

# PTA Newsletter 2021/22 Term 1

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## Teachers Appreciation



Our IMS community came together for two events, one in September and the other in October, to appreciate our teachers.

### Heart Wall

In September, Mr. Broomfield championed our first ever HEART WALL for our IMS teachers. What is more is that Mr. Broomfield, Ms. Dafne and Mr. Bill kept the project a secret from the teachers and created a great reveal on a Friday morning on September 17th! From Monday to Thursday during the third week of September, Elementary children wrote messages of thanks to their teachers during lunch time on paper hearts. At home, Casa and Elementary families also made hearts and wrote messages of appreciation to their teachers.



Students secretly dropped off their homemade heart cards at school in a special box by the front gate so the teachers would not know about the special surprise.



On Friday September 17th, Mr. Broomfield revealed the great HEART WALL! Teachers were blown away and so were students! Casa students were asking if "it was all the teachers' birthday today". ❤️  
In true IMS spirit, the lovely heart cards thanked teachers for their love, care, patience, humor as well as supporting children's interests and curiosities.



A special thank you to our IMS families for participating in this beautiful project and a huge thank you too to our Class Parents who helped innovate, problem solve and lead this effort as well!

## PTA Annual Teacher Appreciation

On October 7th, the six members on the PTA committee organized the PTA's annual teacher appreciation day on behalf of all families in our IMS community.



The PTA arranged custom designed cookies with the IMS logo together with a Starbucks gift card for each teacher and staff member to enjoy. They organized the distribution of these gifts across all four campuses, demonstrating our community's sincere appreciation and gratefulness for all our teachers and administrators do for us. Thank you so much to the PTA Committee - Reema, Simon, Casey, Yan, Yihan and Xing!

Thank you all for helping make IMS the special, appreciative and supportive community that it is today.



## Mid-Autumn Festival



The Mid-Autumn festival is a Chinese celebration traditionally observed to mark the end of the Autumn Harvest. It takes place each year on the 15th day of the eighth month of the Chinese calendar. This year the festival took place on September 21st which coincided with the Community Chest's Dress Casual Day, a charitable initiative that IMS has supported for the past 13 years. To celebrate both occasions, Elementary students dressed casual while Casa dei Bambini and Foundation children wore traditional Chinese clothing to school.

During the days leading up to Mid-Autumn, children in Foundation and Casa dei Bambini were busy creating decorative paper lanterns and learning about the Moon Festival through stories, poems, and songs. They were introduced to festive foods usually eaten to celebrate the day – such as mooncake, starfruit, water chestnut, pomelo, persimmon, taro, and golden pear – and activities to do together with family and friends like going for a walk with lanterns while admiring the full moon.

Elementary school children were able to be more involved in the festivities – making IMS branded mooncakes, paper lanterns, and Chinese calligraphy pieces to take home to share with their families. In class, they were given the opportunity to appreciate popular traditional pastimes like Chinese chess, shadow puppetry, and lantern riddles. The children were also introduced to the legend of Chang'e and Hou Yi, a tale about a wife who steals the elixir of immortality from her archer husband and becomes the Goddess of the Moon – leading to a day of worship of the moon and what is known as the Moon or Mid-Autumn Festival today.



## Amazing Race



On November 13, 2021, against a backdrop of beautiful blue skies and sunshine, the IMS community gathered in Stanley to compete in the PTA Amazing Race. With an enthusiastic turnout of more than 400 people in 110 teams, the outdoor area at the Stanley campus was buzzing with excitement as parents, teachers and children chatted, played, snacked and socialized.

At 9 o'clock sharp, teams set out to complete missions and gather clues all around Stanley, as they all tried to get the most points in the least amount of time. Challenges included building a sandcastle at Stanley Back Beach, having the largest team member go down a slide and finding ferry times from Po Toi despite ear-splitting construction noise! Special thanks to Cheryl Blanco, who created the wonderful collection of neighborhood clues, tasks and puzzles that were fun for both adults and children alike!



As teams completed the race, volunteers worked hard onsite to immediately tabulate the scores. All the volunteers' time and efforts were also apparent in thoughtful details like race packs with snacks for each person, and 20th Anniversary participation medals.



