



Fighting for Special Needs
Virginia Wilson
Kennedy School and Beacon Hill School

To the Rescue
Nora Anderson-Dieppe
Island School

The Signal Caller
Kevin Yeung
Quarry Bay School and Island School

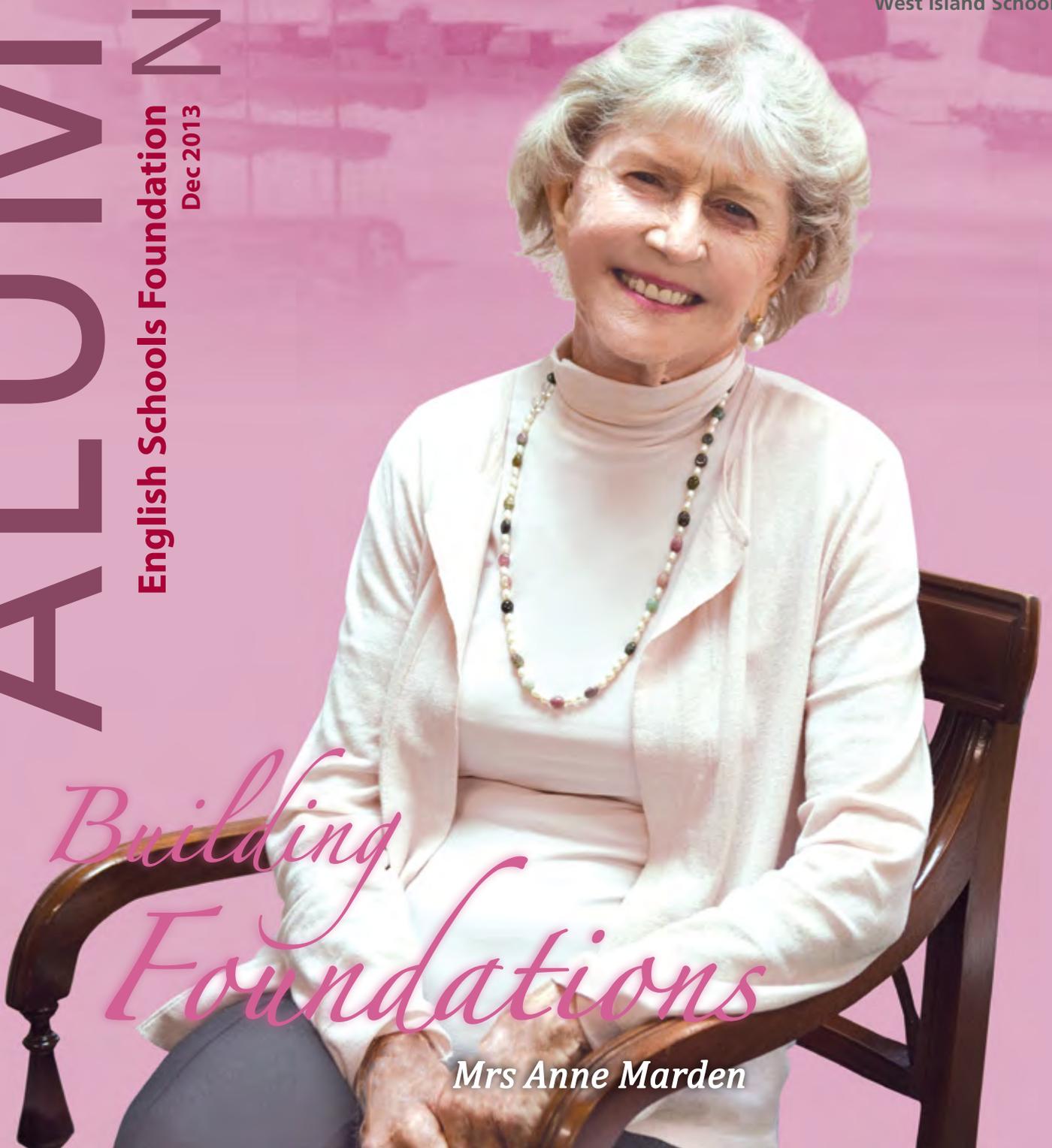
The Travelling Teacher
Christian Romano
Renaissance College

Helping Out
Michael Clachers
West Island School

ALUMNI NEWS

English Schools Foundation

Dec 2013



Building Foundations

Mrs Anne Marden

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Foreword

Christmas is a time of joy and sharing with loved ones. It is also a time to remember those less fortunate than ourselves. In this issue we express our gratitude to a group of people who support charities and participate in voluntary work.



Anne Marden has worked tirelessly for the underprivileged for more than 60 years. Besides setting up her own charitable foundation in Hong Kong and working with enormous dedication to improve the lives of so many, she, with her husband John, did much to help establish ESF in the late 1960s.

We are also delighted to talk to Virginia Wilson, alumna of Kennedy School and Beacon Hill School, who was until very recently the Chairman of Jockey Club Sarah Roe School Council. Virginia, who is Executive Director of the Child Development Centre at Matilda Hospital, is actively involved in charities that support children with special educational needs. Her story is certainly inspirational.

Also in this issue, we hear about two overseas-based alumni, Nora Anderson-Dieppe and Michael Clachers, who devote themselves to worthy causes. Nora, a graduate of Island School is an enthusiastic advocate for an organisation in Sydney that pairs abandoned greyhounds with families. Michael, an alumnus of West Island School, is an awardee of the ESF Chairman's Award for Commitment and Contribution to Service. While studying to be a doctor, he volunteers with his local first aid service in Scotland.

