

VIEWS

Indian Mountain School | 2024-2025

And Now Presenting...

Dance Team performance in our new
Qianxun Performing Arts Center.



VIEWS

2024-2025

In This Issue

- 2 View from Becket House: Meet Lisa Sun, Our Eleventh Head of School
- 4 IMS Moves to “Phone Free”
- 6 Introducing the Montserrat Sustainability Program
- 8 The Magic of Mountain Time
- 10 “Lifers” at IMS
- 12 Beyond the Page: Classroom Collaborations
- 14 Grand Opening of the Qianxun Performing Arts Center
- 18 Climbing Higher: New Spaces on Campus
- 20 Behind the Curtain
- 22 Playing Games in School
- 23 Reimagining *The Magic Flute*
- 24 Boarding Life
- 26 Athletics
- 28 New Studio Art Intensive
- 30 Life Through Service: Leading by Example
- 32 Mountain Fest
- 33 Faculty Spotlight: Ram Miles
- 34 A Conversation with Scott Erickson
- 35 The Class of 2025
- 36 Maroon & Gray



ON THE COVER:

Behind the curtain of the Qianxun Performing Arts Center — one of many things to celebrate this year. Look inside this issue to meet our new head of school, discover new class offerings, and see all the new spaces opening up on campus.



Indian Mountain School



Indian Mountain School



@indianmntnschool



IndianMtnSchool

IMS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

David Nuzum P'25 '27 *President*

Justin Royce '96 *Vice President*

Cary Ullman '91, P'28 '29 '33 *Secretary*

Lawrence Alexander

Robert Casanova '98

Elizabeth Cunningham P'33 '35

Derek Deng P'26 '27

Danielle Do P'23 '26

Carolyn Egan P'26

Eliza Gairard P'29 '32

Alexandra Jarislowsky P'21 '21

Heehyun Lee P'26

Jeffrey Lee '08

Esther Ma P'21 '22

Pieter Mulder P'19 '22

Damali Peterman P'27 '29

Savannah Stevenson P'26 '31

Jason “JJ” Velez '96, P'23

Lara Vitiello P'24

Mark Winmill P'28

“Within these nurturing, tight-knit communities, I have the opportunity to create spaces where each individual is truly seen, known, and celebrated.”



View from Becket House

Meet Lisa Sun, Our Eleventh Head of School

July is normally a quieter time on the Mountain, but this summer Becket House has been bustling. Lisa Sun arrived with her family on July 1 to begin her tenure as the eleventh Head of School at IMS. In fact, Lisa hit the ground running before her headship even started. Earlier in the year, she visited campus many times, joining the community at the opening of the Qianxun Performing Arts Center (page 14), meeting regularly with our Interim Head of School Scott Erickson (page 34), attending board meetings, and taking trips overseas to visit international families.

Lisa comes to IMS with 30 years of experience as an educator and leader in public, independent day and boarding schools from Pre-K through Grade 12, most recently as Head of School at The Philadelphia School. Throughout her career, Lisa has demonstrated exceptional leadership in strategic planning and execution, led successful initiatives to improve retention and experience for students, faculty and staff, and steering ambitious capital campaigns.

Born in South Korea, Lisa was the only English speaker in her household. Her experience as a first-generation immigrant has profoundly shaped her deep commitment to equity and diversity work, a passion that has been a consistent thread throughout her educational career.

Lisa began her career in education teaching art to both high school and elementary school students. To this day, Lisa finds

time to think, rest, and reset in the ceramic studio — she was excited to learn of our new Studio Art Intensive (page 28). Lisa moved from the classroom into administration as the first Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Director at Nashoba Brooks School. At the same time, she and her husband worked as dormitory parents at Concord Academy and The Walnut Hill School. Lisa went on to hold administrative leadership positions at The Park School of Baltimore before assuming her headship at The Philadelphia School.

“My journey in leadership reflects the transformative power of independent schools. Within these nurturing, tight-knit communities, I have the opportunity to create spaces where each individual is truly seen, known, and celebrated,” Lisa says.