The winning team for this year's PTA Amazing Race was Axolotl: Teddy (Parent), Cooper (Tigris), Adriana (Europe) and Nash (Tulip). The team that raised the most money was Furious Phoenix: Parents Ada and JK, and their children Ember (Nile) and Deckan (Peninsula). Congratulations Axolotl and Furious Phoenix!



Prior to the announcement of the winners, it was lovely to have one of our founders, Anne Sawyer join us and say a few words about IMS' 20th Anniversary year. She recalled the last IMS Amazing Race, which was held in Spring of 2007, at the temporary campus in Morrison Hill. In her words, the 2021 race "has many of the same roots - the wonderful IMS community, the beautiful Hong Kong sunshine, and Cheryl helping the PTA to organise the fun! What's different is that celebrating being together in a permanent home at Stanley is just sheer "wonderful". It's so good to be spending time with each other in the sunshine!"

Thank you to all that participated! In the end, the amount raised from the race was over \$91,000 and the PTA generously decided to double-match that amount for a total of \$300,000 donated to the school.

A huge thank you to Rakhi Punjabi (Amazing Race Chair) and as well as Reema, Simon and the rest of the PTA for all the work put into making the event a success. The PTA Amazing Race was a fantastic event that brought the community together and everyone is looking forward to it again next year.

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# Open Day



Stanley campus was bustling on Saturday, October 23rd. With 741 attendees for our school's first in-person Open Day since 2019, the event showcased the strength of the Montessori curriculum and the passion of our community.



In attendance were current and prospective families. All attendees were required to check-in and register their information due to Covid restrictions, but once they were in, attendees were invited to explore classrooms, speak with teachers and meet IMS parents. Additionally, there were three very

interesting discussions about Entrepreneurship & Other 21st Century Skills, Montessori Parenting, and Cracking the Chinese Puzzle at IMS.

One current parent, Duan Mengyun, shares her view on Montessori and technology after speaking with IMS teachers and attending the talks in Chinese during Open Day:

蒙特梭利作為一個於1900年代誕生，傳承至今的教育模式，像一個精神矍鑠的老人，眼見雲卷雲舒，滄桑變遷，同時代的朋友一一作古，自己卻仍然在蓬勃發展。

但作為一個旁觀了人類社會發展進程長達百年的教育方式，蒙特梭利總難被人詬病老舊。尤其是在一個“STEM要從娃娃抓起的”理念甚囂塵上的資訊科技年代，不接受電子產品而執著於具象教具的蒙特梭利看似有些過時。在時代的迷思與熱炒的概念背後，蒙特梭利究竟能否幫我們的孩子保持優質的競爭力，在這個社會上獲得自己體面的一席之地？答案是顯而易見的。



不同於以往工業時代，沒有大型機械和實實在在的原料，我們今天的資訊科技中重要一環就是將抽象的資訊轉化成實實在在的產品，反之亦然，從具象的產品中提煉概念，造就重要資訊，進而轉化成生產力，STEM中的機器人編程就是一個例子。在資訊時代，抽象的概念與具象事物之間的轉化是必要的思維技能。

蒙特梭利教育重視建立具象認識和抽象概念之間的聯繫，在這一方面，其百年積累的經驗造就了其無可比擬的優勢。比如將數學這個抽象學科的概念恰當地與具象物體連結在一起，不僅可以幫助孩子們更紮實地理解相關概念，也幫助他們了解如何將抽象概念轉化為形象世界中實際存在的物體並讓人理解。如果可以從幼兒時期就熟悉並掌握這個理念，對於未來全面理解資訊科技時代的各種抽象產品或者概念也會產生助力作用。

綜上所述，自1900誕生，經歷了無數優秀人才參與發展壯大的蒙特梭利教學思路，在今時今日的社會實踐中依然可以被譽為優秀的與時俱進的幼兒基礎教育理念。



## Alumnus Interview



Left: Lily Graham in 2013 during her first year at IMS Photo

Right: Lily Graham now, with her sister, Heidi Graham, currently in Tigris class

We sat down with IMS alumnus Lily Graham who moved to Hong Kong from Australia eight years ago. Lily started her IMS journey in 2013 as a Lower Elementary student at the former Tin Hau Campus. A few months later the new Stanley campus opened where Lily graduated after completing grade 6 of the Upper Elementary program in 2018.

Hey Lily! Thanks for sitting down with us to share some of your memories from your time spent at IMS. We'd love to know what you've been up to since!

