



# ALUMNI NEWS

English Schools Foundation  
May 2016

Mother's Choice

Alia Eyres - South Island School

An Elephantine Problem

Carmel de Bedin - West Island School

The Bottom Line

Christopher Geary - Glenealy School, Bradbury School

Animal Awareness

Anne Chow - King George V School

Children at Play

Naqiya Ebrahim - Island School

Country Care

Sally Will - Sha Tin College

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for Community





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# FOREWORD

Welcome to the latest edition of the ESF Alumni News. As a KJS and KGV alumna, and communications officer at West Island School, I am extremely honoured to write the foreword for the May issue.



As I write this, I have just celebrated my birthday which included a dinner with my closest friends met in KGV. Inevitably, our conversations usually turn to our time at school and how much we miss 'the good old days'. More recently, we find ourselves also discussing the innate values that an ESF education bestows on its students. What we discovered was that students are not aware of what they have just been handed over until they have left their respective schools. It was not until many of us were baffled by a situation at university that we took heed and solace from our ESF education to find the best solution. Besides creating students who are able to go out in the world and hold their own, they also teach students to dream big and reach wide. ESF alumni are able to not only inspire students who are currently in school, but also inspire one another, too. When you see alumni work together and team up for a greater cause, you cannot help but feel proud about being part of the extended ESF alumni network.

As you read about the alumni who are featured in this month's edition, I am sure these traits will be evident.

"Strength from Diversity" is West Island School's motto and there is no truer statement to best describe the school's ethos. Since my time at West Island School, I have had the pleasure to meet a number of incredibly inspirational WIS alumni who are on their way to make a real difference around the world. Individually, they display qualities of leadership, respect for the world and dedicated passion for their craft. I believe these qualities truly embody the essence of the West Island students and all of ESF.

As we celebrate our 25th anniversary next year, we are excited to learn more about our alumni and their accomplishments over the years. We always look to connect with more alumni, thus, we have created a number of outlets which we believe will allow alumni to reunite. Our official West Island School Alumni Association (WISAA) Facebook page features up-to-date news on WIS alumni and their accomplishments around the world. Additionally, we have also set up an official WISAA LinkedIn group page. Here, alumni can connect with one another, and additionally indulge in various professional conversations.

I believe you will thoroughly enjoy reading this ESF Alumni News May issue and are inspired by these incredible alumni and their motivating stories.

Roshni Mulchandani  
Communications Officer  
West Island School

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Here is the thing about running a non-profit: it is a lot of work. Alia Eyres is as busy running Mother's Choice as she ever was as a corporate lawyer. "People think you're going to work at an NGO and there's better work/life balance, but it's a lot of hard work," says the South Island School alumna.

Luckily, Alia is familiar with hard work — and with Mother's Choice. Her parents and two of their friends founded the organisation in 1987 when they found out that hundreds of teenage girls were facing crisis pregnancies each month. The situation is still dire today: Hong Kong has thousands of young girls who become unexpectedly pregnant every year, many of them burdened by poor sexuality education, broken families and unstable living situations. Mother's Choice



Alia and her six siblings who all went to South Island School

offers a helping hand, no matter if they chose to self-parent, terminate their pregnancy or choose adoption for their child. "Everybody deserves a second chance," says Alia.

Alia was one of seven children born to Ranjan and Phyllis Marwah. She and all of her siblings studied at Bradbury School and South Island School. "It's unusual growing up in a multicultural, multiracial family, but we never felt alone because there was always somebody else like us," says Alia. The Marwah clan certainly did not pass unnoticed at school. "We were infamous," jokes Alia. "My parents couldn't handle parent-teacher day because there were just too many of us. They said, 'They would invite all the teachers to our house for dinner and just do it all at once.'"

Alia thinks back to those school days with fondness. "I had switched into Bradbury in Primary 3 and I was really quiet. I didn't have any confidence." The next year, her teacher, Linda Walker, chose Alia to perform in a school play. "She looked at me and said, 'You are going to be the lead in the play.' I couldn't even talk. But Ms Walker said to me, 'You can do it.' That totally changed my life. It gave me confidence that I didn't even know I had."



Alia in the school play at Bradbury School

Alia took that encouragement to heart. In 1997, she moved to the United States to study international relations at George Washington University, followed by a graduate degree in law at Georgetown University. That led her to a job at one of the world's largest law firms. Soon enough, though, she packed her bags and returned home to Hong Kong, encouraged by her husband, John, who had fallen in love with the city on his first visit in 2008.

Alia soon started volunteering at Mother's Choice. It was not her first time helping out. When she was younger, she used to take out the trash, haul bricks and work on many other vital but unenviable tasks in the three heritage buildings that house Mother's Choice. "It was mandatory volunteerism," says Alia with a laugh. "The whole family was involved." They still are: Alia says two of her brothers, both barristers, are her "number one volunteers."

In 2012, when Mother's Choice was looking for a new CEO, Alia realised that it could be her. "It was one of those lightbulb moments," she says. "People said I was crazy for leaving the world of being a corporate lawyer and coming to work at a non-profit, but actually having legal background has been so helpful to me. The law is our social infrastructure; it's how we relate to each other. I can understand how society works and how legal issues impact the girls we work with."

Ms Walker said to me, 'You can do it.' That totally changed my life. It gave me confidence that I didn't even know I had.

# Mother's Choice

South Island School graduate Alia Eyres follows in her family's footsteps by supporting young girls facing crisis pregnancy and children without families in Hong Kong.

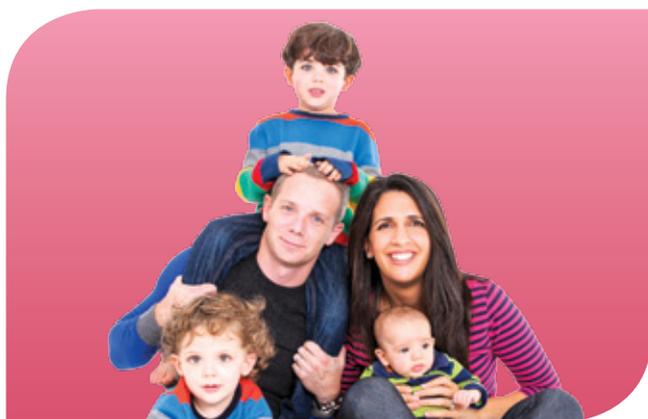
## Alia Eyres

2012-present	CEO, Mother's Choice
2009-2012	Corporate Lawyer, Hogan Lovells (Hong Kong)
2005-2007	Corporate Lawyer, Skadden, Arps (New York)
2005	Juris Doctor, Georgetown University
2001	Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs, George Washington University
1994	South Island School
1989	Bradbury School

The issues are certainly complex. Every year, there are an estimated 7,000 crisis pregnancies in Hong Kong. Babies are abandoned with alarming frequency, while many pregnant women seek to terminate their pregnancies using unlicensed practitioners. Some cannot, or do not want to, get permission from their parents, which is a requirement for children under the age of 16; while others are intimidated by the high cost of the procedure at Hong Kong hospitals. Some do not even realise they are pregnant until they have reached their third trimester, after which abortion is illegal in Hong Kong.

“The issue of children in adversity in Hong Kong is a huge problem,” says Alia. “One in four children in our city live in poverty. We have almost 4,000 children living in full-time institutionalised care with hundreds waiting for a place. The majority of children who go into institutionalised care wait years for a permanent family, and many age out of the system at 18 with no family to call their own. International research shows that children growing up without a family are more likely to have addiction issues, not graduate and be incarcerated. And if they’re girl, they’re astronomically more likely to get pregnant as a teenager and the cycle begins again.”

