Thinking about thinking...
Dear Hong Kong Academy Community,

Learning, growing and understanding. These concepts are so important to us at HKA that we have put them on the wall of the Theatre Lobby in large, bright letters as a reminder of who we are and what we work to achieve.

How we learn, grow and understand are questions that we at Hong Kong Academy are always asking ourselves. And our answers to these questions say a lot about how we define success. In this issue, a diverse group of contributors explore these questions from different perspectives – Primary School, Secondary School, alumni, faculty, staff and educators. The reflections on art, teamwork, volunteering, giving and graduation spark us both to think creatively about lifelong learning and to reflect on the sorts of successes that make life meaningful.

With that thought: welcome back for another school year at HKA! We look forward to another year of learning, growing and understanding together as a dynamic, diverse community.

Happy reading,

Laura Mitchell
Advancement and Communications Director

CONTRIBUTORS

CARTER & PAIGE G4
Grade 4 Students Carter and Paige interviewed Dale Willetts, HKA’s Finance and Operations Director, to learn about what his job entails and why he likes working at HKA.

PREENISS CANTIGA
Prenciss Cantiga. Class of 2014, graduated from Hong Kong Academy in May. She completed the IB Diploma in Art and will be continuing her art studies in the Fall.

ALYSON DOTY
Alyson Doty joined the HKA community in 2012 as a secondary English and Humanities teacher. She works with mostly grade 6 and 7 students. Originally from Minnesota, USA, Hong Kong Academy is her third international school after previous stops in Dubai, UAE and Guangzhou, China.

KIMBERLEY FUNG
Kimberley Fung has been working in Hong Kong Academy’s Learner Support department for the past four years. She was originally trained in classical music, but work and study both here and in Hong Kong and in the UK led her to look into opportunities to integrate music into community work. This led her to pursue further study towards working in special education. She is particularly passionate about supporting successful inclusive education environments. Outside the classroom, she enjoys good food, traveling and being out on the water, whether it’s on a surf board or a dragon boat.

STEPHEN DARE
Stephen Dare is the Head of School at Hong Kong Academy. He has worked in international schools in North and South America and South East Asia. For the last five years, Stephen has been a co-trainer for the Principal’s Training Center Summer Institutes for Curriculum and Leadership and, more recently, for Leadership and Group Dynamics. He currently sits on the Advisory Board for the Next Frontier Inclusion Project and is a member of the ACAMIS Board. He originally left the UK for a couple of years to explore the world of international education and to travel to Machu Picchu. He never made it to Peru and is still working overseas 25 years later.

IAN GILBERT
Guest Contributor Ian Gilbert is an award-winning educational writer, publisher, speaker and entrepreneur who is currently living and working in Hong Kong. In 2013 he was named by the IB Organisation as one of a handful of ‘visionaries’ working in education today. His latest book, ‘Independent Thinking’, was published last year by Crown House Publishing.

JUDITH JONKERS
Judith Jonkers, Grade 6, is a talented creative writer who shares with us her story, "Would I have a Twin?".

HILARY LAU
Hilary Lau is a Grade 10 student at HKA. Hilary joined HKA in Grade 6. For her IB Middle Years Programme Personal Project, Hilary wrote a children’s book about her dog, Machi, that incorporates many of Hong Kong’s famous landmarks.

LAURA MITCHELL
Laura Mitchell is HKA’s Advancement and Communications Director. She and her family have been a part of the HKA community since 2007. From 2007-2009, her daughters attended HKA at the Stubbs Road campus. From 2009-2013 after leaving Hong Kong, she stayed connected to HKA as a consultant on HKA’s programme to raise funds to build the Sai Kung Campus. In August 2013, HKA asked her to return to lead the advancement and communications department.

ROBIN MULLER
Robin Muller has taught Secondary School art at HKA since 2012. She is a graduate of The Rhode Island School of Design and brought with her 14 years of teaching experience both in the United States and abroad. She frequently reminds her students that art is more about hard work and practice than “innate” talent and challenges them to explore their world through a wide variety of media.

RUBY RANKIN
Ruby Rankin, alum of the Class of 2019, attended HKA from 2005 to 2012, through Grade 5. She now lives in London with her parents and her younger brother.
HKA Voices is published twice a year by the communications office of Hong Kong Academy. It is distributed free of charge to alumni, parents and faculty. We welcome input from the HKA community. Please contact Laura Mitchell with your story ideas or comments at laura.mitchell@hkacademy.edu.hk.

