Dear GHIS community members,

Wow, what a year this been! Looking back, it is almost hard to believe how much we have experienced - a global pandemic calling for new ways of teaching and learning, constant changes in daily and weekly routines, frequent changes in dorm assignments and ever growing needs for flexibility and acceptance. More recently, a security and social crisis in the country, calling for dialogue within the community, validation of feelings and ever growing needs for understanding and mutual respect. What enabled us to successfully meet the challenges included working together as one community, building trust in each other, open mindedness and kindness at all times.

I would like to congratulate our fresh graduates for their beautiful graduation and a promising end for two very tough years. As you enter the next phase of your lives we wish you good luck, and remind you that you have a home here at GHIS. I would like to congratulate DP1 students for some outstanding end of year events, for doing well academically this year and for demonstrating your wonderful spirit of friendship and respect toward each other. I would like to congratulate the GHIS team that has done amazingly well under exceptional circumstances and for showing perseverance and determination. Finally I would like to thank all parents and all supporters for believing in GHIS, for supporting us and for taking such an important part in the building of our shared community.
Note from Ms. Efrat Gal Shemesh
Visual Art Exhibition

On May 21st, we opened the visual arts exhibition of DP1. Nineteen creative and talented students presented artworks they created during the first year of the course. The exhibition included variety of media: drawings, paintings, photography, ceramics, video art, and more. The students were dealing with different topics related to their cultural identities, their opinions and their emotions. Each student wrote a curatorial rationale about the intentions behind the works and their curatorial decisions.

The opening event was exciting and included a traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony led by Afomiya and Darik. The students demonstrated impressive skills, strong concepts, great devotion, and team spirit. Visitors from the school community were touched to see a piece of the inner world of their peers. Visitors who came to see the exhibition of the Givat Haviva Arts center were lucky to also see the works of the young and promising artists of GHIS.

We are all looking forward for the final exhibition of the Visual Arts class next year.

DP1 Visual Arts Exhibition
by-Polina Skarga (Russia)

The DP1 June art exhibition enlightened the campus before exam time and helped all DP1 students to shift their focus from stressful studies to art appreciation and reflection. This amazing event allowed GHIS students to see the technical development of their peers and to realize how talented our Visual Arts students are. Although this exhibition was held during a very busy week, it still played a significant role in our coming together as a culturally diverse community, especially in times of conflict and tensions between Israelis and Palestinians.

We truly felt that the DP1 exhibition was a life-changing event that not only showed the amazing
achievements of Art students but also further united and gathered each member of our big Givat Haviva family together.

Commemoration of Loss
by- Lam Ho (Vietnam) and Maria Bakhлина (Russia)

Commemoration of loss is something that brings humans together. We not only share each other’s happiness, but also offer one another a shoulder to cry in times of grief, and in our unity we are complete. GHIS has students coming from different backgrounds and cultures, each with their unique history and loss which is an integral part of our identity. The ceremony for the commemoration of loss was a sharing of personal family stories of students from Vietnam, Kosovo, Israel, Palestine, Armenia, and Ethiopia. Students gave poignant talks, lit candles of respect, and held moments of silence together, all this to cope, live on, and remember the memories of tragedy which contribute to making us who we are. Sharing these stories, provided an opportunity to learn that we are impacted by tragedy and suffering, despite different geographical locations and time periods, but above all that in our unity we are resilient.

In this ceremony, our students have had a chance to go on a time travel through different countries in the world starting time travel from Vietnam and going to Ethiopia, Kosovo, and Armenia before returning back to Israel and Palestine. However, this journey was not meant to be enjoyable, it was a journey to look back at the pain of war and conflicts that all of these countries have shared. We went to commemorate the loss. Students from each of these countries have stood up and told us about their national grief. It has never been easy to open your heart and show people our wounds, but many of our students gathered the courage to do so.

Audrey, a lovely student from Vietnam, told us about the story of Ms. Phan Thi Kim Phuc, a victim of the Vietnam war that took place from 1955-1975. She decided to participate because she was impressed with the idea of sharing her culture and learning about others as well. To her, this opportunity is really meaningful because she had the chance to tell the community about her nation’s painful story, a perspective that is not usually shown in daily life stories. Jon, a representative from Kosovo also had a similar answer when being asked about the reason why he chose to participate. To him, this ceremony seemed like a good opportunity to heighten awareness about the story of Kosovo and its people. Moreover, he wanted to share a part of himself with his peers.

Not only was this ceremony a good chance for our students to understand more about each other, but it was also an opportunity for us to learn from the past. Enhancing our students’ leadership skills in order to promote peace in the world is one of our school missions and we are really proud to see the students develop it gradually, day by day.
Part of our school's mission is to help establish a shared society where Jews and Arabs live peacefully together. We have invited students from both sides to share their stories and to listen to each other. And they have done it so beautifully. Jana, a Palestinian student, told the story of her grandfather, who was a Palestinian refugee in Lebanon after the 1948 war, the Naqba. She felt that it was important to share the story of her people as human beings and to show the struggle that her family went through and is still experiencing today. It was hard for her to do this but thanks to the support of the community, she felt that she had the space to express her feelings where everyone was willing to listen and understand. Naama, (an Israeli Jew whose family survived the Holocaust) said that even though she was nervous to share her family’s story at first, she was also more than happy to see that her community cared about her.