Mother’s Choice aims to help by providing safe and nurturing temporary care for children. Each year, the organisation’s Child Care Home houses 120 children temporarily, until they can join a “forever family,” as Alia’s mother like to call them. Pregnant girls are given support, advice and a safe place to stay if they are currently living in an unsafe environment. “We don’t want to see anyone left alone,” says Alia. The organisation provides non-judgmental support for girls, which means it tries not to push girls towards any particular outcome. “You can’t really make a teenager do anything,” says Alia. “What they need is someone to hold their hand and walk alongside with them.”



Alia and her family

“The great thing about ESF is the sense of family and community. I’m pushing 40 and I still have primary school teachers who write to me.”

Mother’s Choice also offers sexuality education classes to Hong Kong schools. Many schools have no dedicated sexuality education programme. “We don’t want to just intervene in a crisis, we want to prevent it,” says Alia. “The quality of sexuality education in Hong Kong is poor. Sometimes, parents and teachers haven’t been taught themselves. But it’s important not just in terms of understanding the biology but in terms of building decision-making and critical thinking skills, understanding what a healthy relationship should look like, as well as understanding your own self-worth and value.”

More than just sexuality education, what girls need is a supportive family. “Family means everything,” says Alia. “One of the major factors in a teenage girl getting pregnant is her relationship with parents, or even having parents. Every child needs a family and every family needs to be supported by the community.”

Alia often thinks back to her own childhood. “The great thing about ESF is the sense of family and community,” she says. “I’m pushing 40 and I still have primary school teachers who write to me.” Last summer, she received a letter from one of her old Year 6 teachers, Grant Anderson, who taught all of her siblings as well. “I hadn’t seen him in more than 30 years. It was his last week on the job and I had gone to speak at the Year 6 graduation at Bradbury,” she says. “He had saved photos of me from Bradbury and I got them in the mail last summer. I was grateful to know that these are the people who remember me.”

Alia and her husband now have three young boys: Paxton, Sheridan and Blake. She hopes that they will enjoy an upbringing as encouraging as her own, and the same for the girls and women who are served by Mother’s Choice. “It’s been totally life-changing working here,” she says. “Not just because there’s meaning and purpose, but because I feel this is my calling.” 

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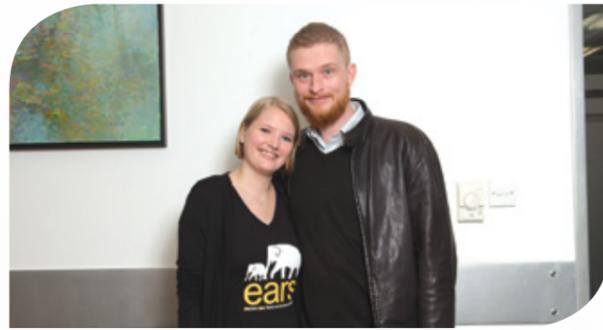


Carmel de Bedin rode her first elephant when she was 18. She had no idea she was participating in a system of abuse that has left thousands of elephants physically and mentally scarred for life. “I had no idea,” she says. “I try to avoid using the word ‘ignorant.’ Naïveté is what it boils down to. You just don’t necessarily think about it from the elephant’s perspective.”

These days, thinking about elephants is what Carmel does, as the director of EARS Asia — the Elephant Asia Rescue and Survival Foundation. “When I had eventually gone to the sanctuaries and saw these animals that had been rehabilitated but still had serious issues, I felt a huge guilt factor [for riding the elephant],” she says. But it is not just a personal quest for redemption: thanks to EARS, elephants across Southeast Asia now have a chance to escape a life of hardship, and tourists have a reliable guide to ethical elephant tourism. “It’s not just about one animal at one moment — elephants live as long as we do, and they make them work from the moment they can, right up until they die.”

It has been a long road from Carmel’s hometown in the south of England to her work as an advocate for elephants. She first came to Hong Kong with her family when she was 12 years old. She remembers walking around in awe of the city. “I loved every aspect of it.”

Carmel joined West Island School (WIS) in 1999, when she was known by her maiden name, Carmel Huber. “It



Carmel and her husband Gaetano, both of them are West Island School alumni

was such an enormous school compared to where I was from,” she says. “Things like getting used to different accents took time.” Even as a student, Carmel turned her eye towards humanitarian work, volunteering for Mother’s Choice, beach cleanups and teaching English in Po Leung Kuk halfway house.

Carmel went back to the UK in 2004 to study at the University of Liverpool and returned to Hong Kong after her studies. That was when she reconnected with Gaetano de Bedin, another West Island School graduate, who was working at his family’s law firm. “He didn’t remember me at all, but I remember him — he had bright green hair and was in a punk band,” she says, laughing. The two married last year.

When she first came back to Hong Kong, Carmel was working as a headhunter, but she eventually grew disillusioned with the way recruitment firms treat their

clients — “like a commodity,” she says. In 2010, she was at a Christmas fair when she came across an EARS booth staffed by the organisation’s founder, Louise Rogerson. She asked Louise to recommend an ethical animal-related holiday destination and she ended up visiting an elephant sanctuary, which inspired her to start volunteering for EARS. When the opportunity came to quit the corporate world, Carmel joined EARS.

The problems with elephants are clear cut, but not necessarily the solutions. In countries like Thailand,



Carmel’s school visits to ESF schools in 2013 and 2014

mother elephants are killed and their calves are taken and abused so that they become docile and compliant. “The way they achieve this is to crush the animal’s spirit,” says Carmel. The elephants are then used for tourist rides, circus stunts and hard labour in the forestry industry. Handlers known as mahouts use bullhooks (a sharp hook attached to a long stick) to prod the creatures, which causes them immense pain and leaves their bodies riddled with scars. As tourists become more aware of elephant abuse, some mahouts are replacing their bullhooks with nails which were hidden inside plastic bags.

What makes the situation tricky is that elephant welfare affects humans, too. Mahouts are not necessarily malicious — they are simply supporting their families in a profession that has existed for centuries. EARS works with mahouts to help them with the transition from exploitative camps to sanctuaries, where elephants can live happily and healthily. “They’ve already got a relationship, and it can be transformed into a positive relationship. If you bring the mahout with the animal and let them follow the more humane methods, it becomes a win-win situation,” says Carmel.

Carmel works on multiple fronts: fundraising, awareness, administration. “It’s a little bit of everything, but you have to do everything when you’re a small organisation,” she says. Fundraising is one of the easier parts of her job. “People here love a good party,” says Carmel. But it can be frustrating when some people do not get the message. “I still have friends who ride elephants,” she says. One of her friend had a baby elephant at her wedding. “That hurts,” says Carmel.

What makes it worthwhile is visiting schools and seeing how well the kids understand the issues. “They just get it,” says Carmel. “You show them a picture, explain the background and ask, ‘Will you ride an elephant?’ and it’s ‘No!’” Given how often Hongkongers travel to Southeast Asia for holiday, she is confident that her work can make a big impact. “Tourism is primarily the problem,” she says. “There are better ways to get to know an animal.” 

# An Elephantine Problem

West Island School graduate Carmel de Bedin is working to save Asia’s elephants from exploitation.

## Carmel de Bedin

2013-Present	Hong Kong Director, EARS Asia
2010-2014	Consultant, Atticus Legal Recruitment
2007-2009	Consultant, Hays
2007	Bachelor Degree in Egyptology, University of Liverpool
2004	West Island School

“If you bring the mahout with the animal and let them follow the more humane methods, it becomes a win-win situation.”

“We always try and have our businesses do good,” says Chris Geary, a young entrepreneur who studied at Glenealy School and Bradbury School. He does not mean that in a financial sense. Chris runs a coding school, jewellery academy and a financial tech startup, and his bottom line goes well beyond profit. When Chris runs a company, he wants it to make the world a better place.