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In May we had the privilege of watching the third set of graduates walk across the stage to collect their HKA Diplomas. Documented on each small sheet of paper was an acknowledgment that the student had successfully concluded his or her secondary education and was ready to embark upon the next phase of a personal journey for which the destination most likely remains unclear. Parents watched with pride and satisfaction as the ceremony brought their sons and daughters one step closer to adulthood and teachers marveled at the thought of being in a profession that helps to develop young minds that might one day change the world. All of us in the HKA community took some gratification from the fact that we played a direct or indirect role in helping each of the graduates get to the next stage of his or her journey.

For those of you with teenage children, you will have had some first hand experience of the trials and tribulations that the process of raising people at this age can bring. It’s a journey that is compelling to be a part of, but one strewn with obstacles in the form of letters and number grades, test scores and entrance requirements that can sometimes overshadow what is most important, the happiness of your child. If you have ever watched the Amazing Race, you’ll know that it is a reality television game show in which teams race around the world. The race is broken up into stages and contestants attempt to arrive first at each leg of the journey to win prizes and to avoid coming in last so as not to be eliminated or disadvantaged for the next stage. On the way they encounter obstacles or challenges that test their abilities in a host of different ways and will ultimately determine the winners and losers. Formal education, if we are not careful, can become a bit too much like the Amazing Race; it is imperative that we intentionally create the kind of environment where the journey, and not the race, is protected.

As HKA educators and parents working in partnership, our responsibility is not necessarily to remove the types of obstacles that challenge students emotionally and intellectually, individually and collaboratively, but to resize them to the extent that each student feels motivated to want to take the next step in the journey. Through self-management and self-monitoring, we want students to feel empowered and confident to tackle dilemmas without fear of elimination, to regard failure as an opportunity to learn and not a disadvantage that will continue to make the journey that much harder, and to value collaboration over competition for determining success. In doing so, we are fulfilling our mission that:

...empowers learners to pursue pathways to individual excellence by fostering creativity, communication and problem-solving skills.
How will we ensure that everyone is included?

HKA believes that a diverse community, grounded in mutual respect, enhances learning for all members of the community. Learning with and not competing against friends who come from different parts of the world, speak different languages at home, identify with different religions and belief systems, and possess different skills, talents, and interests develops open-mindedness, and is an important component of our students’ future success.

Diversity on its own is static and value-neutral. To make diversity dynamic and positive requires the intentional inclusion of all students in every aspect of the life of the school supported by language and actions that demonstrate that this is a positive component of our culture. We may not be able to travel the world, but the examples used in class and the topics and situations we learn about will appeal to a diverse community. Teachers from many different backgrounds and experiences enrich the learning community, and everyone is encouraged and expected to learn from and support each other in all aspects of learning.

How will we ensure the appropriate level of challenge?

Inclusion requires us to create differentiated learning experiences and incorporate differentiated instructional strategies that ensure equal access to learning for all. Rather than reaching “Pit Stops” at which you are given a clue or a task to complete, differentiated education at HKA means that teachers must provide multiple strategies and avenues for accessing information, gaining knowledge, fostering skills, and encouraging reflection and understanding. In essence, inclusion requires a responsive approach to teaching and not a single approach in which:

- Students are active participants in their learning.
- Students are encouraged to make choices and take risks so that they can develop into independent, self-motivated learners.
- Students with special learning and physical needs are accommodated (technologically or otherwise) and supported to learn at their own pace.
- Goal-oriented, rigorous curricula challenge students and promote meaningful experiences of achievement and success.

What will success look and sound like?

Successes are something that we recognize and honor throughout the year. The class of 2014 is comprised of students who have achieved fantastic grades, who have been accepted to a range of world-renowned universities and programs, who have achieved personal bests in a range of interests and pursuits, who have developed as athletes, thespians and musicians, and who have engaged in some creative and innovative community projects. For those of you who attended the graduation in May, you participated in an event where there were no winners and no losers and personal accolades were put aside for one moment. Phil Keoghan wasn’t there with a million dollar prize, but the ceremony made for compelling viewing as we focused on the collective achievement that our graduates had completed this stage of their Amazing Journeys. Everyone was included, everyone had been challenged, and we all shared in everyone’s individual success as the manifestation of HKA’s commitment to its mission.

We don’t look to lose any students on the way – the expectation of walking across the stage to receive an HKA Diploma will be the same for all students completing their Grade 12 year. The way in which the students get there, however, might be different and this requires us to be continuously asking three basic questions:
Whenever any debate is taking place about education, schools, teachers or what goes on in classrooms, there is a mammoth question right in front of everyone's noses which no-one seems to see.

