Worldfest Celebration

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Our mission is to be the leading, culturally diverse and family-oriented international school with English as the principal language of instruction. We inspire individuals to develop their intellect, creativity and character to become independent, adaptable, socially responsible and internationally minded citizens, by ensuring a dynamic, inquiry-driven education of the highest standard.
Where Each Student Counts

Another school year will soon be coming to a close. For our 130 seniors, it is an important time as they enter the increasingly competitive marketplace of college admissions. A recent article in The International New York Times noted that some universities are now accepting fewer than 5% of applicants, citing that Stanford University received 42,167 applications while accepting only 2,138 students. The University of California in Los Angeles received over 86,000 requests for its 6,000 openings. Similar statistics can also be found for the most elite universities in the United Kingdom and Asia.

Indeed, it is a source of pride that FIS has had students accepted in recent years to schools like Stanford, Columbia, UCLA, Oxford, Cambridge, KAUST and others. We offer a rigorous program that allows students to attract the attention of these universities through high International Baccalaureate (IB) scores, extensive extra-curricular options, and building students’ character and leadership skills while at FIS. I am certain that there is no better international school in our region to prepare students for the academic and life challenges that await them upon graduation.

However, you would be mistaken if you believe that I am only most proud of our students that achieve the highest marks or enter the most selective universities. Our school’s goal is not to fit all of our students into a singular mold or to make them conform to our pre-set expectations. I am equally proud of the students that find their perfect university fit at small liberal arts colleges that do not often make news headlines, but will be the ideal place for our graduates to reach their potential. In fact, there exists quite a bit of research that demonstrates finding the right fit is far more important to personal success and fulfillment than if one was only concerned with the pedigree of a college or university.

My sentiments toward our IB results follow in the same vein. I was the first to celebrate when I learned that one of our students scored a perfect 45 last year (and in previous years), which is a relative rarity on an international scale. The fact that we’ve also averaged roughly a dozen or more students achieving a score above 40 is also outstanding. Yet I am equally impressed when I hear about students who were reluctant to even attempt the IB Diploma, given that academics had always been an uphill battle, accept the IB challenge, and after two years of perseverance and hard work pass the IB. They deserve an equal amount of praise for their vigilant effort and personal growth.

To maintain this balance of challenging both our gifted students as well as those who may need additional support, we need to constantly be open to new paradigms of instruction. We need to investigate online learning options, adding new IB courses to our already expansive offerings and even create paths to success for those who may not want to pursue the full IB Diploma. Ultimately our goal is not to teach over 1,700 unique individuals. It is an incredibly challenging task, but fortunately our faculty has the talent and enthusiasm to meet this challenge.

I am well aware, and extremely proud, of the fact that FIS has the highest average IB scores over the past few years, and the most students accepted into prestigious universities than any other school in the area. However, at my core, I am also an educator and know that what makes us a truly great school is that we allow each student the chance to reach his or her own potential and personal goals. It is this pleasant thought that will go through my mind as I look into the eyes of each graduate that will cross the stage in their cap and gown this June.

Paul Fochtman, Head of School

Welcome New Alumni

I know that at this time of the year our community is generally focused on saying its goodbyes to departing families and to our graduating students. However, not being a person particularly fond of goodbyes, I would like instead to remind all those who are moving away from Obergurie that they are simply shifting from our campus and into our FIS Alumni Association.

I already have two children who have graduated from FIS and I know they enjoy keeping in touch with former classmates. They are also interested in current events at the school, such as who won a recent sports tournament or how the plans are progressing for the building of our new Learning and Sports Center. (And, if we’ll ever come up with a better name for the project)! Although having their parents and a brother still at the school makes these updates quite natural for my older children, FIS also has an alumni page on its website and on Facebook for departing parents and students to keep tabs on the school.

It is common to only think of students who have graduated from our school as FIS Alumni. However, we know that students and parents alike, feel a close bond to our community, and we consider all those that have been a part of our school for any length of time as members of our alumni community. In fact, this June we will be holding our second annual celebration for the parents of our graduating seniors, to specifically remind them that they remain a welcome part of the FIS family.

Even when the time comes that you no longer have children at our school, we hope you will continue to join us at Applefest, Worldfest as well as the many plays, concerts, and sporting events that take place on our campus. We have an alumni tent at Applefest for our returning alumni but please accept this as an invitation to all of our open school events at FIS.

