



# 4Hands

THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF POZNAN MONTHLY





# Congratulations!

## Wielkopolska Badminton Tournament

Our men's badminton team won the bronze medal at the XIX Wielkopolska School Olympic Games final held at the sports center in Kleszczewo. Eight best teams from Wielkopolska played in the tournament. Our team - Kajetan Jeziak and Marcin Glaser, both GIII - won four games and lost just one, securing a spot at the podium. Congratulations!!!



## ISoP Annual Badminton Tournament

By Michał Pyda, PE Teacher

Middle School students competed on Thursday, January 11. After very tight singles, Kajetan Jeziak, GIII, became the school champion. Second place - Wojciech Glaser, G8b, third place - Maurycy Gawłowski, G10.

Primary School students competed on Friday, January 20. The best players turned out to be:

Boys Category: first place - Aleksander Bednarz, G7b; second place - Ksawery Downar Dukowicz, G7b; third place - Jakub Moś, G5a.

Girls Category: first place - Natasza Ładziak, G7a; second place Pola Machonska, G7b; third place Patrycja Polowczyk, G7b. Congratulations to all players!

## Studniówka

(100 - Days - Before - Exams Dance)  
January 13, 2018





## Art and Design Club

By Katarzyna Kudlińska, K1 Teacher

Every Thursday at Art and Design Club we create various paper crafts connected to different events in the year. The children are proud to present their winter collection.



## Drama Club

By Monika Kasior, G4 Teacher

Drama Club is an extracurricular activity for G3, G4 and G5 students, who would like to learn something about acting, practise writing through making playscripts and simply have fun. We always start with some warm up activities, games and short plays before coming up with an idea for the new play. Making one is hard work for children as it involves a lot of time, commitment and compromise. Once we come up with the script, the roles must be divided and, believe when I say, "it is definitely the most challenging part!" :) Later, we practise, practise and practise. Sometimes it takes shorter time, sometimes longer. No matter what, we don't give up! Costumes and decorations are the last things we consider.

Last but not least, I would like to use this opportunity and say big THANK YOU to Miss Joanna Markisz, Art Teacher, who always helps a lot with stage arrangement and to all the parents for their support anytime we organise the shows!



## 10 Great Reasons Why Children Should Be Playing With Clay

By Clara Colombo, G1 Teacher

1. It's therapeutic
2. Facilitates emotional expression
3. Promotes sensory development
4. It's called play-based learning
5. Improves social skills
6. Creative exploration in colors
7. Learning creative symbolism in a fun way
8. Learning the value of excellence and discipline
9. Promotes a holistic left & right brain development
10. Just because children LOVE it!







## Community Helpers - Dentist

By Kasia Tabaczyńska, K2a Teacher

K2a hosted a special guest during their Unit of Inquiry called *Community Helpers Play Different Roles in a Society*. It was Tony Hadyniak's grandma, Mrs Ewa Brodziak, who is a dentist. During her visit Mrs Brodziak talked to the children about keeping their teeth healthy and clean and gave them tips on how to brush their teeth. The children thought about good foods to eat and those that might have too much sugar, which are bad for their teeth. All the children were given little dental gifts and went home with big smiles :).



## K2's Community Helpers Unit: Fireman

By Monika Młodystach, K2b Teacher

Our visit at the Fire Station in Luboń was a great experience. Together with K2a group we had a chance to inquire into fireman's work. Mr. Waldemar Pruss, a real fireman, greeted us with a big smile and told us all about his profession. We learned about the most important equipment the firemen use. All the children were very excited to sit both in the newest and oldest fire engines there. As during this Unit of Inquiry we were also talking about another important community helper – a postman, we decided to send a thank you card to Mr. Pruss. Therefore, we also visited the nearby Post Office. What a lovely walk we had!





## K2s and G1s at *Cylia* By Agata Brzezińska, G1 Teacher



CYLIA  
*Theater time*



On Monday, November 27, K2s and G1s went to Teatr Cortiqué in Poznań to see an amazing ballet *Cylia*. They watched a story of a complicated relationship between Amirra and her daughter Cylia. The mother lives in a wealthy world, whereas the daughter loves nature and simplicity. Step by step, they come to understand each other and the story has a happy ending. The students were excited to watch colourful costumes and beautiful choreography. They admired the talent of students who attend various ballet schools in Poznań and young acrobats who prepared a great show.

## G2s - The Ice Cream Makers

By Małgorzata Zamożniewicz, G2 Teacher



As a provocation before we introduced our new Unit of Inquiry about states of matter, G2s prepared their own ice cream! They were excited to find out this can be done in our classrooms. Sofie Kalwani, G2a, explains the steps they needed to follow:

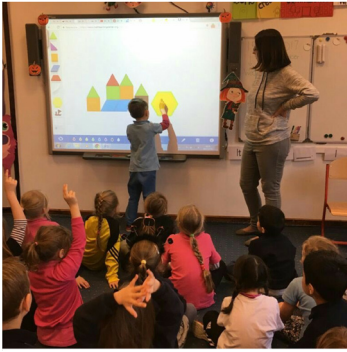
First we took a small ziplock bag. We put milk, sugar and vanilla extract in it and mixed everything. After that we took a big ziplock bag. We put ice cubes and salt in it. Next we put the small ziplock bag in the big one. We had to shake it for a few minutes. When we opened the bag, we had ice cream! Then we enjoyed our ice cream.





## This is us! G1b!

We love Math! Smart board interactive games? LEGO Math? Sure!



Experiments! 'V' like 'volcano':)

Finally! We know all the letters and we can read!



Who doesn't like snow, right?

What's that smell? Guess and win in a 'smelly game!'  
Thank you Kuba's mum!



Getting ready for Christmas:  
Advent Calendar - make something good!  
Little Elves - the best Santa's helpers:)



Making others happy makes us happy!

Forces - new Unit, new challenge! We were pushing and pulling in Sjoelbak - traditional Dutch game - perfect fit for our unit. Thank you to Laurien's parents!





## G4's at the Archaeological Museum

By Pearl Nwoko and Amelia Szygenda, G4a

On Wednesday, September 20, both G4 classes went to the Archaeological Museum in Poznan. Our Unit of Inquiry was about Ancient Civilizations (Central Idea: *Ideas and Achievements of Ancient Civilizations Still Exist in the Modern World*) and the trip was planned to help us learn more. Our first tour guide took us to a room where he had prepared a presentation about Ancient Mesopotamia. Later, another guide walked us through the exposition about Ancient Egypt.

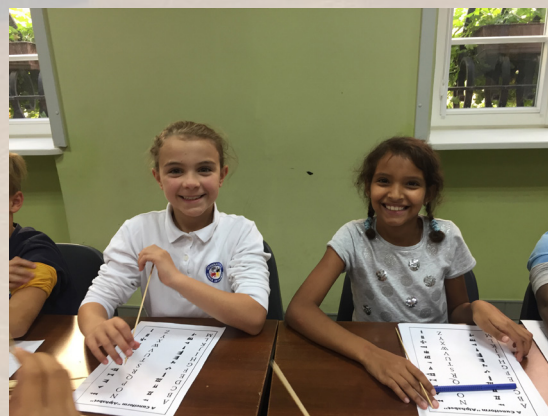
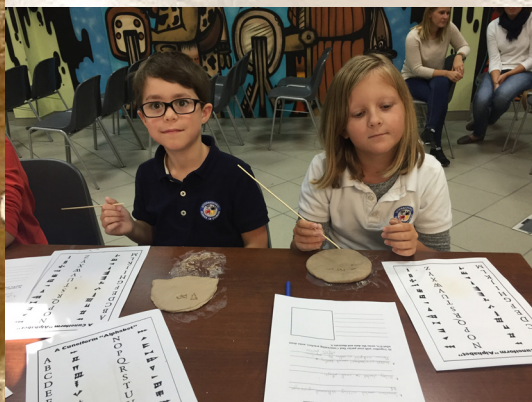
During our visit we learned that the name of Sumerian writing is called cuneiform. Sumeria was the first urban civilization located in the region of Ancient Mesopotamia. After the presentation we got to mold clay into clay tablets and write our names on them and we could take them home. We bet you didn't know that Sumerians "invented" the first superhero, called Gilgamesh. But he was actually the king of Ur.