**IT IS THE QUESTION OF WHAT, EXACTLY, EDUCATION IS FOR?**

Of course, we can all agree pretty much on certain essentials that all children need to learn. How to read and write, do basic maths and get along with others to name a few. But what about a bigger goal beyond that? What we are teaching them to read and write for?
One argument is that we educate children so that they can find themselves a decent job once they are older. The better the education, the better the job. While this argument has merit, it does run the risk of turning childhood into an extended training programme, where the right to be a child is subsumed by the need to learn how to be an adult.

Another argument is that we educate children about the world so they can go and make their way in that world. The broader the education, the broader their world view. Again, this has merit but it does beg the question, are we sending young people into the world as it is or with a view of how it could be?

It is here that we enter a very interesting area. And one not without its controversies. Do we design schooling in such a way that it teaches children to maintain the status quo once they are adults or do we engender in them a spirit of dissent and rebellion so that, once they pick up the reins of our world, they can see what is wrong with it and do something tangible about it, steering it in a direction different from the perilous one we are currently taking?

Like I say, it is a controversial issue. For example, you might nod in agreement with a quote that suggests, ‘The point is not merely to understand the world, but to change it’ but maybe you feel less happy about it if I say it is by Karl Marx?

In recent years, after over two decades working with young people across the world, I am increasingly convinced that we need angry, opinionated, rebellious children, young people who won’t simply do what they’re told and blindly accept the views of adults. Notice I’m not advocating rude children. Or unschooled ones. Notice the use of words such as ‘opinionated’ and ‘blindly’ too. I firmly believe that one of education’s most important purposes is to help children, to paraphrase the words of the great Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire, ‘to read and write the word so they can reread and rewrite the world.’ That is to say, we educate them to see the world not only for what it is but also for what it could be. And to educate them to not only consider what can be done but also to take personal responsibility for actually doing it.

This last element is important. Speaking to many young people, there is a sense that they know the world is in a mess but that they feel nothing can be done about it. This is a dangerous combination and breeds despair, fear and hopelessness. An education without optimism is like learning to drive in a world without roads. Or cars. All teaching should be imbued with a sense of hope, something best defined as an unfailing belief that a) things can be better and b) I can do something about it.

It is clear why the eyes of the rest of the world are so often trained on what is happening in schools in Hong Kong. Some of the world’s best education is on offer in a society that is changing and growing at a time where so many of the old economies are stagnating, or worse. Hong Kong Academy, with its wonderful new building and sense of what is possible, is placed to be at the forefront of global educational innovation and endeavor. But it is a school community with a choice to make. Does it teach children about how things are and leave it there? Or does it educate children about the way the world is in such a way that they will learn to consider how it could be, how it should be and how they can — and must — do something about it? Your answer to that question will silence the loudest elephant.
During a recent Grade 8 art class the question was raised, “Is graffiti art or vandalism?” We had been investigating the work of Banksy and his use of provocative stencil art on the streets of England that question the role of authority. The focus of our unit was art and social change. Our primary question of inquiry was, “Can art change the world?”

As a class we analyzed and discussed the work of Banksy. We began by looking at the artwork. We described the work and did our best to analyze and interpret it based on evidence. Some of our discussion raised questions such as,

- Why might an artist use graffiti as a form of expression on issues relating to authority?
- Why does Banksy’s true identity remain a secret?
- What is the role of an artist in society today?
- Is it an artist’s job to make social commentary?
- What does it do to a work of art to move it from a street context to a gallery context?

If we dig deeper when we look at art we can start to un-peel the intent of the artist using the lenses of form, theme and context to investigate it further. Looking closely can help us to understand the work better. Gone are the days of memorizing dates and movements in art history. What we are interested in is context. How can the work we investigate help us to understand time and place and its effect on culture and globalization?
After some further investigation into the work of other artists from around the world which explore social issues in their work, students were asked, “What do you want to see more of in the world? What do you want to see less of?”

Now it was their turn to use art to communicate their feelings on a matter of importance! Choosing a topic that was relevant and personally meaningful enough to prompt them to take action was a key component of the process. The notion of an audience was also very important.

For the project, students were tasked to create works of art that would be installed within the school in such a way that the art would interrupt the viewer’s normal school day experience. Students could use any medium they wanted and they could collaborate with a partner. Before planning, students had to make clear what their intent was. What did they want their message to be? In the development of their projects, they had to consider how the interplay of form, theme, and context would help them communicate their intent.

To get started, students investigated an artist of their choosing from among the artists that we had looked at as a class. Part of the process of responding to the artist’s work was to find a way to use the work as inspiration in the development of their own. This forced students to learn and explore new techniques.

