



The International School's TIS News is published three times per year to update our community on school programs and activities. To subscribe, please contact Marketing Director Linda Bonder, LBonder@intlschool.org, 503-226-2496 x104. We do not share our mailing lists.

## THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL'S TIS NEWS

### Trustees select Dr. Alfonso Orsini as next Head of School

The next Head of The International School has been described by colleagues as a "kind of poet and a lawyer." By his own account he can be idealistic, "but I have learned to be strong and pragmatic in stewarding the business sides of the schools I have served."

Dr. Alfonso Orsini will be coming from Shanghai, China where he currently

serves as the Executive Director at the Zhuhai International School. His three year term as Head of School at TIS will begin July 1, 2009.

Dr. Orsini has spent over four years in China with his wife and says he is ready to begin the challenges ahead. "I want to find out where TIS is on the International Baccalaureate journey, and what kinds

*continued inside*



#### FEBRUARY 2009

*The International School provides a multicultural environment where children are fully immersed in Spanish, Japanese or Chinese language and culture. Children become bilingual as they learn a full preschool & elementary curriculum with native speaking teachers, small classes, and high expectations.*

*The International School was founded in 1990 and today educates 396 students.*

### Exciting news about Capstone

As TIS grads all know, Capstone Academic Trips Abroad are a transformative experience for our fifth graders. The students spend two weeks abroad completely immersed in their target language and culture. They attend school, make friends, visit historical sites, and often stay with host families.

Until now, much of the work and expense of the Capstone program has fallen on the shoulders of our dedicated parents. We are excited to announce that beginning

in 2009-10, TIS will manage and fund Capstone trips as a regular component of the school's curriculum. TIS will organize trip details, consulting with the 5th grade parents along the way. The school budget will include school-related expenses for the fifth grader such as airfare and accommodations, ground transportation, and meals during the planned itinerary.

Details will be available on the web site this spring, with a report on this year's Capstone trips in the next TIS News.



*Cory Abbe, Class of 2002*

### Graduates look back

*(The following from a November 2008 interview. It has been edited for length.)*

#### **... on their TIS teachers**

Toryn Slater, Class of 2002: I have to say Maria Abad [was my favorite teacher]. I remember my first week of school, I was terrified, I didn't want to leave my parents. And she just embraced me. I would come into class bawling in tears, and she would take me from my parents' and cradle me in her arms and carry me around all day. She could tell that I had something more

than just a crying little 3-year-old, she was able to look beyond my cries and develop me into a better person.

#### **... on doors opened**

Cory Abbe, Class of 2002: A couple of things my Spanish has done for me. For one, I get to put it on college admissions papers. I did the Spanish AP and got a five, and I got A's in all my Spanish classes which looks great on a transcript.

[For my high school internship] I was a bilingual receptionist for two lawyers.  
*continued on the back page*



## Auction raises \$135,000!

On November 8, 2008, 324 bidders enjoyed music, wine and great food while bringing in over \$135,000 to benefit our students. Of that amount, \$92,000 went toward the school's operating budget, and \$43,000 funded this year's Special Appeal for physical education facilities improvements.

The Special Appeal funds will cover

gym renovations (a new floor, wall mats and new paint), as well as a new playing field – clearing and leveling the property, creating a pathway, and planting grass. Many thanks to all of the donors, bidders and volunteers who made this auction a success. Special thanks to co-chairs Kate Schweitzer, Mark Jones and Jennifer Farmer!

*Photo at left: For one auction item, parents donated to have their children participate in a slumber party which was donated, organized and hosted by TIS Japanese teachers.*

### TIS 5th Graders Pass Spanish Government Proficiency Test

Congratulations to the Class of '08 Spanish fifth graders - they all took and passed the DELE Spanish proficiency test late last year.

The DELE, issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport of Spain, is a language aptitude exam that measures reading and listening comprehension, writing, grammar, and speaking.

Constanza's fifth graders took the exam with Adela Pedrosa-Correa, a TIS teacher who has been trained by the Cervantes Institute to administer the test.

The DELE was offered at TIS for the first time last year, and will now be offered to fifth grade Spanish-track students every year.



### Head of School (cont'd)

of professional development the staff could benefit from. I want to know what teachers need in order to do their excellent work, and I want to work on providing it for them. I want to find out what fruitful connections the school has and could have with other organizations such as universities and cultural organizations. And I want to get to work on raising the money to do all the things a great school should do."

With over ten years of international experience, Dr. Orsini also brings extensive experience with the International Baccalaureate program. As Director of the Emirates National School in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, he oversaw three campuses which included a large majority of children from the community.

At the Leysin American School in Switzerland, Dr. Orsini served as Headmaster assuming responsibility for all educational, boarding and other programs while also teaching Higher Level English.

Dr. Orsini is currently an educational enthusiast, but that was not always the case. "I was in high school and I was a lost person, working factory jobs and contemplating going to work after high school," he says. "I was a very good reader and writer as teachers had told me all my life (usually by accusing me of plagiarism), but I hardly ever even went to school". Finally, in his junior year of high school, he did find that needed connection through an inspiring English teacher who was able to guide him onto the college path...a path he

describes as "charmed."

That led Dr. Orsini to a bachelor's degree in English at Hamilton College in New York, followed by a master's at Long Island University, and later a Doctor of Education Degree from Teacher's College at Columbia University.

