



International School Yangon

Newsletter

August 14 (Friday), 2009.

***Our Mission** for the school year of 2009-2010 is the International School of Yangon is a community that is committed to excellence. We inspire students with a challenging, international education, based on an American curriculum, in a nurturing learning environment that promotes responsibility and respect. We aim to develop socially engaged, self-motivated, creative, compassionate individuals who will be a force for positive change in their communities and the world.*

Director's Corner

Dear ISY Students, Parents, and Faculty,

Welcome back to the 2009-2010 school year. This year begins the 55th year ISY has been in existence. ISY has a long and proud tradition of excellence in the Yangon community and I feel very privileged to be a part of this tradition. This is my first year as Interim Director of the school and I want to tell you that I am very excited to be here. Although this is my first year at ISY, this is not my first year in Yangon. My previous position was Director of ISM and this will begin our 6th year living in Yangon. When our family first arrived in Yangon in 2004, we enrolled our son Max Travers in ISY. Max fell in love with ISY and graduated in 2007. You may know that my wife Ann Travers has been an elementary teacher at ISY for the past three years and will continue in the elementary school this year as well. I have been on the ISY campus many times as a parent, and as an administrator from ISM to watch sporting events. I know many of the ISY parents, students, and faculty, and feel very much at home in my new surroundings. Thank you so much to the parents, faculty, school board, and students, for such a warm welcome into the ISY community.

I want to say that we are off to a tremendous beginning. Our faculty is very fortunate to have such a talented group of students attending our school. Our students are very fortunate to have such a talented group of teachers and support staff. Along with a very supportive School Board and parent group, there is no doubt in my mind that this year will be a great one. With all of us working towards a common goal, educating our students to the best of our ability, I can see no reason why this year won't be our best ever.

Thank you again for your warm welcome and I look forward to working with each and every one of you this school year.

Sincerely,

Tim Travers
Interim Director



News from the ISY Library

The library has received over 1,600 new books including over 100 new fiction titles for adults! Parents are encouraged to stop in and check-out books and magazines for their own personal enjoyment.

The summer reading initiative was a huge success with over 1,000 books being checked out and read over the summer break. Thanks to all of you who have made an effort to return books from the summer. We would like to see them all back in the library by Friday August 21. See you in the library!

Michelle Rinker, Daw Baby
and Naw Saywah

Elementary Principal's Corner



Welcome back to school! My name is Bill Martin-Muth and I'm delighted to join the ISY team as your elementary principal. This is my tenth year as a principal and I have almost 20 years of teaching experience before that. (I'm sure I can't be quite that old!) I'm originally from Alaska, though my wife Deana and I have lived for almost 30 years in a number of places around the world ...and now to Myanmar!

It's obvious that ISY parents and teachers have very high expectations. The whole community cares very deeply about our school and our students. I appreciate the fact that parents have gone out of their way to introduce themselves to me.

Everyone I've met has expressed support and concerns in a very positive and helpful manner.

The ISY teachers have impressed me with their devotion and respect for your children. They are as excited as the students to be back in school doing the work they love! The energy and enthusiasm for learning that the ISY teachers express is contagious and refreshing. As we prepared to greet the students they impressed me with their professionalism and commitment to teaching. Teachers worked and planned together diligently to make sure your children entered an organized and stimulating learning environment on the first day of school.

In addition to the established staff we have 4 new faces in the elementary: Suzanne Carr (music), Deana Martin-Muth (3rd grade), Leslie Stowell (5th grade) and Tonya Gerhardt (counselor). They bring a wealth of educational experience and they will fit into the ISY community perfectly!

Our students are among the best I've ever met. I'm most impressed by their motivation and sense of respect. "Respect" is a word that students and adults will hear from me regularly. As adults we need to always encourage our children to have respect for themselves by showing respect to others; by being respectful to other children, by being respectful to teachers and other adults, and by always demonstrating a respect for learning by working joyfully.