As we move into this next chapter with Lisa, there is much to look forward to. “We will build on the work that is underway to create beautiful spaces and opportunities for students to gather, learn, and express their creativity,” Lisa says. “IMS is an extraordinary school, and I’m thrilled to come to the mountain and climb higher with you.”

The view from Becket House is exceptional. Welcome to the Mountain, Lisa!

We look forward to celebrating this important moment in IMS history with an installation ceremony in the fall.

“We know that Lisa will embrace, support, and lead the IMS experience with purpose and joy.”

**David Nuzum P'25 '27,
President of the Board of Trustees**



Lisa with her husband Peter and their children Melodie and Christian.



Lisa visited IMS families around the globe in the spring.



In the audience at the opening of the Qianxun Performing Arts Center.

“Even in the short time I’ve known Lisa, it’s clear that she is a warm, thoughtful, curious, and inclusive leader. Everyone I know who has worked with her speaks so highly — not just of her leadership, but of who she is as a person. I’m so excited to see IMS flourish under Lisa’s leadership.”

Jody Reilly Soja P'23 '24, Head of School 2015–2024

“IMS is an exceptional place, and there are so many exciting opportunities ahead. I know that Lisa can harness them in her new role here.”

**Scott Erickson, Interim Head of School
2024–2025**

Former Head of School Jody Reilly Soja and former Interim Head of School Scott Erickson with Lisa Sun at the 2025 Commencement.





The Art of Being Present

IMS Moves to “Phone Free”

IMS is phone free during the academic day, and beginning in the fall, our phone-free policy will extend beyond the classroom and into the boarding community. There will be case by case exceptions and ninth graders will have designated phone time to support responsible technology management in preparation for secondary school. IMS is not the first boarding school to have this policy, nor is it likely to be the last. This move supports early teenage social and emotional development and is deeply connected to prioritizing real, in-person interactions and a true sense of belonging in the IMS community.

Perspectives

Ingrid Schmitt '23

“I remember landing in The Bahamas for a six-week summer program at The Island School. One of the first things I did was hand my phone over to the faculty. Just like that, I was forced into the present. I couldn’t text my parents if I missed them, or talk to my friends back home. Over the course of those six weeks, I grew accustomed to life without my phone and without a screen to retreat into. I started looking around more, making deeper connections, and enjoying every moment. Life felt fuller and clearer — how it should be. The time passed quicker than I could have imagined. At the end of the program,

I was handed back my phone. I couldn’t bring myself to turn it on. It was no longer an object of reassurance and security. Having it back weighed me down both physically and mentally. I realized how much of a crutch a phone is in social settings,



and how we escape to our phones just to fill an awkward silence. I knew I needed to change and that summer taught me that it is never too late. Because of their importance in society today, phones cannot be fully cut from our lives, but they can be managed. Now, every outing I have with friends, we put a phone stack out of reach. It keeps us present with each other, living in the moment.”

Sharon Mutoni, IMS Math Teacher

“I have found from personal experience that time moves slower whenever my phone is away. The last time in my life when I had the most minimal technology was 2015. I was a ninth grader ready to go off to A Levels. I have a lot of memories of walking to class in the mornings after breakfast. I remember a lot of the dilemmas I had to mentally resolve each evening as I left study hall each night. I remember that Hope had all of the Taylor Swift lyrics from 1989 and Justin Bieber’s entire discography written in a diary. I also remember that my friend Cynthia kept an exhaustive diary of her favorite quotes handwritten in gold

marker. Each Saturday afternoon, Lyna would recite a movie or show episode that she had watched over the break, and we had to believe her animated way of retelling stories and wonder how much of it was accurate. On Sunday afternoons, we were playing fun pranks on each other, improvising comedic skits, hosting dance battles between rooms, and organizing our rooms at the end of the night.

Life was very hands on, and because we had no internet outside of a two hour window each week, each day moved like a long afternoon fever dream. We were forced to face our emotions, whether they were good or bad. We sometimes had long stretches of awkward silences, and sometimes we were bored. I miss being bored, and I miss not being able to completely disconnect from the online world. There is a beauty in the ease of escape, of being able to visit the world and explore different paths of life that our world contains, and I like cat videos. However, I fondly remember when all I had was the world around me, the community

of my school, and the kids in my classroom. I remember so much from that time period, because each day I had to be present and had no other option.



