

SPRING 2016

hkaVoices

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INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
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INSPIRE

NEGOTIATE

INFORM

TRUST

BENEFIT

TEAM

SHARE

Parents as
Partners —
an essential
element
for success

Dear Hong Kong Academy Community,

In the Institutional Advancement Office at HKA, we give tours to numerous visitors: prospective students and their families, other educators, representatives from government and business, and alumni and former families who are keen to see the “new” HKA. Everyone is always impressed with the look and feel of the campus, and they often comment on how the philosophy of the school is evident in the building itself. This is especially true of our Cafe area. When the campus was still just drawings on a page, the mandate to the architects was clear: HKA is a community school where parents are partners, and we need a place for parents to gather.

The theme of this issue is parents as partners: partners with their own children, with their children’s teachers and with the school in general. HKA is fortunate to have so many parents who share their time, talent and treasure with the school community!



Laura Mitchell
Director of Institutional Advancement

CONTRIBUTORS

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Aaron is HKA’s Athletics Director. In addition to supporting physical education, he coordinates the school’s inter-school and conference athletics teams. This year he oversaw HKA’s first on-campus SCISAC tournament, and last year he oversaw HKA’s first on-campus ACAMIS tournament. Aaron also manages the school’s After School Activities Programme.

LEANNE DUNLAP

Leanne joined HKA in August of 2015 as the school’s Secondary School Principal. Before joining HKA, Leanne was the founding Middle School Principal at Copenhagen International School, held leadership positions at the American School of Warsaw and Juanita/Futures High School in Seattle, Washington in the United States. In 2009, she was named National Distinguished Principal by the Office of Overseas Schools (US) and National Association of Elementary School Principals (US). She is active in professional organizations around the world and is expert in curriculum development, student assessment and the use of technology in the

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A self-styled ‘stand-up educationalist’, Dave shows how laughter and humour can improve achievement for all learners. With his contagious humour, energy, experience and performance skills, he has informed, empowered, and entertained audiences from all backgrounds, encouraging them to reach their full potentials. Having trained at The London Academy of Music And Dramatic Art, Dave continues to work extensively in theatre, film and television. His credits include Downton Abbey, Eastenders, and Coronation Street and his most recent book is *The Little Book of Laughter*.

LAURA MITCHELL

Laura has served as HKA’s Director of Institutional Advancement since 2013 and has been involved with HKA since 2007. Throughout her two decades in the fields of communications, advancement and strategic planning, she’s worked for several organizations, including the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. Laura is active with the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) as a presenter and a committee member and serves on the board of the Vesper Society, a foundation that promotes social justice

through health care and community-building. She holds a BA in Economics from Pomona College and PhD in History from Yale University.

CARLA NAGEL

Carla is Hong Kong Academy’s Primary School Counsellor. She has worked in education for nearly 20 years. Her areas of expertise include children’s social and emotional development and the incorporation of pro-active resources and curriculums in education. She also provides support services, resources and strategies to students and families. Carla studied Psychology in Bath, U.K. Education in Wales, and counselling and therapies at Monash University, Australia.

KRISTEL SOLOMON-SALEEM

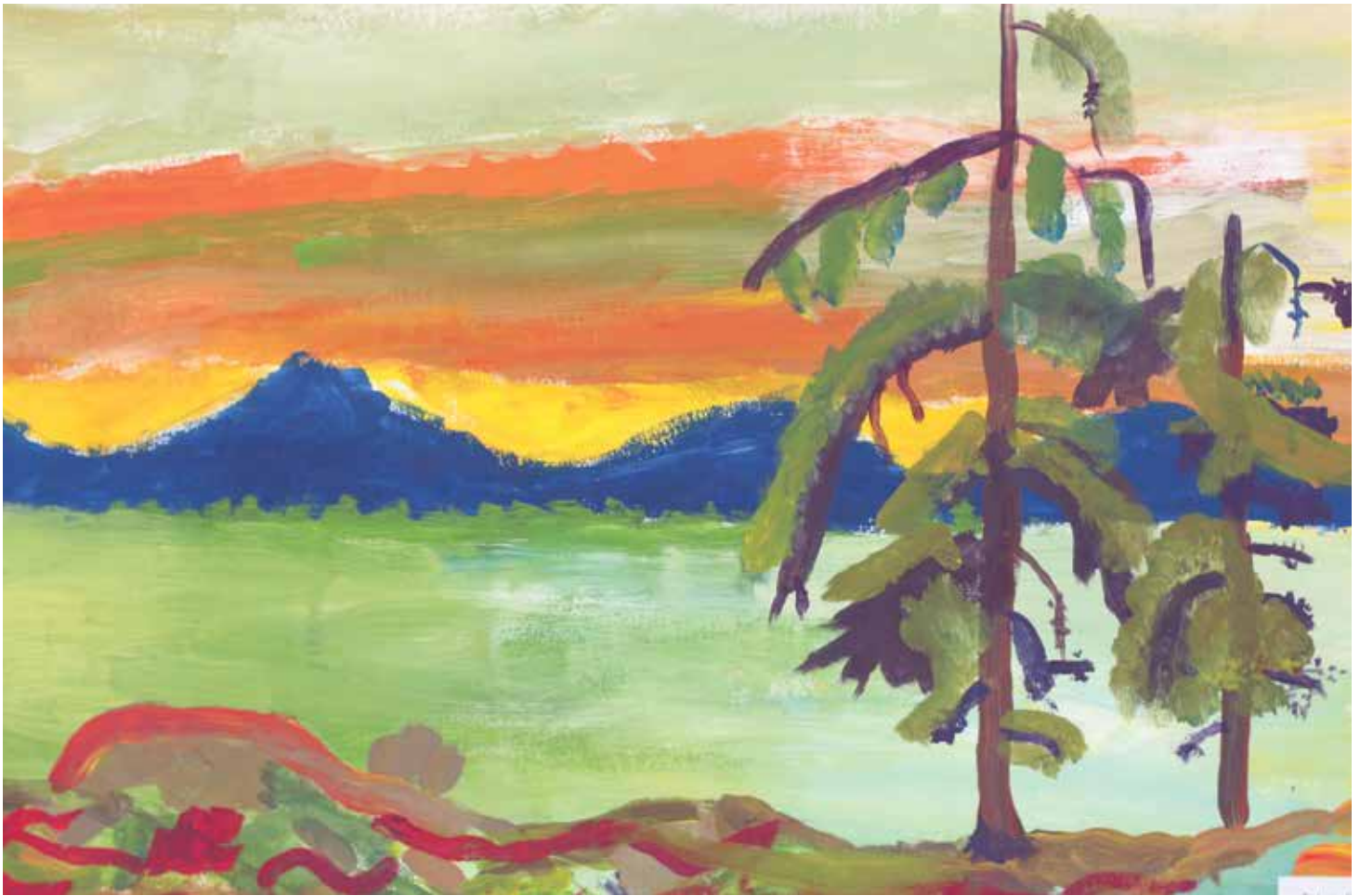
Kristel is HKA’s Learner Support Director. Now in her 6th year at HKA, Kristel has provided key leadership for the Learner Support Programme and vision for the Sai Kung campus’s innovative LS facilities. As an active participant in The Next Frontier Inclusion organization, she coordinated NFI’s Fall 2015 conference at HKA.