I know that having our “graduated parents” in the audience in our auditorium for a concert or among the spectators at a sporting event will bring back wonderful memories and help you to continue to appreciate the relationship between FIS and your family.

So June is not just a time for goodbyes. It is also a time for many of our departing families to seek us out on the alumni portal of our webpage, on our alumni Facebook page, join us on LinkedIn, or better yet, plan to come by and share a bratwurst with us at the Board of Trustees tent at our next festival. When our mission statement states we are a “family-oriented” school, it means that the welcome mat is always out for you to return and to be an engaged part of our community.

Michael H. McKay, Chair Board of Trustees
Trying something new is usually a good learning experience and it seems that both Grade 9 faculty and students alike agree that the new 2014 Grade 9 Exhibition has proven to be just that.

Not only was a new format implemented, but a new focus was found for students under the official title, The 30 Day Challenge. It calls for students to change their life in some way for 30 days, to try something new whether it be to write a journal, learn a language, take on a new sport or activity or just make a point of meeting a new person each day. The inspiration for the new approach actually came from Dr. Fochtman, Head of School, who advocated a 30 day fitness challenge last fall. Exhibition Coordinator, Gavin Hopwood, took the idea to the Grade 9 team who adjusted it to fit the curriculum demands.

So, instead of a four month project as in the past, the students must find a topic outside the curriculum that engages their personal interest and commit to it for 30 days. The goal is for students to take responsibility for their own learning. It is all about starting a learning process and gaining a sense of achievement from it. The rule of thumb is that if it is not a challenge, then it is not good enough!

But who is the judge of this? Fellow students help judge the choice, another aspect of the altered format. In the past, faculty members have monitored and mentored. Now Grade 11 student volunteers assume the role of advisor and evaluator using the FIS Haiku learning platform. Under the supervision of Mr. Hopwood, the Grade 11 students – for CAS hours – are responsible for looking at the entries in the personal journal, reading the students’ reflections on their project and evaluating the exhibition.

It turned out to be a great learning experience for the student mentors as well. The group was very involved, but had to learn to deal with the frustrations that came with the job. Needless to say, some Grade 9 students were more inspired, organized and focused as others. But by 8 April, the exhibitions were in place. Although less important in the past when the exhibition was the culmination of a project, students still needed to present using appropriate tools describing the process they went through and how their project was motivating, challenging and enriching to them as an individual. Students used iMovie, visuals, props (a dog), or performed (ukulele) to illustrate what they had done for the 30 days.

To quote Mr. Hopwood, the new format was “short, sharp, snappy and opened a new experience for all involved!”
Endangered Animals

Grade 2 to the Rescue

The 10th of April was a big day for the FIS Grade 2 students. It was the day of the Endangered Animal Open House - the culminating event in a unit of inquiry focusing on the plight of endangered animals. The students spent the day educating their fellow classmates, FIS staff, and family members about their endangered animal - its habitat, geographic location, the dangers it faces in the wild, and what can be done to help. The Grade 2 students started this unit with a trip to the Senckenberg Museum to learn about dinosaurs, and to fully understand the devastating consequences of not protecting our endangered species. Each student then chose a specific animal and spent many hours researching, writing, drawing, sculpting and glazing in art class, and at home creating a 3-D model of their animal’s habitat. Some students even went so far as to raise money for their animals and educate friends and family members overseas about ways to help endangered animals. The last activity of the unit included a visit to the Frankfurt Zoo to feed rhinos, a very memorable activity for our second graders.

This project is an amazing aspect of the FIS elementary experience in many ways. Academically, it incorporates critical skills such as those related to research, analytical writing, science, creativity, design, and time-management. However, from the perspective of looking at the student as a whole person, this unit is literally life changing, providing the student with a remarkably complete understanding of endangered animals, the causes of their decline in the wild, and what efforts can be done to help them. Such knowledge can be overlooked in many educational settings, and a lack of focus in school on the environment and its species can lead to adults who do not recognize that they must take action to preserve our fragile ecosystem.