I remember playing volleyball and napping, reading and chatting, playing and singing, but I cannot for the life of me remember a single moment where I was sad because I was bored. It was a normal emotion. It was not a restlessness that could only be cured through a screen. I would not have chosen such a thing if there had been the option of having a phone, but I am glad my parents made that decision for me to grow up mostly without technology.”

Navigating the Digital World

Max Stossel, award-winning filmmaker and founder of the organization Social Awakening, visited IMS last fall. Stossel worked in social media development for several multinational brands and revealed, not surprisingly, that the driving force behind social media and technology is to capture our time; to keep us scrolling, addicted, and distracted. “To developers of platforms like Snapchat and Meta, we are their product,” Stossel said.

Stossel provided tips and resources to help navigate the digital world, like asking the question, “Am I using the tool, or is the tool using me?” He also suggested establishing a buddy system to hold each other accountable to limiting social media and technology usage. He encouraged taking conversations out of digital apps where conversations are tracked and analyzed, and instead, converse in the real world, which supports more meaningful relationships with peers.

Supporting a Phone Free Community

Later in the year, IMS took the idea of digital accountability further by introducing parents to “Wait Until 8th,” a non-profit organization that empowers parents to wait until at least the end of eighth grade before giving their children a smartphone. IMS parents were invited to sign a pledge, the idea being that the more parents who agree to hold off on providing smartphones, the less pressure they will feel to do so. To learn more, visit waituntil8th.org.



YOUR DIGITAL BODY — YOUR RIGHTS

Female Empowerment at IMS

With the rise of social media and AI, teenagers, now more than ever, are hyper-aware of their online presence. Members of the IMS Female Empowerment Affinity Group decided to address this issue with the student body through a presentation on *Bodyrights*, a movement highlighting the dangers of gender-based online violence.

“How many hours do you spend online?” posed the group of student leaders to the audience of seventh through ninth graders. “The answer may surprise you.” According to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, teens on average spend 7.5 hours a day online. “That’s one-third of your life!” The revelation startled many in the audience.

The group went on to explain what rights teenagers have over their online presence, utilizing real-life scenarios, including instances of AI-generated photos and fake profiles made to impersonate a teen. The goal of the presentation was not to vilify digital media, but rather to teach peers the importance of safe online behavior and give them a “defense toolkit” should they ever encounter online abuse.

The Female Empowerment Group or “Fe” is one of several affinity groups at IMS that meets weekly to discuss relatable topics, provide support, and create community among peers.



Island Adventure & Education

Introducing The Montserrat Sustainability Program

The new IMS travel program is a ten day, experiential learning opportunity for ninth grade students with a demonstrated interest in sustainability.

Led by IMS faculty members, the Montserrat Sustainability Program launched for the first time this year, coordinated through the Bard College at Simon's Rock and making use of their field station and residential facility. Activities included field trips across the island, guest speakers, community service projects, research projects, presentations, and outdoor activities. Academic time during the trip was dedicated to maintaining students' IMS coursework and to the first stage of the ninth grade Poquonook Solutions Project, their capstone project. Students returned from this year's trip truly inspired by what they saw and studied on the island.



"What's unique about the island of Montserrat is that it is basically a microcosm of the greater world, making it an excellent place for our students interested in sustainability to learn."

Tom Stewart, Director of Sustainability Programming and Initiatives



EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO ENACT POSITIVE CHANGE

Earlier this year, a group of IMS seventh graders attended the fourth annual Youth Empowerment & Sustainability Summit, or YESS! in Olivebridge, NY. During this immersive, three-day event, IMS students participated in workshops and presentations with like-minded students from around the country. Our team presented on sustainable indigenous practices, and brainstormed other effective methods for implementing sustainability practices in schools. The summit culminated in the creation of an “Action Plan for Sustainability” for each participating school.