Last but not least are the heartwarming stories of Kevin Yeung and Christian Romano. Kevin, who attended Quarry Bay School and Island School, is the Chairman of *Feeding Hong Kong*, a charity food bank that works with a network of partner charities. Christian is a graduate of Renaissance College, now working as an educational assistant at Discovery College. Here he shares his experience of teaching children in rural Zambia.

I hope you enjoy reading the magazine and as it is now the festive season, I wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Carlson Tong, JP
Chairman
English Schools Foundation

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In this day and age it's hard to imagine ESF schools without any male teachers but philanthropist Anne Marden remembers such a time only too clearly.

She and her husband John served on the ESF Executive Committee in the late 1960s, when teachers were usually wives of British civil servants.

"When the idea of ESF was first raised, I was on the committee with the Reverend Geoffrey Speak. We negotiated to take over the English Speaking schools in Hong Kong. Part of the deal was for the government to give the same financial support as it gave the Chinese schools."

The Mardens did much to get ESF up and running in the early days and their involvement continued long after the first wave of male teachers took up their posts. In 1974 John opened the new Island School building — a plaque to commemorate the occasion can still be seen in the entrance hall.

In an excerpt from his book, *No Ordinary School*, former Deputy Principal of Island School, Chris Forse writes:

"Special mention should be made of John and Anne Marden whose contributions in time, energy and funds allowed both Island and South Island Schools to enjoy among other things, swimming pools. John will

probably be best remembered for his christening of the Island School pool when he dived in fully clothed and removed his suit underwater to reveal a Victorian bathing costume underneath."

On being reminded of this tale Anne smiles and shakes her head.

"I was in England at the time but I heard about it. I think we've still got the costume."

Anne's son, Antony, went to the Peak School and his two sisters were there for a year before going to England — as was the custom in those days when the only English speaking Secondary School was King George V. Her youngest daughter went to Quarry Bay School when it was still in Quarry Bay.



John Marden's famous swim on the opening of the school pool

The girls and several of their friends still organise a lunch party — Chinese of course — in London, for anyone who was at school in Hong Kong during the 1950s. They always have a tremendous response.



Mr and Mrs Marden attended the grand opening of Island School

Anne's own schooldays were somewhat unconventional. Born in Shanghai she attended an all-girls school there until she was nine before continuing her studies in Switzerland. At the outbreak of the Second World War she moved to England with her family. She met John Marden who was the son of her parents' friends in Shanghai and was also bought up there.

Anne and John married in 1947, which was also the year they arrived in Hong Kong. The couple moved into a house in Pokfulam that was surrounded by a dairy farm and herds of cows. Their arrival coincided with the Communist takeover of China and the flood of refugees who would provide the workforce that made such a difference to Hong Kong. The absence of government support for these people prompted Anne to offer help where she could and shaped a determination to assist those less fortunate that continues to this day.

Until the late 1970s there was no compulsory government-funded education in Hong Kong. The English-run schools were well-organised but Anne was keen to address what she saw as an imbalance. She takes up the story.

"The family started the Marden Foundation in 1973. We were aware that parents wanted their children to go to university and were demanding an academically-based curriculum. However, we felt a lot of students were better suited to a more practical education. At our schools each child had to study subjects such as hotel management so

Anne Marden

Anne received the Caltex Community Service Award in 1990 and was awarded an MBE in 1991 and the Bronze Bauhinia Star in 2006. Mrs Marden has been very supportive in education and founded three Marden Foundation Schools in Hong Kong.

She was the Director of the Hong Kong Red Cross from 1960 to 1965 and later became the first Chairperson of Rehabaid, the forerunner of the Rehabaid Society. Apart from being the founding Member of TREATS and Playright Children's Play Association, Anne is also the Patron of the Federation of Handicapped Youth, of AIDS Concern, of the Kely Support Group, of the Comfort Care Concern Group and of Springboard; and an Advisory Committee Member of the Hong Kong Red Cross.

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that when they graduated they'd have an idea of which career to follow. This approach is the norm nowadays but we were quite innovative in doing it back then."

Anne remembers going to the New Territories to inspect a potential school site provided by the Government.



"We went to Tuen Mun when it was nothing but fields. I remember wondering who would come to the school but by the time it was completed, new housing blocks were going up all around. Caritas Tuen Mun Marden Foundation Secondary School opened its doors in 1977 and still exists. Nowadays though, we are more innovative and take boys and girls from ethnic minorities and teach in English and Chinese as a second language."

During the 1980s Anne's charity work included a role with International Social Service (ISS) just as another group of refugees were pouring into Hong Kong — this time from Vietnam.



John and Anne on their wedding day in 1947 outside Churchill Church, Somerset



"ISS eventually ran all the schools in the camps and we began by teaching them in English as they were expected to be resettled but we had to switch to Vietnamese as it became clear that most would be sent back home. We gave them each a certificate that showed the level of education they had reached to help them fit into the Vietnamese system."

When Anne looks back over her decades of charitable work, one tale from this period sticks in her mind.

"I knew a Vietnamese woman who worked as an interpreter for ISS. Mrs Lye had managed to escape to Hong Kong with her husband and family and we became great friends. Despite having a brother in the United States as well as her status as a translator, they were going to be sent back to Vietnam.

I visited her in Victoria Prison and we had to speak through a glass partition. Both of us were in tears thinking we'd never see each other again. Then at the very last minute the decision was reversed, thanks to the intervention of a human rights lawyer. The family was taken out of the prison and they left for America. We're still in touch to this day."

Anne is the same age as Queen Elizabeth II and like the British monarch she shows little sign of slowing down.

"I've just had a busy weekend but I don't really see it as work. On Saturday I attended a Federation of Handicapped Youth event and on Sunday I went along to a Playright day in Chater Road. I founded both charities and when we started, help came mostly from English ladies. There must have been over a thousand people at each occasion last weekend and yet I was the only foreigner there. Everyone else was local, which is marvellous."