The FIS focus on endangered species and the environment is not limited to the second grade curriculum. Earth Rescue is an extremely popular student group for Grades 2-8. Earth Rescue meets at recess “to learn about the beauty of our world and plan actions to help protect the living things on our planet.” Earth Rescue, led by Steve Crowley and Dr. Sabine Koopmann, chooses an endangered animal every year to raise funds for at Applefest - this past year they focused on rhinos, and raised over 700 Euro to benefit rhinos and the Frankfurt Zoological Society. They have also established battery recycling stations, fed the birds in the forest over the winter, rescued frogs, and collected cell phones to raise funds for gorillas.

Programs promoting earth awareness and conservation abound at FIS. The FIS Upper School students can participate in CORAL Reef Awareness and Protection, a student group dedicated to protecting coral reefs. Moreover, in March, FIS elementary students participated in the “Fitness and Fundraising Jump-a-thon” where they obtained pledges and did jump roping during physical education class to raise money for the orangutans at the Frankfurt Zoo, and its efforts to protect orangutans in Sumatra. While visiting the Frankfurt Zoo during the Grade 2 field trip, students presented their financial donation directly to the zoo - an amazing way to see that they concretely helped the plight of orangutans. A recent speaker at FIS also educated students about efforts to raise orphaned elephants in Africa, creating a spike in students wishing to work as elephant caretakers as a career choice.

We all strive to live in a world where people live harmoniously with nature and where animals are respected and allowed to thrive. FIS students are now prepared to tackle these issues and have the educational background, tools, and motivation to make this dream a reality.

Amy MacDougall, FIS Parent
Writing Center

Coaching With a Pen at FIS

“The hardest part is getting started,” according to Ali Stewart-Ito, the new Upper School Writing Center Director. Her words certainly ring true for me. Fortunately now that the first sentence is written, I can better envision the structure of this article.

I spent an hour with Ms. Stewart-Ito, who has a Masters in Teaching from the University of Washington, learning about the new Upper School Writing Center. Though I obviously learned about Ms. Stewart-Ito and the Writing Center, I also had the opportunity to reflect on my own journey as a writer. Ms. Stewart-Ito began the interview by stating “My biggest job is to teach students that writing is a process…a different process for everyone.” I spent several days thinking about this interview and looking over my notes, and had the revelation that the best approach to writing about the Writing Center is to learn from and write about my experience. I followed Ms. Stewart-Ito’s approach to processes, and thought carefully about the processes that I feel work best for me and prioritized them.

The Upper School made it a priority three years ago to learn how it could better encourage and support writing. Teachers Paul Shoebottom and Sayaka Mikoshiba spent two years conducting research, interviews and surveys, which resulted in a 350 page extensive report suggesting the need for a full-time staffed Writing Center. The Board of Trustees approved the idea, and Ms. Stewart-Ito took over the Writing Center at the beginning of the 2013/2014 school year, continuing to build upon the strong foundation laid by her predecessor, Emma Wilson.

The bulletin board outside the Writing Center communicates a clear message. “The Writing Center is not a one stop ‘fix it’ shop where tutors correct grammatical mistakes. Instead, the Writing Center seeks to support development as an independent thinker and communicator through questioning, suggesting a variety of techniques and strategies, providing resources, and serving as a sounding board for writers.” The Center supports development with one-to-one sessions, class visits, and by providing a rich online resource for students to improve their writing independently.

Ms. Stewart-Ito explained that while she “will address grammar issues in context,” her true mission is to “help students find their voice as words are the most powerful agents of change.” Ms. Stewart-Ito does not want to be perceived as “the writing guru spouting grammatical wisdom” and in turn, has partnered with Richard Winn to pilot a Peer Writing Coaches program. Mr. Winn, a teacher in the Upper School English department, and Ms. Stewart-Ito are currently recruiting and training students in Grades 9-12 to provide writing support for students in Grades 6-8 in any subject area.

Mr. Winn said the Writing Center is “an exciting and valuable development” and reminded him of his experience with a similar program in university. Mr. Winn emphasized that training students to serve as Writing Coaches teaches better writing in both directions. “I was a student writing tutor, and I remember understanding that, as I was (hopefully) helping my peers to improve their writing, I was improving my own writing as well.”

Ms. Stewart-Ito’s approach to processes, and thought carefully about the processes that I feel work best for me and prioritized them.