Field Notes from Mr. Stewart

First full day at the station

Date: 2024-12-06

Home base: Simon's Rock Field Station

Weather: Sunny, 82°F

Observation 1: Beach near Old Road Bluff/Mouth of the Belham River (9:55am):

- Vent steaming on eastern side of the volcano
- Students on black sand beach learning about the 2012 local lahar ash and mudflows
- One student observed that the sand was attracted to the back of their phone case (magnetic sand!)
- Bird activity: pelicans, frigate birds

Last full day at the station

Date: 2024-12-14

Home base: Simon's Rock Field Station

Weather: Overnight rain, Sunny in AM, 83°F

Observation 1: Starting point Volcano Observation station (9:25am):

- Meet up with local youth group (INTERACT) members for community service
- Students observed picking up trash and clearing newly established nature trail

Observation 2: Montserrat Carnival Fair Grounds (7:15pm):

- Students seen attending the opening ceremony of the annual Montserrat Carnival celebrations
- Singing competitions, steel drum performances, local food, ice cream



Learn more about the Montserrat program:



IMS EDUCATORS ATTEND CLIMATE SUMMIT

Teachers Tom Stewart, Alex Weyerhaeuser, and Sonya Friel attended the Global Summit for Climate Education in San Francisco earlier this year. The goal was to network and brainstorm ways to improve climate education. Speakers at the summit spoke on the mental health impacts of climate change, and the importance of participating in hyper-local work. “Students are feeling a lot of climate anxiety right now,” Ms. Weyerhaeuser noted. “This summit gave us and other educators tools to help students channel that anxiety into something positive.” Mr. Stewart, who was also a panelist at the summit, added “It was a reminder that we’re doing some amazing things at IMS, but simultaneously we could be doing so much more.”



The Magic of Mountain Time

Lower Campus Students Explore The Great Outdoors

Staring into the rippling waters of a freshly melted pond at the foot of our Mountain, first graders beam in excitement as they behold the tiny creatures swimming before them. “Tadpoles!” one student joyfully exclaims. The first grade has been learning about the life cycle of a frog in their science instruction and the ability to witness this stage firsthand has been a highly anticipated event all school year.

Eliza Statile, IMS Director of Outdoor Adventure and Education, and Kiana Johnson, Director of Physical Education on our Lower Campus, seem just as excited in this moment. Both educators lead weekly “Mountain Time” expeditions for our youngest students. Together, they venture to the Mountain to hike, play games, and explore the natural world, and they look forward to moments such as the discovery of the tadpoles.

“Mountain Time gives our young Falcons a chance to connect with nature, explore the outdoors, and develop a sense of curiosity and wonder. Ms. Statile does an amazing job guiding students (and myself) to appreciate and respect the natural world in fun and meaningful ways!”

Kiana Johnson, Lower Campus Physical Education Director

“Mountain Time” is what we call the explorations that Ms. Statile and Ms. Johnson lead for our students in Pre-K through fourth grade, but time on the mountain is a core part of the experience for every IMS student all the way up to ninth grade. Whether it be through intentional excursions, the color sorting ceremony for new Upper Campus students at the start of the school year, ropes course training, a fifth grade overnight camp, or the simple pull of a beautiful day that leads to an impromptu English lesson walking along the trails, the Mountain is intricately intertwined with life and learning at IMS.

Every Day is Earth Day

By Sonya Friel

Inter-campus collaboration and hands-on, experiential learning are part of every day life at the Lower School and this year's celebration of Earth Day was no different. Upper Campus students in our Mountain Sustainability Council and the Sustainability Elective class teamed up to lead a series of engaging and meaningful lessons for our younger students. Each grade level had a unique opportunity to explore a different aspect of environmental stewardship, with activities that combined creativity, science, and sustainability.

Pre-K and kindergarten students learned about the earth as a generous giver, offering us clean air, fresh water, and beautiful places to explore. In return, they explored how we can show respect and gratitude by “giving back.” Their activity involved crafting natural bird feeders using pinecones, sunbutter, and birdseed.