ANGELA REILLY

Angela is the Assistant Director of Institutional Advancement (Admissions and Enrolment) at HKA. Since joining the school in 2013, she has implemented an online admissions process, increased enrolment and improved retention. Angela has worked in UK and International schools in various capacities for over 15 years. She is passionate about Learning Support, having most recently overseen the Learning Support Programme at the International School of Manila, and is a regular presenter on the challenges of admissions and inclusion at international leadership conferences.

ANDREW PEARCE, MAIA SOBEJANA AND HILARY LAU

Secondary School Students Hilary Lau ‘16, Andrew Pearce ‘17 and Maia Sobejana ‘16 share their thoughts about their parents as partners in their education.



ARTWORK: Landscape painting created by Early Childhood student Tatum, Kindergarten.

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hkaVoices

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Hong Kong Academy is an IB World School for students ages 3 to 18. Offering a rigorous and inclusive education, HKA challenges all students to reach their potential and prepares them for life in a dynamic and diverse world.



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PARENTS as PARTNERS

BY STEPHEN DARE

To build shared vision, unity of purpose and coherent action is a considerable ongoing challenge for any large community and it is something for which we all bear a responsibility. The types of conversations we have and the ways in which we engage with one another define who we are and ultimately who we become. At HKA, we pride ourselves on being a community that seeks to develop a strong sense of shared identity about who we are, and we are equally thoughtful about the ways in which we build that identity.

Over the last few years, we have hosted numerous evenings with parents to understand what they perceive as Hong Kong Academy's strengths and challenges as we offer a rigorous and inclusive education. To facilitate these conversations, we posed three main questions:

What are the school's strengths?

What are the school's challenges?

Why did you choose HKA for your children?

These questions have prompted some lively dialogue and discussion among parents as they explored a wide variety of themes ranging from homework to service learning, from gifted and talented education to extended sports programmes. At the same time, common perceptions emerged about the HKA mission, especially the value and importance of our dynamic community of learners. Community feel was repeatedly identified as an ongoing strength, a reason for joining the school and potentially as an area of challenge as the school continues to evolve and grow in Sai Kung.

As we delved deeper to understand some of the contributing factors related to our strong community culture, many observations, anecdotes and stories focused on people, relationships, transparency, communication and the role these factors play in building and maintaining high levels of trust. From these meetings, it was clear that we all value maintaining a strong sense of community, but we also recognise that ensuring that everyone feels valued requires even more effort and intentionality in a period of rapid change. During one particular evening, much time was devoted to thinking about parents as partners and the opportunities for collaboration to further nurture this strong sense of community.

Will Ryan, author of *Leadership with a Moral Purpose*, writes eloquently about the importance of turning schools *inside out*, by which he means making the inner workings of schools completely transparent. He identifies a five point progressive scale to develop

the best partnerships between home and school from *good to even better* to the *best*, all of which were touched upon during our community conversations. Ryan proposes that in good schools, there is an apparent free flow of communication between school and parents. Even better schools use a wide range of parent volunteers, have education programmes for parents, and involve parents in the decision-making process. The best schools ensure that all parents are engaged as full and active partners in their child's education. It makes sense that the more we can collaborate as a community to establish effective partnerships, the greater the likelihood that we will promote a healthy learning culture for students and provide them with the tools necessary to value learning throughout their lives.