Students then made a proposal and presented it to the class for feedback before continuing with their projects. They chose topics such as education for girls, child soldiers, bullying, and self-esteem. After receiving feedback from the class, the creation process began.

Students had to learn new techniques and processes to execute their plans. As a teacher, it can be uneasy to offer so much choice in media, but the rewards of seeing students engaged in learning a process of their own choosing and using their newly gained knowledge is the benefit. Allowing freedom of materials reemphasized the importance of form, theme, and context working together. Students took over the third floor open studio. At the end of the process students titled their work and wrote artists’ statements to hang alongside the work. I had the pleasure of witnessing two students installing their work, standing back and jumping up and down with excitement.

When passers by asked the two students about the work, the students turned the tables and asked what the viewers thought it meant. Could the viewers see their intent as artists? The power of being able to clearly communicate a message of importance was evidenced by the smile on their faces.

At HKA, secondary students in the MYP visual arts courses are not exclusively developing standard art skills. They are also developing their creative thinking skills. They do this through the process of exploring their ideas, experimenting, planning and responding to the work of others.
At HKA, we celebrate individual pathways to success. Each student is unique, and their learning experiences and successes reflect their personal goals and efforts. Prenciss Cantiga just completed the IB Diploma Programme in Art and graduated in May. Her artist’s statement reflects both her own journey as a learner and the HKA approach to education.

**Dinner Table, 2013**  

**Retracing the Past, 2014**  
Screen print by paper stencil, fabric, embroidery.

**My Neighborhood, 2014**  
Acrylic on canvas, sticks.

**Home, 2013**  
Wire and bees wax.

As a young girl, I lived in many places where I encountered different things and different people. This experience influenced me to create artworks based on my childhood memories by retracing, recollecting and commemorating events and people. Memories are something that leave a mark on each of us. Memories and my life experiences influence me in how I view the world and myself.

As an artist, my interest, and I feel my strength, is in exploring conceptual themes and transforming them into pieces. I want to give the audience space to reflect on what I am trying to convey in my artworks. This strength is also my weakness because the audience may find my artworks incomprehensible. I find labeling artworks important to point the viewer in the right direction.

I was particularly influenced by Tracey Emin, as she deals with memories and her past experiences. I was drawn by the variety of materials and methods she uses. She might have received a lot of criticism especially for her artwork called “My Bed” (1999) but this actually inspired me to create pieces that people may not necessarily find attractive at first glance. I like to challenge my viewer to have their own interpretation. I also like to challenge myself and get outside of my comfort zone by using materials and methods I am not comfortable with. This helps me to develop different skills and discover my inner strengths.

As for my research, since I was dealing with memories that occurred in the past or in other places, it was challenging living in Hong Kong and working with family histories because of the limited personal materials available. This forced me to work more conceptually and approach my theme metaphorically.
Growing up being very passionate about art, particularly drawing and doodling, this year, I was given the perfect opportunity to extend and execute these skills as well as my creativity. Being my final year of the MYP program, I was required to plan, create and reflect on a year-long task, the Personal Project. Without hesitation, I knew what I wanted to do, which was to write and illustrate my own children’s book.

“The Hunt Around Hong Kong” features my dog, Machi, and guided by her determination, she makes her way to various landmarks in Hong Kong in search of her toy bone.

Knowing that my style of art appeals to younger kids, selecting my target audience of ages 3-6 was pretty easy. However, deciding on what to write about was more challenging. While browsing through numerous children’s books for inspiration, I noticed that there was a lack of books focusing on specific cultures. For this reason, I thought it would be perfect to teach kids, especially kids in Hong Kong, about the city we live in through visuals. And in addition to that, the book would exhibit my personal values and the inspiration of my incredibly loving, happy-go-lucky canine companion. It also expresses my identity as an international school student living in Hong Kong. These aspects would ultimately create a unique and successful book that I would be proud of.

Although the illustrations and text in my book are minimal, working on this project was motivating and extremely rewarding. Not only did I get to do what I loved, but I also got to interact with new people throughout this process by sharing with them my art and writing. Overall, this project has definitely allowed me to express myself in a whole new way, making it a very worthwhile experience.
Once, in an unknown part of Mongolia, where a beautiful village lay, a girl named Mia predicted that tonight, a great sandstorm would come and wipe out everything. No one would believe her until...

"Come on everyone! Come up and I'll tell you the future that lies upon all of us!" shouted Mia at the market place. "Gather around!"

"Do you think we should trust this girl?" asked a woman of about 27 years and was quite short for her age to another woman of about 30 years of age. She looked a bit taller than the other woman.