First and second graders dove into the world of biodiversity and the essential role insects play in healthy ecosystems. After a nature walk to collect sticks, leaves, and other natural materials, they worked together to build “bug hotels” — safe, cozy homes where insects can live and rest, especially during colder months. They even discovered some hotel residents before the end of the lesson!

Third and fourth graders expanded on the theme of biodiversity by exploring the difference between native and invasive species and the threat pollution poses to local environments. They also learned about the power of reusing materials, as opposed to wasting or recycling, and put it into action. Using single-use plastic items like yogurt containers, water bottles, and tennis ball canisters, they created planters and sowed native plant seeds such as milkweed. These will be nurtured and later planted in wild spaces, helping to support pollinators and restore native habitats.

“Our goal is to teach students how to move their bodies safely in the outdoors amongst different elements, appreciate the plants and animals that live with us, and above all else, instill a love for the outdoors so they opt for nature instead of screens, and protect our wild spaces in the future.”

Eliza Statile,
Director of Outdoor Adventure
and Education



FIFTH GRADE MENTORS

All students on the Upper Campus participate in overnight adventures as part of our Outdoor Adventure and Education (OAE) programming. Hiking, exploring and learning during the day, pitching tents, cooking and sleeping in nature at night. During our fifth graders' most recent OAE, they were joined by our Pre-K learners for a scavenger hunt along the ponds. In pairs, they searched for bugs, birds, mammals and other life on our mountain. Cross-campus mentorship opportunities like this are one of the many ways our students learn and lead.

“Lifers” at IMS



Macie Blue and Harper Pecchia began their academic journey at IMS in Pre-Kindergarten. Eleven years later, these graduating ninth graders were asked to reflect on their experience as IMS “lifers.”

What is your earliest memory of your friendship?

Harper Pecchia (HP): It was the picnic at the beginning of our first school year.

Macie Blue (MB): Yes, I remember seeing Harper. I ran over to her because I saw her clinging to her dad, and she looked shy like me. So I just asked her, “Do you want to play?” And that was that.

HP: After that we played together every day.

How has your friendship grown over the years?

HP: I mean, I think we’ve gotten closer. We both know what all the grades have been like, so we have a shared experience that has connected us.

MB: Also, we have this thing where if one of us is having a bad day, we can just find each other in the hallway. We’ll be like, okay, let’s go find a quiet space. We can talk or just give a hug, or just listen and things like that. We’ve always been close no matter what.

Do you have any favorite memories from your time at the Lower School?

MB: My favorite memory is when we got to work with Ms. Woodard in the library. We’d be her little helpers. We would run around and put books away and help her with stuff like that.

HP: Yeah, we got to put the covers on all the Harry Potter books! Also Mrs. Charles in Kindergarten. She was definitely one of my favorite teachers. It was just *fun*. And very supportive.

What was the transition like from fourth to fifth grade (Lower Campus to Upper Campus)?

HP: It was a little scary, going from being the oldest grade to the youngest grade. And it was hard because it was during Covid. So, we didn’t get a Moving Up ceremony. It was over Zoom.

MB: But the teachers came to our houses! They all drove around and dropped off certificates. It was very nice. When I got to the Upper Campus, in fifth grade, we had one of our first musicals and I got pushed into being the White Rabbit in *Alice in Wonderland* with Harper, and it was terrifying.

HP: Like, the second main character.

MB: Yeah, and then after that I was like, oh, it’s not so bad! And then I was thankful I got pushed into doing that thing that terrified me and it opened me up to a whole new world and I went on to do musicals for the last 4 years.

A “lifetime” later, what is it like being a ninth grader at IMS?

HP: In the beginning it’s a lot of pressure because everyone’s saying, “you’re the example now.” Everyone’s looking up to you. And so that’s a little bit scary. But it’s also kind of fun. Like the White Mountains camping trip. It’s so hard, but everyone does it. So everyone really bonds at the end of it.

MB: You bond over complaining about everything and when you get back to the cabins you bond over being so tired and exhausted! And because technology is such a big thing, it is kind of hard for people to fathom time without it. Until someone brings a deck of cards and you just get to have fun without worrying about anything.