Putting his learning into practice, Dr. Orsini taught college English, high school Writing Skills and Public Speaking, and was a coach in Speech and Debate teams. His administrative practice began at the Newark Academy as the Upper School Principal, and continued through his international assignments.

The TIS community is very excited to welcome Dr Orsini with his wealth of experience, education and warm nature.

## IB Learner Profile inspires TIS lessons

On the wall of every classroom and throughout the halls of TIS, teachers display the ten characteristics of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) Learner Profile: *risk-taker, open-minded, principled, balanced, communicator, knowledgeable, reflective, inquirer, thinker, caring.*

The Learner Profile is a set of learning outcomes that all TIS teachers strive to integrate into their classroom practices and teaching. As stated on the IB website, "It is not intended to be a profile of the perfect student; rather, it can be considered a map of a lifelong journey in pursuit of international-mindedness."

In the Japanese kindergarten class, teacher Akiko Grimm represents the

Profile's characteristics through pictures hanging next to her desk. Under the word "caring", two children are shown holding hands. Under "risk-taker", a girl is jumping into a pool. Akiko calls attention to these characteristics when she sees a student display them. "We were talking about Martin Luther King the other day," she recounts, "and a student answered my question. Her answer was wrong, but I pointed out that she was being a risk-taker. Even though she wasn't sure about her answer, she gave it a try."

Fourth-grade Chinese teacher Hong Shentu has a brightly colored poster of the Learner Profile on her back wall. She incorporates all of the Profile into her class, but recently the class has been focusing on how to be "open-minded."

Hong wants the students to appreciate that people have different ideas, and to learn to respect others' opinions and beliefs. In social studies, she works on teaching tolerance of different cultures, races, and religions.

Hong believes that the Learner Profile gives both the students and the teacher a clear model for development. It has helped her recognize the value of developing the whole child and the many paths for social and educational growth. Akiko agrees. "Actually," she says, "this is my favorite part of the IB program. We are training kids to be more independent learners. We try to help them become balanced human beings."



## A thousand paper cranes for peace

So far Britt Prince's third-graders have folded approximately two hundred paper cranes. Their goal is one thousand.

The class recently finished reading the book "*Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*" by Eleanor Coerr. The novel, inspired by a true story, tells of a young girl from Hiroshima who discovers she has leukemia, the "atom-bomb disease." Sadako decides to make one thousand paper cranes so that, according to legend, her health will return. Sadako makes 644 cranes before she passes away. After her death, her classmates finished folding the remaining 356 cranes.

English teacher Britt Prince wanted the students to not only experience what it was like for Sadako to fold so many cranes, but also to work as a team, to set a goal and reach it. "We did this project to honor Sadako," says third-grader Kyle. Classmate Alexander adds, "We did it to honor her and make peace."

The third graders plan to continue making cranes. The



final product - one thousand brightly colored paper cranes in honor of Sadako - will be displayed at the TIS Literacy Fair on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

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All TIS students performed for the school's Winter Festival, held at Reed College's Kaul Auditorium after a 3 week snow delay.

### Graduates look back (cont'd)

They had a lot of Spanish speaking families who had moved from Mexico and needed help. As the receptionist I definitely had to speak Spanish, talk to people on the phone and help them out. That was definitely an interesting experience and I wouldn't have been able to do it at all if I didn't have my Spanish.

#### . . . on native-speaking teachers

Toryn: [Having native-speaking teachers] has made such a huge difference. I'm currently at Jesuit [High School], and I took Spanish AP as a freshman. I was lucky enough to have a native Spanish speaker, but at Jesuit only two out of the seven Spanish speakers are native. I traveled down to Ecuador with a non-native speaking teacher. And it's not that their comprehension of the language is less, because they have studied their whole lives. But the way they sound, you can definitely tell when a native speaker is teaching you. You learn so much more from someone who is actually from that culture.

#### . . . on learning English and SAT scores

Toryn: I actually think that learning how to read in Spanish before English almost made it easier for me. In high school I won the English award

sophomore year – so it definitely wasn't a problem for me. And I became an accomplished writer at Jesuit. So as long as you put your mind to it and set your goals, the whole late English integration shouldn't be an issue. It just takes time. You just have to be patient and persistent and trust that The International School knows what it's doing.

Cory: It's very true. I had a tough time transitioning into English because English is a much more complicated language to learn how to read versus Spanish. But I really enjoy English now.

The kids [in my high school] who learned two languages in grade school have better grades, better SAT scores. I think that comes when you're learning so much more as a kid. Learning a language definitely helped me in every subject.

#### Parents' perspectives

Laurie Slater, parent Class of 2002 & 2008: The International School has given my kids amazing opportunities to just experience life in a really fulfilling way. I feel like because of The International School they see life in a more global perspective, I feel like they really are the children of the



Toryn Slater, Class of 2002

future. And I feel like it has given them opportunities to feel confident, to feel like they excel in another language and to see the world as a smaller place.

Wendy Manula, parent Class of 2006 & 2007: They see the world in a complete different manner than their peers. It's quite obvious as they go through their daily activities. They understand the news, they're aware and really in tune to the world, as opposed to the little block that we live on.

I feel that my boys really have the opportunity to be and do whatever they want because they have really received such a well rounded, grounded education. They learned about culture and love and life at The International School. I really believe that the sky is the limit for them.