It's obvious that this 'changing of the guard' delights Anne. Had there been a swimming pool nearby, you get the impression she might have dived in to celebrate. It's a family tradition after all. 🍷

The Marden Foundation

It was established as a private foundation in 1973 by the Marden family. Originally its purpose was to fund three Pre Vocational Schools for the benefit of boys and girls between the ages of twelve and fifteen who preferred an education with more practical and technical content. In 1986 the governors decided to widen the objectives and now the Foundation aims to support any project that will help the people of Hong Kong and also any projects that would be unlikely to obtain support from other sources. The Foundation has a particular concern for people with disabilities and for children and young people.

Source: www.hkcss.org.hk

It's a breezy morning on the Peak as parents and helpers arrive with their children at the Childhood Development Centre (CDC), which specialises in individualised early intervention for children with special needs. The air fills with chatter as lessons begin; someone is playing the xylophone in one of the classrooms when a young boy walks by wearing headphones. "They're for something called therapeutic listening," explains Virginia. "It helps regulate their mood." Walking down a narrow corridor to an empty room, she takes a seat in a child-sized chair next to a table very low to the ground. "There are only about three big chairs in this part of the centre," she says. "All the meetings take place on little chairs."

Located in an old wing of the Matilda Hospital, the CDC's facilities are cramped and showing signs of age but that's the least of Virginia's worries. Next August, 40 years after the CDC opened — the hospital will take back the building. Virginia says this isn't necessarily a bad thing because the location is inconvenient and expensive for most parents to reach. When the CDC opened a second centre in Wan Chai they almost

doubled in size. However, losing the Peak centre means the CDC will need to find affordable new premises of at least 10,000 square feet. (It currently pays a token \$1 in annual rent to the hospital.) It also needs to find space for the Springboard Project, which merged with the CDC and has also lost its free government-provided space.

"My day is about solving problems," she says. "We need lots of help finding a new place." But compared to the problem of special needs education in Hong Kong, finding a new home for the CDC seems downright easy.

Virginia was born in Hong Kong to a Chinese mother and British father who was a superintendent for the Royal Hong Kong Police. Her family moved often. "Every time he was transferred to Mongkok station or Sai Ying Pun station, we had to move. I was at Kennedy, I was at Beacon Hill and a school that no longer exists called Boundary Street. Five schools in five years. You learn really great social skills because you have to make friends again and again."

When she was 11, Virginia's parents divorced and her mother married an American. They moved to San Francisco where she quickly acquired an American accent. "It's supposed to be British but you get teased enough going to the States with a British accent at 11 that you decide you have to change," she says. Her time in ESF schools gave her a solid educational foundation. "The geometry I learned at primary school in Hong Kong, I was still using in 10th grade in the States," she says. "I drifted through public school with very good grades."

Virginia never felt at home in the US. "I didn't want to stay there at all" she says. So after she graduated from university with a degree in Ancient History, she returned to Hong Kong and began working as a sales executive at Information Age magazine. That led to a job at Hutchison Vision, which she helped rebrand as Star TV.

When her children were born, in 1999 and 2000, she took to raising them full-time, but her son's diagnosis changed everything.

Virginia knew there was a problem when James wouldn't talk. "My daughter Samantha was one, my son was two — they're about 11 months apart — and Sammy was just jabbering away, but James was still non-verbal," she recalls. "So we took him to get checked out." She travelled around the world, attending conferences on autism and discussing the condition with experts. At first, Virginia and her husband weren't able to find a doctor who would diagnose their son. "It was very hard to get someone in Hong Kong to say there was something wrong. I ended up having to get someone at the University of California, Los Angeles to diagnose him and start getting help." The reason James wasn't talking is because he is autistic, a condition that impairs the ability to communicate and interact in social situations.



THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
AT MATILDA

Fighting for Special Needs

Virginia Wilson set out to help her autistic son and ended up working on behalf of special needs children across Hong Kong.

“Taking this job was, in hindsight, one of the best decisions I’ve made. It has been very fulfilling.”

Virginia Wilson

Chairman of Jockey Club Sarah Roe School Council
Board member, English Schools Foundation
Representative of the Committee of School Council Chairmen of ESF
Member of the AmCham Education Affairs Group, American Chamber of Commerce
Member of the Joint Council for the Physically and Mentally Disabled
Member of Hong Kong Council of Social Services
1974-79, Kennedy School and Beacon Hill School
1989 Bachelor degree at the University of California, Riverside

Nora Anderson-Dieppe fell in love with greyhounds the first time she saw one in a park. “They are such beautiful animals, I was just mesmerised,” she says. Her infatuation led Nora to Greyhound Rescue (www.greyhoundrescue.com.au); an organisation in Sydney that pairs abandoned greyhounds with families. Until recently, she worked nearly full-time for the charity, doing administrative work, publicity and fundraising.

It was an unexpected turn of events for the ESF alumna, who never intended to live in Australia. Born in Hong Kong to a Scottish father and Filipino mother, Nora started her education at Bradbury School, where her father was a teacher. “It was hard because you couldn’t say ‘daddy’ or ‘dad,’ you had to say Mr Anderson,” she says. “Luckily it wasn’t too much of a problem because we weren’t allowed to be in the same class.”

Nora went on to study at Island School. After graduating in 2003, she pursued a degree in restaurant and hotel management at Oxford Brookes University

in England, where she met Ed, who was studying architecture. “Oxford’s quite small so we met going out in the evening with friends,” she says. “The funny thing is, we actually met in our first year of university, very casually, and then we met again two or three years later.” They married shortly thereafter.

England wasn’t an easy place to become an architect and Nora doesn’t speak Cantonese or Mandarin, which limited her options in Hong Kong’s hotel industry. So they decided to take a chance and start a new life in Australia — a country neither of them had any connection with.

