FIS Families Serve Abroad

- Oxford University Visit
- Action! at Studio FIS
- Learning with QR Codes
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.

FIS World is made possible through the efforts of our volunteer team of writers, photographers and editors. If you are an FIS parent and would like to join our team and contribute to this magazine, contact Alec Aspinwall at alec_aspinwall@fis.edu. The only experience required is a passion for our students and their education.

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A Transformational School

Over the recent FIS spring break, I had the opportunity to combine a bit of work with a visit to my in-laws in southeast Florida. As an American, visiting Florida is not an exciting international experience, and many of you may think a week with “the in-laws” might actually be a somewhat painful exile. However, nothing could have been further from the truth. The quality family time was exactly what I needed and I was also amazed at the international environment in this region of my home country. I returned to Germany questioning, “When is a person ‘a local’ versus a ‘tourist’, or do we simply remain in a state of being internationally minded citizens?”

At FIS we hold the responsibility of developing international mindedness in our students as a key component of our mission. But what does that look like? I believe it is a combination of factors. First, it involves the ability to leave one’s self, as the research from Pico Iyers (Global Imagination, Ascent Magazine, Fall 2002) suggests. It is leaving assumptions at home and trying to see the world in the eyes of people different than oneself. Second, after detaching from one’s self, a person must be able to take a third-eye perspective on his or her own international experiences. This allows a positive acquisition where one’s own identity is enriched by learning from a different culture. Finally, international mindedness involves the effort to communicate in a language other than your own.

The good news is a person doesn’t have to master all three aspects to be internationally minded and there is no test a person can pass to be awarded this status. In fact, people can be well-traveled and tri-lingual and still not be internationally minded if their abilities and experiences do not make them more appreciative and inclusive of those who are culturally different. Being international may be something you know and sense most distinctly when you return home and realize, “I am not the same person I was before I left.”

That is clearly what we want for our FIS students. As many prepare to graduate or leave our school in the coming weeks to take on new challenges, we hope they too have been changed in a positive way by the international nature of our campus. Our school must be transformational for students if it is to be successful in helping them go forward and transform the world as members of an international community.

Paul Fochtman, Head of School

Dr. Fochtman and FIS Reunion organizer and parent Nicole Smith ’88

Mike McKay pictured with parent volunteers at Worldfest.

Service: The Heart of FIS

A central theme of this FIS World issue is service. It is also a key component of our Mission Statement, which commits our school to inspire students to be socially responsible. There are countless ways I have seen this central FIS value modeled for our students. I find the teaching profession is the embodiment of service. Our teachers work with true dedication in the classroom and often take the planning or grading work home as well. They stay after school coaching subjects or sports, miss holidays while chaperoning school trips, and sponsor groups that serve the needs of our area and beyond, to mention a few examples. Our children are fortunate to have such fine adult models that allow them to see dedication to others and selflessness in action.

Our recent Worldfest celebration is just one of the many events organized by the PTG, our Parent-Teacher Groups, and was yet another example of the countless ways our FIS parents freely serve our community, with volunteers from countries around the world joining to offer a spectacular day for our community. While Worldfest is a very public venue, the same selfless giving occurs through our PTGs, SPA and ABC events, classroom volunteers, to mention a few. Even this publication is only made possible by parents who serve as writers and editors of FIS World.

These examples set by parents and faculty have a significant impact beyond FIS. Our students lead and are involved in countless service learning projects at our school, traveling to the Kalahari, Poland, and India, while also serving the needs of our fragile planet and needy members of our local community. These efforts are not done to check a box for their CAS hours requirement, it is because they want to. Our FIS teachers and parents have shown the next generation the importance of giving of themselves to make a difference in the lives of others.

As the school year comes to a close, please accept my gratitude and that of our Board of Trustees for all that you do to make FIS such a meaningful and caring place to learn and by inspiring our students to become socially responsible citizens of the future.

Michael McKay, Chair Board of Trustees
Visitors to the Elementary School Library during the school day are familiar with our hard working parent volunteers. But if they happen to visit before school, recess time, or after school, they will most likely be greeted and helped by a much younger group of yellow-aproned volunteers. These are our Student Librarians.

Student Librarians are a dedicated group of Grade 4 and 5 students. They completed an application, attended training sessions and then made a commitment to work once a week, for an entire semester. The majority of those who started last fall have continued on this semester, making over fifty Student Librarians this school year. While they commit to working once a week, they are also limited to that, leaving plenty of time for recess or other activities even though most Student Librarians would love to work more.