"I don't know, should we?" the other women said.

"I think we should. I mean, she's only a girl, right?" said a third woman.

"The future that lies before us is evil. My magical ball says that in two years time, a great sandstorm will run across our precious Gobi Village. It will destroy everything we own. This place will then be known as a desert." Mia announced, in despair.

"Why should we listen to you? You're just a child and your magical ball isn't real at all. You're trying to earn money by telling the fake future. If we wanted to know the real future, we would just go to King Zukuri and ask him for the future!!" Michael in fury. With that, he hit the crystal ball, and it shattered into a million pieces.

"NO!" Mia screamed as it smashed. Everybody laughed. She was so mad and so embarrassed all at the same time.

"Could the day get any worse," she whispered to herself so no one else could hear her.

HAHAHAHAHAHAAH! everyone yelled as they fell to the floor because of all the laughter that was created.

"OK. GO ASK THE KING'S FORTUNE TELLER AND ASK HIM FOR THE FUTURE!! YOU WILL SEE THAT HE SAYS THE SAME AS I SAY!!" Mia screamed back at everyone.

After Mia screamed back at all the people, everyone went back to what they were doing before all the nonsense started. But there was one girl who knew that Mia was saying the truth and knew that the storm was coming because her father was the King's fortune teller, and he always told the future to her. She went up to Mia and said,

"How brave of you to do that. You were right all along because I know that everyone is wondering who the fortune teller's daughter is. It is me, Ria. You are right because my dad told me. I want to be friends. Is that ok?" Ria, the fortune teller's daughter said. It was such a shock to Mia to finally find the girl she was looking for. She could answer all her questions. "What would happen if I said yes??" she wondered.

"I would love to be your friend as long as you don't mind me asking you a ton of questions such as, are you rich? and am I telling the truth? and what's going to happen tonight? and is he really going to meet me tonight? and is it safe? and... and..." Mia forced out of her in one breath.

"Relax!! I'll tell you the answer when we get to shelter." Ria said in reply. They went to Mia's house. At Mia's house, Mia's mom had made some tea and asked Mia who she had brought over this time.

"I brought over my new friend named Ria. She has nearly the same name as I do. Do you know who her parents are?" she asked her mom. Her mom took one look at Ria and after what seemed like an eternity of silence she finally replied. She said, "I do, she is the famous fortune teller's daughter and she is part of our family darling," she said in a happy and surprised voice.

"Mom, what's the matter? Are you saying that she is my sister? That's impossible! Isn't it?" Mia asked her mom in shock.

Her mom lied in reply, "Yes, Yes, you're right. She is not your sister or part of our family. I'm sorry. I was thinking of someone else. Ria, do you have a mom and a dad? Do you have any siblings? Have your parents told you anything that felt... confusing to you?"

"Mom, STOP!!!! Why are you questioning Ria so much? Can't you just mind your own business?! She is my friend and you do not need to know if she's good enough for me because that's what you always do and that's why I have no friends! So please, can you leave us alone?" Mia asked her mum begingly.

"Now, if you would excuse me and let me have some time with my friend." She walked off pulling Ria behind her, grabbing a mug of tea. Ria just followed and also grabbed a mug of tea. She shrugged at Mia's mom.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS A STUDENT'S VOICE

WOULD I HAVE A TWIN?

BY JUDITH JONKERS, GRADE 6
When they were up stairs Ria said, “What was your mom expecting? Whatever!! Do you actually think that she was telling the truth about us being sisters? There was something familiar about all these questions. Don’t you think?”

“I think she kind of was telling the truth but i’m not too sure.... How about you? Do you think it’s real?” Mia asked Ria.

“I think it’s true as well and it was awkward when she asked all those questions,” Ria said in reply, feeling confused.

“Yeah. Let’s recall the questions and see what else seems a little out of hand, ok. She asked you, ‘Ria, do you have a mom and a dad? Do you have any siblings? Have your parents told you anything that felt confusing to you?’ That all sounds really confusing, so let’s write it down on paper. I’ll get paper and pens!” Mia said in excitement.

Ria said in reply, “Alright! I’ll watch out in case your mom comes up here. No offense but she is quite weird and creepy, sorry.”

“No problem, I find my mom weird as well. She keeps saying, ‘Have you found anything out about something awkward when you were in town?’ She also says, ‘You have powers like your dad.’ Then she starts crying. Anything seem familiar?” Mia said to Ria, awkwardly.