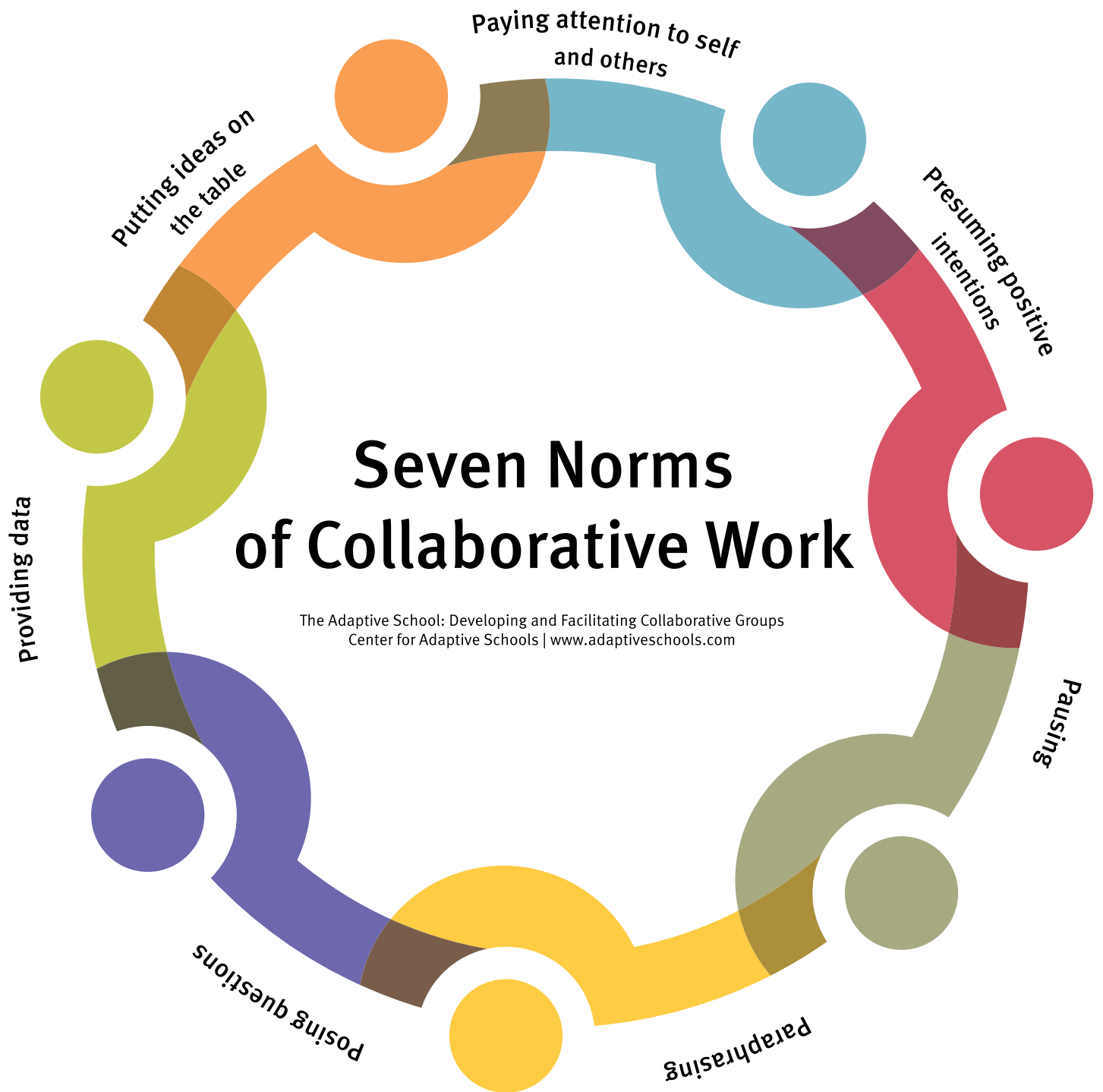
So how can we increase the likelihood that free flowing communication and broader engagement by parents is embedded in our decision-making processes? For much of this academic year, the faculty and staff have been actively engaged with *The Seven Norms of Collaborative Work* developed by the Center for Adaptive Schools. The norms include Pausing, Paraphrasing, Posing Questions, Putting Ideas on the Table, Providing Data, Paying Attention to Self and Others, and Presuming Positive Intentions. These norms have featured prominently in our conversations this year to help us better define who we are as an organization as well as who we want to become moving forward. For those of you not familiar with these norms, they are characterised as:

PAUSING: Pausing before responding or asking a question allows time for thinking and enhances conversations and actions.

PARAPHRASING: Using a paraphrase starter that is comfortable for you — “So...” or “As you are...” or “You’re thinking...” — and following the starter with an efficient paraphrase assists members of the group in hearing and understanding one another as they converse and make decisions.

POSING QUESTIONS: Two intentions of posing questions are to explore and to specify thinking. Questions may be posed to explore perceptions, assumptions, and interpretations, and to invite others to inquire into their thinking.

PUTTING IDEAS ON THE TABLE: Ideas are the heart of meaningful dialogue and discussion. Label the intention of your comments. For example: “Here is one idea...” or “One thought I have is...” or “Here is a possible approach...” or “Another consideration might be...”.




PROVIDING DATA: Providing data, both qualitative and quantitative, in a variety of forms supports group members in constructing shared understanding from their work. Data have no meaning beyond that which we make of them; shared meaning develops from collaboratively exploring, analyzing, and interpreting data.

PAYING ATTENTION TO SELF AND OTHERS: Meaningful conversations are facilitated when each person in the conversation is conscious of self and of others and is aware of what (s)he is saying, and how (s)he is speaking, and how others are responding.

PRESUMING POSITIVE INTENTIONS: Assuming that others' intentions are positive promotes and facilitates meaningful dialogue and discussion and prevents unintentional put-downs.

These norms are not solely strategies for educators, as they offer the whole community a common approach to all our communication, whether it's one-to-one conversations, a group dialogue and discussion, parent-teacher conferences, curriculum evenings, Board meetings, event planning conversations, book clubs or any other activity that brings the community together around a common purpose. These norms provide opportunities for attendees to build strong partnerships and a shared vision. They are essential skills for high-performing organizations and provide us with a common framework that can help groups develop shared meaning and gracefully reach decisions. Ultimately, these norms of collaboration can help us embrace effective working relationships and strengthen the partnership between home and school. As such, they help us fulfil our commitment to developing a dynamic community of learners.

A snail with a brown shell and a blueish-grey body is pushing a large, dark, round object up a grassy hill. The snail is positioned in the lower left, and the object is in the upper right. The background is a cloudy sky.

Let's Get

Grittier

BY LEANNE DUNLAP

How can we best prepare our students to thrive and be successful? This question is at the heart of what every educator attempts to answer on a daily basis. Academic preparation, while important, is only part of what students need to succeed in life. Carol Dweck's *Mindsets*, Daniel Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence* and Howard Gardner's *Personal Intelligences* all reflect the fact that our attitudes are even more important than our skills.

As educators we want to instill a love of learning in our students, help them see multiple perspectives, be global citizens and good people. Every teacher values student effort and responsibility. However, an essential quality that is crucial in achieving success and happiness in the real world is *grit*.

University of Pennsylvania psychologist Angela Duckworth defines *grit* as "a child's perseverance and passion for long-term goals." Grit, she says, is a better indicator of future earnings and happiness than either IQ or talent. Angela Duckworth and her team, through extensive research, have proven that the common denominator among spelling bee finalists, successful West Point cadets, salespeople and teachers who not only stick with, but also improve in their performance, is *grit*.

Grit is a mixture of nature (children are born with a certain amount) and nurture (environmental factors, home, school) as children mature. This means that we can help children develop the characteristics that make up grit: persistence, resilience, curiosity, conscientiousness, self-confidence and self-control. To put it simply, if we want students to become grittier they need to have learning experiences that help them develop grit.

To do this effectively, we need to provide students with opportunities to develop the skills and experiences that will allow them to persevere, to work through challenges, take risks and build their confidence and control. This means we also need to change how we (students included) think about failure. Stanford Psychologist Carol Dweck, author of *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* writes: "... People who have a growth mindset ... view struggle or failure as a natural part of the learning process and an opportunity to improve."