Whilst discussing the popularity of this program with my, now university aged, son and he said to me, “They love it because it is real.” Student Librarians wear the same ‘uniform’ (a yellow apron) as their adult counterparts and with the exception of re-shelving books they have the same responsibilities. The before-school crew works every morning. They help open the library, get our computers going, check in books that were returned the previous afternoon and help students and parents to check out and return materials. The Student Librarians are knowledgeable about the workings of the online circulation system and know library policy inside and out. They are proactive, even coming up with ideas to improve the way our circulation desk works.

Perhaps some of the most important learning comes when the students understand that when they wear the yellow apron, they represent the Elementary School Library and FIS as a whole. There is a higher standard expected and they live up to it. In their words, “We always give our best” or “We try to do the job quickly, but correctly.”

As a school, FIS is committed to developing socially responsible citizens and the library provides a perfect environment for the Student Librarians to develop many skills highlighted in the Primary Years Programme (PYP) such as taking action connected to student inquiries. Additionally, Student Librarians fully appreciate service and commitment; some of them working the Grade 2-3 recess and giving up eating lunch with their own grade level. When asked about what’s important they understand the job is about more than just checking out books. As one said to me, “It is important to be kind, understanding and helpful.”

The next time you are in the Elementary School, stop by and see our Student Librarians in action.

Mary Beth Steidl
Elementary Librarian
Recently, on a late Tuesday afternoon, the usually quiet upper school library was transformed into a high-tech video studio. Equipped with professional video cameras, boom microphones and a state-of-the-art video console, a group of upper school students were offered a hands-on learning experience in the art of live-streaming video production. Under the supervision of IB Film teacher Pete Sinclair and Abel Chaves, the students take turns at the different production stations to gain an understanding of both the technical side of film making, such as digital sound manipulation and camera angles, to the very personal interchange that comes with interviewing a VIP guest on a talk show. A great asset to the group is the presence of FIS parent and professional film maker, Rick Steenbock, who has years of experience in television and film and provides the students with practical advice and filming tips he has acquired during his career.

Grade 11 student, Wesaam, is one of the students who participates in these Tuesday sessions and was active in the live-streaming of the ISST basketball championship earlier this year. “I like that it’s practical, hands-on work,” he shared. “I’m thinking of a career in audio-engineering and this is a great opportunity to see what that might be like.”

While the library filming sessions are not currently being shown publicly, the group’s intent is to film short segments that could be used throughout the school. They plan to offer book and movie reviews and other short clips that are of current interest to students. They will also be able to use their skills as FIS continues to live-stream school events, such as the successful live streaming of ISST Basketball this year that garnered more than 6,000 viewers from around the world.

Studio FIS is bringing lights, camera and action to our campus as well as a great learning experience for the students who are involved.
I was delighted when I saw the many radiant smiles facing me. As the melodious and sweet sounds of classical music played by elementary school children filled the room, I noticed an elderly man gleefully and energetically waving his arms, as if imagining himself to be a prominent conductor. Elderly women sitting nearby smiled throughout the entire performance and their eyes shone with joy. The gratitude of the audience was such that by the end of the performance every attendee individually presented a beautiful plant they had personally planted and grown to each of the young performers!

The Alfred Delp Haus, located in Oberursel, provides assistance and housing to elderly disabled individuals. FIS has had a long connection to the home. Approximately eleven years ago, the Alfred Delp Garden began as a CAS opportunity for FIS students to garden with individuals from the home. Ms. Raoul des Essarts (many may know her as being one of our wonderful nurses at FIS) now coordinates the Alfred Delp Garden and introduced me to the wonderful individuals from the home when I joined the Alfred Delp Garden last November. Being musically inclined, I thought it would be amazing to organize a concert for the residents of the home. The CAS program at FIS funded the transportation to the event, and Ms. Borsodi (our incredible orchestra instructor at FIS) worked enthusiastically with the Elementary School orchestra to come up with a marvelous program. The passion and zeal of the students made it a wondrous and unforgettable evening!

There is no better feeling than being able to give the gift of music to a group of individuals. This experience affirmed my belief in the true purpose of music: to bring joy and hope to others. As a senior at FIS, I strongly encourage younger students to organize and take part in similar opportunities that allow us to share our joys and the blessings we are so fortunate to have. It is experiences such as these that we as students will always remember and treasure from our school days.

Andrea,
Grade 12
QR CODES AT FIS

What is this? What is it doing on my morning cereal box? More importantly, how will it improve the student and parent experience at FIS?