Our second tour guide gave us a tour about Ancient Egypt. First we saw a real obelisk (except for the top, which was made of bronze). An obelisk is a tall, narrow monument with a small pyramid-like top that was placed in front of every temple in Ancient Egypt. It is made of granite and is about 100 feet (30 meters) tall. Then we saw a statue of a goddess named Sekhmet. Sekhmet was the goddess of war and fire. When we saw the statue, we saw this small object that looks like Jesus' cross only that on the top there is an upside down oval. It's called Ankh. It's a sign of power.

The guide told us a lot of interesting facts. One of them it is that people from Ancient Egypt could buy a man-made cat because sometimes they couldn't have the real one. Ancient Egyptians also invented papyrus, which is a kind of paper the Egyptians used for writing. We saw some figures which they made. We saw pharaoh figures and some gods/goddesses.

The guide also told us how they mummified dead people. First they made the brain pour out through the nose. Second they cut on the side of the body (around the waist), and took out all the organs (eg: liver and lungs) except the heart because they believed it carried all the truth about the person-if he/she was honest or a cheat. Third when they put out organs, and the body was then flat. Later, they put herbs and oil inside the body. And after this all they wrapped the body in bandages/cloth with two layers. They also put magical amulets and good charms for good luck. Then they put it all into sarcophagus (a kind of coffin).

The trip was fun because we learned a lot about Ancient Civilizations and we hope that the future G4s will enjoy the museum as much as we did.





## G4a's Healthy Snacks

By Pearl Nwoko, G4a

Our previous Unit was about healthy lifestyles and one of the aspects of being healthy is healthy eating, therefore, we had HEALTHY WEDNESDAYS throughout the Unit - we made different food every week! The first thing we made was a fruit smoothie. The ingredients were: mango, kiwi, banana, baby spinach leaves, and apple juice. We were divided in two groups because not everybody wanted to add the spinach leaves (by the way, the boys were in the group without the spinach). When we finished making the smoothies, everyone tried both kinds and some of us liked the smoothie with the added spinach more. Later we even got to try the baby spinach leaves and they were good.

The next thing we made was oatmeal-cranberry-coconut cookies and we were divided in four groups. The ingredients were: cranberries, honey, coconut flakes, coconut oil, a pinch of baking soda, oatmeal, flour, and bits of chocolate. We had to weigh the ingredients first and then mix them all. If the dough was not sticky enough, we added a little more coconut oil to it and mixed it again. Then, we used a tablespoon to scoop dough and form our cookies. Then, we took them to the kitchen and had them baked for fifteen minutes. Viola! They were scrummy!

We also made a fruit salad during our Spanish and German lesson! There were many fruits in the salad: raspberries, kiwis, grapes, oranges, bananas, apples, etc.

The next thing we made was a salad. These are the ingredients: cherry tomatoes, cucumber, lettuce mix, valeriana lettuce, mozzarella, olives, and olive oil (as salad dressing). First we sliced: cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, olives. Then we added the mozzarella cheese and lettuce and drizzled olive oil on top. The last thing we made was sandwiches. We used: whole grain bread, Gouda cheese, lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, radishes, and cucumbers. They were yummy! Bon Appétit!





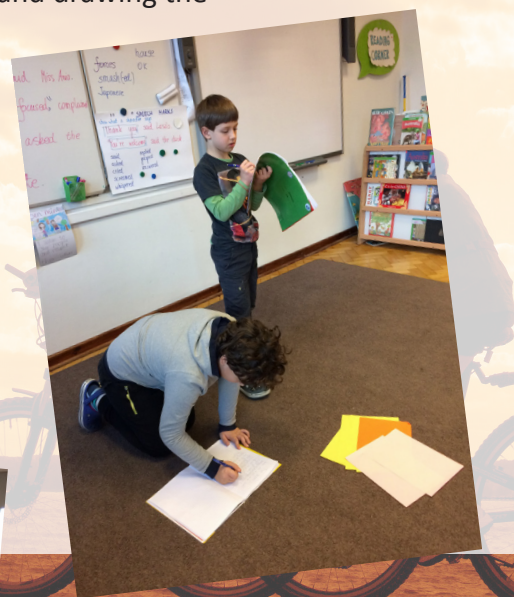
## G4b Research on a Healthy Lifestyle

By Marta Niewiadomska, G4 Teacher

Shortly before Christmas, G4b students conducted a series of surveys on various aspects of healthy lifestyles, for example, on sleeping habits, balanced diet, dealing with stress, doing sports and having regular doctor's check-ups.

Students task was to choose one aspect, form some questions, choose a research group and then carry out the survey. Next stage was devoted to interpreting the collected data and drawing the graphs representing the findings. Then, the students were asked to describe their results and write some recommendations on the basis of what they have found out during our Unit. The last stage took place right after the New Year's Eve and included oral presentation in front of the chosen study groups. Some sample questions are: "What do you do one hour before going to bed?", "How many servings of carbohydrates do you eat per day?", "What makes you stressed?", "How often do you exercise?", "How often do you have blood tests?".

The findings show that our ISOp students (G2-G6) have a pretty healthy lifestyle, except from the fact that they do not sleep long enough! Would you like to know what the possible consequences might be? Ask our G4 experts! :)





## G4's Trip to Orkiszowe Pola

By Krzysztof Bogdański, G4a

Unit of Inquiry - Central Idea: *Taking Care of Ourselves Allows us to Be Healthy in Many Different Ways*

On Monday, November 13, G4a class went to a healthy food center called Orkiszowe Pola. In there you can buy healthy food and learn to prepare healthy meals. We went there to attend a workshop concerning healthy and balanced breakfast options. We learned to make several healthy dishes, for example: porridge, three types of spreads to put on the bread, and a chocolate pudding. We spent one and a half hour making them. After making the healthy breakfast, we ate it. It was very yummy. After the workshop, we went to the Orkiszowe Pola shop and bought some healthy things to eat. It was an AWESOME trip!



## Healthy Lifestyles Unit in G4

By Monika Kasior, G4 Teacher

G4 students were very lucky to host many guest speakers throughout our recent Unit of Inquiry. They had a chance to listen and speak to a doctor (General Practitioner), one of our student's dad. They had individual zumba lessons with one of our P.E. teachers and yoga practice with one of the mums. It was a great experience!





# Newspaper Club Corner

## Christmas Around the World

Christmas is a very special holiday that is celebrated all around the world! Christmas trees, Santa Claus, carols and delicious food seem to be a part of it everywhere. Even though we all seem to spend this time in a similar manner, each country, culture or even family has a different way to make this day extraordinary! We asked our teachers about their Christmas traditions.

### Nigeria

**Ebenezer Nwoko, Music Teacher**

**By Emma Noutsou, Nikola Andrzejewska, Maciej Mazur, all G3b**

In my language Ekere si mesi means Merry Christmas! We celebrate it starting December 25, for two weeks. Usually, we gather with families, friends, well-wishers, neighbours and even strangers. Traditionally, we don't have a Christmas tree, but recently my people have started to implement the concept. The same happened with the Santa Claus - in the past we didn't have him and now Santa is present in our culture. People make him fit into their own nature and purpose, for example by portraying Santa Clause with the same skin complexion as the natives. We celebrate Christmas with lots of carnivals, eating, sharing gifts and money, singing and dancing, visiting families and friends and also going to church. We eat a lot of delicious food from around the world, but it can be anything you like, up to the individual's capabilities. I got most gifts when I was a child, but if I could choose something for myself now, it would be a ticket to an exotic place. The best present I got, was the fact that my kids managed to think about something to give to me and my wife. My best memories about Christmas are connected with my childhood. I was always excited to visit my village, especially my awesome uncle who was very generous and always had great gifts for us!

### Argentina

**Clara Colombo, G1 Teacher**

**By Antonina Cholewińska, G3a, and Michał Fedorczuk, Janina Milejczak, G3b**

In Spanish Christmas is called Navidad and we celebrate it on December 24. We set up a traditional, green Christmas tree and we gather with even 30 people just from our closest families! We start the celebration around 9 pm and we eat the traditional dishes, such as asado - the Argentinian barbecue. Santa comes around midnight - he is called Papá Noel and he looks just like the Santa from the Coca Cola ads! As long as we're not naughty, we get Christmas gifts. The best present I got is a 365 makeup box and this year I'd love to get a nails lamp. My best memories include spending the holidays with the whole family - when I was a kid we used to travel for two days, just so we can be close to them. It was amazing to be around all my cousins, aunts, uncles and grandpas. We used to prepare a cozy Christmas place and many more crazy things.