Too often failure is seen as something that shouldn't or must not happen, or that failure should be avoided, that it is better to quit than fail. We need to shift the paradigm and instead view failure as an opportunity for students to receive feedback on their strengths as well as their areas of improvement with the purpose of getting better. When re-framed as a positive, constructive, and essential part of learning, failure can be the best teacher.

To place an emphasis on developing grit in the classroom is to fully embrace the notion that a fundamental goal of education is to create students who are able to respond to challenges and setbacks. We cannot solely wait for these opportunities to materialize organically for each student; rather, they need to be planned for, deliberate and ongoing. Planning for problem-based learning where students must show persistence, resilience, curiosity, conscientiousness, self-confidence and self-control is crucial.



Secondary School Design students working in the design studio workshop.

Our Design class in the Secondary School exemplifies problem-based learning and provides students with multiple opportunities to develop the characteristics that make up grit. The focus is on the process rather than the final products and solutions. In Design, students are asked to solve a design problem through the creation of solutions, testing and evaluation. In essence, students are given permission to fail; there is an expectation of trial and error in the design cycle. Students are explicitly taught that their failures lead to better outcomes.

When students develop grit, they are open to learning because they believe that they can learn. They seek feedback and assistance because it is not a criticism of their abilities, it is the necessary information needed to improve. Students become comfortable with the idea that they will not necessarily understand concepts immediately because they see learning as a continual pursuit and they know that effort and motivation are key to their success.

There are easy things we can all do regularly to reinforce and provide students with opportunities to build grit:

- Regardless of how challenging a task is, help children manage it instead of quitting. Coach them through hard times, don't do it for them. Remind them that there is no time limit on success and that it is in their best interest to push through the challenge. There is no accomplishment greater.
- Remember that valuing speed and perfection can hinder difficult learning, so praise effort and work habits, not ability or grades.
- Learn with intention. Children shouldn't want to develop grit just to get better grades, they should want to develop it because it will make them successful people. Great working habits develop strength of mind and character which are more important than extrinsic motivation.
- Model the behaviors you want children to emulate. Be willing to take risks and fail in front of them and then model how to pick yourself up and dust yourself off and try again.
- Remind children that grit is not an innate ability; it is the heart of what it means to practice and persevere. Grit takes work. Remind them not to be afraid of work.

We need to provide opportunities for children to try and fail without anyone fixing it for them. It's okay to let them struggle. Learn how hard to push and when to lend a hand without enabling them.

In the end, we want to help students develop a growth mindset who know that they can develop their abilities through hard work and learning and who see failure as an inevitable result of trying new things.

Improv and the Art of Education

BY LAURA MITCHELL



HKA students, faculty and staff played games and laughed out loud last September when self-proclaimed

Stand-up Educationalist Dave Keeling spent a few days on campus sharing his knowledge, wisdom and humor. Dave travels the world talking to audiences of all sorts about how we learn, squeezing in acting gigs when he can. But while Dave initially trained as an actor — he’s a graduate of the prestigious London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA), his real passion is the brain: how it works, how we learn, and then what we do with what we learn.

Early in his career, Dave found himself, like many actors, looking for dependable employment. He got his first big break in education when he was approached to be a part of a new business venture that employed actors as role players for training exercises. Dave found himself in front of audiences at organisations as varied as the Thames Valley Police and Sotheby’s.

That experience launched him into a programme designed for adolescent boys who needed some extra help raising their self-confidence and their academic skills. Working with these kids, Dave drew on a theatrical technique called *forum theatre* which transforms spectators into *spectactors*. In forum theatre, participants act out different situations, play around with the action, try their hands at directing, and then act the scene out all over again — until they get it right. It’s a sort of rehearsal for success.

Watching kids learn through forum theatre prompted Dave to do his own research into how people learn and then develop his own techniques for engaging kids. In effect, he became a teacher. And these days, he is a teacher of teachers, asking them this key question: How many kids would come to your class if they didn’t have to?

Dave finds one response to that question in humor. Humor, it turns out, is a very serious matter grounded in the anatomy of the human brain. As Dave shared with HKA’s teachers, the human brain has the potential for more synaptic firings — or learnings — than there are atoms in the universe. Referencing the work of paediatric neurologist Andrew Curran, Dave explained that the connections our brains cells can make add up to a 1 followed by 10.5 million km of naughts. The potential in our heads is literally exponential. But what are the conditions necessary for leveraging all that capacity?

The answers to this question are, in some ways, common sense. We all know that we learn better when we’re relaxed and self-confident. To learn, we can’t be scared, either in our minds or with our bodies. We need a good flow of oxygen to the brain; it’s not a bad idea to tell ourselves to breathe. And when we’re at ease, we can explore the world with the unfettered curiosity that we often associate with young children, but which most people lose as they get older.

Contemporary research on the brain, especially endorphins and dopamine, explain this common sense in more technical terms. Happy chemicals, like endorphins, encourage us to engage and aid our ability to remember. The chemical dopamine is released in anticipation of

an action; it gives us a kick start to put our minds in gear for an exciting, positive learning experience. In both cases, these chemicals create emotional contexts that support learning. And educators, Dave championed, have the power to shape those emotional contexts for students. As teachers, they are engaged in nothing less than the anatomical and physiological sculpting of minds.

Which is where humor, more specifically improv, comes into the equation. As Dave showed everyone at HKA, improv is a brilliant springboard for exploration that promotes curiosity. While making us laugh, releasing all those good chemicals, improv embraces change, flexibility, adaptability and versatility. It’s always positive. The first rule of improv, Dave noted, is to say “yes”. The second rule is to say “yes, and ...,” not “yes, but ...”. “Yes, but ...” stops the conversation dead in its tracks; “yes, and ...” opens doors of infinite possibility. It’s childlike — not childish — and is fundamentally supportive of lifelong learning.

Dave closed his presentation to teachers with a quotation from another famous teacher, Socrates. Socrates advised that “life and learning should be a festival of the mind.” At HKA, when we talk about pathways to individual excellence, when we focus on a meaningful understanding of rigor, and when we champion inclusion, we are, in effect, relishing in the festival of the mind. And as Dave reminded us, one of the loudest sounds at that festival should be laughter.