“Yes, sort of. My dad asks whenever I come home from getting the fruits, ‘Anything unusual darling?’ or ‘You ok? You look just like your mother, so proper but so unusual.’ Seems kind of weird and then he also starts crying,” Ria said with a weird feeling. “Now go get that piece of paper!!”

But Mia had other ideas. “No. Maybe we should go to your dad and see how he reacts to my appearance. OK?” she said with a thinking voice.

“Good idea...... Come on let’s go!” Ria said with a nervous look on her face. So, that was that and they ran off to Ria’s house to see his reaction to Mia. Would he give them more clues?

As they arrived at the palace, Ria said, “Now, do not say anything, until I say, ‘Hello, King Zukuri, can I please see my father?’ You only say, ‘Hello King Zukuri.’ Ok? Good. Let’s go.”

They proceeded to the King’s throne, and Mia did exactly what Ria said but to their surprise, King Zukuri said sharply, “No. Your dad is busy with a visitor.” As much as Ria tried, King Zukuri just said no and she gave up. Then Mia tried to help and said in a brave and trembling voice, “It’s a very important meeting and... and... and we have to see him before 8 o’ clock. So please, just let us see him for a minute at least. Please.”

At that moment, the king received a message that Ria’s father was available. They entered the adjacent room and opened the curtain. Ria’s dad froze and stared and then gasped and said in a soft voice, “Mia, is it really you? Look how much you’ve grown! How are you, dear? Am I confusing you guys? Oh dear, I released the secret.”

Ria looked at Mia, and Mia did the same. They said at the same time, “What secret?!?”

With the facts revealed, their dad told them everything. About how he and Mia’s mom were divorced, and how their names were nearly the same because they were twins. About how mother and father knew that things would have gotten too confusing if they let them know that they were sisters. And about how they just had to keep it a secret because he and their mother had had big fights in the past and didn’t want to let their daughters know about it. Then together, they went out of the castle and stood in the wind.

Everyone did what they did and the sand storm approached.
“I never wanted to miss a day of school.”

BY RUBY RANKIN, HKA ALUMNI

Ruby Rankin, Class of 2019, attended HKA from 2005 to 2012. She now lives in London with her parents and her younger brother. This photo was taken at the HKA London Alumni Event in January.

My parents moved from Australia to Hong Kong in 2000, and I was born not long after in 2001. My HKA journey began in 2005, when I joined Mrs Sherry’s K4 year at the Stubbs Road campus. I vividly remember the steep ascent, the smell of Eucalyptus trees and holding tight to the coloured railings to reach my classroom, which was festooned with colourful art and a wooden cubby house in the corner.

At HKA we were truly imbued with the core values of being an enquirer, risk taker, caring and balanced. The excellent teachers at HKA lead by example; we weren’t told, we were shown. Students were always valued and respected. The diverse HKA community was open-minded and always inclusive. New students were well integrated and supported.

Hong Kong Academy’s greatest achievement was to give me a love of learning. Whilst we covered the required material of the PYP to help us become knowledgeable and thinkers, we also had fun. I learnt my maths facts, but I can also moonwalk, thanks to Miss Lawler. I never wanted to miss a day at school.

At the end of grade 5 in June 2012 my family and I moved to the UK. I was extremely sad to leave HKA and the wonderful friends I had made there. I started the new school year in grade 7 in a school with an English curriculum, which is very different from the IB. The biggest changes were writing with a fountain pen and learning French and Latin. The school does not offer Mandarin, so I am pursuing learning with a tutor at home. I really value the Mandarin progress I had made over the years at HKA and do not want to lose it.

I still miss HKA though am pleased to see that the friendships I made there are enduring and have withstood the test of time and distance. I miss Mr Ryan’s stories, casual dress day, Chinese New Year celebrations, the size and intimacy of the school and much more. The values gained at HKA helped me cope with the transition to a different school with a different system. Confidence I had gained in myself, not fearing risk and change, has enabled me to make new friends. The approachability of the teachers at HKA has helped me engage with my new teachers to bridge the differences from the global IB to a more Anglo-centric education.

I am grateful for the opportunities that I received at HKA and know that the core values instilled in me will assist me with my lifelong learning.
Hong Kong Academy is first and foremost a community of people. Before we arrived at our state of the art campus in Sai Kung, we were fond of saying, “It’s not about the building.” And it wasn’t — and in a very real way, it couldn’t be! Our temporary, tired, and sometimes troubling facilities made it crystal clear that the community was HKA’s most important asset.

Now that HKA boasts a fabulous facility, it remains crystal clear that people still are the heart of Hong Kong Academy. The relationships, the learning, the growing and the sharing: this is Hong Kong Academy, wherever HKA calls home.