**With five years at IMS you must have had many different teachers. Do you remember any teacher in particular?**

I had a lot of amazing teachers at IMS but two of the most memorable, that I spent a lot of time with, were my Upper Elementary classroom teacher Mr. John and my Chinese teacher Ms. Joy.

**When you think back to your time at IMS, what are some of your fondest memories?**

The talent shows, school camps and after-school sports with Mr. Bill were always great fun. For camp we used to go and stay on one of the islands where we spent some nights in tents, going on night walks into the jungle.

**Do you remember a challenging project that you had to tackle? What was the outcome?**

Some of the most challenging but enjoyable projects were the CAS projects in Upper Elementary. One year, my friends and I organized the bake sale and for two years in a row we organized the school dance. It took a lot of collaboration among the group but the outcome was an enjoyable time for students at IMS and we raised a lot of money for charity.

**Sounds like you worked on some very rewarding projects which must have also really strengthened the bond between you and your class peers. Are you still in touch with some of your friends from that time?**

Yes, I am! Most of us are at different schools but we remain close as we spent so much time together at IMS where we met at the Stanley campus.

**After graduating from IMS, three years ago, you moved on to CDNIS (Canadian International School of Hong Kong). How did your transition go? Was there something that your experience at IMS taught you that really helped ease into your new school?**

My transition to CDNIS went quite smoothly as it was the first year of Middle School for everyone and I was joined by a lot of other newcomers. I felt like I fit right in. One of the biggest attributes that IMS gave me was being able to manage my own time independently and getting my work done. Even though the curriculum at CDNIS felt quite different, managing my homework or extracurricular school activities at the new school came easy to me and this helped me to feel integrated quickly.

**What are you enjoying most about your current school life at CDNIS?**

I started High School this year so students are given more freedom to choose subjects that we are truly passionate about. I chose Art, Business and Coding. I am really enjoying having a wider range of subjects!

**Tell me a bit about yourself. What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

At the moment, most of my free time is consumed with sport and dance but both are things that I enjoy tremendously and never find as a burden. It allows me to spend time with my friends, while exercising. I was about nine years old when I started to really pursue dance. I mostly do ballet but also contemporary, jazz and acro.

**For people reading this who might be new to Hong Kong, can you share a tip on a great place to eat or visit?**

My favourite place to grab food is Be-Juiced in Central. They make the most delicious, cold açai bowls, perfect for the warmer months of the year.

**Thinking of the future, what's in store for you? Do you already know what you'd like to do after finishing school?**

To be honest, I am not quite sure what I am going to do after graduation. This year, we are taking career studies which is helping us figure out which possible direction we'd like to take after graduating. For now, I've been leaning toward universities in either Australia or Europe with a focus on marketing and design or dance.

**And lastly, thinking back, what advice would you give your younger self, and what's your message for current students who are still on their IMS journey?**

When I was at IMS I tended to worry a lot about my future ability to transition and fit into middle/high school as I saw that friends at other schools had to deal with a full workload of homework every day and seemed to cover much more content. Looking back, after having transitioned so smoothly into my new school, I realised that IMS had been teaching me the crucial skills to become a good learner and that mattered most. If I had to give one piece of advice to current IMS students, it would be to treasure every moment that you don't receive excessive amounts of homework. Enjoy that you are given so much time to pursue your interests and have fun with your friends while receiving a great education!

Lily, thank you so much for walking down memory lane with us and sharing your current news. Wishing you all the best for your future endeavours - keep us posted!

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## Getting to Know Our Founders



When asked what she likes about Hong Kong, Karin, born and bred in Hong Kong, said “I love the language, the culture and the sense of Hong Kong Identity. I am truly a Hong Kong girl.” Her father is originally from Shanghai and her mother is Swiss and she went through the local Hong Kong schooling system. Prior to starting IMS Karin worked in consulting and finance, and started studying Education in her evenings as the idea of starting a school germinated in her. She loves languages and has also learnt German, Japanese and French. Karin loves music, she plays the piano and sings. She loves going to pop concerts but of course this has been curbed by Covid. A fun fact is that she played the piano for the first few years of the IMS winter performance.