It is a QR code (abbreviated from Quick Response Code). This two-dimensional matrix, appearing similar to the maze from the old PacMan game, can hold up to 7,089 bits of information and almost instantly connect a person to URLs, text messages, coordinates on a map, phone numbers and other digital information.

The maker of Rice Krispies™ and Frosted Flakes hopes you will scan the QR code on the box with your smartphone, and be instantly transported to the Kellogg’s website where you will learn more about its cereals, and hopefully buy them in abundance.

And most importantly, the QR code is quickly becoming an extremely powerful tool for teachers and school administrators to enhance learning and communicate across entire school communities.

“It is a great way for teachers and students to get information,” said Kelsey Jones, the ICT Integration Coordinator for the Primary Division of the Oberursel campus. “It is also a great way for parents to see what is happening in school,” she added.

Ms. Jones is teaming with Angela Jochum, the ICT Coordinator for FIS Wiesbaden, to lead the effort to research and ultimately implement QR codes across all of FIS. Ms. Jochum said, “At FISW, we see QR codes as an opportunity to seamlessly share technology projects and experiences.” According to Ms. Jochum, the FISW Grade 2 – 5 Music Teacher, Eric Rockwin, used QR codes during the March student-led-portfolio conferences to enable his students to share integrated multimedia music projects with parents.

In addition to their usefulness for sharing information, QR codes are very effective teaching tool. Ms. Jones said she believes the first use of QR codes on the Oberursel campus was in Gayle Angbrandt’s Primary grade class. Ms. Angbrandt and Ms. Jones teamed together to utilize a QR code to enhance the teaching of the alphabet through the well known book, Chicka Chicka Boom Boom.

Other potential teaching uses include: links for the school calendar and assigned homework list; links to tutorials connected to in-class lessons; links to both books and their authors; and even links to locations on maps to connect ideas to places.

On the Wiesbaden campus, Primary teacher Amy Wright and librarian Anna Rose are utilizing QR codes extensively in the March unit titled “Where We Are in Place and Time”.

Ms. Jones and Ms. Jochum have received significant positive feedback from both teachers and parents. In response, Ms. Jones is currently teaching FIS Faculty Academy sessions where all teachers can learn about QR Codes. David French, the Grade 4 Team Leader and Elementary Mathematics Coordinator on the Oberursel campus, attended a recent session with Ms. Jones and is now a strong proponent and user of the QR codes. “For me it was more of a way to solve a problem for our class,” said Mr. French who added “…the code gives greater access to our work throughout the school community.” Mr. French and his students, with the help of Cindy Lee, the Elementary School ICT Coordinator, now produce a class newsletter and make it available to all by posting a QR Code on the classroom door. QR codes can be small and fit onto coffee mugs, or very big and cover the side of a building. They can provide entertainment or teach a valuable lesson. In the case of the entry hall of the Oberursel Primary School, they teach a very valuable lesson. Kelly Wedin, a Primary grade teacher, and John Weaver, the Principal of the Primary School on the Oberursel campus, are using the common area at the entrance to teach the FIS IB Learner Profile. The IB Learner Profile consists of 10 inspirational words that define the school’s mission. Ms. Wedin and Dr. Weaver posted QR codes that transport the QR code reader to a secure website where they can hear FIS children and see FIS parents defining words from the IB Learner Profile including “integrity”, “commitment”, “caring” and “thinker.”

Hopefully, readers of this article enhanced their enjoyment and learning by utilizing a QR code reader. Quite possibly, those readers without a QR Code reader will consider downloading an appropriate app and rereading this article for further enjoyment and understanding. The International Society for Technology in Education suggests the following QR Code Reader apps: BeeTagg, i-nigma, KAYWA, Quickmark, and ScanLife.

Emmett Kelly, FIS parent
Germany’s society is facing fundamental changes within the structure of its population. With a birth rate of 1.36 children per woman (the natural replacement rate is 2.1), Germany has the lowest birth rate in Europe, and with each passing day the population is becoming smaller, older and more multi-cultural. As a result, the business community and public sector in Germany have been sounding the alarm and frantically looking for solutions to a shrinking population and a dwindling work force. A few answers come to mind readily: entice more women to take jobs, include the elderly through late retirement and bring more short and long-term immigrants to Germany to work.