It proved to be a fortuitous move. Ed found a job in Sydney almost immediately. And Nora, who felt the restaurant business wasn’t right for her, decided to study interior design. She now works with her husband. “We have one project at the moment; clients who are knocking down a house and building a new one,” she says. “My husband will be doing the exterior and I’ll be doing the interior. We work really well together.”

All the while, Nora works for Greyhound Rescue, which is the only such charity in New South Wales. “It’s run from a small desk in the home of an elderly couple. We have about 60 greyhounds up for adoption and about 15 volunteers,” she explains.

Most of the greyhounds rescued by the organisation are former racing dogs discarded by their owners. Many are in bad shape. “The saddest part is seeing the cruelty,” says Nora. “They’re skinny, they have bad fur, dandruff, ear infections and rotten teeth — all signs of poor nutrition.”

That included Nora’s own nine-month-old greyhound, Millie, whom she adopted after getting a phone call from a breeder in a town south of Sydney. “The next day, we drove down to pick her up. She had a bandage on and the first thing the woman said when we arrived was; ‘She’s just missing a couple of toes, but don’t worry, she’ll be fine.’ When we got home and took the bandage off, we saw the whole front part of her foot was gone. It was just a stump.”

Millie ended up being the first dog in Australia to get a prosthetic paw. (The Daily Telegraph described her as “Australia’s first bionic dog.”) She recovered quickly



The nine-month old Millie.

from the procedure, gaining weight and rambunctiousness.

Despite their potential for speed, most greyhounds are actually quite lazy, according to Nora. “From the age of one or two, you only need to walk them for about 15 minutes to half an hour a day. We get so many different families and couples

adopting dogs but we have a lot of retired people, because they want a lazy dog.”

Though she is now ramping up her design work, Nora continues to devote much of her time to Greyhound Rescue. On alternate Saturdays, she and her husband run a second-hand market stall at North Sydney with proceeds from the sales going to the charity. For Nora, it’s worth the effort: “The happiest moment for me is seeing the greyhounds in their new home and the look on their new parents’ faces. It’s beautiful.” 

“The happiest moment for me is seeing the greyhounds in their new home, seeing the look on their new parents’ faces — that’s beautiful.”

To The Rescue

A move to an unfamiliar country led Nora Anderson-Dieppe to a new calling: rescuing greyhounds.

Nora Anderson-Dieppe

Interior Designer, Dieppe Design

Volunteer, Greyhound Rescue NSW

Graduated from Island School in 2003

2010-2011 Interior design and architecture at The Interior Design Institute

2003-2007 Degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management at Oxford Brookes University

It's half past eight in the morning as Kevin Yeung sips his espresso at the Aberdeen Marina Club. It's how he often starts his day. Although Kevin is one of Hong Kong's busiest people, he makes a point of keeping his evenings clear so he can enjoy dinner with his wife Sherwin and their three-year-old son, Jonathan who goes to Hillside Kindergarten. With a hectic procession of daily meetings he usually starts with breakfast meetings at the club. Kevin feeds off the energy of these encounters; he's a quintessential people person who has parlayed his sociability into a career that has focused on helping others.

Born in Canada in 1974, Kevin's parents — a police officer father and a schoolteacher mother — soon returned to Hong Kong. He started his education at Quarry Bay School. "It was a very happy place for me," he recalls. "I met my first good friends there and remarkably, many are still my friends now." When he moved to Island School, his favourite subject was history; he still remembers the lessons taught by David

James and Chris Forse. "I was particularly fond of history because you can recognise patterns and trends from the past and how they correlate with modern-day events," he says.

Most of all, he remembers ESF schools for their diversity. "You didn't just have kids wearing tailored suits, you also had the sons of tailors or policemen. Everyone was very respectful. Competition was encouraged but more importantly, so was fair play."

Kevin didn't graduate at Island School. His parents divorced when he was 10 years old, and 5 years later, he went to live with his aunt and uncle in Hershey town in the American state of Pennsylvania. It was a move that spun some of the most important threads of Kevin's life. The first big change came with American football. "I was a skinny kid and the first thing I noticed was how much bigger many of my classmates were," he says. After he met some football players at summer school he started to work out with the school team.

"It was far better than any gym membership as the team trained hard twice a day and my goal was just to build muscles and get strong" he says. His teammates were soon impressed with his passing ability and accepted Kevin as one of their own. "I recognised that the quarterback's task was to serve as the team's signal caller and determine the plays. But he does not usually score himself. This is something I learned that's very important in life — my goal is to create opportunities for the team to score, and together we win." He chuckles before looking straight into my eyes with intensity "I'm a far better passer now. It's not a game anymore as people and their families depend on our team performance. What we do really matters. It's important that we get it right."

The transition from skinny new kid to football player took a lot of work. "Pennsylvania is a tough state," he says. "It's predominately a blue collar town. People work

hard and they love sports. To play any sport well you've got to develop mental, rather than physical toughness. You also have to recognise that your adversaries on the field could also be your friends off it."

Hershey presented Kevin with an even bigger opportunity. His aunt, Barbara Miller is a paediatrician at Penn State University's Hershey Medical Center. "She's regarded as one of the best paediatricians on the planet, a Harvard-trained, top gun," he says. "She could have picked any private practice job, but she chose to work in a teaching hospital, taking a tiny fraction of what she could have earned. She viewed life very simply. Her gift was to heal and she was able to achieve maximum impact at a public teaching hospital."

Helping out at the hospital planted the seeds of charity in Kevin's mind. "The catalyst for my philanthropy was my aunt," he says. He went on to study political science

This is something I learned that's very important to the course of my life — my goal is to create opportunities for the team to score, and together we win.