CAMP

A Right of Passage

BY CARLA NAGEL

Camp ... The date is fast approaching! The camp leaders have presented to the children, parents and teachers about what is to come. The extensive shopping trip to get the recommended equipment has been ticked off the list. The packing begins, and there is a realisation that the children are entering into a new area of development and independence. As students pack their own bags in readiness for their time away from home, they begin to experience a journey of self-discovery and a sense of purpose.

At camp, children are presented with an array of new experiences and challenges ranging from taking on new responsibilities, trying different foods, using different levels of communication, participating in risk-taking activities and being away from home. They may have encountered these experiences before, but usually not at the same time, and often in a much more controlled environmental setting. Camp is the time when these experiences are concentrated and condensed into one unforgettable adventure.

This unique experiential learning engages students in critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making outside the classroom context. Camp offers students the opportunity to consolidate and reflect upon ideas and skills, apply them to new situations, and make connections that are personally relevant to them. Each new context and new experience on camp helps children to grow in so many areas that other everyday learning does not always provide.

Communication is an essential component of camp that strengthens bonds, builds trust and develops healthy and positive relationships. It is a chance to discover new connections through what the children have in common as well as by celebrating and accepting their differences. Friendships and positive interactions during camp encourage growth and confidence. There is a sense of openness as well as safety and assurance for students to be creative and innovative. Altogether the camping experience impacts and reinforces the identity and strength of the school community.

Camp is also an important opportunity for children to be able to face challenges and strengthen their resilience. As in life, it is inevitable that during camp, they will face difficult experiences. Camp is a great place to embrace the sense of discomfort or stress that comes with any challenge and allows students to face those challenges within a safe, caring environment. Through supportive encouragement and reassurance, children can plan independently to take steps, apply strategies, adapt and reflect. This positively impacts their self-identity and self-esteem, where they can build on their strengths and abilities and feel they have a sense of purpose, worth and value. "I faced it. I overcame it. I feel so proud of myself."

And lastly, and most importantly, are the shared experiences combined with the essential ingredient of laughter that creates memories which last a lifetime!



It is a chance to discover new connections through what the children have in common as well as by celebrating and accepting their differences.



Grade 4 camp gained experience sailing and kayaking on the water and hiking and camping while on land this autumn. Grade 5 stayed in yurts on Lamma Island and experienced rock climbing, hiking and team building activities.



Admissions: *Not*

BY ANGELA REILLY



Nothing about admissions is an exact science. Sometimes we know a lot about the families who are coming to visit and sometimes we only know their family names. Once they're on campus, we can determine some aspects of their experience, but not everything. Because admissions tours at HKA are not a 'horse and pony' show, we rarely have rigidly scheduled large group tours. They are usually 1:1 and happen at any time of the day, on any day of the week. Depending on the time of the day, we may see an Assembly when we walk into the theatre, or sometimes we get a surprise. Sometimes we're lucky enough to walk in on a Pre K music lesson; other times we have the excitement of watching Grade 9 students in the midst of a science experiment. On occasion, we show prospective families empty classrooms. Regardless of what a prospective family sees on our beautiful campus, however, one thing remains the same: the warm welcome those families receive from the students, faculty, staff and families that we encounter across the school.

From the moment that our interested families enter the school and are greeted by the irrepressible David, Eddie or Johnson to when they are handing their badges back to the ever-efficient Ave, they are greeted by smiles and welcomes. I am always confident that our students will smile and say hi, that they will engage happily when we talk to them and that, above all, they will show how happy they are in school. We even have the occasional shout out of "Come to HKA, this is the best school" or something similar in Secondary School when we have other young people on the tour. That's a fair reflection of HKA's personality, and we know that if an interested family accept this enthusiasm

an Exact Science

with a smile, then we are probably the right fit for their family. Similarly, our Primary students can always be counted upon to answer any questions about what they are learning or ask an inquiring question such as, “Are you coming to our school?” or “Have you read this book before?”



And I’m always glad to walk prospective families through the HKA cafe, which is usually buzzing with friends catching up. This shows our community spirit without our having to say a word. I have yet to meet a parent who is not happy to stop and chat, and thanks to all of you who have allowed yourselves to be bombarded with questions about any topic from the school itself to opinions about the best local gymnastic club in Hong Kong. Similarly, teachers are happy to have visitors walk into their classes with us unannounced and always try to make time to answer any specific questions that parents may have. We always try to share out the visits between classrooms, but some of our specialists receive more than their fair share of visitors as we show off our gorgeous music rooms or art space. But they always manage a smile!

Admissions Officers in every school often talk about the ‘risk’ of having prospective families touring the school during class crossover time or at dismissal, as these are times when a school may appear to be at “its most chaotic.” But dismissal is also a time when you get a real insight into how the students treat each other, how the parents relate to the teachers, and how a school approaches student safety. At HKA we know that dismissal time tours are not ideal due to the noise and sheer number of people, but we also know that if we do have visitors on campus during this time, we can always be proud: of our afterschool activities that students are running off to, of the way that Primary School dismissal is managed quickly and safely, and of the way that our older students interact with each other and our community of parents, helpers and older siblings who wait cheerfully to collect students at the end of the day. Sometimes seeing a community at its most chaotic is seeing it at its most honest, and there is nothing to hide here at HKA.

Admissions is ultimately about being genuine. HKA is a great school, but it is not the right school for every family. By being transparent on tours, allowing prospective parents to visit all areas of campus at anytime of the school day, and through answering questions as openly and honestly as we can, we help parents make an informed decision about whether HKA is the right fit for their family.

As much as admissions is about saying “this is who we are,” it’s also about being honest about who we are not. We are a school that strives to provide a rigorous, diverse and inclusive international education. We are not a school that values only academic achievement above all

else. We are a school that seeks to provide pathways to individual excellence. We are not a school that places all emphasis on one qualification option. One size does not fit all.

Admissions at HKA is also about remembering that “it’s not about the building”. We are very lucky to have such a wonderful campus in beautiful Sai Kung, but it is the learning and teaching, the mission and the community, that help families make the right decision about joining Hong Kong Academy.



If you are reading this as a teacher, staff member, parent or student, then the Admissions team thanks you for always making our visitors welcome and for embodying our school mission. If you are reading this as a prospective parent or student, welcome to Hong Kong Academy — ask us anything!