Because relationships are so important to HKA, and because everyone at HKA gives so much to the school, HKA has a formal statement to describe its unique “Culture of Philanthropy.” That statement reads:

Hong Kong Academy recognises that everyone contributes to the life of the school in different ways and values all gifts to the school, whether of time, talent, or financial resources. The community-centered, co-operative values that inspired the school’s founders continue to shape HKA today. Each member of the community is a gift to the school, and HKA appreciates everyone for their roles in making HKA a positive and dynamic learning environment.

HKA seeks every opportunity to say thank you to those who give generously of their time, expertise, and resources, including faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni, former families, and others associated with the school. The school seeks to say thank you in ways that respect HKA’s sense of community and its many cultural backgrounds and contexts. HKA stresses the importance of the personal thank you over public recognition and offers public recognition that matches the school’s vision and values.

Parents in particular give life to the school’s culture of philanthropy. The HKACO’s Buddy Programme helps welcome new families, its committees support school programmes and its social gatherings provide opportunities for parents to get to know one another better. Room parents support teachers and classroom activities, and this year, parent volunteerism expanded to include a Saturday sports programme. Other parents serve on the Board of Trustees and committees, providing valuable leadership and decision-making. And many parents volunteer behind the scenes in capacities most people never see. These generous gifts of time and expertise benefit the community immeasurably.

Parents also give generously to the school with their financial resources. This year, donations to the school exceeded HK$2m. The annual gala alone raised close to HK$1.2m. The financial success of the gala is extraordinary, and the proceeds directly support students and faculty at HKA through enhanced programmes and professional development opportunities.

The dollar number is a real achievement, but there’s another numbers story that’s extraordinary: a committee of more than 20 who worked tirelessly to bring the event together, the nearly 100+ people who donated auction and raffle items, and the 200+ who gathered for a fun-filled evening. At HKA, these numbers are the real measure of success.

As Hong Kong Academy’s first Advancement and Communications Director, it’s my pleasure and privilege to support everyone at HKA as we give of our time, talent and financial resources. As our first year in Sai Kung draws to a close, it is equally my pleasure and privilege to say THANK YOU. Thank you to everyone for all your contributions to the school. Thank you for being a part of this community. We are all the richer for being here together.
It’s Wednesday afternoon and HKA staff have just finished an afternoon of professional development. Instead of heading home, a group comprised of HKA teachers, administrators, parents, spouses and maintenance staff are jumping into dragon boats on the Sai Kung Waterfront for a two hour training session on the water. Captained by Karin Maddox and James Woodard, the team begins weekly ‘social paddling’ as early as October with the official training season beginning early in March.

While different team members have come and gone, the Dragonflies team has been together for eight years. Unlike many other teams in Hong Kong, the Dragonflies doesn’t require tryouts or make cuts. What makes the team so special is its members’ dedication and camaraderie. Rain or shine, after a long day of work or giving up time on the weekend, the Dragonflies are a team that knows how to practice hard, but also have fun.

On May 4th, the HKA Dragonflies competed in their first race in the Sai Kung community, the Sai Kung Dragon Boat Lovers Fun Day races, winning the Silver Cup. During the Stanley Warm-Up Races, they competed against 94 teams and got through to the Bronze Cup Final. The highlight of the season, however, was this year’s Stanley International Dragon Boat Championships on June 2nd on Tuen Ng Festival. It was the largest race event in dragon boat history, with over 288 teams competing from all over the globe. The team went from strength to strength, getting through to the Silver Cup Final and placed an impressive 31st out of 198 mixed teams participating. The Hong Kong Academy Dragonflies is yet another reason to be proud of the HKA community.
Dale Charles Willetts is the Director of Finance and Operations at HKA. He was born in West Canada and grew up there, too. Dale’s wife’s name is Alyssa. Alyssa is from Guang Zhou. They have one son whose name is Benjamin. He was born in Hong Kong and is almost done with High School.

**What are your hobbies?**
I really love to play golf and hike in the hills of Hong Kong with my wife. When it’s winter time I also love to ski. And in my free time I enjoy reading and listening to the radio.

**What is your favorite food?**
Ah, I have so many favorite foods. I think maybe Japanese Sashimi. We are so lucky to live in Hong Kong. There are so many different cuisines to choose from.

**If your friends were going to describe you, in one word, what would they say?**
They would say that I am serious with a good sense of humor.

**Do you have a nickname?**
I don’t really have a nickname. But my brothers sometimes call me Chuck, which is short for Charles (my middle name.)