The Signal Caller

Kevin Yeung has combined his strategic talents with a strong teamwork ethic to become one of Hong Kong's most accomplished and inspiring philanthropists.

Kevin Yeung

Chairman, Feeding Hong Kong
1981 to 1985 Quarry Bay
1985 to 1989 Island School
1989 to 1992 Hershey School
1992 to 1996 Studied political science and statistics at the University of New Hampshire

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and statistics at The University of New Hampshire and was also accepted to Columbia Law School. He was broke and didn't want huge law school loans. So friends introduced him to a job in investment banking at the Beacon Group (now part of JP Morgan) and he used his signing bonus to rent his first apartment and purchase his first suit.



Kevin's son, Jonathan, visited the warehouse of Feeding HK.

Investment banking provided Kevin with a comfortable living. "I started off in charity by writing cheques like everyone else," he says. When he was transferred back to Hong Kong, he got involved more directly. Eventually he was invited by the Late Dr Robert Fung to serve as chairman of special fundraising for The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a position he retired from to focus on fighting hunger for the underprivileged in Hong Kong.

"You have to focus on your fights." Hunger in Hong Kong is a serious problem. It's on our doorstep. With one in six people living below the poverty line in Hong Kong, Kevin's concentrated his efforts to fight hunger. In 2009, he helped Gabrielle Kirstein and Christina Dean start Feeding Hong Kong, which rescues food that would otherwise be thrown out. "Food charities have existed here for over 100 years," says Kevin. "Many have done a good job identifying where the poverty is but we discovered there's was still a huge lack of efficiency. They did not communicate with each other and they rarely shared resources."

Rather than operating like a traditional food bank, Feeding Hong Kong links 47 food banks with distributors who are looking to get rid of surplus food. "Shelf space is at a premium in Hong Kong so if something doesn't sell, it gets thrown out," explains Kevin. The connections go beyond donated food — a local Mercedes-Benz dealer donated vans for delivery while Sino Group provides warehouse space. Other companies providing services and provide volunteers.

It all comes down to what Kevin says is the crux of philanthropy in Hong Kong. "There's a Cantonese

saying, ze lik(借力), which means to borrow strength," he says. "Don't just ask for a cheque, always try to show people what the problem is and explore ways for them to help. It takes a community to help a community. You have tap into the strength of people, their friends and their organisations." He says it's those connections, combined with Feeding Hong Kong's team and 200 weekly volunteers that help the charity save 15 tons of food each month.

Kevin dedicates his time to helping organisations grow. In addition to supporting Feeding Hong Kong, he is a mentor and angel investor to many aspiring entrepreneurs in Asia and America. He is a board advisor to the Longines Masters Equestrian Event in Hong Kong. 20,000 people attended this year to watch 25 of the world's best show jumping riders compete "It's all intertwined," he says. "I try to encourage my friends and partners to think of philanthropy as a language — you have to practice it. Yes, you're going to make mistakes but if you're persistent you develop fluency."



Volunteers from Quarry Bay School participated in the food drive.

That extends to his son too. Kevin chose ESF because he wants Jonathan to have the same kind of well-rounded education he enjoyed before he left for the US. "ESF was our one and only choice. My son is a lot more privileged than I was, so my wife and I want him to grow up with a wide mix of people and be respectful to everyone," he says. "And I want him to learn that the most important thing is to start by being a good person." 

When Christian Romano first moved to Hong Kong from southern Australia, he didn't enjoy the experience. "It was humid and smelled different. I was 15 and uprooted from my comfortable life in sleepy Adelaide," he says. Christian comes from a large, tight-knit family — his grandparents lived just down the street from him — so it was a shock to learn that his parents had decided to move all the way to Hong Kong, to work at Discovery College (DC). "It was the first time I had ever been on a plane," he recalls.

Five years later, things have changed. "If you ask me now if I want to go home, the answer is no," says Christian, who works as an educational assistant at DC. His time in Hong Kong has inspired a love for travel and teaching — two unexpected passions he has managed to combine. "I want to travel the world and teach, in Asia, Europe, Africa, America," he says. "My parents kind of regret bringing me here — they say they've created a monster."

It's a big world

Christian and his twin brother Adrian were faced with a one-hour commute every morning from their home in

Discovery Bay to Renaissance College (RCHK) in Ma On Shan. (A younger brother, Justin, stayed closer to home at DC.) Despite that rough introduction, RCHK grew quickly on Christian. "The approach to education was different to my school in Adelaide — teachers were engaging and passionate about their work," he says. "If they're not passionate about it, you can tell."

One year into his time at RCHK, Christian was introduced to the Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) programme by its coordinator, Kathryn Bignold. Students had a choice to do community work for a week in Hong Kong or abroad. Adrian went to build houses in Cambodia; Christian decided to teach in Indonesia. He and eight other students, along with two teachers, flew to Medan, in North Sumatra, and then set out by car to their school in a rural village. "It was meant to be a 10-hour ride but it was actually 18 hours. The roads were in terrible shape," says Christian.

The school was rudimentary. "It was basically just a room with a blackboard," he says. "All the kids showed up on their own motorbikes which was strange to see because they were only 10 years old." Christian taught them

English along with football and volleyball. "The kids were just so full of life. They appreciated all the little things in life in a way that is different to kids in Hong Kong."

After he returned to Hong Kong, the Indonesia experience took a few weeks to sink in but it set the tone for Christian's future. After graduating from RCHK, he planned to take a gap year but instead he was offered the chance to be an educational assistant at DC, working one-on-one with Year 1 and 2 students who need some support with their learning. "I just got out of school and now I'm back in," jokes Christian. "But I love working with children and I can save, which gives me a chance to travel."