### Poland

**Marta Matuszewska, G3 Teacher**

**By Maks Przewoźniak G5b, and Antek Tokarczuk, Michał Olszewski, G3a**

I am Polish so my Christmas is called Boże Narodzenie. We start the celebration with the Christmas Eve on December 24, followed by two days of holidays. Together with my family we put up a real Christmas tree that is very colorful. We believe that Santa brings presents, but in Wielkopolska region we call him Gwiazdor. He has a red hat, a white and red outfit and big black boots. I spent my Christmas at my parents house, with my family members, eating carp fish and other dishes, cooking and talking, spending time together. For me, the best present that I would like to get is love, friendship and more time with my family. The one thing that I like the most about holidays, and I consider to be my best memory, is the fact that I can spend this time with my closest relatives.



In my native language - Malai - Christmas is called Hari Christmas or Hari Natal. We celebrate it on the same day as you do in Poland, December 25. Since it is too hot to have a real Christmas tree, we usually have a plastic one and we decorate it with the traditional ornaments. We celebrate mostly with friends and colleagues, but some people travel to meet their families as well. We don't think Santa put presents under the Christmas tree for us - we just exchange gifts. I always appreciate practical gifts the most, like vouchers or movie tickets. The best one I got was for a spa day with a massage and facial treatment. We know Santa as Santa Claus, the same Santa with red clothes, big tummy, looking happy. Recently though, very often he is portrayed with Hawaiian shirt and shorts, as well as with the surfing board. The most traditional thing to appear on our table is the Christmas log cake. For me the best thing connected with Christmas is having dinner with friends, exchanging gifts and playing ukulele and singing songs together.

## Christmas Class Celebrations



## Common Room

By Monika Kasior, G4 Teacher



There was a lot happening in the common room before Christmas too! Apart from usual games everybody always joins so willingly, we were listening to Christmas music and decorated the Christmas tree together. Moreover, students and the common room team practised fine motor skills. Miss Natalia Rolicz, our common room good spirit, prepared a lot of crafts to do, for example: Christmas stars, trees, reindeer etc. The outcomes were fantastic! Even the youngest ones managed to complete their beautiful works with smiles on their faces.



# Christmas Market December 15, 2017





# My Hobbies: Writing Books and Games

By Maks Przewoźniak, G5b

I am very happy to share with you my two hobbies. The first achievement is my book. I am a Polish book writer and I create a series of books called *Maks Detektyw*. This book is about myself in the future as a detective and I started to write it when I was 4. For now, I finished the first part and now I'm working on the second one. The book includes first names of my classmates, so if you ever find your name in my book - don't scream like crazy! I work on this book when I have free time or when I get a low grade from a test. I am very happy to be writing this book! The books will be around 10 to 30 pages each, so they are not very long. The last part of my first book took me seven hours to check. It is very hard to make books with a time limit, as I always set a deadline for myself, but then I end up doing everything on the last day.

Now the second thing I really like are video games. I create them in a software called Gamemaker Studio 2. To make the video games I use code: if you want to go on the easy way you can drag and drop. There are various boxes that create the code - you set the numbers, names and many more. You can make games very fast! If you want to start coding, you can search Youtube for some tutorials. I recommend searching for a channel called Heartbeast - the person shows how to use code to create games and also how to create pixel art. This youtuber is an awesome guide.

Thanks for reading about my hobbies!

## Winter Is Finally Here !







# PYP Ch Show

December 9, 2023





# Christmas 2017





# 2017 PYP Christmas Show: Nick Alone and Mr. Bean in New York

By Monika Kasior, G4 Teacher

The 2017 PYP Christmas Show was held on Saturday, December 9, at the Music School Auditorium. What a day it was! The day filled with joy and laughter, full of singing, clapping and dancing. It all started with a gorgeous concert of K, K2 and G1 students dressed up as angels, reindeer and little santas, accompanied by music teachers playing the piano. Later, we were taken on a journey to New York with Nick, not a very well-behaved boy who meets a ghost and gathers some puzzles each time he does something nice. In the end Nick understands he needs to change and thanks the ghost.

I may not be the only one thinking that the story of Nick recalls well-known and unforgettable novel of Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol*.

The students did an amazing job on stage, were excellently prepared and showed a lot of enthusiasm! We, teachers, are so proud of them! Additionally, some of the G5 students responsible for the 2017 Christmas Show have also been members of the school's Drama Club for three years already. Throughout that time, they have developed their acting skills tremendously.

This school year, a new Drama Club started - for a slightly younger group of students (G3s and G4s). The students also had their performance on the big stage – their first one! The show was a short episode of Mr. Bean, who meets carolers, dancers dressed as babies and Santa right before Christmas time. It was a very stressful and exciting moment for my shiny little actors, who proved that anything is possible on stage. Even though we had had a lot of difficulties during our preparations and rehearsals as the kids were often absent due to sickness, they did it and made me very proud of them. A week later, with a lot of positive energy everyone started thinking about the next show. I can't wait myself!

Mr.Bean in New York actors:

Amelia Szygenda as Mr. Bean

Natalia Campbell as Mr. Bean's Teddy

Antonina Cholewinska as Mr. Bean's Girlfriend

Gabrysia Lukowska as Santa Claus

Hania Seo, Pearl Nwoko, Dominika Grobelna, Lena Tomikowska, Wiktor Cichocki and Antonina Sendlewska as carolers

Sophie Robinson, Maciej Mazur, Janina Milejczak, Luca Kinecki, Lucille Wloka and Janina Milejczak as baby dancers

## G4's Christmas Party

By Monika Kasior, G4 Teacher



In December, right before Christmas, G4 students invited their parents to school to celebrate this holiday season with them. For this occasion they prepared a short Christmas play entitled *Santa's Diet* and sang Christmas songs.

The play was about a quite overweight Santa and his reindeer taking him to the Slim Up Center after asking questions about Santa's bad eating habits. In the Slim Up Center a strict personal trainer took care of Santa so that Rudolf and other reindeer could pull his weight again and deliver the presents on time.

*Santa's Diet* perfectly matched our Unit of Inquiry about food and healthy lifestyle. The Central Idea of the Unit was *Taking Care of Ourselves Allows Us to be Healthy in Many Different Ways*.

Children not only showed their knowledge and understanding of the Unit through the play, but also discovered their acting talents. After the show, students wished their families Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Then, we shared Christmas wafer with everybody in the classroom. With a lot of food on the tables, music in the background, Christmas tree and all the lights on, the atmosphere turned out to be magical. Of course, the biggest joy was brought by Secret Santa and lovely presents. Students and teachers laughed, sang carols and spent a wonderful time together.





# G5s at the Imagination Lab

By G5 Students



On Friday, November 24, both G5 classes went on a trip to a place called the Imagination Lab - Laboratorium Wyobraźni in Poznań. We went there because of our Unit of Inquiry about technology. There were three parts of the trip: the optical exhibition, the lab and solving the riddles.

First, we got a tour around the optical exhibition. There were many interesting light experiments, for example: holograms. There was a hologram of a car, which we could turn on and off. There was also an alarm room, where we needed to go through a gate and pass through a thermosensor barrier. There was also a special TV - we could only see the film if we had special glasses on. Without the glasses, we only see a white screen. Another interesting things were lasers, which went through a magnifying glass and produced more laser beams. We saw a strange mirror where we could only see our reflection when wearing polarized glasses. The ultra violet mirror was interesting, because we could see our bright clothes shining. We learnt that UV light is also used to check if money is fake or not.

Next, we conducted experiments in the lab where we met a scientist, who showed us how to do the experiments. Firstly, we conducted a ghost experiment. We used baking soda, vinegar and a balloon. We put the soda into a plastic bottle, put the balloon on the bottle and we poured the vinegar inside. The gas produced after combining the two substances inflated the balloon. Secondly, we observed an illusion experiment. We poured some water into the cup and put a pen inside and it looked like the pen was broken. The scientist showed us how to create a friend for the monster. We mixed yeast with water and poured it into a container and added some food coloring and some dishwashing soap. We also formed a rainbow out of skittles. We poured some water on a plate and put some skittles in the middle. At the end the scientist gave us some soap to produce bouncy bubbles.