HP: Also, I think there are so many things that you are so excited for. We’ve seen 11 ninth grade classes. They all get to do the slip and slide on Mountain Day. There’s the boat trip, the camping trips, and there are so many things to be excited for that only ninth graders get to do.

MB: It definitely gives you something to look forward to and these are little tokens of just fun and joy. And with the secondary school applications, everyone collectively is supporting each other and helping each other out, like proofreading essays and stuff.

HP: Yeah, you’re not alone.

What’s your favorite thing about the IMS community?

MB: I would say the people — it’s kind of cheesy, but it’s true. My best friend is from here and also half of the teachers here are my favorite people. They’ve seen me grow up. Like my art teacher, Ms. Jenkins, she’s basically an aunt to me at this point.

HP: I think everyone cares so much about you and your success. If you are struggling with something or you don’t understand the assignment, teachers will take time out of their day to help you understand until you get it right. No one ever dismisses you. They always take their time to help you.



Macie in Pre-K

“I found out I got into my top school and she was the first person I called. Having those shared experiences is important.”

Macie Blue ’25

“We’ll always have this shared experience. If some big news happens, we’ll always be there for each other.”

Harper Pecchia ’25



Harper in Pre-K

You’re leaving the Mountain. How does that feel?

HP: I haven’t started a new school since I was five, so I’m definitely nervous, but also excited for the opportunity.

MB: It’s a double-edged sword. I’m happy to be moving on, but it’s also terrifying because IMS is all I’ve known. It’s such a lovely place and it’s scary to think about leaving something that’s been so comforting. But like you said, Harper, I’m looking forward to new experiences.

What lesson or lessons do you think you’ll take from IMS?

HP: I think the core values — honesty, compassion, and respect. We talk about them so much that they feel engraved in my brain now. I think it’s something that I can think about in every situation.

MB: IMS has shown me that if you give somebody comfort in a safe space and show them kindness, they will then instill that in you. Then when you move on to new places and new spaces you can share that kindness in new communities.

What is something that you wish for each other as you grow older?

MB: Oh, I’m gonna cry.

HP: Macie, I wish that you continue to explore the things that you love doing and continue to do them.

MB: I hope you continue to play lacrosse. I hope you become D1. And then, what’s like the NBA of lacrosse?

HP: Professional lacrosse.

MB: I hope you become a professional lacrosse player, and I hope you’re able to enjoy life.

We wish Macie and Harper and all of our ninth graders the best of luck on their next chapter (see our graduating class on page 35). Come back and visit the Mountain anytime!



Beyond the Page

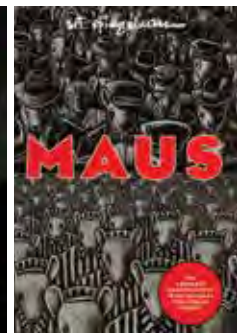
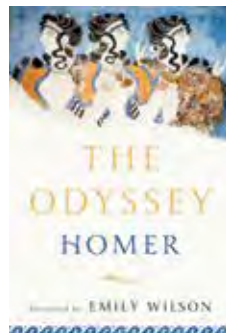
By collaborating between classrooms, and drawing on the experiences and skills of colleagues, educators at IMS find inspiring ways to explore literature and teach for relevance and purpose.

Finding the Beginning

Breathing New Life into *The Odyssey*

Part of the ninth grade English curriculum is a study of Homer's *The Odyssey*. This year, Mr. Hodosy collaborated with Performing Arts Director Danny Tieger to breathe some new life and meaning into Emily Wilson's translation of the epic poem. Focusing on its place in history and literature as an oral tradition, Mr. Tieger worked with ninth graders on the recitation and the performative components of storytelling, and in doing so, he perfectly captured the lines in the opening stanza that read "...tell the old story for our modern times. Find the beginning."

By discussing the rhythm of the poetry, the meta-narrative act of retelling, and the modern relevance of complicated heroes and epic stories, he imbued the work the students do in the fall with direction and purpose and gave students the courage to climb into the text and to fully inhabit their roles — not only as students, but as readers and participants in an ancient story.