Christian says that as the oldest among his cousins in Australia, he is used to being around younger children. "The challenge is instruction," he says — learning how to be easy-going and helpful while also maintaining discipline.

Teaching in Africa

Working at DC has given Christian ample time to travel around Asia and Europe, but he especially wanted to visit Africa. "My trip to Europe last year was great but it was very self-focused," he says. This time, he wanted to do something useful. Along with his friends Charlie Bilton and

James Hirst — both 2012 graduates of West Island School — he found an internship through an organisation called African Impact that gave him the chance to work in a rural Zambian school for five weeks. Every morning, Christian woke up at 6:45am in Livingstone, the nearest town, and drove for an hour to Mwandu Community School.

"It was deep in the bush," he says. "All you would see in the village was the school and a water tank." Some students had to walk eight or nine kilometres to reach the school, often with no shoes and little clothing, despite temperatures that dropped to seven degrees in the morning. Even with those hardships though, Christian says his students were the most eager and well-behaved he has



Christian (middle) with two other volunteers, James Hirst and Charlie Bilton, and the students in Africa

The Travelling Teacher

A school trip to Indonesia gave Christian Romano a passion for combining teaching with travel — something the Renaissance College graduate is building a life around.

You teach something for weeks, and once it finally sinks in, and you see the kids have that eureka moment — it's just awesome.

Christian Romano

Graduated from Renaissance College in 2011
2011-2013 Education Assistant, Discovery College

ever seen. "You have 30 kids just looking at you with their big eyes — I couldn't believe how keen they were. I'd ask them what they do when they get home and they would say, 'Oh, I'll study maths.'"

Christian taught Year 5 students, who ranged from nine to 14 years old — "It depends on how academic they are," he says. With the help of the Zambian curriculum, he prepared his own lesson plans, and there were after-school activities like a book club and conservation education. "It's massively rewarding. You teach something for weeks, and once it finally sinks in and you see the kids have that eureka moment — it's just awesome." Christian says he learned as much from his time teaching in Zambia as his students did. "The last week I was there, I was a much better teacher than in the second week."

Christian's work was supplemented by contributions from Discovery College. "The students really worked to establish a connection between themselves and the Mwandu Community School," he says. "One hundred kilogrammes' worth of donations have been sent to Zambia from the DC community. I was humbled by this response and very grateful for the support."

On the road

Teaching in Zambia only gave fuel to Christian's travel bug. Livingstone is not far from Victoria Falls and some of the most spectacular natural environments in southern Africa, so at weekends, Christian would go kayaking and bungee jumping. He also went on lion walks with the help of his housemates, who were working at an animal sanctuary. "The lions had been injured so they were nurturing them and they were very calm. You could even touch them. You just have to be firm. Don't kneel, because that's a sign of submission." Animals that most people only ever see at the zoo were commonplace outside Livingstone. "There were giraffes and elephants everywhere. Once, we were having dinner outside and a couple of rhinos strolled past. It was surreal."

In July Christian will be heading to Prague to undertake a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) course. After that, he hopes to continue on from his experience in Africa by travelling and teaching children all over the world. 

STAY IN TOUCH



We are keen to build links with the alumni of all ESF Schools. You are welcome to visit the following alumni websites and enroll as alumni of your school and network with your classmates.

Island School
King George V School
Sha Tin College
South Island School
West Island School
Peak School

<http://alumni.island.edu.hk>
<http://alumni.kgv.edu.hk>
<http://alumni.shatincollege.edu.hk>
<http://alumni.sis.edu.hk>
<http://alumni.wis.edu.hk>
<http://www.ps.edu.hk/about-us/alumni>

Providing your personal information is strictly voluntary. All information collected will be passed to individual ESF school(s) solely for the purpose of alumni liaison.

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Sahoro, Hokkaido in Japan

Located on Japan's northerly Hokkaido island, Sahoro boasts some of Asia's most perfect powder snow. Children's clubs including skiing and snowboarding classes for kids aged from 4 years and 8 years respectively are among the many superb family-friendly facilities. And after another day on the slopes where better to unwind over a Japanese "Nabe" hot pot than in Sahoro's atmospheric restaurant?

Yabuli, Heilongjiang in China

Commanding stunning mountain views and boasting Asia's longest ski run, Yabuli is equally good fun for all the family. Probably China's premier winter holiday spot, the resort offers rental of equipment from top brands, plus expert skiing instructors from exclusive partner, Ecole du Ski Francais (ESF). Kids can even get medals and passports for passing expert-supervised courses.

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HELPING OUT



Michael Clachers

Fresh out of school and just 18 years old, Michael Clachers is already skilled at getting people to shed their complacency and join a good cause. His effort at founding the Environmental Focus Group at West Island School earned him the ESF Chairman's Award for Commitment and Contribution to Service earlier this year.

Volunteering has been a central part of Michael Clachers' life since his first days of secondary school. "People leading volunteer work need to make it look fun," says Michael, who is now taking a gap year in his native Glasgow. "We had a big video campaign for No Air Conditioning Period and Earth Hour, which made it look fun, especially to younger students. If you start in Year 7 it's a lot easier to continue than if you're in Year 12 or 13."

Michael's volunteer work stretches back to his time in Tianjin, where he moved with his family from Scotland when he was eight years old. "It was a big change, because at the time Tianjin wasn't really developed," he recalls. Michael attended a small international school where he signed up to work with a student environmental group. "I was first inspired in Year 7 science, learning about climate change and the impact that humans are having on the environment," he says. "It just kind of started from there."

In 2009, Michael's family moved to Hong Kong and he enrolled at West Island School (WIS). He helped start the Environmental Focus Group two years later. "There wasn't anything like it at West Island," he says. For their first project, the group tackled waste management at the school; first by replacing plastic cutlery with reusable utensils, and then by rearranging recycling bins so that they were near rubbish bins. "We found that students recycled more if it was more accessible" he explains.

