand name items that you are used to from home are very expensive here but you can usually find a local brand that is similar for less.

Check with Your Bank

Many non-Lebanese banks require that you sign a document if you plan on using their US debit or credit card in Lebanon. A visit to your bank may be helpful to avoid any surprises when you get here. Also, if you are planning on making wire transfers, please get complete routing information from your bank before you leave, as well as fees.

MEET YOUR ACS COLLEAGUES

Moving to a new country is an exciting time and it's always nice to see a familiar face when you arrive. We are pleased to introduce the new members of our ACS community. If you wish to contact each other just put the initial of their first name and their full last name@acs.edu.lb

Alyssa Strickland

I am from Anoka, Minnesota, which is about 20 miles (32 km) north of Minneapolis. I taught in Minnesota for two years before deciding to teach internationally. I am currently living in Maracaibo, Venezuela teaching middle school math and drama. I have enjoyed directing plays while here and hope to continue to be involved in theater at ACS. Outside of work I enjoy baking and traveling. I am greatly looking forward to joining the ACS community as well as experiencing a part of the world I have yet to see.



Andrew Borozan

I am originally from Chicago. I have spent time living in South Korea, the Philippines, and most recently Maracaibo, Venezuela. I enjoy reading, watching movies, and watching and playing sports. I am an avid baseball fan and was quite happy that the Cubs finally won the World Series. My goals include carving out more time to write and create instructional videos.

Audra Santos

Hello from Ukraine, where it is March and still snowing! My name is Audra, and I'll be joining ACS next year with my husband, Rex, after 5 amazing years teaching Biology in Kyiv. Before this, we spent 5 years teaching in China. Since 5 seems to be our lucky number, we look forward to as many years in Beirut! I'm originally from Texas, but try not to go home too often. I love spending any extra time I have playing or coaching volleyball, conquering escape rooms, and planning holidays. Rex, our two cats, and I look forward to meeting everyone in August!

Rex Santos

Marhaban, ACS! Please don't let my accent fool you – I'm not actually Lebanese. My name is Rex and I'm joining in as an IT Integration Coach for the elementary school. I've been told everyone there is fluent in binary, 01111001 01100101 011110011? My wife and I are from



Texas (but don't hold that against us). We've lived and worked in Ukraine for the past 5 years and the 5 before this in China, where our skills of charading obscure items was put to the ultimate test. We are enjoying this journey called life and are excited to be sharing it with you all soon in Beirut.



Cassandra Brady

Hello, my name is Cassandra Brady. I grew up in California and Minnesota and have been teaching overseas for the last four years. I have enjoyed living in Vietnam and South Korea and am looking forward to experiencing a whole other part of the world. I love nature and the outdoors. Mountain biking, cross country skiing, running, hiking, and backpacking are some of my favorites. If I am indoors I enjoy films and books. I look forward to meeting the whole ACS community soon!

Chelsea Barger

Hello! My name is Chelsea. I am originally from Michigan but also spent some time living in Colorado, USA. I am currently a 1st grade teacher in San Jose, Costa Rica and I will be a 5th grade teacher at ACS. I enjoy practicing yoga, getting outside, traveling, reading a good book and spending time with friends. I am so excited for this new adventure in Beirut!



Erin Johnson



I grew up surrounded by the corn and soybean fields of southern Minnesota. I was able to study abroad in Spain for a few weeks when I was in high school, and my love of travel was born. When I initially went to college, I wanted to be a children's book editor at a publishing company, but in my role as an electronic resources librarian at a college library, I discovered I loved teaching. I went back to school, and when I finished my licensing, I was able to combine my love of travel and teaching at my first post in Kuwait. My educational philosophy focuses on teaching students to become critical thinkers, engaged readers, and decent human beings. In my free time, I enjoy reading, practicing yoga, and exploring wherever I happen to be at the time. I enjoy spending my Saturday mornings chatting with my nephews, however, they prefer to talk to Chris! We are coming to ACS from Jeju, South Korea.

Chris Walden-Jones



I am an Arizona native. I had actually never been outside of Arizona for more than a couple months before becoming an international teacher. The upcoming school year will be my ninth as an international school educator after teaching ten years at the middle and high school levels in Arizona. My original plan was to be a Social Studies and/or Spanish teacher, but my career gravitated towards teaching computers, integration, and supporting peers use of technology very early. I am an avid reader of world and financial news. My favorite book would be The Tao of Pooh. I

enjoy watching historical dramas and sports, with my newest interest being Aussie Rules Football. I prefer taking the picture than being in the picture. I enjoy cooking and can make some mean Mexican food.