Coaching With a Pen at FIS

writing Center

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Writing Center
Model United Nations, or more commonly known as MUN, is provided as an Upper School extracurricular activity at Frankfurt International School and is an amazing chance to improve one’s oratory and interpersonal skills. Participants take on the role of diplomats and research a current pressing issue and then debate, deliberate, and discuss possible solutions to the important issue in committee. It is recognized by universities all around the world as a highly regarded and rigorous extracurricular activity and is the only extracurricular activity that is recognized by Oxford and Cambridge Universities in the United Kingdom.

Model United Nations at FIS has been an active group for more than fifty years and has been run by a variety of teachers all throughout. For the past ten years Celia Nater, Upper School Business and Economics teacher, has been the MUN Advisor and driving force of the group at FIS. Over the decades, the school has been invited to multitudes of exclusive conferences. Additionally, this year, Ms. Nater has led the organization of the school’s first Model United Nations for Middle School students at FIS that will take place in June 2014.

While the MUN advisor is crucial in getting students to and from conferences, the students are the active force in the group as a whole. Students are responsible for teaching new MUN members about how to write resolutions, policy statements, speeches, and how to present oneself in front of an MUN committee whilst debating. In some of the more prestigious conferences such as The Hague International Model United Nations (THIMUN), passed resolutions in the plenary session are in fact sent to the actual United Nations. In 2014, two of the three resolutions passed in plenary were written by Frankfurt International School students and are now at the United Nations.

This year has been a great MUN experience for all MUN members. During the school year the students were given the opportunity to participate in conferences at the Royal Russell School outside of London, Paris MUN at the UNESCO conference center, THIMUN, which is one of the most exclusive and largest of such conferences in the world, and the new Prague conference. MUN members are also extremely excited for the FIS Middle School MUN conference in June and are all playing an active role in its organization.

To conclude, MUN at FIS is a very rewarding experience that is recommended to students who wish to expand their horizons and challenge themselves at an intellectual level. MUN students graduate FIS more globally aware and diplomatically inclined. Lauren Moore, a former FIS student described her experience as, “MUN gave me the confidence; leadership skills and a deeper understanding of the world, a key in helping me get into college.”

Nicholas Strauch and Katarina Majetić, FIS Class of 2016
**FISW Father-Daughter Dance**

The Unique Value of the Father-Daughter Bond

Valentine’s Day! A day for romance, chocolate, pink and red ribbons, heart-shaped cards, and sweet little nothings whispered over candlelit dinners, firing up a new love affair or rekindling the embers of yesteryear romance... Ventures selling chocalates, ribbons, boxes, cards and dinners are very fond of this sug-ar-pop vision of Valentine. Others deem it a made-in-America commercial fabrication rekindling the raging wild fire of consumerism, not the gentle glow of romantic embers.

I personally like Valentine’s Day. In a world full of conflict and hardship, consumerist fallout is peanuts to pay in our daily to-do tracks, and celebrate all the love in our lives, romantic and otherwise.

So when I found the FISW / PTG invitation to the Father-Daughter Valentine Dinner Dance this past February in my email inbox, I gave up this year’s Mom-Dad Valentine dinner for a chance to enforce the bond between dad and a daughter exploding into the tween stage of her young life.

American musician John Mayer celebrates the critical value of the Father-Daughter bond in his 2005 Grammy award winning song “Daughters”,

> “On behalf of every man, looking out for every girl, You are the God and the weight of her world”.

It nails the importance of dads in the lives of their daughters spot-on. Since very early in life, little girls watch their parents interact and draw conclusions about themselves, and what men are like. By the age of four or five, a girl who sees herself as female already has set ideas for what it means to be a woman.

As they grow, girls are watching and defining for themselves the way they will be, and how to relate to men. A father’s relationship with the mother and daughter sets the bar and template for a daughter’s self-esteem, confidence, happiness and choices as a woman -- including the choice of relationships a little girl will one day make.

A good father-daughter bond helps future women learn how and who to trust (or not), whereas a poor one has the opposite effect. Research in the USA, United Kingdom and Australia shows that little girls with a poor father-daughter bond grow into women that have a hard time trusting others. In their teens, they are much more likely to develop symptoms of depression, low self esteem, feelings of body dissatisfaction, eating disorders, and indulge in substance abuse. Girls with a good father-daughter bond generally have healthier romantic relationships themselves as they grow older.