SPORTS @ HKA

BY AARON COOK

HKA students had only been back at school for two days this August when the sporting season got underway. Right from the start, SCISAC soccer/football trials were held with over 50 students from Grade 6 to 8 vying for spots on the team to travel to Nanjing, China in November 2015. The volleyball season started with HKA entering a record 5 teams in the ISSFHK local league, and the cross country runners and swimmers were tearing up the trails, track and pool.

Season 1 Sports made for an exciting first term at HKA. The school hosted the ACAMIS Volleyball Tournament in late October with schools from Shenzhen, Beijing,

Macau, Hangzhou and Dalian fielding both boys and girls teams over 3 days of fierce competition. Our ACAMIS girls volleyball team won the tournament for the third straight year, overcoming a very determined International School of Macau. The girls backed this up four days later by winning the Division 2 U20 Girls ISSFHK Volleyball league. Our U14 boys and girls finished 2nd and 3rd respectively on their Division 1 ISSFHK leagues. HKA cross country runners represented the school at the ISSFHK Hong Kong Championships on Lantau island. With over 80 runners in each division, all students competed brilliantly on the day. Special mention must go to the following



ACAMIS U20 Girls Volleyball Team.



HKA Cross Country team.

ACAMIS VOLLEYBALL

Boys 4th place

Girls 1st place

SCISAC FOOTBALL/SOCCER

Boys 4th place

Girls 2nd place

ISSFHK VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE

U20 Boys 4th place

U20 Girls 1st place

U14 Boys 2nd place

U14 Girls 4th place

U14 Div 2 Girls 5th place

runners for finishing in the top 15 in their age group: Jasmine Coffeng - 10th, U12 Girls; Gabe Hunt - 12th, U14 boys; and Clara Oscarson - 13th, U14 girls.

As the student population increases, so too do the number of children participating in HKA sporting teams. With Season 2 Sports now underway, we have over 140 Secondary School students playing for HKA in at least one sport or more. For the first time, HKA is being represented by both an U12 boys and girls basketball team. This compliments the existing U14 and U20 boys and girls basketball teams, reflecting the enormous growth of the school and the sporting programme.

The school's Weekend Sports Programme, initiated and run by parents, has also grown from strength to strength. These parent-led and parent-supported training sessions are fun, effective and great for team-building! In the Weekend Sports Programme, we see HKA's long tradition of parent support for the school combined with sport and with our fantastic new campus. The sporting results above can easily be connected to the hard work that the parents put in week-in, week-out to help develop students across a variety of ages and sports.

NFI

Update

BY KRISTEL SOLOMON-SALEEM

On November 1-3rd, Hong Kong Academy hosted the Next Frontier Inclusion (NFI) Conversation for the second time. This year, HKA and NFI reached out specifically to other international schools in and around Hong Kong and Southern China to further a growing network of schools that are committed to inclusion. Over 120 participants, representing 26 International Schools from Hong Kong and an additional 13 international schools from around the world, gathered at HKA for the 2½ day event.



Schools in attendance came together with the common purpose of discussing their pathways to becoming more inclusive. Teachers and administrators discussed the moral imperative of teaching students with diverse

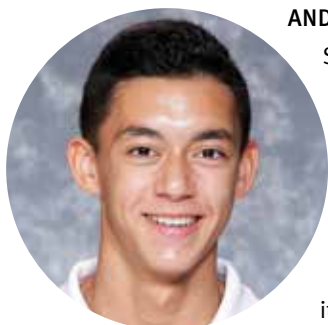
learning styles in a mutually beneficial learning environment. They pondered together the sometimes difficult but always rewarding work of finding the balance between identifying and naming challenges and meeting those challenges with opportunities. And they shared strategies for making their schools more inclusive.

All of these themes came to life in the inspiring and encouraging student and parent panel discussions. HKA students spoke of the value of understanding themselves as learners as well as the acceptance and support they feel from their teachers. Parents conveyed the benefits of their child(ren) being part of an inclusive learning community and for the authentic experiences that will inevitably prepare them for the world around them.

Over 30 faculty and administrators from Hong Kong Academy presented or facilitated discussions over the course of the event. HKA, as a lead learning school, offered its experiences with those gathered, articulated steps to establishing a culture of inclusion, and facilitated a conversation around the common aspiration of ensuring that students experience success. Although each school that attended has its own unique culture and ethos, everyone came together to share stories and resources. The NFI conversations established connections that transformed thinking about what is truly possible in an international school.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT =

HKA Voices asked three Secondary School students to reflect on the role their parents play as partners in their education. The students talk about the importance of their parents in their lives and how their parents' roles have changed over time.



ANDREW PEARCE, GRADE 11

Since coming to Hong Kong Academy last school year, I've really gotten used to the feel of the school and I've made a lot of new friends! I lived in the US (Virginia) for about 6 years prior and in Malaysia for 8 years before that, although I was originally born in the States. Moving to Hong Kong wasn't an incredibly hard transition for me, as the school is very dynamic and open to new people, and the small student body makes for a friendly environment. It's only been a year, but time has flown since coming to HKA.

When I first came to HKA from a different system in the US, I was unfamiliar with the IB and how prestigious it is. I had a bit of a rough time getting used to the new curriculum, as the learning I was used to (AP and standards of learning) was much more content-heavy and focused less on how the information all connects. This is where my parents came in — going to the grade level diploma pathway nights at school and talking with them about the benefits of an IB diploma helped me make my decision to do the full IB! When it came to choosing subjects for the IB, my parents were very open to what subjects I wanted to take and supported me in the choices I made. Since I'm graduating from HKA in 2017, I've already talked to my parents about colleges and universities I am considering and looking into. I'm leaning more towards the US for tertiary education, but wherever I decide on, I'm thankful to know that my parents will support my decision if I believe it's the right one for me.

Going back to when I was struggling last year, my parents were always there for moral support and made sure that I didn't freak out too much about deadlines and the amount of work I had. They weren't too caught up in my school life, but checked up on how I was going about with my work and if I was managing my time. This year, it's been relatively the same so far. However, when I was younger, my parents were much more involved with my school life and activities. When I lived in Malaysia 8 years ago, my mom volunteered to supervise primary school events and was happy to help! My parents had to check up more on my school work then and would sometimes help me with basic homework.

With all this being said, I think my parents have played an important role when it comes to my school life and being on board with what I have going on. Without their guidance, I doubt I would be where I am academically and independently now! I couldn't be more grateful than I am now that they'll have my back when the IB starts to sink in.