Born to British parents living in Taipei, Chris and his family relocated to Hong Kong in 1988, when he was six years old. They spent the first several months living in the old Hong Kong Hilton, which was later demolished to make way for the Cheung Kong Center. He stayed in Hong Kong and attended ESF primary schools, and then he continued his studies in England until he finished his law degree.



Chris at Bradbury School

Chris quickly realized that he did not want to become a lawyer. “It’s a fantastic academic pursuit,” he says, but he wanted to challenge himself by choosing a more creative path. Before he graduated, he had already tried his hand at running a tennis business with a former professional coach.

Soon after, Chris launched his own recruitment business. During the financial crisis hit in 2008, Chris looked around and decided to relocate to Asia where he thinks the business environment is better than Europe. He picked Hong Kong and launched a fine jewellery company and a jewellery training school, named after his new wife, Natalie Melville; and also a studio.

“Jewellery shouldn’t cause anyone to suffer; it is not a necessity after all,” says Chris. Melville’s jewellery uses only gold that has been mined without heavy metals or destructive chemicals, and they make of point of tracing their gems back to the source. “Diamonds are very, very difficult,” he says, because of murky trade practices that make it nearly impossible to establish a diamond’s origin with certainty. Even so, Chris says they try their best to avoid any stones stained by conflict or bad mining practices.

Many businesses cannot strive for any social impact, so why make such an effort to go beyond the demands of the balance sheet? “When a business is tied into the community, it’s a stronger company,” says Chris. “People connect with the spirit of your company rather than just its financial goal.” It turned out that Chris’ companies have lower staff turnover, and stronger bonds between colleagues. “It’s not clock in, clock out.” Chris adds.

Some of that ethos stretches back to Chris’ own unusual life. In 2000, before his first year of university, Chris travelled to South America, where he spent two months working for an anti-drug organisation in Lima, Peru. It was a difficult situation. “For some families in Lima, if the kids don’t have anything to do, they don’t want to take care of them. They’ll give them drugs to shut them up,” says Chris. “It wasn’t so much about intervening and stop people from taking drugs, it was about giving them a reason not to.”

In 2009, two months before his marriage, Chris decided to run an ultramarathon in order to raise money for Room to Read, a South African charity that donates books to children in poor families. Chris trained by loading his

“People connect with the spirit of your company rather than just its financial goal.”

backpack with an Oxford English Dictionary — “the abridged one,” he notes — and running 30 miles around London. He enjoyed the experience so much that he wanted to run another ultramarathon shortly after, but Natalie put a stop to that. “It was only two weeks before our wedding,” says Chris.

To oversee all his charitable operations, Chris launched the FarGo Foundation, whose initiatives include RefuCoder and RefuGeek, two programmes that teach coding skills to Hong Kong’s asylum seekers, in order to improve their job prospects when they are resettled into other countries. “RefuCoder is a 50-hour programme, and after that, RefuGeek is more location-based, so

“We always try and have our businesses do good.”



# The Bottom Line

Chris Geary is not contented with running a profitable business — if he is going to make money, he wants to give back to the world, too.

## Christopher Geary

- 2011-present CEO, FarGo Foundation
- 2011-present CEO, YTS Investments
- 2004-2016 COO, Asianet Group
- 2004 LLB (Hons) in Law, Bristol University
- 1996 Harrow School
- 1992 Caldicott School
- 1990 Bradbury School
- 1988 Glenealy School



Murals from one of FarGo's initiatives - StreetPoppy

if we know where they are going to go, we can give them specific technology knowledge so they can get employed," says Chris. Its first graduate was 25-year-old Sri Lankan refugee Sivasuthan Somasundaram, who had never written code before taking the RefuGeek course. Sivasuthan now works as an IT systems engineer in the United States.

Another FarGo initiative is StreetPoppy, which offers kids at Sir Ellis Kadoorie School the opportunity to work together in order to paint murals. "We paint about 7 to 8 each year," says Chris. It is not just an artistic exercise: the students must plan their work schedule and order materials before they can get started. "They're doing project planning and design planning," he says. "They have to put their names on it, so that they can say, 'I own this and I'm proud of this.'"

Chris likes to approach things from an unexpected angle, and FarGo's fundraising efforts are no different. Instead of hosting gala dinners like many other non-profit organisations, FarGo raises money for charities by

staging a scavenger hunt in which participants scour the city for discretely placed QR codes. Chris hopes more organisations take inspiration from the way he runs such initiatives. "If people want to use it, they can use it," says Chris. Island School used FarGo's QR code system for its own treasure hunt. "They're open-source programmes," says Chris.

It all goes back to the philosophy that drives not just his business but his life: if you're going to do something, make sure it does some good. "Don't wait until you're a billionaire to try and benefit the community," he says. "If you want to do some good, you have to do it from the very beginning." 📍

“Don't wait until you're a billionaire to try and benefit the community. If you want to do some good, you have to do it from the very beginning.”





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When Anne Chow was a Year 11 student preparing for her GCSEs, she came across an abandoned kitten in the Tai Po village where she grew up. She took it home and cared for it while she studied for her exams. Things seemed to be going well until the kitten suddenly began panting. “It was bloated,” recalls Anne. The kitten died soon after. “At that point I realised, ‘I need to know what happened,’” she says.

Born in Canada, Anne moved with her family back to Hong Kong when she was just a few years old. Her village was filled with animals, especially strays that had been let go after guarding construction sites. Anne and her neighbours have been involved with rescuing these animals. “We just provided shelter for animals that didn’t have any,” she says.

Eventually, Anne discovered the kitten she had rescued had likely been suffering from feline infectious peritonitis, an illness common among stray cats. At the time, though, Anne had no idea why the kitten had died. The incident sparked a moment of clarity: Anne decided that she wanted to dedicate her life to helping animals. Her history teacher at King George V School (KGV) referred her to an animal clinic in Shatin. She began shadowing the vets during their shifts. “This is exactly what I want to do,” she thought.

Anne began working part-time after school, helping out wherever the clinic needed extra help. During CAS week, she worked at a riding club, which gave her a chance to



Anne (second right) participating in KGV CAS week in 2008

go horseback riding and learn more about horses. She did work placement at the Hong Kong Jockey Club, too. “I did anything that was animal related,” she says. “It was good that I knew what I wanted to do because I got started early with building up my work experience.”

Even with all of Anne’s teenage experience, veterinary school was a surprise. She moved to Nottingham for her studies and soon realised that treating animals involved more than just dogs and cats. “The farm side of it was quite a shock to the system,” she says. “It was my first

encounter with a cow.” She spent many cold days tending to livestock; she still remembers the first time she performed live surgery on a cow. “I was thinking, ‘I have half my arm in your body and you’re not reacting?’” she says, laughing.

Anne graduated and moved back to Hong Kong two years ago. She is now a veterinary surgeon at a clinic in Sai Ying Pun, where she treats “everything as simple as sneezing to something more complex, for example chronic heart disease and performs procedures that run from spaying and neutering to dental work, physiotherapy and rehabilitation. “There’s a lot of responsibility,” she says. “After you’re done with studying, you suddenly have to step into adult mode very quickly.”

Most of the animals Anne works with are cats, dogs and other small household pets, but it turns out the farm training she received at university was worthwhile, because she is sometimes called up to assist her boss at a cattle shelter where she treats cows and goats. “When it comes to animals, you look at the similarities rather than differences,” she says.



Anne nosing a cow in veterinary school

People are another matter. “Communication is a large part of being a vet,” she says. Her work requires her to be as much a counsellor as a veterinarian. Day in, day out, she comforts the owners of sick pets and deals with irate clients who do not realise that, unlike health care for humans, veterinary services are not subsidised by the government. “Every time you give them the bill they complain,” she says. “They want high quality care at a low price. Human on human contact is the toughest part of the job. It makes you very thick-skinned.”