All of our experiences at ISY thus far have been encouraging. The facility, technological resources, library and music program are first class! Above all, parents and staff have given us a very warm welcome. Everyone we've met shows great pride and a sense of ownership in ISY. My wife and I are very happy and proud to join the ISY team. It seems that the school community has a wonderful spirit!

I sincerely look forward seeing you at the Elementary School Open House at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 26.

Mr. Martin-Muth

Middle School & High School

I welcome you all back to ISY with a warm and friendly smile. I am sure you will join me in a big welcome back to our new and returning students and teachers. My name is



Jim Gerhard and I am the new Middle School/High School principal. Originally from New York, I have spent the last sixteen years working as a teacher and administrator. During that same time, I have also lived in five countries. My wife Tonya, the ES Counselor/Special Needs teacher, and my Kindergarten daughter Maeve join me as we make a new home in Yangon. I look forward to meeting many more of the community members that make ISY such a great school.

Other new faces you will notice on the MS/HS staff include two teachers moving up from the elementary: John Rinker (Gr. 6 and IB Film) and Ms. Puja Kashyap (Theater, Drama & Film), and also Ms. Anna Russell (HS English), Ms. Suzanne Carr (Choir) and Mr. Glenn Carr (Band and Choir).

You might be familiar with most of our returning teachers. If not make some time on your calendar for August 27th when we host our MS/HS Open House. You will find that we have an extraordinary group of committed teaching professionals who come to ISY each day and make a difference in the lives of our students. I am truly impressed with the caliber and dedication I see in the staff and I can assure you your children are in great and caring hands.

When I spoke with our vibrant group of two-hundred and fifty 6-12th grade students on the first day I asked them to be more thoughtful this year. Thoughtful in their words, and actions. This means taking time to think about what we say and do. Thoughtfulness is a great way to be more mindful of our inner selves and the impact our words and actions have on others. This short message has provided some good conversation already this year. I wish for all of us to be more thoughtful of each other and our world this year. I encourage you to remind your child of this message.

I also took the time to give students five 'Keys to Success.' I will repeat them here so you can better understand how to help them be more successful in school.

1. Ask for help if you need it
2. Work hard in classes, study hard at home.
3. Be nice, act nice, make friends.
4. Participate in activities and events at school
5. Talk to your teachers each day, talk to your parents each day.

Please keep in touch with us and check for important announcements on our webpage.

www.internationalschoolyangon.org

I look forward to meeting you soon.

Jim Gerhard
MS/HS Principal

Greetings from the ISY athletic department

Let the games begin!

I want to welcome all families back to school and look forward to seeing many of you at the various sporting events your child is participating in this year. Please, if you have the time, come and watch any of the sports teams during the school year. I know you will be thrilled at the ability of our ISY "athletes".

The high school mini league volleyball (HSMLVB) got underway yesterday with 8 teams playing in the tournament over the next few weeks. It should prove to be very exciting for all involved.

Middle school basketball will begin next week with the practices being on Wednesday and Friday from 3:00-4:00 with occasional matches against the other international schools in town. MS parents keep your eyes open for a permission slip coming home soon. A reminder that on days of games at ISY please expect your child to be finished closer to 5:00pm and on days that we travel to other schools the time we return back to ISY will probably be closer to between 5:30-6:00pm.

High school soccer has begun their practices and both teams are looking forward to a positive year on the field. The HS boys and girls soccer teams will be traveling to Jakarta for the SEASAC soccer tournament the weekend of November 6-8. More information to follow for this trip over the next few weeks.

High school volleyball will get into full swing once the MLVB is finished. The boys and girls teams will be traveling to Bangkok for the SEASAC tournament the weekend of November 6-8. More information will be sent home in the next few weeks regarding this trip.

If your child is planning on trying out for one of the **high school teams that travels out of the country**

here are a few items of interest that you should know about before making that decision.

-A valid passport for at least 6 months is very important.

-A valid re-entry VISA (if needed) to return to Yangon after the trip. ISY can provide letters if needed for assistance.

-Commitment to payment for the trip.

-Once tickets have been purchased the school can not get a refund. That will be your responsibility. You will be notified before tickets are purchased.