**Maurice and Belle: It doesn’t take a perfect dad to have a good bond**

Disney has come a long way since the Sleeping Beauty days of archetypal womanhood (girls passively waiting to be rescued by charming princes) and gender roles (dad wandering about, moms and daughters keeping castle.) The daughters in modern Disney movies are active, smart, sexy, and independent. They may decide not to marry at all (Merida), and fence off unwanted beaus of once-upon-a-time charm (Belle, Gaston).

Modern Disney dads still have a long way to go in supporting their daughter’s inquisitiveness and integrity. King Triton crushes Ariel’s treasures to stop her from being curious about humans; King Fergus’s bond with his tom-boy of a little daughter (Merida, a.k.a. Brave), stops at the gates of his daughter’s womanhood.

A notable exception is Maurice, Belle’s father in Beauty and the Beast. Though not rich or powerful, physically or socially, Maurice has what it takes to make a good father-daughter bond, and raise a daughter (Belle) at once strong and kind. Despite his absentmindedness and humiliations by village louts, he is very caring and affectionate with his daughter, spends regular time with her, respects her choices, celebrates her mind, and admires her style. He is not a “do as I say, not as I do” kind of guy – rather, he shows Belle his honest, hardworking nature and perseverance in his determination to make a good invention so he and Belle can have a better life.

He raised a daughter that naturally expects her future partner to treat her with respect and affection, is able to glimpse past appearances for whom to trust (Beast) and to clearly see and fend off unsuitable life companions (Gaston.)

Maurice and Belle illustrate that there is something unique about the relationship between dads and daughters, which sets the course for a confident, happy womanhood - physically, emotionally and psychologically – like no other relationship can.

**How about Mothers and Sons?**

Other than the son-and-mother in-law dance after the newlyweds have opened the wedding ball, I am hard pressed to find a mother-son dance celebration at the time of this writing...

But it is not difficult to envisage a unique and critical value of the mother-son bond equivalent to the father-daughter bond.

The hook of John Mayer’s song “Daughters” goes, “(…) girls become lovers, who turn into mothers; so mothers, be good to your daughters, too.”

He might just as well have written:

Boys become lovers, who turn into fathers; so fathers, be good to their mothers, too.

Maria Monteiro, FIS Parent
Our annual FIS Alumni Reunion Weekend was held May 16-18, overlapping with World Fest which provided a great venue for people to mingle, enjoy great food, and celebrate our diversity among us.

This year the Classes of 1989 and 2004 were invited to their 25- and 10-year celebrations.

Friday evening marked the official part of the reunion, held in the Upper School Foyer, Alumni Courtyard and Cafeteria. Everyone had a chance to catch up with old friends and classmates and meet new people; hear about the school’s plans for the new Sports and Learning Center scheduled to break ground in November; see the new Alumni Courtyard; and visit with former teachers, counselors and principals. The Classes made their own celebratory plans on Saturday, ranging from tours of the Staedel Museum in Frankfurt to reminiscing in local beer gardens. On Sunday Worldfest brought the alumni all together again, many took advantage of tours of the campus, the culinary delights of our PTG organized festival and it wasn’t without a little tear that we said “Auf Wiedersehen” to our family of alumni.

We had approximately 50 alumni in attendance from Sweden, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, L.A., Boston area, Washington D.C. area, Iowa and Texas, to name but a few… what a great showing!

Nicole Smith and Nancy Huston
At a recent FISW assembly, Ms. Hauswald’s Pre-Primary class proudly introduced the two latest additions to FISW, Rosie and Sunny, two female guinea pigs. Ms. Hauswald’s students very impressively led the movement to obtain these adorable, social creatures after learning about guinea pigs as pets during the “Sharing the Planet: Staying Alive” unit of inquiry. Through mature and logical reasoning, big promises, long discussions, and a meeting with Ms. Rosinger, the FISW principal, this amazing group of Pre-Primary students were able to gain official approval to go to a large pet store in Wiesbaden and adopt their new friends.

Ms. Hauswald set up a website to organize parent volunteers to take the guinea pigs home during weekends and holidays, and the children decided on alphabetically taking turns to feed Rosie and Sunny. As one might expect, these two guinea pigs have become a huge focus in this classroom and are taken out of the cage to interact with the students twice each day. Moreover, other classes can “borrow” them for the day to care for them. These guinea pigs have become the stars of many pieces of student writing and are the focus of intent observation.