Initially Michael set about raising awareness and getting more students involved. "In the first year, it took quite a lot of time but by the second year, we had people running their own groups. One made recycled products to sell, like paper binders made out of old newspapers and cards. Once we got into that kind of structure it was a lot easier."

By the time Michael was in Year 13, he was able to pass the torch onto younger students. He then started an ESF-wide environmental sustainability group, which he co-founded with students from KGV and Renaissance

College in order to promote inter-school collaboration on environmental issues.

At the same time, Michael was planning ahead. "I was most interested in science subjects like biology and chemistry," he says. That led him to consider a career in medicine. "I find how the body and chemicals interact, and different things that affect the body and how it protects itself very interesting."

But for any medical school to consider his application, Michael first needed work experience. His education counsellor, Catherine Schofield, and PE teacher, David McTaggart, at WIS helped arrange an internship with the Hong Kong Rugby Football Union's first aid team. "If there were injuries we would go out there to help clean wounds and stabilise fractures before the ambulance came," he says.

When he graduated from WIS earlier this year, Michael went to Romania for a two-month internship in the emergency department of a public hospital. "Not many people think of Europe as a place where you can volunteer and make a difference," he says. Working with doctors and nurses, he set up IVs, did ECGs and helped ventilate patients as they were being moved from the ward to the MRI scanner. "I was quite lucky in that I had experience in rugby, so I was able to get more hands-on with the patients."

Michael says it was a gratifying experience. "I was nervous and would come out thinking, 'No, I don't want to do this anymore.' But it only confirmed that I want to be a doctor." So far, Michael has applied to four medical schools in the UK and he plans to start volunteering with a local first aid service.

For the time being, Michael is enjoying being back in Scotland — his first time living at home in more than 10 years. "There's a lot of family I haven't seen much of since I've been overseas," he says. Eventually, he thinks he might once again leave the UK in search of work. "But I haven't really thought that far ahead." 

Who's Who



Felix Leung

- South Island Schools (Class of 2008)
- Imperial College London (2008-2011)
BSc Environmental Biology
- Imperial College London (2011-2012)
MSc Ecology
- University of Exeter (2013-Present) PhD
in Geography

"My wish of becoming an ecologist was inspired by my teachers Ian McKirdy (Geography) and Andy Morris (Biology) from SIS. They were passionate about teaching and were very supportive and encouraging.

While studying at Imperial College London, I grasped every opportunity to broaden my exposure to ecology. I worked as a research assistant in a National Park in Indonesia. I helped scientists collect data in open water, mangrove. Meanwhile, I have also learnt about coral reef and tropical forest ecology.

I am now a PhD candidate at the University of Exeter, researching the impact of climate change on food security. I have co-authored several scientific papers."

"When I went to University I studied subjects that interested me such as East Asian history and political science, but never would have thought I would end up in the Automotive Industry as a Service Consultant/ Assistant Service Manager. I guess since I love cars and love talking to people and helping them out with problems.

I work at Audi in Newmarket Ontario now."



Lucas Leung

- Quarry Bay School, South Island School (Class of 2003)
- Pickering College in Newmarket, Ontario, Canada
- University Toronto Hon. B.A. East Asian Studies



Hoosenally Rabab

- Kennedy School (Class of 2002)
- South Island School (Class of 2009)

"I like listening to calm music, reading books, and watching movies, cooking, playing tennis, dancing, and hiking. I like to also do exercises daily such as yoga to keep myself fit and going for a walk on the beach. I always like to upgrade myself when I get free time."



Rolf Clausnitzer

- King George V School (Class of 1959)
- Leicester University (1961 - 1964),
BA in Combined Studies (English Literature, French, German, Sociology)
- Head Instructor, Wing Chun Kuen Academy of Western Australia.

"My years at KGV were amongst the most memorable and enjoyable of my life. A highlight was an introduction to the late Bruce Lee by my brother Frank. It sparked off a lifelong interest in Wing Chun Kuen.

In 1964 I returned to Hong Kong and was accepted by the late master Wong Shun Leung as his first foreign student. In 1969 I wrote the first ever book on Wing Chun in a foreign language.

Over the decades I have worked as an English teacher, management consultant (external and internal), and Three Principles teacher, in Australia, Iran, Switzerland, UK, and Hong Kong. In 1981 my family and I migrated to Perth. Since my semi-retirement in 2002, I have been spending my time teaching Wing Chun Kuen, counselling/life coaching, and writing."

"I graduated from Hong Kong University in 1988 with a Bachelor of Social Sciences degree. I worked for a publicly listed company that owned the Hyatt Regency hotel. During my time at SIS, I witnessed the move from Causeway Bay to Nam Fung Road — what an upgrade that was! My husband also attended ESF Schools — Kennedy School and Island School. My claim to fame is that both my daughters graduated from South Island School. It was a real honour to have my teachers (from all those years ago!) share their wisdom with my next generation."



Monica Motwani (Monica Vaswani)

- South Island School (Class of 1985)



Colin Parker

- Sha Tin College
(Class of 1995)

"When we fly Cathay Pacific, there is a good chance that we are in the good hands of a Sha Tin graduate. We will not be seeing them in person on board though as they are pilots in the cockpit barred from passengers during flight.

I am one of a good number of Sha Tin graduates taking up flying as a career. I am now a Senior Captain with Cathay Pacific, flying the Boeing 777 in Asia, Europe and North America. I joined the Cadet Pilot program of Cathay Pacific right after completing university education in UK. After 14 months training in Australia, I became a Second Officer flying Boeing 747-400 and in 2002 became a Junior First Officer on the Boeing 777 fleet before making my way to this present rank."