Finally, we were given an activity and had to solve some riddles, some of them were so difficult that they blew our minds! We had a time limit of 2 minutes for each riddle. If we finished the first riddle, Miss gave us a harder one! We didn't understand harder riddles, but at the end Miss explained how to solve them. There were riddles, which involved concentration, and in all of them we needed to think really hard to solve them. In the riddles we needed different skills to solve them, for example, we needed to build something on a piece of wood. Each riddle was unique and at the end the answers turned out to be really funny and obvious, after we discovered them. For solving each riddle we got points, which our score depended on.





## Guest Speakers in G5

### Central Idea: *Understanding of Scientific Knowledge is Constantly Evolving and Has an Impact on People's Lives*

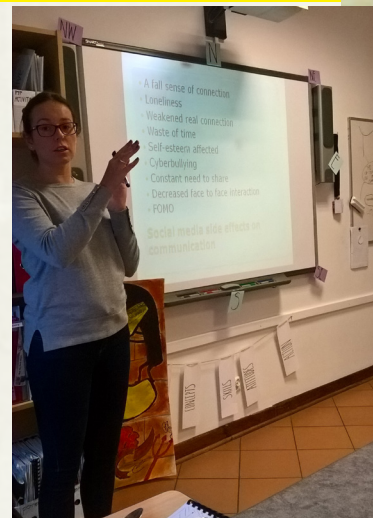
#### Ms. Borowska's Visit By Maksymilian Hess, G5a



During our Unit with a Central Idea: *Understanding of Scientific Knowledge is Constantly Evolving and Has an Impact on People's Lives* - many guest speakers visited our class and we learnt loads of interesting things.

One of the most remembered visits is the one of Ms. Justyna Borowska, our school psychologist. Apart from presenting the history of human communication, she taught us about the effects of technological development on communication and people's relationships. Constant use of social media can lead to FOMO - Fear of Missing Out, which means that we are constantly attached to our electronic devices. We also simplify our

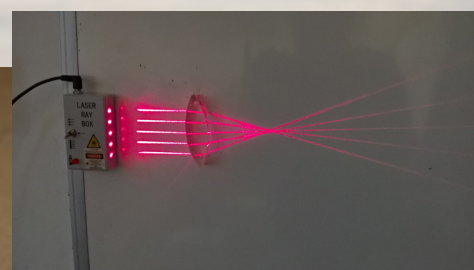
language, eg. instead of saying 'It was really funny!' we say LOL. We also discussed dangers connected with virtual world. I think that Ms. Borowska's presentation was interesting and well-organised and contained a lot of useful and important things that we should know about the world now. We have become more aware of the negative effects that technology can have on us, if we don't use it with moderation. Thanks so much Ms. Borowska!



#### Mr. Ratajczak's Visit By Antoni Moś and Jakub Nowicki, G5a



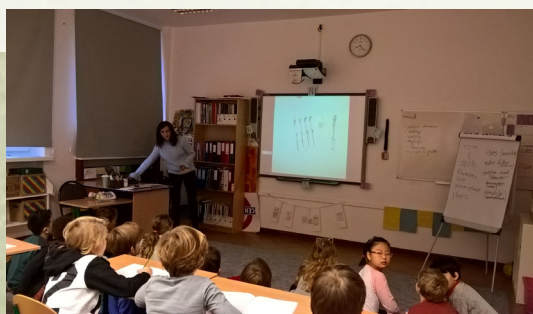
On Thursday, November 30, Mr. Błażej Ratajczak, ISoP's physics teacher, visited us and told us about many aspects of physics and demonstrated some of its laws. It helped us make a connection between such a difficult area like physics and our everyday life. We learned that Michael Faraday, for example, invented the first electric model. He was the first person to connect magnets with electricity. Mr. Ratajczak also showed us an experiment showing the attraction of magnets and their possibility to 'float.' On Facetime we called a famous astronomer and it turned out to be...Mr. Ratajczak's sister! We learnt many interesting facts, for instance, it was NASA that invented thermometers while working on improvements for the astronauts. In general, exploring space actually helped us invent something else. GPS (Global Positioning System) exists thanks to the astronauts, too! We enjoyed the presentations and experiments very much and we're looking forward to the next lecture with this great Physicist! Thank you!





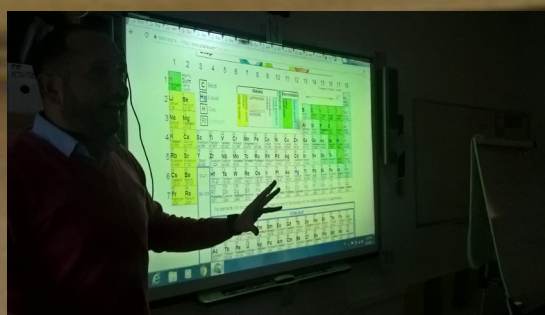
## Mrs. Justyna Elnur's Visit by Adam Elnur, G5a

On Friday, December 1, 2017, Mrs. Justyna Elnur came to G5a class to present her findings about peritoneal dialysis. Peritoneal dialysis means inserting plastic tubes to a patient's stomach to cure his/ her sick kidneys. We were also taught about plantations of cells. Cells cannot eat too much sugar as it can kill them, but they can eat MI99 - phenol red and L-glutamine. If we want to observe cells, it is supposed to take 15 days. The presentation was very nice and we became more knowledgeable after it. Within the presentation we were asking a lot of questions, which showed that we are inquirers and thinkers. In the end we understood that thanks to researchers' job and the development of the medical technology over the years, we can help people in need, cure diseases and improve the quality of life of sick people. Thank you Mrs. Elnur!



## Mr. Komorniczak's Visit By Mikołaj Michalczuk and Paweł Magierski, G5a

On Tuesday, December 5, 2017, Mr. Marek Komorniczak, ISO-P's chemistry teacher, visited us and talked about inventions. We learnt many interesting things, among others that some inventions were discovered by accident, such as teflon (out of measuring gas), sticky notes (out of trying to make Super Glue), silly putty (out of making rubber), sweetener (out of coal tar). Mr. Komorniczak discussed with us the negative consequences of chemical discoveries, too. Those are e.g.: nuclear weapon and waste, pollution, poison, toxic waste, global warming, smog. He also told us some interesting general facts, for instance, that nuclear power plant used by Russians was so powerful that a big island melted/evaporated. We began the whole lecture with a brainstorm session about why people explore/discover things in the first place. Possible reasons are: curiosity, eagerness to learn something new, idea of improvement of one's life, money, safety, boredom. We enjoyed the lecture a lot and we would like to host Mr. Komorniczak again one day! Thanks a lot Mr. Komorniczak!





# Szlachetna Paczka - Noble Box

By Zosia Rzeźnik, G8a



This year both G8 classes decided to take part in the Szlachetna Paczka (Noble Box) project, which was established in order to provide aid to struggling families during Christmas holidays. First we chose a family in need. Then we collected money and went to the supermarket. We bought home supplies, coats, pieces of clothing, food, detergents, and hygiene products. We all learned that we usually don't pay attention to how expensive everything is.

Also both G6 classes as well as G5b joined the initiative. They collected food and money to buy a cabinet and a small gift for the girl from the family.

In the end we all packed everything into boxes and wrapped them in nice and colorful wrapping paper. On Saturday, December 9, a few students together with Ms. Katarzyna Ramicka, came to our school, loaded the boxes into a car and delivered the gifts. We all got diplomas and thank you letters.

It was a great experience for us and we learned a lot during this action. We also learned that it's good to help and that we should all be thankful for what we have.



## Teacher Profile

My name is Karen Kuhn and I teach English A at the ISoP IB programme. I am a South African who is also a senior lecturer in South African Studies at The Adam Mickiewicz University, Faculty of English, in Poznań. I am a published author of Afrikaans poetry, a curriculum developer, blogger as well as a writer for film and television. Literature, film studies and psychology are my fields of interest and besides having a soft spot for words, I enjoys travelling.