With all of the students and the administration’s efforts, the ceremony was held very successfully. For the students who presented, the ceremony helped them to improve their knowledge about their countries. Darik (Ethiopia) said that he knew more about the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, but the preparation process helped him connect to the situation on an emotional level. Students understood more about the pain and loss their people, families, and their ancestors suffered during the war. After the ceremony, Jon (Kosovo) felt good to have shared a part of his identity with his friends. Moreover, he felt happy that all our societies have come such a long way from the tragic events we went through.

Other students who participated shared that they felt quite touched during the ceremony, not only because of everyone’s tragic stories but also because the whole ceremony has given them a feeling of connectedness with their friends. We know that the ultimate goal of this ceremony has been achieved- not only in committing to not forget what has happened to humanity but also in remembering the hard lessons taught by blood and tears. Understanding more about our history motivates us to never let injustice happen again.

---

Celebration of life - Palestinian Wedding
by- Polina Skarga (Russia) and Wamukelwe Dlamini (Eswatini)

On Monday the 12th of April, the whole school got invited to a Palestinian wedding like no other. This beautiful and joyous occasion was mainly organized by our Palestinian students Jana and Sara. When asked why they wanted to organize such an event they said "It is really important for us to present our culture in our shared community." It was a simulation of the reception at a traditional Palestinian wedding.

It began with a jubilant walk accompanying the "newlyweds"...
(Freya who is Vietnamese and Mohammed who is Palestinian) to the reception. The atmosphere was cheerful and worked well with the bright spring sun. As we walked to the reception we were greeted by a great crowd of more students and faculty, elegantly dressed for the occasion.

We danced around in circles with the bride as per tradition and got an opportunity to even be graced with some traditional dances by a few of the Arabs. We all had so much fun dancing and socializing, in a way this seemed like a breather for the DP2 students who just completed their mock exams and DP1 who had completed their midterms two weeks prior, and a good one it seemed.

We then continued with the final and most anticipated part, the food. We were served exquisite Arab cuisine. The food was amazing (as is Arab food), and the cheerful atmosphere was a great one to dine in. They served Dawali and a lot of other delicious food. This ceremony was well planned and so much fun, it has got to be one of the highlights of this year. Having the whole school beautifully dressed and celebrating is something to be thankful for.

International students and local Israeli’s got a feel of a traditional Arab wedding. Alikhan, from Kazakhstan, said “The tradition is a part of every nation’s culture that makes it so diverse and unique at the same time. Living in a shared society means an everyday exposure to cultural exchange. The more we hold such events, the more diverse our community gets. Learning about traditions and acknowledging our differences allows us to gain more knowledge of people’s rich history and cultural backgrounds, and this plays a key role when building a shared society of leaders that came from completely different environments.

"Personally, I felt like the wedding event was so captivating for the reason of joy and real-time experience. Getting to know closely about the Palestinian tradition I figured out for myself that the rich heritage they preserve and perform till the present time should give them greater importance and appreciation in the cultural site of our community."

This was not only enlightening but also engaging as this is a true testament to the shared society we live in. One in which we all show interest, empathy, and love towards all the different cultures and their customs.

The Sequence Summit
by- Dr. Joshua Yarden

Q&A on the “Sequence Summit”

Q: Is the summit part of the IB curriculum?
A: It’s a GHIS strategy to help students achieve the IB objectives. We know it can be easy to fall behind. That can lead to low expectations and stress that isn’t good for anyone’s emotional well being, and it’s not even a good way to learn. So we designed a series of supports and check points to help the students move along, step by step, since keeping up is easier than catching up. That’s what we call “the sequence,” and the summit is a support system to make sure everyone is on track, before the first major checkpoint.

Q: So, you’re pulling the students instead of pushing them?
A: Our strategy is simple. 1: Raise the bar. 2: Encourage aspirational learning, so everyone can be proud of their achievements. 3. Support students all along the way. GHIS is a team where everyone scores, some higher than others, but that doesn’t really matter. It’s about achieving a personal best, so no one loses.
Q: You say GHIS is “a team” — Does that mean that learning is a sport?
A: It means that whether you are learning algebra, language, sports, or the arts, learning requires some combination of ability, guidance, and practice. You need to get into the right mindset to build the right skill set. My daughter joined a gymnastics team when she was nine years old. She had energy and flexibility, but no skills or experience. So she started doing somersaults. Anyone can. Cartwheels are more challenging, yet easier than backflips. The balance beam seems like an accident waiting to happen. And nothing was as intimidating as the high uneven parallel bars. It seems you’d need a superpower just to get up there. And forget about fear, or you’ll coming crashing down.
She learned her routines, step by step, flip by flip, trick by trick, advancing up the levels. Still, I was more than a bit scared when I eventually saw her up on those bars. Seeing the coaches encouraging her to believe in herself, and boosting her up to the bar was as reassuring to me as it was to her. She spun around the low bar, reached out, and propelled herself to the higher bar. A few years later, she was coaching little girls, helping them to believe in themselves, and to become flying superheroes.