Such observation of our animal friends can be seen each morning as students arrive at the FIS Primary School. They peer into the glassed interior atrium to get a glimpse of what the school rabbit, Lily, is up to, delighting in her hops, trying to get a glimpse of her in her straw, or figuring out if she is underneath her hutch. She is well cared for with fresh and healthy food, a beautiful two-story warm and cozy hutch, and a large outside area to explore. Primary school teachers have a schedule by which each child gets a turn caring for Lily. She is adored by all.

The FIS primary students also spend time gazing at one of the various fish tanks around the school, noting what the fish are up to, and attempting to find the elusive “sucker fish.”

FIS pre-primary students also have some new, short-term, pets - a tank full of wiggly tadpoles collected from the lake which are being closely observed and documented. They are located in the “big room” on the ground floor, so they can be appreciated by all during their stay at FIS.

Pets are not only for the younger students, an upper school teacher actually has a snake as a classroom pet.

The decision to obtain a pet for a school is a tricky one, raising issues of responsibility for caring for the animal, animal welfare, and the short lifespan of such pets. It is a large burden on the teachers, who must organize such care over vacations and during the summer, and requires admirable dedication. FIS primary families recently encountered the issue of a pet’s short lifespan when Lily’s rabbit companion, Moritz, passed away quite unexpectedly. The death of a pet is difficult for all, and was handled impeccably by the primary school teachers, who read appropriate books regarding the rabbit’s death, and provided ways for each child to remember Moritz and mourn his passing. The students were very concerned about Lily’s well-being and happiness without Moritz, and felt eased when they found that Lily still hops around and munches on her veggies.

Children adore animals. Having a classroom or school pet is a marvelous way to engage children, teach empathy and responsibility, and make school feel a bit more like home. Pets also provide many opportunities for authentic writing experiences, and ways to use information about the pet in science, math, and other subjects. FIS and FISW students are fortunate to be able to lovingly care for, and learn with, their “class pets.”

Pets Can Be Teachers Too
There are so many wonderful sights to see, it is hard to know where to start describing the options! Detailing some of the area overlook towers seems like as good a place as any, to get started. So, here is a start describing the options!

**Taunus Towers and Trails**

A wonderful outdoor playground at our doorstep!

Oberursel (Taunus), Kronberg im Taunus, Bad Soden am Taunus, what do these town name endings mean, anyway…? These town names make reference to being within or near the Taunus region of Germany. The Taunus area, located north of Frankfurt, is defined by its low mountain range, and contains trails to delight all sorts of outdoor adventurers. Whether you are a mountain biker, hiker, walker, or trail runner – there are trails galore to keep you entertained!

There are so many wonderful sights to see, it is hard to know where to start describing the options! Detailing some of the area overlook towers seems like as good a place as any, to get started. So, here is a collection of some great local outdoor destinations, to encourage you to get out (and up!) to some wonderful sights in the area. I provide here descriptions of how to reach the trail heads/parking; as with any outdoor adventure, it is recommended to take along a trail map - area trail maps may be found at numerous local bookstores. Also, make sure to bring along water and make sure to bring along water and at least a snack for the journey. Since Germans love getting out for fresh air and have built delightful spots to take a break (benches, huts) - you may want to bring a full picnic to enjoy your time outside, too.

### Herzberg Tower – Ever wondered what the tower is, seen up in the hills as one drives from Königstein to Oberursel on the B455? It is the Herzberg Tower, calling you to come on up for great views, and food and drink at the neighbouring Gaststätte (restaurant)! Parking is reached by driving to the Saalburg in Bad Homburg (Saalburg 1, 61350 Bad Homburg), then proceeding an additional 1 kilometer to the Herzberg parking lot (look for the Herzberg sign on the left as you drive into the Saalburg area). Hiking distance is approximately 2 kilometers each way, and there is a 50 cent fee at the turn-style entrance to the tower (exact change needed, you may want to bring a full picnic to enjoy your time outside, too. Pferdskopf Tower – This one kilometer - each way - out and back hike has wonderful payoff views, with a climb up a stumpy, covered wooden fire tower yielding views from Grosser Feldberg to the west, to Neu Anspach and beyond to the east. Enter “Am Pferdskopf”, 61389 Schmitten (Treisberg) into your GPS/navi to find parking (on the left side of the road as you head out of Treisberg).