Even worse, there are people who do not take care of their animals — and those who go out of their way to harm them. Thousands of animals have been deliberately poisoned in Hong Kong over the years, including a recent spate of cat and dog poisonings in Central. One of Anne’s rehabilitation patients is a paralysed husky that had been previously abused. “Some people just seem to have hatred towards animals,” she says. She chalks it up to irresponsibility and ignorance. “As Cesar Milan would say — there aren’t any bad dogs, there are only bad owners.”

When she is not working, Anne takes care of her own dogs, a 14-year-old Labrador Retriever and a tricolour rescued mongrel. Animals at home, animals at work — it is all part of Anne’s passion. “I just fell in love,” she says.

She hopes others can learn from her experience. Last November, she returned to KGV for a career fair, where she had her own booth and gave a 20-minute talk to Year 9 students who were interested in becoming a veterinarian. Since then, Anne has taken in student volunteers from KGV to shadow the veterinarians in her clinic. “I do think that it is important to provide students with exposure to their chosen career path as early as possible,” she says. “The only way to enjoy going to work everyday is to be doing something that you are passionate about. I have been very lucky that things turned out this way for me.” @

# Animal Awareness

KGV alumna Anne Chow turned her lifelong passion for animals into a career as a veterinary surgeon.

“I did anything that was animal related.”



## Anne Chow

2014-Present	Veterinary Surgeon, Biorecovery Veterinary Clinic
2013	Bachelor Degree in Veterinary Medicine and Science, University of Nottingham
2008	King George V School
2001	Kowloon Junior School

It started with a school play — or school plays, to be more precise, because Naqiya Ebrahim did not limit herself to just one turn on stage. “I was involved in a lot of plays. I put on plays at school, either with the support of drama teachers or friends,” says the Island School alumna. Those school productions turned out to be the seed for her career in theatre, but not just any kind of theatre. Naqiya now lives in London, where she helps at-risk children who struggle with school through performance.

“I know that I gained a lot from doing theatre at school. It gave me so much confidence, a confidence that I didn’t always have,” she says. “It gave me the ability to work in a team and express my creativity. I really wanted to be able to pass all of those skills on to others.”

Born in Hong Kong, Naqiya attended Glenealy School, before moving on to Island School. She remembers how engaged her teachers and fellow students were. “There were so many different activities to get involved in and the teachers were incredibly supportive,” she says. “Particularly after coming to the UK and hearing about other people’s school experiences, I knew I was really lucky.”

Naqiya performed in school plays, but she also writes and direct plays, which she found especially fulfilling. “When I was in Year 11, I had to devise and write my own play for my GCSE exam, which was something I really loved doing,” she says. “Today, with the work I do, that is an important aspect — giving children the ability to create their own work gives them a sense of ownership, which is very empowering.”

After she graduated from Island School in 2006, Naqiya went to University of Kent to study drama and theatre, followed by a year in San Diego before returning to Kent to finish her master’s. Her move towards



Naqiya’s workshop - Make a Play in a Week, pictured in August 2012

performance-based education began early; she worked on a summer theatre programme for young children in Hong Kong in 2008. Naqiya now works for three non-profit educational organisations, as well as the Croydon Borough Council. She runs drama, dance and visual art workshops for children, many of whom have trouble in conventional learning environments.

“I work with a lot of young people who haven’t been able to cope with mainstream education. Some have problems at home, some have learning disabilities, and for whatever reason, they can’t cope with the mainstream environment,” she says. “A lot of the work I do is teaching the school curriculum through theatre. For children who struggle with desk-based learning, it’s wonderful because they get to explore topics through theatre and dance. It allows them to open up and understand what’s going on because they’re moving and being kinesthetic. They’re not stuck behind a desk and totally unengaged.”

“I know that I gained a lot from doing theatre at school. It gave me so much confidence, a confidence that I didn’t always have.”

The effects can be remarkable. Naqiya is hired by other performance education organisations to evaluate their work, craft surveys and conduct interviews to see what kind of impact they have. “There’s something very freeing about performance that unlocks the creative energy in a young person. When they are being creative, the desire to misbehave escapes.” She says.

Naqiya’s parents are happy to see Naqiya using her passion for theatre for the good of others. “I’m sure they were surprised when I first said I’m going to study drama at university, but they have always been very supportive,” she says. “I think they are really thrilled that I’ve gone in the direction that I have gone.” That goes for Naqiya herself, too. “I cannot help but feel happy after the end of a long day, knowing that I have made someone else’s day a little bit more special.”

# Children at Play

Naqiya Ebrahim uses her talent for performance to help at-risk children find more fun in learning.

## Naqiya Ebrahim

- 2010 Master degree in Drama and Theatre Studies, specialising in Creative Producing, University of Kent
- 2009 Drama and Theatre Studies, University of California, San Diego
- 2006 Island School
- 2000 Glenealy School



Naqiya’s DanceDeco workshop

Sally Will knew early on that she wanted a career that would allow her to help people. “As a little kid I was best at empathising with people and talking,” she says. “One of the most valuable skills I have in my tool-kit is the ability to listen to what’s not being said.”

That is something that comes in handy in her role as a paediatric occupational therapist in the Scottish Borders, a vast rural region that stretches from the outskirts of Lanarkshire down to the borders of England. It’s a long way from Sha Tin College (STC), where Sally studied in the early 1990s, when she was still known by her birth name — Sally Lofthouse. Her dad is Dr Geoff Lofthouse, one of the longest serving teachers at STC. “At the time I attended STC, it was still quite a small school,” she recalls. “When I was in sixth form — there were only 30 or so of us.”

Sally loved English and home economics, and for a while she considered becoming a dietician. “But when I researched what the job entailed, I didn’t really fancy it,” she says. “Sha Tin College produced a lot of fantastic medical/law/accountant type people, really studious

brainy kids, but I wasn’t the most academic — I was a C-grade student who wasn’t quite sure what she wanted to do in life,” she says. Still, she knew her strengths were in relating and supporting others, so when she graduated from STC, she gained the sufficient grades to study on Sheffield Hallam University’s occupational therapy degree course, where she learned how to assess, manage and treat patients with severe physical and cognitive impairments. Following a two year probation period as a basic grade therapist, she was successfully offered a senior position and the opportunity to specialise in acute and community paediatrics.

“One of the most valuable skills I have in my tool-kit is the ability to listen to what’s not being said.”

Following 16 years with the National Health Service (NHS), Sally now works for the Scottish Borders’ regional government, driving back and forth between small towns and farms, advising families on how to adapt their living situations to meet their children’s complex needs.

Sally says people often seem confused by what a paediatric occupational therapist does. “Some people may think that occupational therapy is only for adults — children after all do not have occupations,” she says. “But a child’s main job is playing and learning. Occupational therapists evaluate children’s skills for playing, school performance, and daily activities to compare them with what is developmentally appropriate for that age group.”

Sally’s patients involves a wide range of complex difficulties including birth injuries such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, acquired spinal injury, autism and chromosomal abnormalities and complex traumatic injuries. “My caseload is large and ever increasing as medical care is now so effective at treating very sick children who otherwise would not survive from complex birth issues and trauma, but this can often result in severe cognitive and physical disability,” she says.



Sally and her family

Sally’s work addresses a spectrum of needs, and she has developed specialist skills to identify and develop motor skill; and prescribes specialist equipment such as wheelchairs, supportive seating and complex moving and handling equipment to ensure children with severe impairments have the opportunity to learn and participate in daily tasks such as bathing, getting dressed, brushing teeth and feeding themselves.

As the professional lead for paediatric housing adaptations, Sally not only works with individual families and architects to make major physical adaptations to

# Country Care

Sally Will is putting her empathy to good use as an occupational therapist for children in Scotland.