MAIA SOBEJANA, GRADE 12

I have been at Hong Kong Academy for 2 years now. I love it here! Everyone's been so nice and welcoming. HKA has always given me so many great opportunities; be it with sports or academics. The fact that I will be graduating from HKA in 2016 has made me really sad. It's quite unbelievable how much I have grown to love HKA because I didn't always see HKA in that positive manner.

After being born and raised in Singapore for 15 years, leaving that place was tough. I had to leave all my friends behind, and the thought of being in a totally different environment terrified me. Although I made many new friends during the first few weeks of school, I always felt homesick. On a daily basis, I would hope for a miracle to happen so that I could get to go back to Singapore again. Consequently, my reluctance to stay in Hong Kong started to show through my attitude at home. I was always complaining about the slightest things and was always locking myself in my room.

Looking back at that now, I am so grateful for the patience and support my parents gave me during that rough time of mine. Everyday, despite my complaints, they did all they could to help me transition well. They encouraged me to talk about interesting things that happened in school, pushed me to join sports teams,

gratitude

supported me in my academics and always reminded me that the move to Hong Kong opened up many opportunities. After about half a year of being at HKA, I found that I was much happier and I settled in much better than I did when I started school. I interacted more with my classmates and I started to join groups in school.

In Grade 12, I am focused on the rigorous IB program and the long process of applying to universities. My parents have played a very significant role in providing me with information about universities and university life. Their input regarding universities was really meaningful to me because, at the beginning of grade 11, I honestly thought I would not end up choosing a university. My mind was all over the place! First, I thought of applying to the US, then Australia, then the UK or even Germany. Again, with the patient and calm minds of my parents, they guided me through the process slowly. Over the summer break, my dad helped organise a trip to visit schools in Germany and in The Netherlands to help me get a feel for the environment. That really helped when it came to narrowing down my school options. Finally, after much deliberation with my parents, I have decided to apply to schools in Europe: The Netherlands, Germany and the UK.

I can say that without the patience and support of my parents, I don't think I would be the person I am today. I know that parents can sometimes get on your nerves but trust me, in most occasions, they are the only people you can really count on for help and moral support. So with that being said, thank you Mom and Dad! I really do appreciate everything you do for me!

HILARY LAU, GRADE 12

Whether it be moral support, wise (and sometimes nagging) parental advice, or simply financial aid, my parents have never failed to put their hearts and souls into providing me with the unconditional support that has shaped me to become the person I am today. As a kid, I took this for granted. Although I have already spent almost 7 years at HKA and 9 years in Hong Kong, I still remember the confusion I experienced each time my parents made a major decision for me like it was yesterday. I was confused about why we were suddenly moving to Hong Kong and leaving my sister behind in Vancouver, a place I had never left in my entire life. And when it finally felt like I had settled in Hong Kong, I was confused at why I had to move to HKA and leave the new friends that I felt like I had only just met. However, now that I am soon moving onto the next chapter of my life as an HKA graduate of 2016, I realize that I would not be able to pursue my future aspirations and ambitions past high school life, had it not been for my parents' wise decisions and hard work.

Although I consider myself to be an independent and strong-willed individual, often deciding things for myself, I still believe that parents play an essential role in providing the advice that we students need regardless of how resolute we are about decisions, big or small. Thankfully, the close-knit community at HKA has not made it difficult for parents to be involved in this aspect, especially academically. This is especially the case for me since my mom works at the school. It is nice to have someone who understands things that are going on at school, and not having to do much explaining back at home when it comes to things such as big school events, school assessments, or even school gossip. Although not every student's parents work at the school, I feel as though HKA does a great job of informing all parents about everything that goes on at HKA, making it easy for them to develop closer relationships with their own children, other parents as well as the teachers and staff. This is evident in events such as the teacher appreciation lunch and Cultural Food Festival which are all organized by the parents.

Needless to say, the roles of parents should never be overlooked. As for myself, I couldn't be more grateful for everything that my parents have done for me!



Looking back...going forward

BY AARON FRANCIS, CLASS OF 2014



Aaron Francis, during his Senior year at HKA in 2014.

The reality of Hong Kong Academy was different from my initial perception as I stepped on the first of many steps in 2007. Can a school have this many stairs? Was it usual for a school in Hong Kong to only have two floors? Why weren't the pupils wearing a shirt and blazer? To say I was suspicious was an understatement. However, what HKA lacked in aesthetics, it more than made up for in terms of atmosphere. I remember a feeling of strange and happy bewilderment as I met the Head of School and the Middle/High School Principal, Dr. Andy and Dr. Merris. They were so nice! They made me feel welcome and a part of a community that was going to grow and keep on going.

The school was part of an expanding project with the students at the core. Throughout my 7 years from Grade 6 to Grade 12, from the different teachers and school sites, HKA always maintained a healthy and encouraging community, a characteristic that is not prominent in most schools and very underestimated. The teachers at HKA didn't need to encourage one to learn because they fostered an atmosphere that made one want to learn. They pushed me to get the most out of myself and above all to enjoy my learning. Learning was no longer a chore, but a way to further one's self.

Without certain teachers at HKA, I would never have discovered my love for history and politics, a subject I now study in Durham University in England. University is a much more independent environment. There are no teachers inquiring why you were late. It requires a lot of self-motivation to attend classes when you know the lecturer doesn't care if you show up or not. Thankfully, I attended most of my classes and I believe the International Baccalaureate was excellent in preparing me for this new independent learning.

Over the summer of 2015 I returned to HKA to work as an intern for the Summer Learning Programme. Here I was able to develop skills that will be crucial for the work place. This included communication, time management and above all, creativity. I was given tasks which ranged from interacting with and teaching the children who took part in the programme to creating posters which advertised our events. The six weeks I worked at HKA were definitely tiring and stressful at times, but a fulfilling experience.

BEHIND THE SCENES HEROES

HKA TECH TEAM

INTERVIEWED BY EMMY & ABRAHAM, GRADE 5



LEFT TO RIGHT: Kenneth Leung, Eric Leung, Emmy G5, Abraham G5, Marco Mo, Kit Chow, Damir Domazet.