The FIS administration was looking for an appropriate way to celebrate the 20th anniversary of its Wiesbaden Campus and decided to organize an event in Wiesbaden for the local business community on this highly relevant topic. The focus was on one aspect of the issue, that of attracting personnel to the Frankfurt Rhein Main region. In order to receive diversity of input, we chose a panel format, inviting experts from different areas of business as well as the public sector. The Mayor of Wiesbaden, Dr. Helmut Müller, was joined on the panel by Dr. Lutz Raettig, Advisory Board Chair of Morgan Stanley, Michael Müller, Board member and Director of HR at Fraport, and Alexander Würfel, CEO of Abbott. Representing educational aspects of the topic was Christian Boehringer, FIS Board member, parent and resident of Wiesbaden.

The school was honored that Stefan Grüttner, Minister of Social Affairs from the State of Hesse, agreed to speak at the event. As one of the government’s experts on demographics, he was able to expound on the importance of educational institutions in attracting talent to any region, and spoke about the significant role FIS, with campuses in both Oberursel and Wiesbaden, has played in the economic development of the Rhein-Main region.

The panel was led by one of Germany’s foremost experts on demographics, Dr. Winfried Kösters. In his introduction to the topic he was able to document with facts, figures and humorous anecdotes the extent of the demographic challenges facing Germany.

Through his skilful moderation, the panel members could share their valuable insight with the audience, not only about the complexity of the issue for their particular business, but also their efforts to find viable solutions. For example, Alexander Würfel from Abbott, mentioned that filling a high level position can now take over a year. And in order to find good kindergarten teachers for their company childcare center, Fraport now offers a company car as part of the package. Christian Boehringer mentioned that having a benchmark school like FIS in the area is becoming more important in attracting families considering a foreign assignment because the region is now competing with so many other business hubs around the world. For Lutz Raettig from Morgan Stanley, the region is much better than its reputation and needs to be marketed as such; it has all the conveniences of a metropolis with few of the inconveniences like traffic, smog and crime. But all agreed with Wiesbaden’s mayor, Dr. Müller, in light of the immense need for personnel, German society needs to become more welcoming towards those willing to come from abroad.

The thought-provoking panel discussion was followed by a reception where guests could converse with the panel members, network or just enjoy the beautiful surroundings of the Wiesbaden Kurhaus Kolonnade.
India...what to expect? My family had done our research with travel books, online sites and friends that had traveled or lived in India but nothing could have prepared us for this wonderful experience.

Every morning as soon as we set foot outside, India would unfurl itself right in front of our eyes. It’s like a game; giving you a little nudge as if to say, “come on - trust me.” So you forget any ideas you had about controlling your trip, and simply let go.

Amid the extremes of poverty and wealth there seems to be a sense of contentment and a happiness factor that is hard to put into words. Delhi gets under your skin - there’s something so familiar about it that after a day or two you already feel at home.

Five mothers traveled with their Grade 10 girls whose hearts were focused on service. These girls are the co-founders of the student lead club called VFI - Vision For India. Their goal was to work hands on with the students at NAB (National Association for the Blind) in New Delhi. Their objective over the last two years was to create awareness about VFI among the FIS student community. We were joined by Upper School faculty member Rhonna Jessome, who was a great asset. This trip was not a Spring Break holiday. It was a trip for all of us to touch the lives of children at the NAB school.

Looking back, I am so proud that these five girls could work with such ease and confidence with children that have no sight and limited English, and come away with so much. This resulted in new friends, and a new found spirit for life and a thankfulness for what they have.

My daughter Hannah summed it all up very well: “They can’t see with their eyes, but they can feel so much with their hearts.” During the week the girls worked hands on learning braille, recording textbooks, traveling to local markets led by the NAB students. Now, during monthly VFI meetings at FIS, our students will SKYPE with the students at NAB to continue building the relationship. Even with such a brief visit, we learned much more from the NAB students than they learned from us.

Amy Schmidt,
FIS Parent
Mumbai Service Experience

This past February holiday was a special experience for the Chapman family. Lindy Chapman and her two FIS daughters, Ashley (Grade 10) and Katie (Grade 11), made the decision to visit a charity they support in Mumbai, India.

They spent their time at St. Catherine’s home for impoverished youth. “It was an incredible experience,” shares Lindy. “Watching my own children work and play with the beautiful children that we’ve only known through letters was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.” The Chapman’s are sponsoring four children and the chance to meet them was a very emotional experience for all involved.

The trip to India was not an FIS sponsored excursion but is an example of one of many ways in which FIS families reach out to serve beyond the school. The FIS Kalahari experience offers similar opportunities to families who want to travel together and share a cornerstone FIS service experience.