**What movie star are you most like?**
When I first moved to Hong Kong, many of my friends here thought I looked like Arnold Schwarzenegger, from “The Terminator.”

**Was it your dream to work in finance?**
**What did you want to be?**
At first when I was in high school I wanted to be an engineer. But then when I went to university I changed my mind and I studied business instead. That is how I ended up in finance, accounting and being a business manager.

**Do you like your job?**
Do I like my job? I LOVE my job!!! It is almost the best job in the world!!!! I especially like the people I work with and getting to see all the happy kids around the school every day!

**What is the hardest thing about your job? And some challenges?**
I think a challenge is having too many things to do and not enough time. I don’t think that is an unusual challenge.

**How long have you been working at HKA?**
5 years.

**How long have you been in HK?**
I arrived on May 1st, 1991. I guess that is almost 23 years and counting.

**When you were a kid did you want to work in a school?**
I never knew I wanted to work in a school before. In fact, before HKA I didn’t work in a school. I volunteered for a school, the one my son goes to, but this is the first time I have worked in a school.

**What is a normal day like for you?**
I drive here from Hong Kong island. I usually get to school around 7:15. When I arrive at HKA, I check with my staff, we’ll discuss things that we are going to do for the day and set priorities. And then I try to set my schedule and look at my calendar and also set my own priorities and understand what I have to do for the day. And then usually I’ll attend meetings, sometimes with Miss Virginia or Mr. Dare, about managing the school and looking after the children and all the financial resources to do that. And then I’ll go home.

**Where did you work before HKA?**
Well before I worked at HKA I had a chain of restaurants in Hong Kong called Fat Angelo’s.

**Why did you choose to work here?**
I like the story of HKA and the fact that when I joined, the school was still at Stubbs Road. And then we moved to Kennedy Town while I was here. And now we’ve built this new building in Sai Kung and moved here. All of that to me seemed very interesting to go through all the changes.

**Will you ever retire?**
Oh yes, I would love to retire. I don’t have any idea yet. I think when I am happy and the school is prepared and is able without me, that will be a good time to retire.

THANK YOU MR. WILLETTS!
HKA's inaugural theatre production, ‘Wind of a Thousand Tales’ was a celebration of art, culture, diversity, and all the talent that HKA has to offer.

The annual gala was a big success with over 200 parents gathering for fun and food with the school raising nearly HKD 1.2 million to enhance its programmes.

HKA celebrated reading, writing and stories with visiting authors, DEAR time (drop everything and read) and the continuous reading chair.
The IB and Senior Art Exhibit was the culminating event showcasing months or years of hard work and was enjoyed by the whole HKA community.

24-27 APRIL
ACAMIS Soccer Tournament

23-29 APRIL
World Individual Debating and Public Speaking Championship, Lithuania
Donovan Kelly, Grade 10, was chosen for The Hong Kong National Team and competed well at this event.

3 MAY
Hong Kong Schools’ Debating and Public Speaking Competition
G7 Anna Loretan placed 1st in the Interpretive Reading division.

8-10 MAY
SCISAC Basketball

16 MAY
International Schools Coffee House
HKA hosted the first ever Coffee House invitational with five international schools contributing acts to the event held in a packed theatre.

10 APRIL
IB Visual Art and Senior Art Exhibition

17 MAY
Cultural Food Festival and Community Fair
800+ people celebrated HKA’s first year at the campus at the Cultural Food Festival. A fair of sports, live performances, arts and crafts and food added to the fun.

19-20 MAY
G5 Exhibition

24 MAY
Spring Formal

29 MAY
Class of 2014 Graduation Ceremony

12-13 JUNE
G4 Play

12 DECEMBER
Last Day of School Before Winter Break

LOOKING FORWARD

20 AUGUST
First Day of School

22 AUGUST
Back to School Coffee

13 SEPTEMBER
Back to School Parent Party

20 SEPTEMBER
Senior HKSDPSC Debate Championships and Grand Finals

20-23 SEPTEMBER
Next Frontier Inclusion Conference, hosted at HKA

11 OCTOBER
Junior HKSDPSC Debate Championships and Grand Finals

21-24 OCTOBER
Grade 5 Camp

22-24 OCTOBER
Grade 4 Camp

23-26 OCTOBER
SCISAC Soccer

6-9 NOVEMBER
ACAMIS volleyball

21-22 NOVEMBER
Secondary School Play “Arabian Nights”
“It is easy to be balanced at HKA, because you can do different kinds of activities.”
— India, Grade 4

**Balanced**

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives — intellectual, physical, and emotional — to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.