## Russian Poetry Contest

By Miłosz Molenda, G8a

I took part in a Russian Poetry Contest held at the University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań. I was one of just two boys that had entered. My poem was about a boy who made tiny cheat sheets for an exam but he couldn't find the one he needed. After some time, he remembered everything anyway and he got a 5! In the end he didn't know why he even took the cheat sheets to school. For this poem I received a diploma, a pendrive and some chocolates.

Here is the poem in Russian:

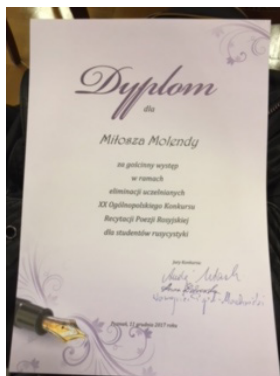
Шпаргалка

Всю ночь шпаргалки я писал!  
Не спал, измучился, устал.  
Теперь стою, тяну билет  
- Мне будет счастье или нет?

И вот, билет в уже в руках,  
В глазах бело, как в облаках...  
- Ура! Писал всю ночь не зря!  
"Наполеон",- читаю я.

В моей шпаргалке это есть!  
Ее бы мне теперь прочесть.  
Я прячусь, словно таракан,  
И лезу в правый свой карман.

Читаю: "Крымская война".  
Мне эта тема не нужна!  
И тихо, словно таракан,



Я лезу в левый свой карман.

Гляжу: "Крещение Руси".  
Помилуй, Господи еси!  
Ну, как же мне экзамен сдать?!  
И стал шпаргалку я искать!

Искал в ботинках и в носке,  
В рубашке, в брюках, в пиджаке!  
И был ужасно удивлен,  
Куда пропал Наполеон?!

Но мысль моя проснулась вдруг!  
И я, преодолев испуг,  
Припомнил все, о чем писал!  
И разразился знаний шквал!

Аустерлиц, Наполеон,  
Кутузов и Багратион!  
Совет в Филях, пожар в Москве, -  
Все разыскалось в голове!

Так получил пятерку я,  
Но, откровенно говоря,  
Обидно мне теперь до слез,  
Зачем шпаргалку в школу нес?  
(Т. Варламова)

## Welcome Back!

Małgorzata Zamożniewicz - PYP Teacher

I am really happy to be back at ISoP after my maternity leave. I thought it would be hard to part with my baby and start working again, but smiley faces and warm hearts of G2 students make it much easier.

I love travelling, discovering new places and meeting new people. I hope to see every faraway corner of the world. My quite old-fashioned hobby is collecting postcards which I exchange with strangers from all around the globe and I never say no to a piece of chocolate.







## Trip to Ulm, Germany

By Weronika Miniach and Asia Rosik, IB11b

On Thursday, November 30, we had a pleasure to fly to Ulm with our German teacher Ms. Magdalena Musiał. We took part in the Eljub program (Erasmus+) trip, which aim was to construct a dialog about the values in the globalised world.

The participants were mainly from German-speaking countries but also from Romania and the two of us from Poland. We spent most of our meetings talking about the main values that we claimed to be the most important - even though we all came from several countries and were brought up differently, our conclusions were very similar. The open-mindedness of the students made the teamwork and debates enjoyable but also effective, which contributed to meeting the goals. Not only did we talk about values, but also had an opportunity to get to know about the story of the brave Sophie and Hans Scholl and the White Rose organisation against Nazi regime, which made us more aware of the influence of dictatorship. Among all of the various activities one of them was an enjoyable stroll in the city with the whole group, despite the freezing weather. We had a lot of free time that we used to socialise with the other participants - one evening we visited Weihnachtsmarkt, which was an amazing experience, another evening we played board games, which was quite challenging because of the language barrier (German!) but we gained many communication skills that will be beneficial in the future. Unfortunately, our sickness during the trip affected our moods and productivity, but ginger shots kept our energy levels high enough to think critically and creatively. Overall, we are thankful to be given this incredible 4-day opportunity during which we met amazing people and made unforgettable memories. We highly recommend taking part in these types of trips and will definitely get involved in such projects again.







## MOVIE REVIEW

By Maria Witkowiak, IBilla

*Murder on the Orient Express* is a movie based on a crime novel of the same title, written by the best-seller author Agatha Christie. The film tells a story of thirteen strangers, who are stranded on a train due to a heavy snowfall, when it is discovered that one of the passengers has been murdered. One of the people travelling on the lavish train is detective Hercule Poirot (Kenneth Branagh), who is trying to solve this mystery throughout the course of the movie. During the investigation he finds numerous pieces of evidence, which do not seem to be related. Will he be able to solve the case and find the mysterious murderer?

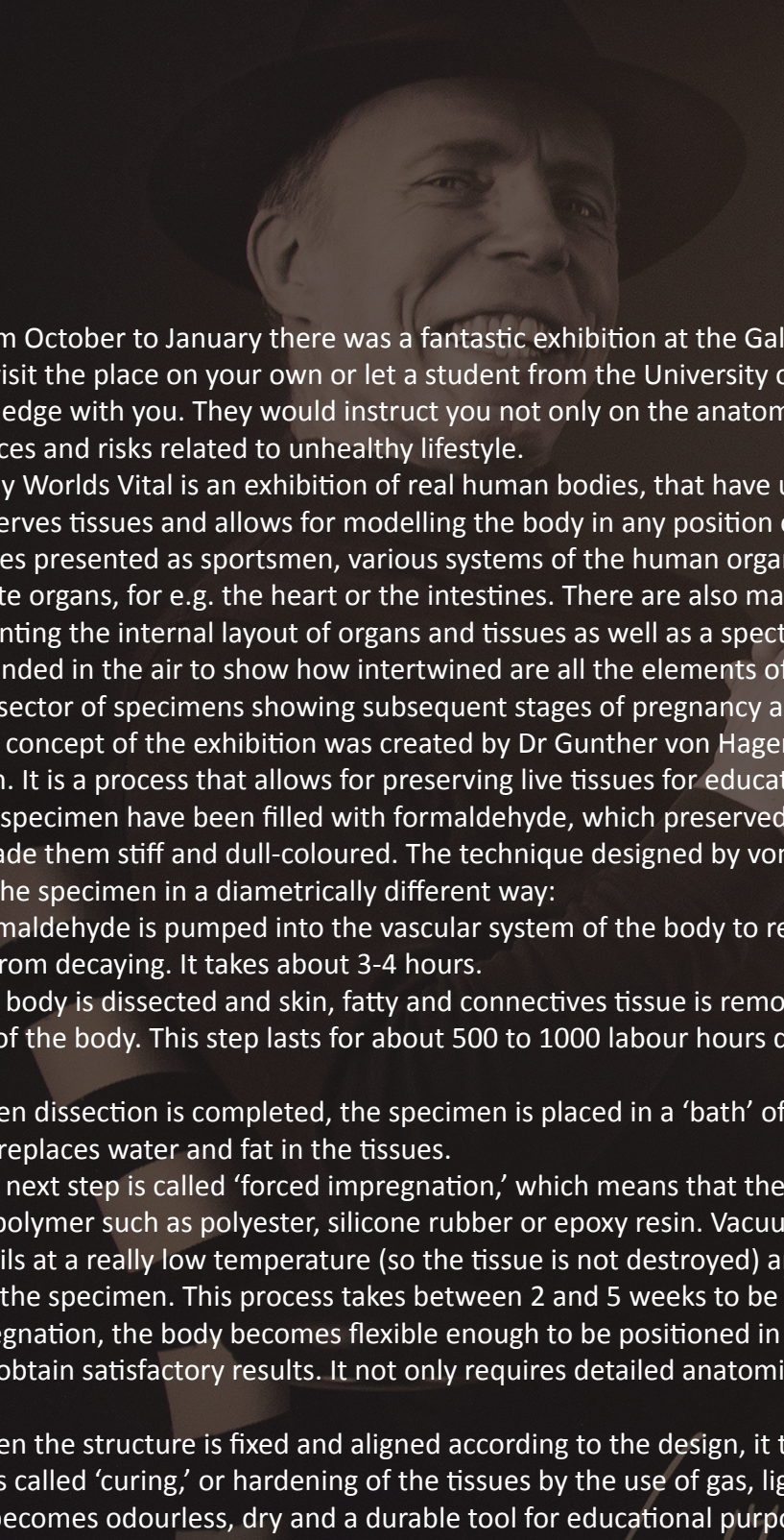
The movie was released on November 10, 2017, and lasts 114 minutes. In my opinion it is one of the best criminal movies of the last years. One of the strongest points is the cast, including: Penélope Cruz, Willem Dafoe, Judi Dench, Johnny Depp, Michelle Pfeiffer, Daisy Ridley and Josh Gad. Additionally, the plot of the story is interesting and captivating, keeping the viewers in suspense till the last moments. The solution of the main conflict is unobvious and surprising. All the characters end up being entangled in the main objective of the murder, which is unusual and leads to an interesting ending.