## Sally Will

- 2016-present Paediatric Occupational Therapist, Scottish Borders Council
- 1999-2015 Paediatric Occupational Therapist, National Health Service, Scotland
- 1999 BSc (hons) Degree in Occupational Therapy, Sheffield Hallam University
- 1996 Sha Tin College

improve the child's living situation, but also with planning department to ensure newly built properties fits for the disabled and that the housing stock is sufficient for the local population.

It is a big task, one made even bigger by the fact that Sally is the only occupational therapist employed by the council to assess and adapt housing and equipment in the Scottish Borders, she says. "I can travel up to two hours for one visit. It's rolling green fields, farmland, dirt tracks, and many people who are off the grid, a 4x4 is essential!"



Sally and her children

Treating family is just as important as treating children. "Parents are usually in a state of distress, they're anxious, they're frightened," says Sally. "When I first meet a child, I recognise that parents have usually had a very difficult personal journey before they reach my clinic room, they have usually seen many medical professionals and often have been given very difficult and discouraging opinions about their children's prognosis and likely abilities. It is so important to remember that no family ever anticipates that their child could be born with a serious disability, and no parent ever anticipates or expects that their child could have a life changing traumatic injury. As an occupational therapist, when I see a child on the ward or at home, I am always mindful that the parents are experiencing their own grief and coping with a massive change in their own circumstances."

Helping families through these situations is what Sally finds most meaningful about her work. "The most positive aspect of my job is being able to work through the mess, chaos and the stress that physical disability can cause," she says. The stress on some of my families is huge — all their hopes and dreams can disappear after one accident or diagnosis. It can be catastrophic but life doesn't have to end there."

Sally has her own family to think about, too. She and her husband have three children. Being able to spend more time with them is one of the reasons she left NHS, where shift work did not give her much flexibility. "It is a taxing job but I think I would have been really bored in a

career that involved sitting in an office. It's not how my brain works," she says. As for the move to Scotland, "I'm a fool in love," she jokes. Her husband, Malcolm Will is also from Hong Kong, where he was a student at KGV. When he began training to be a cardiothoracic surgeon in Scotland, Sally followed him and they married in 2003.

"Moving to the United Kingdom and dealing with culture shock was the biggest thing for me, having lived in Hong Kong since I was 7," she says. "Hong Kong is a very close community and I don't think it always reflects real life — when I was growing up it was a very fun, affluent and secure environment and I had absolutely no real life experience of families living in poverty or with mental or physical ill health, or of child protection issues. I was extremely naïve"

Sally has not been back to Hong Kong since 2007. She says she misses her friends and Hong Kong's food especially. "I love the fact that you can go out on a weeknight and there's still families outside eating in the "Dai Pai Dongs" (Hong Kong local food stalls) at 8, 9, 10 o'clock. I miss the lights, smells and vibrancy of it all," she says.

But she is firmly rooted in Scotland. "I had several job offers in Hong Kong, but I decided to stay," she says. "We've 3 young daughters, a dog, cats and 3 horses. It's very rural — the complete opposite of what I grew up with. My children have such a different lifestyle. They ride horses every night, there is no pollution and they play outside in vast open green fields that are surrounded by cows, sheep and deer, however the only downside is that it does rain a lot!"

Sally is well integrated into the local community and is close to the patients that she holds dear. "My greatest ally is a cup of tea and a chat," she says. "The relationships that I develop with parents and siblings over time are significant. Many of these children I work with I see them from birth until they turn 18. It is a great joy when I see some of my most profoundly disabled children go on to succeed and find their own unique place in the world. 

It is a great joy when I see some of my most profoundly disabled children go on to succeed and find their own unique place in the world.

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**SOUTH ISLAND SCHOOL**



► **SADAF SYED**  
(CLASS OF 1992)

PRIMARY SCHOOL: QUARRY BAY SCHOOL

Sadaf lives and works in Karachi, Pakistan. She completed a Master’s degree in Economics in Islamabad, Pakistan. Before joining the teaching profession, she worked for several companies including chartered accountancy firms. She is married with three children.

Sadaf is now employed as a management consultant for a school. She often shares her experiences of studying in Hong Kong with her colleagues and students, and has many fond memories of her time spent here. She is still in touch with many friends and teachers.

“My teachers in Hong Kong taught me so much and many of them believed in me. Their faith has always given me confidence which has allowed me to move forward in my career path — give back to my own nation by way of teaching the younger generation important values, and helping to improve the standard of education in my own city” .



► **JONATHAN HODGSON**  
(CLASS OF 1988)

Jonathan returned to Hong Kong after graduating from university in 1993. He worked in the engineering industry for two years and then 20 years in finance. He is a keen yachtsman having represented Hong Kong in yacht racing and also played competitive rugby until hanging up his boots ten years ago.



Left to Right : Mylene Wong, Kay Chau and Mudita Rastogi, dated 17 February, 2016 in Hong Kong. The students were close friends at SIS and have since met up after 30 years’apart.

► **MUDITA RASTOGI**

Upon finishing her ‘O’ Level studies at South Island School at the age of 16, Mudita relocated to New Delhi to further her 6th Form education. Upon graduation, she attended the University of Delhi and University of Bombay to complete her Bachelor and Master Degree in Psychology. Thereafter, she moved to the USA to complete her PhD in Marriage and Family Therapy at Texas Tech University.

Mudita is now a professional in the area of mental health, a wife and a mother enjoying life in Chicago. She loves to travel, read and spend time with her family and friends, and is actively involved with non-profit organisations.

She remembers her time at South Island School of with exciting times, positive learning experiences and wonderful opportunities to grow. “I truly value the gift of critical thinking that we received. Many of those SIS classmates continue to be my friends. I am amazed and inspired by what we have collectively accomplished!” .



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**SOUTH ISLAND SCHOOL**



▶ **WINGSHAN SMITH**  
 (CLASS OF 2009)  
 PRIMARY SCHOOL: BRADBURY SCHOOL,  
 QUARRY BAY SCHOOL

Wingshan is a curator, activist and writer. She is currently studying a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Art History at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London. She has wonderful memories about her time in South Island School particularly performing in “Midsummer’s Night Dream”, “Beauty and the Beast” and “Sweeney Todd”.



▶ **FLORENCE LI**  
 (CLASS OF 2008)  
 PRIMARY SCHOOL: QUARRY BAY SCHOOL

Since qualifying as a doctor three years ago, Florence has worked in various medical specialties such as paediatrics, general surgery and cardiology. She is now training to become a paediatrician.

“Without the infinite and invaluable academic and extracurricular opportunities at SIS, I would not have been able to recognise and fulfill my career aspirations as I have done to date”.



▶ **AIDAN ALUNAN**  
 (CLASS OF 1984)  
 PRIMARY SCHOOL: QUARRY BAY JUNIOR  
 SCHOOL

Aidan has been part of the ESF family joining Quarry Bay Junior School in Primary 4 and a student at South Island School from Form 1 through to Upper 6. He officially relocated back to Hong Kong in 1996 after spending the early part of his adult life in San Francisco, California.

With a keen interest in Arts, he took great inspiration from Mr. Tilbrook’s art classes and Mr. Flancy’s design and technology classes. Upon graduation from South Island School in 1985, he pursued further studies in graphic design at the Academy of Art College earning a Bachelor’s degree in Fine Arts.

Aidan now works for an interior design company specialising in graphic design, print, packaging, branding, corporate identity and information design with a focus in signage and wayfinding.

**KING GEORGE V SCHOOL**



▶ **NORMA WASKI**  
 (CLASS OF 1974)

Norma Waski (nee Kwan) is alumni in class 1974. She was excited to be back at KGV celebrating the 80s Mega Reunion.