We welcome alumni to share their latest updates, achievements or interesting experiences.

Please go to http://www.esf.edu.hk/alumni_profile to submit details.

UPCOMING REUNIONS

WIS HONG KONG REUNION FOR THE CLASS OF 2013

West Island School (WIS) Alumni Association is hosting an Afternoon Tea for the Class of 2013 at 4 pm on 19 December at WIS. Alumni are welcome to catch up with former classmates and teachers to share experiences of the first term at university. Please contact Ms Fleur Murdoch, Communications Officer (fleur.murdoch@wis.edu.hk) for enquiries.

RENAISSANCE COLLEGE REUNION IN UK

The second Renaissance College (RCHK) overseas reunion will be held at Millennium Gloucester Hotel, London on 15 January 2014. Come and meet Dr Brown and former school mates and learn more about the latest developments at RCHK. RSVP to alumni@rchk.edu.hk by 8 January 2014.

KING GEORGE V SCHOOL LONDON REUNION 2014

The King George V (KGV) London Reunion 2014 takes place in Farringdon on 24 January and is an opportunity to reconnect with old friends from the classroom and staff room. The event will take place in an historic crypt and will see alumni from across the decades enjoy a drinks reception; three course meal and an after-dinner speech from 1990s alumni and Olympic cyclist David Millar. Full event and ticket details are available from the events page on the KGV website. www.kgv.edu.hk

ISLAND SCHOOL REUNION



Island School (IS) held a reunion at The Globe in Central on 13 November which was attended by over 50 alumni. Principal, Chris Binge and his wife, who is also an Islander, welcomed alumni to the event. The school was thankful to Patrick Gatherer (Da Vinci 2003), Manager at the Globe, who provided the venue and helped organise the reunion. Photos are available on the IS alumni website (<http://alumni.island.edu.hk>). For enquiries, please contact Katie Forster, Communications & Events Manager. (katie.forster@online.island.edu.hk).

THE FUNG FOUNDATION LRC

The Fung Foundation has made a HK\$15 million donation to KGV that will go towards the building of a new Learning Resource Centre and convert the upper floor of the 79 year old Peel Block into a multi-purpose learning environment, providing students with a wide range of services and a café. The Fung LRC is another example of alumni supporting developments to enhance learning for future generations of KGV'ers, and is due to open in May 2014. Stay connected with us through the school LinkedIn group, which boasts over 610 members and our Facebook page; already liked by more than 1,420 alumni. For enquiries, please contact alumni@kgv.edu.hk, call +852 2760 6681 or visit www.alumni.kgv.edu.hk.

SHA TIN COLLEGE ALUMNI CAREER EVENING



On 25 October, alumni from a range of occupational fields joined more than 60 Sha Tin College (STC) students at an Alumni Career Evening jointly organised by the College and the Alumni Association. Students were offered career advice, mentoring and mock interviews and they could also attend training sessions on resume writing and interview techniques run by the Principal. More photos of the event are available in the STC alumni website (<http://alumni.shatincollege.edu.hk>).

STC ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

To strengthen liaison between the College and its alumni, Sha Tin College published its inaugural Alumni Newsletter in November 2013. The newsletter will be published three issues each year in electronic format to inform alumni of developments; provide updates on the work of the Alumni Association and share news of individual graduates. The College is pleased with the positive response to the issue.



STC alumni newsletter

Red Hot Flight Deals

Auckland	Economy return from \$5,690* QF	New York	Economy return from \$7,200* BR
Beijing	\$2,260* KA	Paris	\$6,780* BA
Boracay	\$1,670* PR	San Francisco	\$5,700* SQ
Hawaii	\$5,860* DL	Sydney	\$4,690* QF
Kota Kinabalu	\$2,140* KA	Tokyo	\$2,340* DL
London	\$6,310* VS	Vancouver	\$4,570* CX
Maldives	\$3,270* HX	Yangon	\$2,090* SQ

Holiday deals to your favourite destinations.

Bali Flights + 3 Nights 5-Star

INCLUDES Accommodation at Conrad Bali with daily breakfast and return airport transfers.
from **\$7,799*** CX

Bangkok Flights + 3 Nights 4-Star

INCLUDES Accommodation at Double Tree by Hilton Sukhumvit Bangkok with daily breakfast.
from **\$2,699*** CX

Danang Flights + 2 Nights 4½-Star

INCLUDES Accommodation at Furama Resort Danang with daily breakfast and return airport transfers.
from **\$3,999*** KA

Ho Chi Minh City Flights + 3 Nights 4½-Star

INCLUDES Accommodation at Majestic Saigon with daily breakfast.
from **\$3,599*** CX

Koh Samui Flights + 3 Nights 5-Star

INCLUDES Accommodation at Anantara Lawana Samui with daily breakfast and return airport transfers.
from **\$6,699*** PG

Phuket Flights + 3 Nights 5-Star

INCLUDES Accommodation at Angsana Laguna Phuket with daily breakfast.
BONUS Stay 3 pay 2.
from **\$4,499*** KA

Seoul Flights + 3 Nights 5-Star

INCLUDES Accommodation at Renaissance Seoul Hotel.
from **\$4,499*** CX

Siem Reap Flights + 3 Nights 4½-Star

INCLUDES Accommodation at Sokha Angkor Resort with daily breakfast.
from **\$4,099*** KA

Singapore Flights + 2 Nights 5-Star

INCLUDES Accommodation at Shangri-La Hotel Singapore with daily breakfast.
BONUS Stay 3 pay 2.
from **\$2,899*** CX

Taipei Flights + 2 Nights 5-Star

INCLUDES Accommodation at The Sherwood Hotel Taipei.
from **\$2,599*** CX



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