Anne was born in Hawaii and grew up living in different places across the world because her father was a doctor in the US army. Her father is an inspiration to her and her greatest mentor, he always maintained that there are no limits to what you can do with your life. "I have lived in Hawaii, Washington DC, Germany, Washington State, London and Hong Kong" she says but it is Hong Kong where she has finally found her roots and has lived for the past 25 years. When asked what she loves about Hong Kong, Anne says "everything" with great enthusiasm. "I love the water, the sea, the mountains, the weather, the city. To me it is all beautiful." Anne is passionate about family, singing, hiking, being part of her church and sharing goodwill with others.



During her childhood, Anne had attended thirteen different schools in the US, the UK, and in Europe, including a Montessori Elementary programme in Germany. In retrospect it was this Montessori experience that changed the way she thought and learned. She found the Montessori learning experience more integrated. Through that two-year experience in an Upper Elementary classroom Anne had a moment of self-actualisation: she realized that she could make a difference. And as a young mother working in Hong Kong in business development, she decided that she wanted this type of experience for her own children, and so made the career change to education.

So what was it that brought these two women with very different life experiences together? It was a goal and vision that they had both been cultivating before they met. They had both wanted to start a school so a common friend introduced them to each other. Anne's kids were in a local Cantonese-speaking kindergarten and she was surrounded by a group of parents looking for a proper bilingual Chinese and English primary school. Whilst there are now many bilingual schools in Hong Kong, there were very few at that time. Karin's upbringing was also unusual for her time in that while she is fluent in Chinese, most of her Eurasian peers would just speak English. Being bilingual was the greatest gift from her parents, and one that she wanted to pass on to other children.

Thus a partnership was born to create a space for a quality Chinese and English education. For Chinese, they decided to use traditional characters because these are the characters the children see in their immediate environment in Hong Kong, an important part of Montessori integration in the local environment. The complex characters also enable children to see the radicals and the origins of the characters. This is similar to how the "Five Great Stories" in Montessori schooling explain through the story of numbers and the story of writing how the alphabet and numbers came through various formations to represent our mathematical and linguistic systems today. Chinese Montessori materials did not exist then, so these had to be developed and created by weaving the Montessori approaches into developing and co-creating special Montessori Chinese materials with dedicated staff.

When Karin and Anne were starting IMS, they researched different curriculum systems including the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Montessori. A friend was involved in starting the Hong Kong Academy at that time which gave the founders insight into the IB system. The founders noticed how homework and the pressures of schooling were taking away the intrinsic motivation and joy of learning for many children, in both the local and international systems. Montessori, on the other hand, was all about developing children's self-discipline and adaptability, and came with compelling science and history to its efficacy. They therefore decided to start an authentic Montessori School based on the original association founded by Maria Montessori herself, and opened the first IMS campus in 2002 on Queen's Road East (next to Pacific Place III which was still

being built then). From those early days, the founders set about educating parents about the Montessori method and haven't stopped since. Anne's enthusiasm for the Montessori method shines through.

What are the threads that run through their endeavours and bind the two of them together? Investing in people and the community and valuing different cultures. For Karin, she holds dear Chinese culture while Anne is the keeper of the Montessori flame. Together they have created a unique bilingual educational institution in Hong Kong with the IMS community at its heart.

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# Open Day



You may have seen on the school's Facebook site that our very own Tigris class interviewed Mr. Adam Broomfield, Head of Stanley Campus. See the interesting things they learned about him in this document that they put together and designed themselves!

**Meeting our Community**  
**Interview with Adam Broomfield**

**INTERVIEW**

- 1 How long have you been working for IMS?  
*"This is my 8th year."*
- 2 Did you ever think you'd become a principal?  
*"Yes, I did. I wanted to be a principal for a lot of years"*
- 3 How many postcards do you have?  
*"I would have hundreds if I kept them but I just can't keep them all so I tend to keep the ones from the present year and when I clean my office I dump them."*
- 4 How many countries have you been to?  
*"I've been to a lot, but I don't think I have been to as many as other people. I would say around 30 or 40."*
- 5 What is your favourite sport?  
*"Aussie rules football and cricket"*
- 6 What is your favourite football team?  
*"The Melbourne Demons."*
- 7 How long have you been in Hong Kong?  
*"8 years"*

## Library Volunteers



IMS relies on its parent volunteers to run libraries across all its campuses. This year witnessed enthusiastic participation with over 200 volunteers signing up across various campuses. The program follows a flexible schedule. Volunteers have the option to commit in hourly increments across multiple days during school hours. Library volunteers may help in checking in/out books, shelving, organising collection or reading to students.