The movie has also found an appreciation in professional critics, who most value the acting skills of the actors, who enriched and recreated the original novel characters. Although *Murder on the Orient Express* is a crime story, it is considered to be a family movie (above 12 years) and lacks bloody scenes, which for many may be repellent. Overall, by watching *Murder on the Orient Express* you surely won't waste your time in the cinema, as the movie is worth recommending due to uniqueness of the plot and an interesting scenography as well as professional cast.



# Body Worlds Vital Exhibition

Martyna Ciesielska, IBIIIa



From October to January there was a fantastic exhibition at the Galeria Pestka - the Body Worlds Vital. You could visit the place on your own or let a student from the University of Medicine in Poznań to share their knowledge with you. They would instruct you not only on the anatomy and body functions but also the consequences and risks related to unhealthy lifestyle.

Body Worlds Vital is an exhibition of real human bodies, that have underwent plastination technique, which preserves tissues and allows for modelling the body in any position or posture. The collection includes whole bodies presented as sportsmen, various systems of the human organism like vascular or nervous system and separate organs, for e.g. the heart or the intestines. There are also many cross-sections of the human body presenting the internal layout of organs and tissues as well as a spectacular 3D-dissection of the whole body suspended in the air to show how intertwined are all the elements of the body. The exhibition also boasts the sector of specimens showing subsequent stages of pregnancy and fetus development.

The concept of the exhibition was created by Dr Gunther von Hagens, who invented the method of plastination. It is a process that allows for preserving live tissues for educational and instructional purposes. Previously, specimen have been filled with formaldehyde, which preserved the organs by killing bacteria, but has also made them stiff and dull-coloured. The technique designed by von Hagens also involves formaldehyde but treats the specimen in a diametrically different way:

Formaldehyde is pumped into the vascular system of the body to reach all cells and kill bacteria to prevent it from decaying. It takes about 3-4 hours.

The body is dissected and skin, fatty and connectives tissue is removed to prepare separate anatomical structures of the body. This step lasts for about 500 to 1000 labour hours depending on the complexity of the project.

When dissection is completed, the specimen is placed in a 'bath' of acetone, which under freezing conditions replaces water and fat in the tissues.

The next step is called 'forced impregnation,' which means that the specimen is placed in another bath filled with polymer such as polyester, silicone rubber or epoxy resin. Vacuum conditions are created so that acetone boils at a really low temperature (so the tissue is not destroyed) and as it vaporizes, the polymer takes its place in the specimen. This process takes between 2 and 5 weeks to be completed.

After impregnation, the body becomes flexible enough to be positioned in any way. This stage can even take months to obtain satisfactory results. It not only requires detailed anatomical knowledge but also a sense of aesthetics.

When the structure is fixed and aligned according to the design, it takes one more step to finish the project. It is called 'curing,' or hardening of the tissues by the use of gas, light or heat. After this step the specimen becomes odourless, dry and a durable tool for educational purposes.

The Body Worlds Vital aims at increasing the awareness of the public about the risks related to unhealthy diet and lifestyle and how simple changes may help to stay in good health for longer. It also involves students of medicine to present their theoretical knowledge and teach others about the complexity of human body. In December, students from our school had the possibility to participate in this awe-inspiring experience. I recommend this breathtaking exhibition to anyone who wants to discover the anatomy of his or her own body.



# ISoP Students at the Body Worlds Vital Exhibition

By Michał Krzyżański and Hubert Perliński, GIII

On Wednesday, December 20, GIII class and the IB Biology group together with our chemistry teacher (Mr. Marek Komorniczak) and our biology teacher (Mr. Marcin Stachowiak) went to see the famous Body Worlds Vital exhibition made by Gunther von Hagens. It is placed at the Pestka shopping mall so we had to get there by bus. We spent there two hours and learned a lot about human bodies.

The Body Worlds Vital exhibition is made out of real human bodies of people that had volunteered online. The needed organs are plastinated. The difficult process of plastination was invented by Gunther von Hagens in 1977. It is based on replacing fats and water of body parts with certain plastics. After the process the organs become exhibits. Presented bodies compare the insides of healthy and unhealthy humans.

This was rather a unique experience. We learned a lot of interesting and helpful things in a very intelligible way. For example, we saw how exactly our body is built and how it works. We also got to know why we are sick and how to become more healthy. More than that, we learned how the diseases spread and affect our body on the inside of us. There was also a exhibition about fetal development, which was very interesting, but also a bit disturbing for some people. All was very interactive and we had a great guide.

To sum it all up, it was a very fun and entertaining school trip. Now we know a lot more about our bodies and diseases and all that we learned in a very approachable way. We recommend everybody to see this amazing exhibition.





# The Christmas That Changed Everything

By Margaret Golovatiuk, G9

It was the Christmas afternoon when the Johnson family were getting ready for celebrating this wonderful holiday. While mother Emily and aunt Laura were busy in the kitchen preparing the food for the Christmas dinner, father Alex and grandfather Steve went to the store to buy the supplies they needed for the celebration. At the same time grandmother Nhi and the grandchildren were in the living room sitting on the floor around a fireplace. There were six children altogether: four siblings — 14-year-old George, 10-year-old Angela, 8-year-old Daisy, 7-year-old Chris, and their two cousins — 11-year-old Nikki and 8-year-old Tom. They were playing a game in which they had a spinner with an arrow that they were supposed to spin, and if the arrow pointed at someone, that person was to tell a story. It was George's turn and he almost finished telling everyone else about how he was at his friend's birthday party a couple of days ago and the power in the house suddenly went off.

"...but Johnny didn't seem to be scared, so he took a flashlight, went right to the basement, figured out what the problem was and fixed it. The Fearless Johnny saved the day again!"

Everyone applauded.

"That was a great story!" said Nikki. "Let's see who's turn it is now!"

And she spun the arrow. It pointed at Nhi, the grandmother.

"Now it's your turn, granny!" said Chris. "Tell us a story!"

"What kind of story do you want me to tell you, darling?" answered Nhi.

"Something interesting about your life," Tom responded.

"But my life was full of different events, what exactly do you want to hear about?"

"We know that you came here from a place that is very different from where we live, maybe you could tell us something about your experience of moving to the United States," George replied.

"Yes, honey, you're right. I came here from Saigon, the capital of former South Vietnam. Our country fought a long war for independence, but unfortunately the war was lost and South Vietnam was wiped off the map. It was taken over by the communist regime which is no better than the war. Until the last moment we had a hope that the hostilities would end one day and everything would be fine, but at some point the situation became desperate. We all understood that the end of the war wouldn't mean the end of all the troubles. So my family and I were forced to escape the circumstances that were tearing our country apart. We made a perilous journey after which we ended up here, in the United States. At that time I was only thirteen years old, a bit younger than you, George. It is a difficult age for most of us, but for me it was even more problematic since, in addition to the transition from childhood to maturity, I had to adapt to an entirely new way of life in a completely different country. That's why I had troubles with understanding what was going on around me and accepting the changes I had to face. Maybe some of you are also too young to understand the things I'll tell you, yet it would be good for you to hear about how people feel and what they do in such situations, because you never know what might happen tomorrow."

"And since it's Christmas time, maybe you could tell us a story about your first Christmas in the United States?" said Daisy.

"Yes! Yes!" all the other kids chanted in unison.

Nhi gave the kids a helpless look. "Okay, my dear, if you want to hear this story so much, you shall hear it. By the way, today is December 25th, 2015, and the events of the story happened exactly forty years ago."