### Feldberg Towers

Grosser Feldberg – The Feldberg, at 880 meters high, is the tallest peak in the Taunus range. While the tower may lack somewhat in architectural character (at least compared to those mentioned above), it makes up by providing wonderful 360 degree views of the area. The Feldberg peak is also accessible by car (Grosser Feldberg 5, 61389 Schmitten), so you can choose whether to head up by foot, bicycle, car, or even by bus from the Oberursel Hohemark U-Bahn station (or Königstein Stadtmitte) via bus #57. On a sunny day you will encounter plenty of motorcycle, road and mountain bicycle enthusiasts up there, too. There is a fee to enter and climb up the outlook tower, but it is well worth the climb and the fee, although there are also wonderful views - for free - from all over the summit. There is also a great playground at the summit, and a Gaststätte for food, drink, and once again a balcony with great views. If you wish to hike to reach the summit, there are multiple parking areas possible (check a trail map). Hiking from Grosse Kurve (head up from Oberursel Hohemark towards Schmitten, also a stop for the #57 bus) also gives you a chance to stop off at Fachschran which has two Gaststätten, and is a fantastic stopping point for refreshment on your way up or down (or both). Germans find time to get out and enjoy the outdoors, often as a family, with the Sonntag Familienspaziergang (Sunday family walk) tradition very strong. (This may relate to stores being closed and rules against things like lawn work being done on Sundays, but that is a topic for a different article!). The trail systems, maps, and infrastructure (huts to rest in, benches, etc) are just wonderful to accommodate Familienspaziergänge. I hope this article gives you enough information to get started on the great area trails! Please drop me a line if you have a hiking route to recommend in the area, we love to explore. Happy Trails!

Karen Claire-Zimmer, FIS Parent
Bikes are Better
Students and Bicycles Are a Great FIS Match

Without fail, mornings and afternoons of FIS school days bring with them a veritable buzzing (and sometimes out and out commotion) of all types of transportation spinning around the school – school buses, u-bahns, local buses, automobiles, scooters, pedestrians, etc… However, one mode of transportation stands out from the others. Complete with wheels, a chain, pedals, and zero carbon footprint along with an agile handler, the bicycle is the perfect way to access FIS.

Their easy maneuverability notwithstanding, bicycles allow children (and adults) to experience freedom and dream of greatness. Who, as a child, didn’t fantasize that their bicycle was as fast as a Lamborghini or as posh as a Learjet, allowing for adventure at every turn?

For children, riding a bike is probably one of the first experiences of true freedom in their lifetime. All of a sudden, this simple apparatus allows children to increase their autonomy and broaden their range of activity. These first ‘solo’ biking experiences lead to greater confidence whilst improving skills like inquiry, reflection, risk-taking, communication, etc… Funnily enough, those are the same skills that FIS instills in all of its International Baccalaureate (IB) Learners.

Given our European climate, you might not want to bike year round through the snow, ice and rain; however, many people here consider it an all season sport. Fortunately, we live in a bike friendly area with many bike paths. Also, bikes are allowed on the U-Bahn at no additional charge. So if you live in Weisskirchen for instance, come to school on the U-Bahn, you’ll have an easy downhill ride on the way home. Also note that, in general, in Germany, children up to the age of 12 are allowed to ride their bikes on the sidewalks. From 12 upwards, they are required to ride on the road. For safety, it is best to have children wear helmets and safety vests. German school children have regular bike safety sessions in school; so don’t hesitate to check with the locals for information.

Finally, before your children go solo on their bikes, as a parent you can ease them into the fun of biking by adding a trailer or tandem system to your own bike. I’ve greatly benefited from ‘towing’ my children to and from school and we take full advantage of the great biking opportunities in the Taunus. The best part is that we avoid the school drop off / pick up commotion with the greatest of ease – a Learjet couldn’t find a better parking spot than our bikes!

Ranko Tripkovic,
FIS Parent

Alumni Tree and Courtyard

The tree is up! The dream of “grow-ing” a donor tree in the FIS Alumni Courtyard has become a reality. Over the last two years, more than ninety FIS alumni, friends and families have made contributions to the Annual Fund’s “Senior Gift,” which is represented in engraved leaves mounted on the tree and engraved stones around its base – both of which FIS students help make right here on campus.