Dr. Fochtman traveled with his family to the Kalahari with FIS students and found the experience incredibly meaningful. “I know there are many families at FIS who model the importance of service and philanthropy in their own homes. Traveling as a family for a service project was a great way for Wendy and I not only to support the FIS value of being socially responsible, but our family value of service as well.”

Oxford University at FIS

For the last four years the recruitment office from the University of Oxford in Great Britain has made a special effort to visit FIS as part of their European Tour. Although the university receives thousands of applications a year and can choose among the best high school students the world has to offer, the admissions office has come to appreciate the academic preparation afforded by the IB Diploma. Since 2008, four of our graduates have been successful in gaining a place at this prestigious university. FIS is proud to host this session, which is also open to parents and students from other local and international schools.

The admissions information meeting focuses on students up to Grade 11 and goes into explicit detail about the application criteria and process, which takes place through UCAS (University and College Application System). The UCAS application is straightforward and unified across all UK universities; however, an application to Oxford has some distinctive features when compared with other universities. In particular, they are looking for students of the highest academic caliber who show a passion and commitment to a particular subject. This can be evidenced by extra reading outside of the school curriculum or relevant extra-curricular activities.

Also teaching at Oxford is unique: students work with their professors in very small groups of up to three students, they need to be active and creative problem-solvers, and open to study projects with an international team of students and scholars. As Ms. Woolhouse from Oxford proudly mentioned, “The University has been engaged in collaborative research with international students since 1190!”

In recent years, more universities in the UK have begun to recruit international students, so the competition to attract the brightest and best has grown. Many now recognize the value of the IB diploma as an excellent preparation for university courses and market their institutions to international schools more intensively. Some are realigning their admission criteria with respect to IB scores and others are considering offering scholarships to offset the recent increase in university tuition.

When asked what advice can be given to students who aspire to attend Oxford, Ms. Woolhouse’s answer was as straightforward as it was self-evident: work hard, follow your academic interests outside the classroom and develop a passion for your subject.
The Double Helix – with a Double Reward

Not only do FIS students have many opportunities to engage in experiential activities in the areas of creativity, action and service, (CAS), but some students choose to follow their more academic passions as well. Upper School biology teacher, Liza Gorkiewicz, was very proud to have two of her students submit entries this year to the American Society of Human Genetics essay contest held annually to commemorate the founding of the human genome project and the discovery of the DNA helix. Considering the contest is highly competitive with over 6000 essays from 47 US states and 15 foreign countries, it was truly an outstanding accomplishment when FIS Grade 11 students, Hannah, was awarded 3rd prize and became the first non-American to win a prize in the society’s eight year history.

Ms. Gorkiewicz attributes Hannah’s success to her passion for and excellent understanding of genetics, quite unusual for someone her age. But her exceptional ability to express herself articulately, no small feat for an Austrian whose mother tongue is German, was a decisive advantage. Hannah herself says her keen interest in genetics was triggered by the fate of one of her favorite actors who suffers from achondroplasia, a genetic disorder resulting in dwarfism. This also helped her answer the essay question which asked the student to look at DNA and human genetics and examine its impact from a medical or ethical point of view. Hannah, who wants to study medicine, concentrated on the medical aspect expounding on recent clinical research found in medical periodicals and books.

Hannah is still contemplating on how to spend the $400 prize money she won. A very nice feature of the competition is that an equal amount is also awarded to the student’s school as an equipment grant to be used for the purchase of genetics lab equipment and supplies. So Hannah has not only received recognition for her commendable achievement, but her effort will also be instrumental in maintaining the fine science program at FIS for her fellow students in the future.

Daddy Day Care

There are many signs that the human race has evolved over the centuries, and one such milestone may be the phenomenon of dads staying at home! Although in my family the working roles may be reversed, please be assured that the genders remain the same! I am one of the rare species of dads at FIS who has happily taken on the most important role in our society: childcare.

Skeptics may ask, “Is it really a new way to express fatherhood? What about your relationship with other men? Do women accept it? Is it a sign of progress or necessity?” While other dads may answer differently, for me it is simply about love for your children and your family.

While I could write pages about the unique experience of being a stay-at-home dad within the FIS culture, I thought I would instead share my thoughts following the same manner in which our young students are learning their ABC’s.