And she began her story.

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It had been almost nine months since my family and I had left Saigon. By that time I had been only thirteen years old. Although I had already spent quite a long time in the United States, I didn't seem to grow accustomed to our new home. The USA did not appeal to me at all. I was stressed, heartbroken, and homesick. Although the place was peaceful and safe, at the same time it was so foreign and unfamiliar. The people around were too different from me, and the cultural divide between us would make me afraid of them and everything else that surrounded me. Apparently I was the only person in the family with such an attitude. My younger brothers, 6-year old Tran and 4-year old Nguyen were excited about their new home, and my parents felt good in the USA because they were grateful for the chance to live in a place without war, instability, or a regime that violates basic human rights. My dad would always tell me, "You should be thankful for the opportunities you've got, most of the people of our country weren't so fortunate." Back then I didn't realize



why my parents would get so mad whenever I said that I wanted to come back home, but now I perfectly understand it. They were simply irritated by my childish naivety and they were unable to figure out how I could miss the place where our lives had constantly been under a threat. I know that somewhere deep inside they might have missed it too, but they were realistic about the situation, unlike me. When we just settled down in the States, I was scared of everything that was happening around me. The events were unfolding too quickly and I just couldn't take it. My young heart refused to accept all the changes that I had to encounter. I didn't feel at home in America because I missed Saigon a lot. No, I didn't miss the war or violence, I grieved only for the place where I grew up. I lived there for so long that I got attached to it, despite all the bad events that were taking place there. I missed the familiar streets, buildings, and people. I missed the ability of speaking my native language and being understood by everyone and everywhere. I missed warm winters and hot summers with tropical heavy rains. I missed all of that so much... I felt like I had been seized up by a monstrous creature and dropped in this foreign northern country. And the name of that creature was War. The Lost War. All I wanted was the day when the hostilities would end and my country would be free again, so I could come back home and have a peaceful life in the place where I was raised, in the place that I was forced to leave. But it was impossible, and I was too young to understand it. I wasn't strong enough to let go of my hometown and accept the United States as my new home, so I just kept on grieving for the country where I had spent the first twelve years of my life and refusing to adjust to where I ended up. Until the day when everything began to change.

It was December 25th, 1975 when my parents took me, Tran, and Nguyen downtown to the local Christmas celebration. We were already familiar with this holiday and some traditions since our parents were Catholics. But it was the first time when we had a proper celebration because we could never enjoy Christmas back home due to the war that was raging there. I can still remember that day like it was yesterday. As we walked down the street, I could see holiday decorations everywhere. But the most unusual thing for me was snow, lots of snow. Large white flakes were falling from the pure white sky, swirling and dancing on their way. They were landing on my face and giving my cheeks a frosty touch. Everything around was covered with a thick white blanket of snow that sparkled like sequins. During the time I spent in the States I had already seen snow, yet this experience seemed entirely new to me every time. It never snowed in the place where I grew up, that's why I found those silvery patterns of ice so strange and elusive. When we came to the central square of our town, I saw a huge decorated Christmas tree. It was illuminated with Christmas lights and adorned with lots of decorations. Different kinds of glass balls and icicles were hanging from its branches which were already covered by thick snow caps. It looked like nothing I had seen before. Since I spent most of my life in a tropical country, I had never had a chance to see a Christmas tree, especially such a huge and decorated one. Apart from it there were some Christmas displays, such as the Nativity display. The people around expressed great joy, kindness, love, and togetherness. Even though the weather was cold enough, the air was filled with warmth and holiday spirit. It all created a peaceful, joyful, festive atmosphere that found a special connection to my heart. I found Christmas somewhat similar to Tet, the Vietnamese New Year. During the war it had been the only time when all the fighting would stop and people would have an opportunity to spend a couple of days in peace. Perhaps that's the reason why this holiday connected to my soul in such a way that it made my cold heart melt. For the first time I felt comfortable in this foreign place, like it was my home. I just stood there and enjoyed happiness, and most importantly, peace. Back in Saigon I had never had a chance to experience this peaceful feeling since the war had started long before I had even been born. Even my parents had never known what peace felt like until the moment when we settled down in the States. I was overwhelmed by this amazing emotion and I just wanted it to last forever. But it was time to go home, so our parents took us by the hand and we left the square.

As we were heading home, I was walking without saying a word and thinking over what I had just experienced. I didn't feel like I was in the wrong place anymore. I realized that my problem wasn't the changes or cultural differences, but my reluctance to open my heart to this country and adjust to the new way of life. Perhaps I was just too stubborn and naive to understand that coming back to my homeland was impossible, and all I could do was try to live a happy life here, in the United States. When we almost arrived, I saw a group of children building a snowman and having fun. I was so inspired by my previous experience that I felt a sudden urge to go and join them, so I asked my mom if I could play with them a little. She was astonished because that was the first time I had ever asked for something like this. I was an antisocial and shy kid who hardly ever wanted to make any friends, so apparently she saw it as my first attempt to adapt to our new home by befriending some local kids. She didn't even think if she should give me the permission or not, and she let me the permission or not, and she let me join the children, but she told me not to stay there till late



So I approached the kids and asked in a shaky voice: "C-c-could I p-play with you?" I lacked confidence because I was afraid they would just push me away, but my fears were not confirmed. One girl came to me and said: "Yes, sure! What's your name?" Her radiant smile looked disarming and made me feel more comfortable, so I introduced myself and she did the same. Her name was Victoria, or simply Tori, and she was thirteen, just like me. She had a younger brother, Peter, who was playing somewhere among the kids. She introduced me to other children and after that they quickly taught me how to make a snowman, because I had never done it before in my life. To my great surprise, no one made fun of me or said anything mean, instead they accepted me to their group and talked to me like we had been friends for a long time. Although I couldn't speak English fluently, we were able to understand each other perfectly without saying too much. They asked me questions about the place I had come from, and it turned out that most of them already knew something about the events that were happening in my country. Since the United States were heavily involved in the Vietnam War, it had a great impact on the Americans, even on the little kids, and I could clearly see that. Moreover, Tori's uncle had served in that war, so she was able to understand my situation better than other children. But we didn't talk much about all those sad things, for most of the time we were just playing and having a great time. When we were done with the snowman, we started a snowball fight. It was so fun that I was able to forget about all my problems and just enjoy this game. After an hour or two we heard a voice that shouted "Tori! Peter! It's time to go home!" I turned around and saw a woman approaching us. She was Tori's and Peter's mother who came to take her kids home. Peter and Tori ran up to their mom, then Tori said something to her and after that she summoned me. As I walked up to her, she introduced herself and asked me "Wanna come to our place and have a Christmas dinner with us?" At first I didn't know how to respond because that had been completely unexpected, but then I agreed to go with them. I knew my mom would be mad at me for coming home late, but at that moment it didn't bother me. I was excited about my new friend and I wanted to have a chance to see how Americans celebrate Christmas. So Tori, Peter, their mother, and I went to their place which was only a few hundred meters away from where I lived.

As I entered the house, I thought I had never been in a nicer place. It was warm, cozy, and spacious, unlike the cramped house I lived in. Christmas lights and decorations were everywhere, even in the yard. After we took our jackets off, we went to the dining room. There I saw Tori's family sitting around the table which was full of traditional American Christmas dishes. At that moment I had no clue what most of them were called, but they all looked delicious. After Tori introduced me to the other family members, they greeted me with a warm welcome and I sat at the table with them. It was the first time I had ever tried Christmas food in America. Although it was something completely different from the food I was accustomed to, but I found all the dishes very tasty. Most of all I liked the turkey and the plum pudding. As we were sitting at the table, we were talking about different things. Tori and her family told me about the Christmas customs in the USA and other things that they associated with this holiday. The most unusual thing for me was the tradition of hanging up stockings next to the bed or fireplace hoping that Santa Claus would come and put presents into it. Most of those customs and traditions were different from the ones that I had previously seen in my life, yet they appealed to me a lot and I wanted to adopt some of them in my family and try celebrating Christmas in a similar way. Despite my shyness and poor English, I enjoyed talking to Tori's family and spending time with them. They did not ask me any war-related questions which could cause me a painful experience of thinking back, instead they chose to ask me about something that wouldn't make me sad, for example how I felt about the USA. I must admit that I had to lie a little while answering them because I didn't want to offend those people who were so nice to me. Tori and her family turned out to be kind, welcoming, and friendly, although I was afraid of them at first, just like I was scared of Americans in general. I would have stayed with them for longer, but I had to go since it had already been late and I knew my parents would get angry at me. So I apologized for leaving so quickly, thanked Tori and others for the warm welcome, put on my jacket, and left.