Please do not hesitate to contact me either here at school or by email at: tomjust@isy.net.mm if you ever have any concerns, comments or suggestions for the physical education program or the after school activities for both the middle and high school.

Go Chinthes

Traveling together
in Education!

Tom Just



Counselor's Corner



I am very excited to begin another year as the secondary counselor at ISY. Secondary students face unique and diverse challenges, both personally and developmentally, that impact academic achievement. I look forward to working with the other ISY stakeholders in the delivery of programs and services to help your child achieve success in school

High School Parents: High school years are full of growth, promise, excitement, frustration, disappointment and hope. It is a time when students begin to discover what the future holds for them. Please encourage your child to join school clubs, get involved with community service, read for pleasure and take their studies seriously. Last year's seniors got admitted into terrific universities and I expect the same for their year's class.

Middle School Parents: As you probably already know the middle school years are a time of adjustment for both parents and children. At no other period during the life span cycle of development do so many changes take place so quickly. Your child is challenged by rapid physical, cognitive, psychological, emotional and social development. While seeking to understand who they are becoming, they must learn to negotiate where they are going. I hope to make this navigation process easier with the activities I will be introducing during the middle school enrichment block.

Its emphasis will focus on:

Academic Development – Activities in this area will include working on transitions skills, decision making skills, interpersonal skills, problem solving and goal setting.

Personal/Social Development - This component will focus on the development of 'knowledge of self' including helping to build a positive self-concept and learning skills for relating to others.

Career Development- Emphasis here will be in making students aware of career lifestyle options, and in evaluating their values, interests and abilities.

Thank you,

Janet Hallwood
Secondary Counselor

Amendment in the School Calendar

ISY Open house on the School Calendar is August 26 (Wednesday) and August 27 (Thursday).

Swine Flu

Dear ISY community members

There is a matter of concern that we need to share with you. As you are aware, Swine Influenza A infection caused by HINI virus has progressed in Asia since the end of last school year. Although it has not yet prevailed in Yangon to the extent of neighboring countries, all precautions should be taken to minimize exposure. The Flu is transmitted by the H1N1 virus contained in droplets that are expressed by an infected person sneezing and coughing.

The symptoms are much like the cold or seasonal flu viruses. They include fever accompanied by **at least one** of the following:

- Cough or sore throat
- Chills
- Body ache
- Runny nose
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Infected people may be able to infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

If you or another member of your household develop any of these symptom, please consult with your doctor as soon as possible AND NOTIFY THE SCHOOL. Please do not return to school until you have been given a full medical clearance by the doctor. You may be asked to provide a medical certificate upon your return if sick leave is necessary.

If you are new to Yangon and are not sure how to see a doctor, please call ISY's Doctor Emily Ext. 104 to ask for assistance. She will help you to make an appointment at your nearest hospital and provide directions for you.

Precautionary Advice

No single action will provide complete protection, but an approach combining the following steps can help decrease the likelihood of transmission. These recommended actions are:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand cleaner when soap and water are not available.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid close contact (i.e. being within about 6 feet) with persons who appear unwell and who have fever and cough.
- Maintain good health habits including adequate sleep, eating nutritious food, and exercise regularly.

If there is an ill person at home, it is important that the room be kept well ventilated by keeping windows and doors open, wash your hands with soap and water thoroughly after each contact with the ill person, and keep the environment clean with readily available household cleaning agents.

Please follow the (above) practices and prepare your lifestyle to extend these practices for your family, relatives and visitors.

Precautionary Measures in school:

Students who are sick or having flu like symptoms should stay at home till fully recovered and inform the school office.

On returning to school, a medical clearance certificate is required and also be checked by the school doctor before going to the classes.

Students who are coughing and sneezing in class should be sent to school clinic for check and may be sent home.

Students are encouraged to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and throw the tissue in the nearest trash receptacle.

They should keep hands away from their eyes, nose and mouth when possible. They should wash hands with soap and water after using the rest room.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Again we are very pleased to be working with your students and look forward to a super school year.

Sincerely

Tim Travers

Director