A: Alien. The way you may feel sometimes when you are amongst the mothers waiting for the kids. The way you may feel when you are amongst fathers talking about their jobs.
B: Books. Reading “Men come from Mars Women from Venus” might be helpful to find a good balance in your unique relationship.
C: Cookies. You realize that the real cookie monster is by your side.
D: Dress Code. There isn’t one. Go casual.
F: Friday wear. Great, now it lasts the whole week!
G: Gym. A stroller can also be a great workout tool.
H: Hugs. An endless supply.
I: Ice Cream. Which melts quicker than it is eaten and turns your child into fly paper.
J: Job. Yes, I have one with high security and good benefits!
K: Kellogg’s Corn Flakes™. Still a great workout tool.
L: Learning curve. A steep one!
M: Moment. Always in demand but never in supply.
N: Nap. It’s recess time!
O: Organized. More than I have ever been before.
P: Post It Reminders left on the refrigerator by wife.
Q: Quantities. Of dirty laundry and crumbs in the car.
R: Reminders. See Post It.
S: Stroller. My man-driven cabriolet.
T: Tie. Forget about it.
U: UGGs shoes. Still waiting for a model for men.
W: Women. Ah, now I get it!
X: Expert. That’s now me, giving answers to my child’s endless questions.
Y: Yellow: The color of the a Post It note.
Z: ZZZ. The sound produced by an exhausted body too tired to reach his bed and lying desperately on the living room couch.

Ranko Tripkovic, FIS Parent
As the heat of IB exams and lazy summer days approach, three FIS Students recently published two illustrated children’s books and one fantasy thriller guaranteed to keep IB Art examiners and seaside bookworm loungers enthralled.

Emma: The Traveling Prince, with Doll

Little Prince has a chance to travel the world before becoming king, and his broadened view of the world changes his perception of life. Emma wrote and illustrated the children’s picture book for her IB Art High Level degree, based on her beliefs that traveling is fundamental to understanding the world, and that children’s books tell complex messages in a simple, straight way that books for older audiences seldom live up to. The book shows the strong influence of Emma’s Nordic heritage. Swedish painter and interior designer Carl Larsson and Finnish author Tove Jansson have influenced her work.

The Traveling Prince comes complete with a large Little Prince doll, an endeavor Emma attempted for the first time. “It was a bit daunting to take on such a large project including something that I’d never done before. But I felt it was important for kids that would read my book to see a 3D figure and be able to interact with him. In the end it all turned out well – both for the IB, and helping me trying not to be a perfectionist. The whole experience gave me a lot of confidence.”

Cara: Mother Hulda Given a New Perspective

Cara is another strong believer in the importance of the physicality of our stories. For her IB Art diploma, Cara did her own book rendition of the German fairy tale Frau Holle, known in English as Mother Hulda. The tale tells of two sisters, one idle and spoiled, the other unloved and hardworking. Mother Hulda is impressed by the services of the diligent girl and sends her home with an apron full of gold – whereas the lazy one is sent home covered with tar. In her IB Art candidate statement, Cara writes that stories and memories passed on from one generation to another “tell us who we are, where we come from, and what we value… they define us.” But as more and more is stored online, the stories that shape us, and that we shape, may be forgotten in the intangible vast online vault. So it is vital for our identity as people to maintain physical representations of our stories.

Jason: Graffiti Artists Explored in Paint

Jason’s graphic novel Paint, produced for the IB Arts diploma, also explores the connection between identity and physical expression of creativity. Driven by his growing love affair with the culture and personal stories within street art, Paint tells the story of two graffiti artists exploring the meanings and motives of their work while coping with the passage from adolescence into adulthood. When preparing for the story, Jason first looked at global socio-political issues, and soon discovered that he was overlooking the importance of what is near, up close and personally meaningful. “I found inspiration in my own day to day life,” he writes in his IB candidate statement.

Maria Monteiro, FIS Parent and Volunteer
More than 60 alumni from as far away as New Zealand, Hong Kong, San Francisco, and Washington D.C. returned to Oberursel over the Worldfest weekend to celebrate their 25th or 10th class reunion. The festivities began on Friday, 3 May with an alumni reception and dinner in the Upper School foyer and cafeteria. More than 20 current and former FIS faculty and staff joined in celebrating the alumni back “home”, and the atmosphere was abuzz with laughter and chatter as they shared stories and memories of the days “back then.” The fun continued on Saturday evening until the wee hours of Sunday at a restaurant and bar in downtown Frankfurt. Sunday, they gathered under the alumni tent to enjoy the FIS Worldfest celebration and recount their stories and experiences from the weekend. Not only did the alumni have the chance to share a glorious day of weather and festivities with our current families, but they also had an opportunity to take a guided tour of the campus with their former classmates and current FIS staff member, Tanja Jäger Pekrul (FIS 2003) and FIS parent, Nicole Moch Smith (Class of 1988). Our thanks go to Tanja and Nicole for their tremendous efforts in making the reunions not only successful, but equally as memorable – proof was in the faces of our alumni as they said goodbye and Auf Wiedersehen to each other and to the place where these lasting friendships took root.