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DISCOVERY COLLEGE



► **GABRIELA ESPINA**  
(CLASS OF 2015)

Gabriela is currently studying politics and international relations at the University of York. She is also part of their women's rugby team, where she has been working hard for an annual 'Roses' tournament, taking place in Lancaster next term. Alongside her degree and rugby, she has recently landed a work experience project with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to advocate for the protection of animals within the Yorkshire dales.



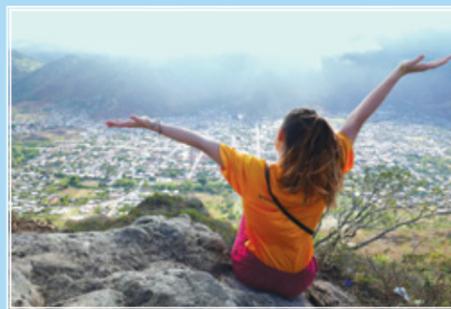
► **ELYA UZAN**  
(CLASS OF 2015)

Elya moved to Israel after graduation and joined an educational gap year programme, where she is learning about a wide range of issues for personal enrichment and development. This non-academic education has reignited her love for learning, and has also provided her with many platforms through which she can volunteer with the struggling communities in her country. When her programme ends, she will join the Israeli Defence Forces. There, she hopes to work on the 'education cops,' which provides socio-economically weakened soldiers with the some of the education they did not get to acquire at school or throughout their lives. Pictured are Elya and friends at the Negev Desert in Israel, one of the locations to which she visited during this special gap year.



► **MINATO UMEHARA**  
(CLASS OF 2015)

Minato recently ran the Toyko Marathon 2016. Although initially nervous about it, he was confident that the passion he got from DC helped him to achieve this tough challenge. Along the route, he was able to meet many people and enjoy the perfect weather and stunning views of Tokyo. He plans to run it again next year.



► **NINA ROSSITER**  
(CLASS OF 2015)

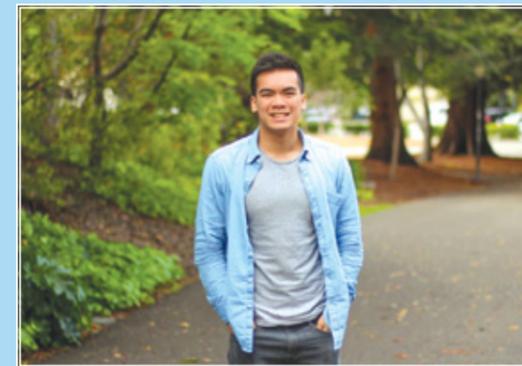
Nina is in her second semester at Northeastern University in Boston, where she has added on to her degree, and is now majoring in a combined international affairs and environmental studies degree with a Chinese minor. She spends most of her free time going to interesting talks, and most recently met the Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Lynsey Addario and Skyped with a professor in the University of Geneva about the rising crime in the Syrian Crisis. Nina is very much enjoying these opportunities. She is also involved in a club that teaches English to cafeteria workers, and right now she is helping one prepare for her citizenship test. Over spring break, Nina went to Central America for the first time, to teach English in a learning camp in Nicaragua.

DISCOVERY COLLEGE

► **BRAYDEN HANDCOCK**  
(CLASS OF 2015)

Brayden is currently studying at the Vancouver Film School. He has been acting in student films, including some with students at Emily Carr University. His most recent student film had him playing a man who unknowingly brings a serial killer back home after a night out.

SHA TIN COLLEGE



► **NICHOLAS YIU**  
(CLASS OF 2011)

Nicholas founded Mixathon48 last year when he was a chemical engineering student at UC Berkeley. Mixathon48 is a music technology company which catalyses the artistic development of early-stage music producers. To date, Mixathon48 has launched 2 global music production marathons with participants from 65 countries around the world. Nicholas has now completed his bachelor's degree and moved on to study his master's degree in Nanotechnology at University of Pennsylvania. However, he continues to grow Mixathon48 and aims to make it become a leading platform for other types of music education in addition to music production.

ISLAND SCHOOL



► **ANNE FERRET NEE ROGERS**  
(CLASS OF 1975)

PRIMARY SCHOOL: GLENEALY SCHOOL

Anne Ferret's father was the minister of Union Church in Hong Kong and a pioneer in being part of an initial committee that set up Island School and ESF. Anne works in a specialist centre for students with significant speech delays and disorders in a mainstream nursery school in the UK.

Anne is also an active volunteer with Parkinson's UK; a charity that supports people with Parkinson's disease. She advises and counsels families after caring for her own mother who suffered from Parkinson's Disease for 10 years.

► **SHANNEN LI**  
(CLASS OF 2011)

Shannen works for a US bank, Wells Fargo, as a learning specialist in the HR Training Department. She participated in the ESF CPD day last year speaking on behalf of a talent management solutions company.

If you would like to obtain the contact of your former classmates who shared their stories here, please email [alumni@esfcentre.edu.hk](mailto:alumni@esfcentre.edu.hk)

## SIS ALUMNA BECOMES WORLD'S YOUNGEST FEMALE TO SUMMIT MT. MANASLU (8163M)



19-year-old South Island School alumna, Marin Minamiya, summited Mount Manaslu in Nepal in 2015 and became the world's youngest female to reach the mountain top of the eighth highest mountain in the world at the height of 8,163m. At the same time, she has also earned the title of the youngest 8,000 metre climber in Japan.

Marin started mountain climbing in Year 10, when she joined the HKAYP (The Duke of



Edinburgh's award). In the past six years, she has climbed six of the highest peak in the seven continents and her goal is to summit three more peaks in Europe, Asia and North America, in order to complete The Explorers Grand Slam.

Marin's plan is to complete the Explorer's Grand Slam in April 2017, with the final expedition to the North Pole. We look forward to hearing updates from Marin about her next accomplishments.

## GEOFFREY CHEAH VISITS WIS



On Tuesday, 16 December, West Island School (WIS) welcomed Geoffrey Cheah, a potential Hong Kong Olympic Swimmer who went to Stanford University with a sports scholarship for swimming. He visited WIS to share his experience as a student athlete and offered advice on applying for scholarship and writing college essay. Geoffrey lauded the opportunity for being a student athlete and appreciated the diversity of students at Standford.

Later on that day, Cheah ran a swim clinic for eager swimmers. Cheah taught various skills, and used his expertise to assist attendees with their swimming questions and concerns.

## HISTORY EXPERT CRAIG MITCHELL GIVES TALK TO SIS YEAR 9 STUDENTS

On 15 February, South Island School (SIS) alumnus Craig Mitchell (Class of 1998) gave a talk to the SIS Year 9s about WWI, which coincides with the topic students currently studying. Craig is an expert in history who became interested in WWI through metal detecting. He did two BBC History Channel documentaries last year in Belgium and France and found undiscovered trenches.



## JULIA MASON COMPLETES EXPEDITION AND SHARES WITH WIS STUDENTS



Julia Mason, West Island School (WIS) alumna, and her good friend Bethany Martin completed their 16,000km bike expedition on 4 February, 2016. The two girls travelled 22 countries in 299 days on bike in order to raise awareness on food wastage. It turned out to be a very successful trip which attracted interest and buzz about food wastage in Hong Kong and around the world. For more details about Julia and Bethany's story, please refer to ESF Alumni News Dec 2015 issue.

The next day after completing their journey, the duo went to WIS to talk about the expedition and their exciting food waste project. They spoke about their trip and explained the shocking percentage of food that is wasted around the world, especially in Hong Kong. Additionally, they explained the various ways that we as a society, can help to bring this number down so that the food can feed more mouths instead. It was a very informative and educational talk for WIS students that inspired them to explore more about food wastage.