When I got home, my parents were about to tell me off for not coming on time, but before anyone even managed to open their mouth, I said something that made everyone in the room overcome with astonishment:

"I've changed my mind about the United States. America is nice and I love it!" I said loudly and confidently.

Both my parents and my brothers looked shocked. They certainly hadn't expected me to say anything like that. For a very long time I would annoy them with complaining about our new home and telling them how much I missed Saigon. After a long pause my dad uttered: "I knew you would say it one day." That Christmas brought substantial changes to my life. I finally understood that I had been wrong about the USA and Americans. I simply had been putting labels on everything around me for no reason. The problem was not the place or the people, but my attitude. Just because I grieved for my hometown, I refused to see all the beauty of my new country of residence. My stubbornness and unwillingness to accept the challenge that life had given me were the cause for all my troubles with adjusting to my new place of living. Of course my attitude didn't become positive at once, it gradually began to change for the better, but that moment gave me the push that I needed. I felt a desire to become part of the American society, and it grew stronger and stronger every day. To remove all the obstacles I had to encounter on my way to achieving this, first of all, I started working hard on my English. That would make the language barrier disappear, and two years later I became able to speak it without any difficulties.



Second of all, I improved my grades in school and at some point I became top of the class. And most importantly, I started to make contact with the people around me. Before that I had fears that would make me want to stay at home for most of the time and minimize the interaction with the locals. But after I met that group of kids and Tori's family, those fears grew weaker, and at some point they stopped preventing me from integrating into the society. Tori was my first best friend, but as I grew older, I made more and more friends. Before that I had felt completely alone in America, but after a certain period of time I realized I wasn't lonely anymore. As the time went by, my grief for hometown started to fade away. I was no longer depressed and I felt like my little broken heart fused back together. Shortly after I graduated from school, I met Steve, your grandfather, and that was the moment when my homesickness and doubts vanished without a trace. I realized that my home was nowhere else but here, in the United States. A couple of years later we got married, and then we had two children — Alex and Laura. Both of my brothers also managed to achieve their goals and start a family. Of course I can't say it was the end of all my problems, life has never been easy and I still had to face a lot of troubles and challenges, but that would never make me feel desperate since I already had everything I needed to be happy. I've always been grateful for what I've got so far. I have a home and a loving family, and I truly appreciate it. Moreover, I understand that everything I have right now I owe to my parents who brought me to this country, and of course to the USA, the place that gave me all the opportunities. And the lesson I've learned was that everything depends not only on your current situation, but also on how you respond to it.

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There was a long silent pause after Nhi had finished telling her story. The children didn't know all those things about their grandmother. They could never imagine what she had gone through in her life. They were so touched by the story she told them that none of them said a single word while she was telling it. They tried to think what they would do if they were in a similar situation, but they had never lived under such threats as war or instability. So they had no idea what it was like and therefore were totally unable to put themselves in her shoes. They were so focused on the story that they forgot about the game they were playing. They didn't even notice Steve and Alex coming back from the store. After a while George broke the silence:

"We've learned that you managed to make your home in the States and now you're perfectly fine here. But after so many years, can you still feel any connection to the place where you were born? And if yes, how do you feel about the current situation there?"

"Of course I can. I don't think it's even possible to forget your roots completely. However, I cannot call that place home since no one's waiting for me in South Vietnam. There I have nothing and here, in the States, I have everything. Nevertheless, Saigon has influenced me throughout my entire life. Even though I don't miss it anymore and don't want to come back and live there, it holds a special place in my heart and I'll never be able to erase it from my memory. I'm still concerned about the situation in South Vietnam (I know that it doesn't exist anymore as a separate country but I simply refuse to accept it). From time to time I get news from there and I keep track of the events that take place in that country. All I can say now is that although the situation is slowly getting better, it still leaves much to be desired. Forty years have passed and the country is still ruled by the communist regime. And I can't be indifferent about it. My mom considered the possibility of coming back when South Vietnam (or Vietnam in general) is no longer controlled by communism. But she's dead now, and the bad guys are still holding power. So if we hadn't managed to escape to the States, I would have spent my whole life waiting for our country to become free, but I don't even think I would have lived long enough to see it happen. It makes me feel grateful to my parents for what they have done for me and my brothers. They brought us to the place that gave us all the opportunities which we would have never gotten in the country we were born in. Anyway, perhaps South Vietnam right now is not the best place to live in, but it will stay in my heart forever.

"And if I were to leave my home and move to a different place, what advice would you give me?" asked Angela.

"Well, if life gives you such a challenge, don't back down from it. Don't be afraid of the changes and difficulties you'll have to encounter, don't let them prevent you from achieving great things. And even if your new place of living doesn't seem to appeal to you, just look around, maybe it's just your attitude makes you feel that way. Remember, it depends not only on the place, but mostly on how it appears in your eyes. You can be everything you want, it's only up to you (of course unless the situation in the place is unstable or it is controlled by some regime that limits your freedoms). If you miss your previous home and you can't let go of it, remember that sometimes life takes away something good from you just to offer an even better option. And if you can't change the situation, you can always try to make the best of it. Like in a good old saying, if life gives you lemons..."

Nhi was interrupted by Emily who had just entered the living room.

"Come to the table, the Christmas dinner is ready!"

And they all stood up and went to the table.



# ISoP First Golden Microphone Singing Competition

By Karolina Kajzer, G5 Teacher and Contest Organizer



Oh, what emotions, what a concert!

On Thursday, January 18, the final of the First ISoP Golden Microphone Singing Competition was held.

The final, however, was only a fraction of what the contestants had to do. The first stage was an online registration - students had to sign up by sending a recording of them singing. Mrs. Jakubowska, a voice coach and owner of the Willa Talentów School as well as the founder of the main prize, and myself chose the finalists. Later on, the finalists took part in an all-day-long workshop led by Mrs. Jakubowska, where they learnt basic theory about singing techniques and practiced proper voice production. It was really something!

There were four junior finalists: Alicja Kabacińska, G2a; Emilia Ciesielska, G2b; Dominika Grobelna, G3a; Maciej Mazur, G3b. And eight senior finalists: Ignacy Gawłowski, G7b; Zofia Lamprecht, G6a; Natasza Sowińska, G6a; Wiktoria Pawłowska, G5b; Wiktoria Zatorska, G7a; Zuzanna Sokołowska and Midia Saadoun, both G5a; Marta Gajewska and Mika Tomczak, both G5b; Pola Machońska and Antonina Meissner, both G7b.

Each finalist/team had to perform one chosen song that ideally would show all of the singer's potential and skills. The most popular choices were the songs from Disney movies or the top radio songs that everybody recognizes. In the meantime, the jurors - Mrs. Jakubowska; Mrs. Pyda, Elementary School Principal; Mr. Nwoko, Music Teacher; Ms. Kajzer, G5 Teacher and music enthusiast - were making their choices. The decision was extremely difficult to make! But in the end the winners were... Alicja Kabacińska and Wiktoria Zatorska! Congratulations to both of them!

All of the performances were amazing and everyone was very professional; it was painful not to be able to grant the prizes to everyone. Nevertheless, Alicja and Wiktoria stole the jurors' hearts and each won the main prize: one semester of individual singing lessons with Mrs. Marta Jakubowska! Once again, congratulations to all the finalists! You were great!

I am really happy to know there are so many people who love singing! And, going further, are really good at it! Once I was a girl with a dream... and no matter where you end up with your singing, it always pays off to just do what you love! I keep my fingers crossed for everyone following their dreams! Be strong, be adamant...and SING! See you next year!

Special thanks to:

Jurors: Mrs. Małgorzata Pyda and Mr. Ebenezer Nwoko for giving us your time

Certificate designer and maker: Ms. Katarzyna Adamska, ICT Teacher

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