Tina Shealy, Manager of Development & Alumni Relations
A aged 14 and presently completing Grade 9, Kayla has accomplished a feat that few authors of any age can assert: from story idea to Amazon storefront in 13 months. Described on Amazon as a “powerful and action packed medieval fantasy story”, The King’s Daughter tells the coming-of-age story of princess Arabella, who gains independence and the ability to freely use her powers through battles, the motives of which were hidden from her.

An avid reader of a plethora of book genres, Kayla finds writing empowering. It gives her the thrill of “secret ownership”: the ability to make up completely unique characters that “nobody can take away from you and will always be yours!” But what if someone copies the character Arabella? Kayla reckons matter-of-factly that this is not possible. She has planned her character thoroughly, and kept her character’s entire background and drives a secret. “Secrets are important to keep the mystery and the well of creativity”, she confides. Appropriating Arabella without knowing her motives would make the character behave out-of-character. It wouldn’t be a credible Arabella - simple as that.

A Tedium but Worthwhile Journey

Kayla wrote The King’s Daughter from 23 March to 21 December 2012. The print publishing process took five months, and involved five main steps:

1. Researching publishers: “That took a couple of weeks – comparing reviews, pricing. In the end I decided to use Amazon and its CreateSpace platform.”

2. Finding an editor and editing: “I was lucky to have an FIS parent who used to work as an editor willing to help me.”

3. Formatting: “That was the most frustrating process ever!!”

4. Submitting the manuscript to CreateSpace: “They write you back within 24 hours and tell you what to fix, if anything. I got my manuscript back twice.”

5. Printing: “Once CreateSpace approved the manuscript, it took 48 hours to have it processed at the printers.”

Amazon’s publication date stamp is 31 March 2013. In addition to the print book process, Kayla also designed the book cover, worked through the process of the eBook version of The King’s Daughter. She set and controls the book pricing strategies on the various Amazon storefronts and follows up her sales and royalties on her CreateSpace author dashboard.

She reckons that the publishing process was the most painful part of the journey, but worth it: “I am going to do it again!” And she also intends to send her book to a traditional publisher, as she wants to experience the traditional, offline, more often than not über-conservative publishing world. Will she keep on writing? “Yes, but not necessarily to make a career out of it. Writing is something I do to relieve stress and be freely passionate about. I want to go to college for something else – like zoology, or marine biology. Then I could use my work to write about miraculous creatures!”

Kayla’s Tips for Budding Authors of Any Age

1. Stick to it! Especially during the formatting process - and don’t think that eBook is easier than print when it comes to formatting for publishing – it isn’t.

2. Allow time for your imagination and don’t expect to have the first idea perfect. I re-wrote the beginning of my book 20 times.

3. Use online publishing as a strategy to getting published traditionally: “Online publishing is easier than traditional publishing, shows some proof of success, and is more tolerant of little mistakes. You can catch these in the online version and edit your book to make sure it is at its best before sending it to a traditional publisher.”

Maria Montero, FIS Parent and Volunteer

“If you want to be a writer, write about what you know the best.”

Emmy Abrahamson

Emmy was young she felt that she too was embarrassed, because of the cultural conflicts. For example, her mother always wanted to serve her classmates soup, and Emmy claimed that Swedes don’t like soup, and therefore tried to stop her—without success!

Emmy revealed that she was hoping to write a horror story situated in a mental asylum. She spoke very passionately and dramatically to us about her writing. She is also a trained actress. She went to a drama school in London, and has also worked as a director. Emmy is truly international, having lived many years in Moscow and attending an international school in her youth.

One of her books has been nominated to win the August prize, which is one of the greatest honors a Swedish author can be awarded.

Marcus, Grade 6
Creating a Culture of Reflection

To assure that FIS maintains its status as a leading international school and continually improves education for students, we rely on both internal and external review processes. Our internal reviews range from internal and external review processes used for divisional and strategic planning. External quality assurance is provided by accrediting bodies including the Council of International Schools (CIS), New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and the International Baccalaureate (IB). The elementary divisions of the school (Primary School, Elementary School, and Wiesbaden) are currently undertaking a self-study of their IB curriculum program, the Primary Years Programme (PYP) in preparation for an evaluation visit. This IB process takes place every five years; this will be the school’s third PYP evaluation. The Oberursel and Wiesbaden campuses are evaluated as separate schools.