The hardest part of living abroad is missing the milestones of our niece and nephews.

Erin and I are coming to ACS from Jeju, South Korea

Jana Gahm

Hello, my name is Jana Gahm and I will be joining ACS as an English teacher next year. I was born and mostly raised in Phoenix, Arizona. After college I spent my early career years working as an academic advisor, which taught me that the 9-5 desk job life was not for me. It did however; afford me the opportunity to earn my MA in Curriculum and Instruction as well as my MAED.

For the past 7 years I have taught a variety of English Language and Literature classes at a very large, inner city public high school in Phoenix, Arizona. I have experienced great successes as well as challenges and obstacles. All of that helped me become not only a stronger teacher, but also a better friend, sister, daughter, collaborator and mentor. Teaching feels like a true calling, and it's something that makes me better every day. I am interested in all of the new challenges and opportunities that are coming my way both personally and professionally as I settle into life in Beirut and at ACS. When I'm not in the classroom I like to seek out new and interesting restaurants and coffee shops. My idea of a great afternoon is getting completely lost in a bookstore. I am forever planning my next trip.

I am really looking forward to meeting everyone at ACS as well as getting to know Beirut and seeing all it has to offer. See you in August!





Kalen Wheeler

Greetings! I am a School Counselor, born and raised in New York City. With exception to attending Smith College in Massachusetts, and living abroad in Senegal for two six month intervals, I have spent my whole life in NYC, and I am a very proud native New Yorker. My undergraduate studies were in Sociology, and my MEd is in School Counseling. Therefore, my counseling practice puts the more individualistic discipline of psychology within the context of the

larger societal systems and structures that affect our mental health. I am passionate about social justice and equity. I love music, dance, fashion, food, and travel (obviously), and I cannot wait to get to know another part of the world. I look forward to meeting you all in August, and building with you all in the coming years.

Laura Blazek

I am very excited to be joining the ACS community! After spending the past five years in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, my daughter Lily and I are looking forward to new adventures and less dust. I will be teaching fourth grade, and Lily will be starting high school.

I have also lived and taught in Japan, Ecuador, the United States, and Nigeria. Lily came along in Ecuador but managed to acquire a powerful affinity for sushi despite (with great disappointment) just missing out on living in Japan. She likes to joke that our most difficult posting has been Texas, my home state. So much barbacoa, boudin, and brisket must be quite a hardship for a third-culture kid to endure! That said, she can fluently make a contraction from you and all. This alone made it well worth our time.

After school, I enjoy going for a run (preferably on trails) or spending time in front of a sewing machine. I worry about being a selfish seamstress though, as Lily's fashion sense specifically excludes mom-made. When she isn't keeping her social media connections up to speed, Lily also enjoys running and debating her curfew.

Though we've enjoyed experiencing the wonders and deserts of Arabia, Lily and I are looking forward to Lebanese shawarma and a more temperate climate. We are also eager to meet and make new friends at ACS!





Eric Bonnett

Hello ACS Family! My name is Eric Bonnett and I am thrilled to be joining the ACS family next year as the 6-10 Band Teacher. I grew up in Manchester N.H and attended Plymouth State University where I earned my Bachelor of Science in Music Education. After college I taught music in inner city NH for 3 years before jumping into the international teaching scene. Traveling and teaching internationally has always been a dream of mine and I am lucky to have been teaching overseas now for five years. For the past 5 years I have been teaching music at a brand new American International school in Kuwait. I am one of the founding teachers of my school in Kuwait, and have spent those years creating and building the music program from scratch. It has been such a humbling and rewarding

experience to see a school grow from 78 students in grades pre-k through five, to now having over 900 students in grades Pre-K through eleven. In May 2017 I completed my Masters of Music in Music Education degree from SUNY Buffalo State University. I love to learn and love going to workshops and conferences and look forward to pursuing my phd in the future.

When I am not teaching I enjoying performing as much as possible, traveling and exploring new places, movies, and concerts. I have enjoyed performing with Staged in Kuwait a local theatre company for the past five years. I have been in 5 productions including Shrek the musical, Cinderella the pantomime, Sinbad the Sailor the pantomime, Beauty and the Beast, and more recently Puss in Boots. I have been everything from Papa Bear, to a pirate, to a dancing fork in beauty and the beast and have loved every minute of it.

I am so excited to be moving to the beautiful Beirut, Lebanon for my next stop in my international teaching adventure. I look forward to meeting everyone in person real soon :-)

Please note the new hires whose blurbs are not in this newsletter will be posted in our third newsletter.