## WEST ISLAND SCHOOL ALUMNI CHRISTMAS TEA PARTY



West Island School (WIS) welcomed alumni to a festive tea party in December. Ex-students, including class of 2015, were treated to an afternoon of festival delicacies as they caught up with teachers, the Principal, Ms Foxcroft, and old classmates. Students spoke at length about university life and exciting experiences in the workforce as they simultaneously reminisced over their time at WIS. Thank you to all the alumni who turned up and spent the afternoon at WIS. We look forward to learning more about their accomplishments during the year.

## ANDRE STEYNBERG BREAKS THE WORLD RECORD IN 50M BACKSTROKE RACE

Andre Steynberg, Island School alumnus (Class of 1974), has joined the South African Masters Swimming Long Course Championships (age 60 - 64 Category) in March 2016 and won five gold medals and one silver medal. He has even broken the world record in the 50m backstroke race! Here are his results:

Silver Medal	200m Backstroke	2min 40sec.
Gold Medal	100m Backstroke	1min 8.86 sec. South African Record.
Gold Medal	50m Backstroke	30.66 sec. <b>New World Record.</b>
Gold Medal	100m Freestyle	59.76 sec. South African Record.
Gold Medal	50m Freestyle	26.32 sec. South African Record.
Gold Medal	100m Butterfly	1min 5.78 sec. South African Record.

Congratulations to Andre on these wonderful achievements!

## PROFESSIONAL DANCER ASHLEY COOPER OFFERS DANCE LESSON TO SIS STUDENTS

On 10 March, Ashley Cooper was invited by South Island School drama department to offer a dance lesson to SIS students on actual dance moves from famous productions. He put students from Year 8-13 through their paces in dance choreography. The lesson was hugely enjoyable and inspirational.

Ashley graduated from SIS in 2009. When he was an IB student at SIS, he already worked as a background dancer for Marian Carey, and also picked up other high profile commercial jobs in Asia. After he graduated from SIS, he was trained at Arts Educational Schools London for three years. He was then involved in various famous musicals including *We Will Rock You* and *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory*, and was the dance captain of *Matilda* which was produced by Royal Shakespeare Company.



## KGV 06' ALUMNI REUNION

Class of 2006 celebrated their 10th graduation anniversary at King George V School on 19 March 2016. The event was a warm occasion, 70 alumni attended and enjoyed their day back to school.

The alumni went on a reminiscent school tour with community development manager, Ms Yasmeen Ashraf (93' KGV alumna). They were very interested and delighted to see the developments that KGV has made over the years. Several teachers including Dr. Wickins joined the lovely gathering at Leo's Cafe afterwards.

If you are interested in organising such a reunion or visiting KGV on your own, please contact alumni@kgv.edu.hk for more information.



## KGV MEGA REUNION 2016

KGV Alumni Association and KGV held a mega reunion on 23 March at KGV School. This reunion involved a lot of alumni, even those graduated in the 80s. They came from around the globe to visit their alma mater. The head of KGV, Ms Judy Cooper and community development manager, Ms Yasmeen Ashraf (93' alumna) prepared a very warm welcome for them. They enjoyed a fabulous school tour led by current students and also enjoyed a KGV lunch in the canteen.

Despite a slight unfortunateness of the weather, we still managed to hold the alumni vs students football and hockey match. Alumni Team won the hockey game and student team went on to beat the alumni in the football game!



## KGV LION FUND COCKTAIL 2016

The KGV community development office held a Lion Fund Cocktail Reception on 20 April at KGV Banyan Tree. The event was a nice opportunity to acknowledge and thank donors, and make connections with fellow alumni, parents and VIP guests.

Lion Fund has been a crucial part of the fundraising effort for KGV development. We would like to send our appreciation and sincere thank to all donors for the act of generosity to KGV.



## CRICKETER JAMES ATKINSON PRESENTS AWARDS AT SIS SPORTS AWARD CEREMONY

James Atkinson (Class of 2008) shared his personal development story as a professional cricketer at South Island School Sports Award Ceremony on 14 April. His story was inspirational and encouraging for all the athletes at South Island School. On that day, James also presented awards to Sports Boy, Sports Girl and Best Sports Team of the Year.

James captained the Hong Kong team in their first global tournament, the World T20 in Bangladesh, which the team defeated the host in the final match. James also played in One Day Internationals for Hong Kong.



## ISLAND SCHOOL ANNUAL RUGBY 7'S REUNION – FCC

The annual Island School Alumni Association's 7's Reunion took place on 7 April at the Foreign Correspondence Club in Central. Being the highlight of the ISAA's calendar of annual events regarded as the "pre-Rugby Sevens" gathering, we were delighted to welcome over 70 alumni from Hong Kong and abroad. All year groups came and, for several alumni, it was their first time to attend a 7's Reunion! We also played host to two separate alumni groups — the 1994ers and 1982ers, and several ex-teaching staff members: Diane Duncan, Sandy Pescod, Stewart Harding, Maureen Doctrove, Peter Clarke and Jenny Fearn.

This year the 7's Reunion had a very special twist for Island School. Two highly respected long serving teachers, Derek Bailey (Physical Education) and Jo-Anne Travenna (Music) bid farewell to many ex-students and staff before their departure to the UK at the end of June. There were a few tears, lots of laughs and stories told, but we wish Derek and Jo-Anne the best of luck for their future.



## SOUTH ISLAND SCHOOL CAREERS FAIR

On 6 May, fifteen SIS alumni came back to their alma mater to support South Island School Career Fair. During the fair, Year 9 students had the opportunity to meet with representatives from different companies around the world. The students asked a lot of questions regarding



Natasha Usher, interior designer at Nude Design Limited

qualifications needed to enter that industry, what the job really entails and what the journey has been to get to where they are today. With the great diversity of industry, the fair managed to inspire over 200 young people!



Azan Marwah, barrister working at Gilt Chambers

## SITAL PATEL'S VISIT TO ISLAND SCHOOL

Sital Patel ('86E) took a nostalgic walk down "memory lane" when he visited Island School with his family on 18 April 2016. Sital's family moved to Hong Kong in 1975 and lived on Borrett Road. His father worked for the Hong Kong Government Service and his mother volunteered for the St John's Ambulance Service. Sital and his sister, Shveta ('83E) attended Kennedy Road Junior School before joining Island School in Year 7. After graduating from Island School, Sital attended Swansea University. He lives in West London with his wife, Neelam, and children, Esha and Shayan.



Sital with his wife Neelam, and children, Esha and Shayan.

Sital spoke affectionately about his time at Island School, "The school has a unique spirit; it's a wonderful combination of the blend of cultures, the house system and our bonds with our teachers – being all rolled into one big happy family. Although some naughty childish antics took place, it was never enough to warrant severe punishment. It was a sworn tradition amongst us boys to be "bog washed" – being dunked head first in the toilet bowl on our birthdays! I recall a shocking incident taking place during a pottery lesson. The pottery kiln overheated and the flames caught the uniform of a student. Uniforms then were made of polyester and, of course, polyester is highly flammable. Her uniform was badly burnt but she also received rather severe burn injuries to her arms. Thereafter the uniforms were produced from cotton. This incident led to the change of uniform style and colours from the scruffy baggy brown jumpers and cream shirts to the grey trousers/skirts and blue ties and blazers".

Sital was keen to learn more about the redevelopment plans for Island School and hopes to be in Hong Kong next year to celebrate. If you know Sital and wish to get in touch with him, please email Jacqueline Archer at the development & alumni office at Island School on [jacqueline.archer@online.island.edu.hk](mailto:jacqueline.archer@online.island.edu.hk).