The aims of the evaluation process are to ensure that IB Programme standards and practices are being maintained and to promote reflection and action towards enhanced implementation of the Programme. The process involves all stakeholders within the school community - the governing body, administrators, teachers, students and parents reflect on all aspects of school life affected by the PYP.

Teachers have been meeting in groups to evaluate current implementation of the standards, articulate major achievements since the last review, and identify practices in need of further development. The opportunity for Primary School and Elementary School teachers to meet together has been a particularly valuable aspect of the evaluation process and a practice that will continue next school year. To ensure that the ratings are evidence based, faculty groups are now identifying documents and practices to support their findings.

A total of 120 PS/ES parents were randomly selected and invited to attend focus groups with Teresa Dupre (Assistant Head of School). Some parents chose to respond in writing, but many attended the meetings with a total of 30 parents participating. All parents reported high satisfaction regarding the alignment of the FIS mission with the IB mission, commenting on the strong commitment of the teachers and administration to the PYP, to open and ongoing communication, and to promotion of the learner profile. When asked specifically if they have access to information about the program and our curriculum, responses were a resounding “yes”. There is awareness of information on the website, but most parents preferred to seek answers in person. Parents in the groups believe that the school promotes inquiry, intercultural understanding and international-mindedness.

In a similar fashion over 30 randomly selected Grade 3-5 students met with Caroline Joslin-Callahan, assistant principal and PYP coordinator, to share their views about teaching and learning at the school. The students were able to identify various strategies that teachers use to assess and support their differentiated learning needs. They could list ways the school helps them to become internationally minded and were especially attuned to the importance of language learning towards this goal. Several students mentioned risk-taker as the learner profile attribute most connected to becoming a good student. The importance of adult support for student action was apparent when the children listed initiatives supported by Earth Rescue as well as the Jump-at-thon and the Kalahari Walk-a-thon as examples of action. They could also identify personal examples of how learning causes positive changes in their behavior. The main suggestions for improvement concerned writing with comments such as it should not be rushed, should not be assigned for homework and should not involve copying drafts by hand.

The views of the different constituents are included in the self-study report which then becomes the basis of an action plan that allows on-going monitoring of progress.

An IB evaluation visit will be carried out in November to verify the school’s self-study. The two-day visit will be conducted by a team of two to three trained and experienced IB educator site visitors. The team will meet with different members of the school community, review the school facilities and observe classes.

In response to the self-study and the school visit, the IB will send a report to the Head of School; that will include commendations, recommendations and any matters to be addressed. The findings of the report will further shape the action plan and perpetuate the culture of reflection and improvement that permeates the school.

Caroline Joslin-Callahan, Elementary School PYP Coordinator
While our children spend hundreds of hours each year receiving feedback on their educational progress, FIS as a whole is doing the same in order to engage the entire community in a process of shared leadership.

FIS has a variety of constituents that are extremely important to its success: Students, Faculty, Staff, Parents and Alumni, amongst others. Unfortunately, it is not always feasible to speak to each and every constituent to determine what they think, what they want and where they see room for improvement.

Fortunately, the advent of technology has made it quite easy to survey a large audience at any given time on a variety of issues. Most recently, FIS released three surveys: Parents, Faculty and Students. A multicultural group representative of the FIS constituent base worked over several months to develop surveys for each of these groups. Most importantly the group ensured that the surveys include a multitude of questions that are mirrored in each survey so that comparisons can be made across the three groups. As with past FIS surveys, a summary of the results shall be shared with the community.

Grade 5 students have also found the benefits of surveys. In their recent Exhibition project, many of the Grade 5 students used surveys to gather information.

However, surveys are only as good as its respondents, so please take a few minutes of your time to complete the next FIS survey that comes your way.

Rest assured, your answers are truly anonymous when indicated and comments are encouraged so feel free to elaborate.

Martha Boston-Majetic
FIS Parent

The Survey Says...

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

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<th>When</th>
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<td>28 May</td>
<td>Spring Sports Awards Evening</td>
<td>FIS Auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 May</td>
<td>Grade 5 Trip</td>
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<td>29 May</td>
<td>Prom</td>
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<td>30 May</td>
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<td>31 May</td>
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<td>FIS Grade 6-8 Play: Alice in Wonderland</td>
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