Students were incorporated and involved in the process. Special thanks goes to the FIS Design & Technology Department’s Fionán O’Loingsigh, and student helpers Lilli Schuetz, Alex Rohregger, and Yasemin Oezcitak, who have volunteered their time and energy to this project.

In connection with the school’s 50th Anniversary, a decision was made to refurbish an overgrown space in the heart of the school and rename it the Alumni Courtyard. Some of you may remember what the space looked like before it became the Alumni Courtyard; for those of you who don’t, the photos above provide a helpful illustration!

The Alumni Courtyard before – and after; Alumni Donor Tree can be seen against the back wall.

The transformation of this previously unusable space into an area that current and future FIS community members can enjoy is something for which to be proud. Students now use the space for after-school clubs, at lunch recess and during school breaks to play chess or socialize, and the courtyard has proven to be popular for hosting receptions and other school events as well.

The Alumni Courtyard is dedicated to our alumni community: all FIS past students, parents, and faculty and staff who have helped shape the school’s history and development, and keep the FIS spirit alive throughout the world. Going forward, each year a new set of leaves will appear on the tree as graduates and their families join the legacy.

Nancy Huston,
FIS Development and Alumni Relations
A Rainbow of Fun

For many years, the FIS community has participated in a spring running event, the FIS Fun Run. This spring the FIS Upper School student service group, Vision for India (VFI), decided to reinvigorate this tradition and add some color - literally - and cultural context as well to the charity event. The result was astounding – there were over three times the number of participants who joined the VFI Holi Fun Run on the Sunday morning of Worldfest!

The FIS service group works with the National Association for the Blind in New Delhi, India, an NGO which seeks to empower visually impaired students and encourage them to continue their education. Students at FIS raise funds to purchase purposeful resources for these students and increase awareness about those with visual impairments. Since the focus of the student group is on India, the service group decided to organize the charity run around the traditional Indian festival of Holi, the festival of love and colors.

The team of students was convinced that the unique Holi color chase, where participants throw colored powder at each other, would be a lot of fun and attract a good crowd. The success and high participation of the event are proof that the students were right – and that student inspiration and involvement are truly key factors which make FIS an exciting place to be.

### Events Calendar

For up-to-date information on school events please visit our website at www.fis.edu

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<thead>
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<th>When</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>Where</th>
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<tr>
<td>22-24 May</td>
<td>Varsity Girls' Softball ISST</td>
<td>FIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-28 May</td>
<td>Gr 5 Trip to Nürnberg</td>
<td>Nürnberg</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 May</td>
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<td>29 May</td>
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<td>Gr 6-8 Beach Party Summer Dance</td>
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<td>30 May</td>
<td>Senior Prom</td>
<td>Hilton Hotel FFM</td>
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<td>1 June</td>
<td>FISW Summer Fete</td>
<td>FISW</td>
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<td>2-5 June</td>
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<td>2-5 June</td>
<td>Gr 7 Trip Week</td>
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<td>3 June</td>
<td>Summer Concert</td>
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<td>5 June</td>
<td>Gr 5 Exhibition</td>
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<td>5 June</td>
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<td>7 June</td>
<td>Graduation Class of 2014</td>
<td>Stadthalle Oberursel</td>
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<td>9 June</td>
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<td>10 June</td>
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<td>17 June</td>
<td>ES Learning Festival</td>
<td>ES</td>
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<td>17 June</td>
<td>Gr 5 Graduation</td>
<td>FISW</td>
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<td>18 June</td>
<td>Last Day of School</td>
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19 June - 13 August Summer Break

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FIS World is a production of Frankfurt International School e.V.  
Editorial Team: Alec Aspinwall, Ania Bull, Martha Boston-Maylor, Nancy Huston, Ryan Koo, Emmett Kelly, Amy MacDougall, Maria Monteiro, Nicole Smith, Vera Thiers, Ranko Tripkovic, BT Zimpel  
Production & Layout: BT Zimpel  
Cover Photo: Paola Webber  
Photos: FIS Community, Conny Winslow-Krugger  
Print: printmedia Frankfurt a. M. printmedia-solutions.de  
At FIS we care about the environment. All our publications are printed on recycled paper using vegetal ink.