Q: What actually happened at the summit?
A: We devoted three days in May to completing three projects. One was to submit a rather challenging “Theory of Knowledge” abstract thinking assignment. We’d been working on it for over a month, and the summit provided a target date, as well as time for concentrated support. As students finished one project, they began another. The second trick was to complete the first stage of a 4,000 word analytical research essay. It won’t be easy, but then the really impressive achievements never are. Each student now has detailed guidelines and a faculty mentor to help them reach the bar. While some of them may not believe they can do it, we know they can. Everyone will be “flying through the air” soon. The third task was a reflective thinking exercise, designed to help students decide how they would like to complete the first year of the two-year program, to identify challenges, and set ourselves up for success.

Q: Were you satisfied with the results?
A: Yes, we were really pleased with student progress. I can tell from many hours of conversations how students are developing a stronger foundation for thinking about... well, everything. And the feedback was very positive. We already have some new and improved ideas for next year.

DP2 Graduation Ceremony
by- Ilay Hatami (Israel)

Once a year at GHIS we hold a DP2 graduation ceremony. Although, the circumstances this year were a bit different from the previous year because we were able to organize a ceremony including parents, host families, and zoom for parents of our international students. Over the past 2 years, our DP2s have worked hard to reach this point. In the graduation ceremony, our students received their certificate for completing high school with hard work and dedication.

Throughout their time at GHIS our DP2s got to experience the wonders and the challenges of the IB system. Being in an IB program, Didi (Liberia) said, was “spectacular and eye-opening”. “My favorite part was meeting people from around the world”, said Mira (DP2 graduate), and meeting people who “broaden horizons and perspectives about almost any issue”, was Didi’s favorite part of her time at GHIS.

The ceremony was lead by our lovely DP2 students Niva (Israel), Randa (Germany), and Argam (Armenia) which was fun and enjoyable. During the graduation ceremony, our students received an appreciation speech from different people including parents. In addition, the school band performed as promised which was outstanding.

Many students felt a feeling of fulfillment as their time in the IB program came to an end. The graduation
further expanded that feeling by physically delivering them that closure, in terms of the certification. Some of our students also received a special certificate for different things some of them being, for the act of leadership and personal growth.

While the graduation ceremony gave the students the realization of the IB’s period ending, it furthermore opened a doorway to the student’s futures. We wish our DP2s the best for their new adventures, leaving them with the question of “what’s next?”.

DP1 Closure Ceremony
by- Afomiya Esayas

A lot has happened in just one year, making new friends, bonding, sharing our culture, and much more. But the year came to an end. It was time to take a break and go back to our separate ways. DP1 has been challenging with all of the things that happened throughout the year, the pandemic, and of course the challenging IB program itself, but we as a cohort have managed to keep up and push harder in those difficult times.

After taking our final exams, we had three days for our closure ceremony. The ceremony began with an activity that was held by our boarding team, which included writing notes to one another, a special cohort award, and our last visit to the swimming pool. Although, that night was also sad because we had to say our goodbyes to three of our boarding team members, Tal Toren, Issac Jhonson, and Tal Surkis. After showing their love for the community by reading a short letter everyone gave them a warm hug and showed their appreciation for what they have done and for being with us during our difficult times. Lastly, we went back to our rooms to get ready for our trip the next day.

Early in the morning around 6:45, we all gathered at the gate to wait for the bus, we left campus around 7:10 to start our journey to the northern part of Israel. While we were on our way to our destination, our friends Ibraheem (Palestine), Alma (Israel), Alon (Israel), and many others made our time on the bus enjoyable by sharing how the year was and by leading different activities. We started our trip with a short walk in parts of Golan Heights and learn about the history of that area (our appreciation goes to Noga (Israel) and Mrs. Maysaa). We headed to the second activity of our trip which was kayaking. Everyone was excited and happy to have the chance to go kayaking with their friends which were super fun.

Our last activity for the closure ceremony was End Of The Year Show, which was as well as the last day on campus for the local and most of the international students. This show was organized by our own DP1(soon to be DP2) students. Parents, teachers, and host families were invited to join this show, which included skits, an appreciation speech from our lovely Palestinian and Israeli students Sara and Alma, a speech about our strengths and weakness as a cohort from the administration team Mrs. Hadas and Mr. Yuval, and also a lovely speech from Danna Coronel (Mother of Tamar Coronel) and many other things. At last, the show came to an end, and even though we didn’t want to, it was time to say our warm goodbyes and head our separate ways from a place we call our second home.