The guys in the tech department are some of the hidden heroes of HKA: Damir, Eric, Kenneth, Kit and Marco. What they do at HKA is a bit of everything. They help students, make sure all the technology in the school is working and a lot more! Recently we interviewed them, and what we found out is really interesting. For example did you know that almost all of the tech department are amazing at basketball?

How long have you been working at HKA?

Damir has been working at HKA for a few months, however, Eric has been working at our school for four years.

Is this your dream job?

Marco: "When I was young like you I always wanted to work with computers."

Kenneth: "Yes, I have a really nice boss!"

When a student asks you a question you don't know the answer to do you ever get stressed?

Damir: "For example, like now ... hehe. Yes, if I don't have the answer or if they come in large numbers, then yes."

Eric: "Not really. I have been doing this for 8-9 years, so I'm used to it."

What is the hardest part of your job?

Damir: "We need to evolve with the technology."

Kenneth: "Technology changes everyday, we need to always be improving."

Kit: "If something goes wrong during the performance even when the rehearsal is smooth."

Imagine you still worked at HKA, but in a different job, what would it be?

Eric: "Basketball player, but the people are quite tall."

Marco: "Basketball coach."

Kenneth: "Theatre manager."

Kit: "No one can replace me!"

What is your favourite sport?

Eric: "Basketball, I play every single Saturday."

Damir, Marco and Kenneth all like soccer, but Kit likes basketball like Eric.

What is your favourite animal?

Damir likes dragons and elephants, but all the rest like dogs!

What is your favourite holiday?

Christmas was popular with Damir, Eric and Marco. Kit likes Lunar New Year and Kenneth likes Easter.

When you were a child, were you good at technology?

Damir: "I would open all the toys to see how they worked, usually they were my brother's."

Eric: "No, really bad. I deleted something and I broke the computer and my dad told me not to play on the computer again."

Marco and Kenneth just played games as kids and Kit said he wasn't very good, but became a fast learner.

When was the first time you used technology?

Marco was the youngest of them to use technology when he was in 6th grade. Kit got his first computer at the age of 12, and Damir used technology for the first time when he was 15 years old.

When did you realise you wanted to work with technology?

Damir: "When I was 24, I got my first computer and I started taking it apart and I realised that it was good for me."

Eric: "When I was working in the Apple Repair Centre."

Kenneth: "When I started working at HKA."

Kit: "When I was 15."

Marco: "After Secondary School, I went to school to learn more about computers."

Thank you for your time and everything that you do!

Happenings

LOOKING BACK

19 AUGUST
First Day of School

21 AUGUST
Welcome Back Coffee Morning
and Grade 12 Retreat

24 SEPTEMBER
PS: Mid-Autumn Festival Celebrations



PS Students enjoyed a variety of activities.

**SS: Council of International Schools
University Fair**



Grade 9 students talk to universities and colleges as they explore their future educational pathways.

29-30 SEPTEMBER
SS: Noa Rotem Visiting Artist
Noa Rotem returned to HKA as a visiting artist to work with drama students.

6-9 OCTOBER
Grade 5 Camp



Grade 5 students enjoyed time at the beach, hiking and rock climbing during their 4 days and 3 nights on Lamma Island.

7-9 OCTOBER
Grade 4 Camp



Water sports and wilderness were the focus of Grade 4 camp. Students acquired new skills while working together.



9 OCTOBER
Autumn Coffee House



29-31 OCTOBER
ACAMIS Volleyball Tournament at HKA



Everyone played hard during the competition with the UG20 girls team taking 1st place.

30 OCTOBER
PS: Casual Dress Day



1-3 NOVEMBER
Next Frontier Inclusion
Conference hosted at HKA



HKA hosted its second NFI conference with over 35 schools in attendance to discuss how international schools can become more inclusive.

4 NOVEMBER
ISSFHK Hong Kong Cross Country
Championships



HKA runners competed well in a field with over 80 students in each age division.

6-7 NOVEMBER
Rock the Park - Movie Night



Rock the Park: HKA kicked off its first ever Annual Fund Campaign with two movie nights attended by approximately 300 students and parents, putting the fun in fundraising. Donations to this year's Annual Fund will support the school's future Adventure Park challenge course, which is being designed for all ages.

9-11 NOVEMBER

SS: IB TAPS in Thailand

Grade 11 & 12 drama students travelled to Thailand to expand their knowledge base for performing on stage.

19 NOVEMBER

SCISAC Soccer Tournament in Nanjing, China



20 NOVEMBER

Hot Cocoa House



28 NOVEMBER

Community Fair



The Community Fair celebrated the diversity of HKA families and provided a fabulous day with activities for everyone and wonderful food from around the globe.

1 DECEMBER

2015 2nd Annual Golf Tournament



48 players swung into action to support the HKA Annual Fund.

5-6 DECEMBER

SS Play: Alice in Wonderland



The student-led production of Alice in Wonderland provided opportunities for leadership, collaboration and teamwork. Smiles, a sense of accomplishment, and of course a tea party were all a part of this production.

11-12 DECEMBER



SS: Winter Socials

From glow-in-the-dark-paint to games to moves on the dance floor, the winter social was a night to remember.



4-5 FEBRUARY

HKA Sports Days

LOOKING FORWARD

29 FEBRUARY-4 MARCH

SS: Learning Outside the Classroom

9-10 MARCH

PS: Grade 3 Camp

18 MARCH

SS: Coffeehouse

8 APRIL

Grade 12 Art Exhibition

11 APRIL

CASE Schools Conference

14 APRIL

ACAMIS Soccer Tournament

23 APRIL

HK Schools Debate and Public Speaking Champ. Tournament and G9-12 Spring Social

28-29 APRIL

Grade 4 Play

5 MAY

SCISAC Basketball Tournament

10 MAY

Parent Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

11-13 MAY

Grade 5 Exhibition

20 MAY

GRADE 6-8 Spring Social

21 MAY Rocktail Party

25 MAY

SS: Senior Brunch

26 MAY

PS: Art Exhibition Opening

27 MAY

Hot Cocoa House

2 JUNE

Graduation, Class of 2016

8 JUNE

Renaissance Festival & G10 Arts Exhibition

15 JUNE

Last day of School

Risk-Takers

“I like to keep going, face my fears
and never give up!” — Dewi, Grade 5



Inquirers | Knowledgeable | Thinkers | Communicators | Principled | Open-Minded | Caring | Risk-takers | Balanced | Reflective

RISK-TAKERS We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.