## ISLAND SCHOOL ALUMUS MICAH SANDT (CLASS OF 2007)

Micah Sandt (grad '07) visited Island School on 1 March to meet with teachers and view plans for the redevelopment which takes place in mid-2017. He is an international actor and composer currently in Hong Kong starring in the upcoming stage production Gweilo (based on the famous memoir by Martin Booth) with the Cantonese Theatre Company Pants Productions.

Upon graduating from Island School in 2009, Micah initially studied music before he trained as an actor at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts in London. He makes the distinction between studying and training. "When you study drama one becomes a dramaturge or teacher, usually both. While training to be an actor is athletic and almost closer to P.E. than an actual drama class. To perform eight shows a week without losing your voice and with the same energy for a year is no academic feat. Mountview was like military but with jazz pants."

Although Micah's heritage is originally French and Finnish, he went to a local Chinese school before he joined Island School in Year 9. "My first year at Island School was emotionally tough. I didn't fit in initially; this is probably because I went to a local school, but also because I was a closeted homosexual." Micah said his form tutor Jeromy Rowson (also known as Rows or Jez) really changed his life here. "I remember telling Rows that I thought I would never enjoy Island School, that I would be counting down the last five years before I could finally leave. And I think it's thanks to him that I ended up not just appreciating my time here, but loving it."



Jeromy Rowson was Micah's form tutor for his entire five years here. "Our form almost became a little family with Rows as our mad parent. We would do all sorts of crazy things with him like 24-hour volleyball for charity and hiking trips. Many of us even went to Peru with him for three weeks. I'll never forget that trip." Micah said Mr Rowson was a huge influence for him in coming out. "I remember we were sitting at the pier, looking out onto the beautiful Lake Titicaca, and I finally told him. It was a perfect little moment, especially when he said 'Meeks, I always knew.'"

To this day, Micah is still in touch with many of his old teachers. "It can be hard to keep in touch with everyone when you're traveling. But thankfully we have the alumni gatherings around the world which is a great excuse to see people." Coming back to Island School, Micah really enjoyed seeing some of his old teachers again including Derek Irwin, Carol Boag, Jo-Anne Trevena, Derek Baily, to name but a few. "My two heads of house aren't here any more. Cath Hopkins, who was also my IB Chemistry teacher, has moved back to the UK. And our dear Guillermo Vezzano passed away suddenly a few years ago, which I know shocked everyone. At the end of the day, Island School isn't just bricks and mortar, but its people. And probably in a few years' time I won't know anyone in here anymore. But I do know I will be in touch with many of these people for the rest of my life."

Outside of acting, Micah works as a conductor and musical director for the Hong Kong Women's Choir. He will be moving to New York City later this year to do his masters in composition at New York University Tisch School of the Arts.

## ISLAND SCHOOL 1982ERS' REUNION



The 1982ers' reunion took place at Island School on Friday, 1 April 2016 for 26 alumni. Organisers, Ravin Melwani and Laura Briey, welcomed alumni from Hong Kong and abroad for an evening reliving their school days in the main hall. In preparation for the event, Laura and Ravin gathered many old photographs of the 1982ers' time at Island School; some with hilarious recollections! After an emotional gathering in the main hall, the 1982ers took a tour around the school buildings and learned more about the school's alumni and fundraising initiatives and the plans to celebrate the school's 50th anniversary next year.

## ISLAND SCHOOL ALUMNA, STACEY ARCHBELL (CLASS OF 1974)

Stacey Archbell (nee Williams) (class of 1974) visited Island School with her husband and daughter on 26 February 2016. She attended Island School as a 6th former from 1974 – 1976 when she relocated to Hong Kong with her family from their native England at the age of 15. Her brother, John, and sister, Emily, attended KGV. Their father was a lecturer with the Hong Kong Polytechnic and the family lived in Waterloo Road in Kowloon. One of Stacey's fondest memories of being an independent 6th former was the daily commute from her home in Kowloon to Island School with fellow Islander, Hazel Watson. The journey entailed catching a public bus (there were no school buses) to the



Star Ferry. Upon reaching Central, they had to take a taxi up the winding hill to Borrett Road. Stacey recalls meeting Norman Wisdom who attended the school fair and fashion show in 1975. As she was a prefect and the winner, she had the privilege of receiving one of Norman's wet sloppy kisses!! "It was rather cringe worthy because Norman had such a stubbly chin! I was left with a wet cheek and slight scratches!". Another close friend of Stacey was Mandy Roberts, the colonial secretary's daughter. She has since lost touch with Hazel and Mandy, and would very much like to hear from them. Stacey lives in San Francisco and works as a financial adviser for a well-known investment house.



What's new - Where in the world are you - What's your favourite memory of your ESF school? Send us a one liner, with your class year and school, and perhaps you will be featured in the next edition of the ESF Alumni News!

We'd truly like to **HEAR FROM YOU!**



Please submit your story to:

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**Sai Kung Hse** 16.3M

1300' hse w/1000' gdn, 1 en-suite  
Peaceful w/mountain view, CP



**Silver Strand Villa**  
Net: 1083' 20M/42K

1364' villa, 2 bds(1 suite), sea view  
Open kitchen, CP



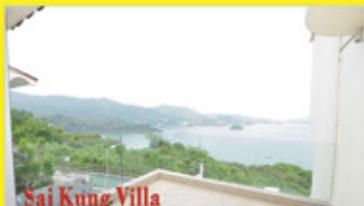
**Sai Kung Mid-level** 18M

2100' hse w/800' indeed gdn,  
Open greenery view, 4 bds (2 en-suites), 2CP



**Clearwater Bay Hse** 25M

2100' w/indeed gdn and roof, Open view  
4 bds (2 en-suite), open plan kitchen, 3CP



**Sai Kung Villa**  
Net: 1562' 32M

1985' w/800' garden, sea view  
4 bds (1 en-suite), Mgt. w/pool



**Sai Kung House** 15M

2100' Hse w/700' gdn, sea view  
4 bds (2 suites)/1 maid room, Open kitchen, CP



**WB Village House** 18M

1800' hse w/500' gdn, open view  
3 bds (1 suite), CP



**Sai Kung Duplex** 9.5M

1400' hse w/ 800' gdn, open view  
3 bds (1 suite), Tranquil location, 2CP



**Sea view Villa**  
Nets 1872' 35M

2450' w/2800' indeed gdn, sea view  
3 bds (1 suite), Private Pool, 3CP



**Sai Kung Mid-level** 27M

2800' w/1000' gdn & 600' movie room, open view  
3 bds (2 suites)/1 maid room, 2 CP



**Designer House** 28M

2100' hse w/1400' indeed gdn, open view  
4 bds (1 suite), Private pool, close to beach, 3CP



**Brand New House** 25M

2100' hse w/huge gdn, open greenery view  
4 bedrooms (2 en suites), Open kitchen

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**Private Pool Hse** 65K

2100' house w/breach front view, open sea view  
5 bds (1 suite)/1 maid room, tranquil area



**Designer House**  
Net: 1661' 48K

2178' villa w/gdn & roof, sea view  
2 bds (1 suite)/1 maid room, c. pool, garage



**Silver Strand Villa**  
Net: 1710' 70K

1850' villa w/gdn, open view  
New Deco, 3CP



**Marina House** 56K

2100' Water front, sea view  
4 bds (2 en suites), Nice deco



**Sai Kung Brand New** 50K

2100' hse w/800' garden,  
Open view, 4 bds (2 en-suites)



**Sai Kung Brand New** 78K

2100'w/1000' gdn, open greenery view  
Modern Deco, Well equipped kitchen



**Clearwater Bay House** 88K

2100' hse w/4000' indeed gdn, open view  
3 bds (1 suite), Private pool, open kitchen, 4CP



**Sai Kung Mid-level** 80K

2100'hse w/5000'gdn, open view, Private pool  
4 bds (3 suites), Tranquil location, 4CP