If you are interested in volunteering please contact the relevant campuses, Stanley - [pta-library.st@ims.edu.hk](mailto:pta-library.st@ims.edu.hk), Mid-levels- [pta-library.ml@ims.edu.hk](mailto:pta-library.ml@ims.edu.hk) and South Horizons- [pta-library.sh@ims.edu.hk](mailto:pta-library.sh@ims.edu.hk).

Michelle Ng has two children enrolled in the IMS program. She has been a volunteer over the last 9 years across Tin Hau, South Horizons and Stanley libraries.

**Why did you volunteer?**

I was eager to know more about the school, meet other parents and get involved in the school community. The program is very flexible - you can volunteer as often as your schedule allows, even if you only have one hour per month.

**How has your experience been so far?**

I enjoy observing first-hand how children interact with each other and with their teachers. It is fascinating to see the growth of Casa children in their reading journey. Most start off not knowing how to read. Over time they become our little readers in the Casa library, reading to other younger children.

**What was your children's reaction to seeing you in school?**

My children are always excited to see me in the school library. When they were in their Casa years, they would proudly announce to their teachers the day that I was helping in the library. They would ask me to read to them their favourite books. It was a very precious bonding time for us.

They are as excited to see me in their Elementary years, as they know I can help them borrow five more books as a benefit of being a parent volunteer!

**How do you spend most of your time in the library?**

There are always various tasks to keep us volunteers busy. I help with checking in and out books, shelving books, wrapping new books and help children find the books.

Sometimes I help Ms Coco with the library decorations, birthday book program, as well as the annual library inventory exercise.

In South Horizon's Casa library, I read English and Chinese books to the younger children. Many of our parent volunteers are multi-lingual and can read to the children in Japanese, Korean, Spanish, etc.

**What are some of the popular book requests for reading?**

Casa students are fond of The Magic School Bus series, The Berenstain Bears series, Oxford Reading Tree readers, and those related to dinosaurs and animals.

Elementary children are more independent and read by themselves. They are always working on a multitude of research topics and I help them find the books relevant to their research.

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## Four Seasons Exclusive Offer



Check out this Exclusive Festive Staycation Privilege at Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong

There's no better time than now to make the best of the year-end and extend the Christmas festivity. Be pampered with Four Seasons festive goodies, fun kids activities, and mouth-watering dishes at our Festive Buffet with your holiday staycation in our reimagined new rooms. Keep the celebratory spirit alive with family and friends this holiday season at Four Seasons. Reserve your holiday staycation before 6 December, 2021 to enjoy 10% savings on our 'Let the Holidays Begin' and 'Festive Staycation' room packages. For details, kindly refer to the [attached flyer](#).

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# Zubin Christmas Crackers



## **Bring Joy This Christmas with Zubin Crackers**

IMS is delighted to partner with The Zubin Foundation, a Hong Kong charity that works to improve the lives of Hong Kong's marginalised ethnic minorities by reducing suffering and providing opportunities.

## **What is a Christmas Cracker?**

It is a fun toy for the family during the holiday season. Watch this short video to learn more:

<https://youtu.be/-rcfWWt5Cjk>

## **Why should you buy the Zubin Crackers?**

Purchasing the Zubin Cracker is an easy way to support racial equality, sustainability and Hong Kong's ethnic minority community.

## **The Zubin Crackers are:**

1. Created by Hong Kong's diverse young people who underwent training to learn about business and sustainability from industry experts
2. Made in a social enterprise supporting the employment of ethnic minorities
3. Sold by partners across Hong Kong who support racial diversity and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

All proceeds go towards The Zubin Foundation's work for Hong Kong's marginalised ethnic minorities.

Click [here](#) or scan the below QR code to buy boxes of Zubin Crackers for your friends and family.



We promise it will be fun!

For more information, contact [zubinshop@zubinfoundation.org](mailto:zubinshop@zubinfoundation.org)

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## Looking For Newsletter Volunteers

Do you have a way with words and want to be more involved? The IMS PTA Newsletter team is looking for volunteers to help with writing and proofreading for the 2021-2022 school year! We appreciate any time you are able to contribute!

Please volunteer [here!](#)

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