Nora Yasumura volunteers for an organization that focuses on healing for the Japanese-American community. Learn more at Tsuruforsolidarity.org.



Top: Ms. Yasumura's father, Mutsuo "Muts" Yasumura in the Japanese incarceration camp in Arkansas.

Bottom: Ms. Yasumura and her father, Mutsuo Yasumura.



Ms. Decker, showing students her father's passport which was stamped with "J," identifying him as Jewish during WWII.

Connecting Literature to Lived Experience

"I'm going to share things with you that my father couldn't share with anyone for 40 years of his life." Health and Wellness teacher Nora Yasumura was addressing the eighth grade students, who had been reading Julie Otsuka's historical fiction *When the Emperor Was Divine* for their English class. The book is about an unnamed Japanese-American family sent to an internment camp from 1942 until 1945.

"Until I was a teenager, I never knew about the Japanese Incarceration during World War II. There was nothing about it in my history books. But, when I was about 14 years old, my father told me that when he was a child, he was a prisoner in one of the camps."

This personal narrative of Ms. Yasumura's father, a firsthand family account of a dark chapter in American history, provided students with a real-life context that deepened their understanding of the novel they were reading. "It's important to tell our stories, even though it's not easy, so that we never forget our past and, hopefully, we learn from it," added Ms. Yasumura.

The themes of identity and resilience are common threads throughout the IMS curriculum. Books that cover challenging, complex topics and the intense desire to hold onto one's identity and culture can help teach empathy and also serve as a reminder that

the persecution of marginalized people is not isolated to one moment in history.

Included in the eighth grade reading list is *Maus*, Art Spiegelman's graphic novel about the Holocaust. Here, the English Department amplified the reading with the help of IMS Learning Specialist Susan Decker, whose parents and grandparents were Holocaust survivors. Students were able to look at her family's passports, stamped with symbols of the Third Reich, and with middle names changed to "Sarah" or "Israel" by the government. One of the students said, "It is hard to see how much the world tried to erase their identity." Reflecting on the class, Ms. Decker said, "All of our international students have passports, and they know what it means to be identified by that document, so when I bring this piece of history to life for them, it emphasizes that it's not just a page in their required reading, it's real life."

The diverse makeup of IMS students adds a layer of richness to classroom discussions, opening a space for students to begin sharing their own family narratives, which the students did through a project in tandem with their reading. By reading these books in conjunction with firsthand family perspectives, students are given the tools to understand the weight of the past, and develop a deeper connection to the present.



Then and Now: Our former gym... transformed!

Qianxun Performing Arts Center

Our newest community space opens up a world of possibilities for students to gather, create, and inspire.

There was no mistaking the expressions of awe and joy as our students, faculty, and staff entered the completed Qianxun Performing Arts Center for the first time in January 2025. Thanks to the generous support of more than thirty donors, our former gym has been reimaged into a state of the art venue for performances, assemblies, visiting speakers, and community gatherings.

It has quickly become an essential and beloved gathering space on campus.

“This could be the spark that ignites a newfound interest and passion.”

Jayden Lee '23

Watch a video of our opening celebrations:



SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS EXCITING SPACE INCLUDE:

- Generous proscenium and upstage area
- Retractable seating
- Full size projector screen
- Control booth for lighting and sound
- Green room
- Dance Studio, prop storage, and costume shop
- Lobby area and HarvEst Hub connector space for art displays and gatherings



We opened the Qianxun Performing Arts Center with a first look for donors and trustees. We then welcomed students, faculty, and staff for an opening event that included student performances and special appearances by actress Laura Linney, actor Jonathan Groff, and pianist/composer Jayden Lee '23. As the school year continued, the space was host to daily morning assemblies, an extraordinary Lunar New Year celebration, our annual benefit concert "By Kids For Kids," the spring musical, Grandparents and Special Friends Day, the Fourth Grade Moving Up Ceremony, and much, much more.



Timeless Art, Lasting Legacy, and Enduring Generosity

IMS Alum Honored in Performing Arts Center Name

By Alex Hodosy



The Qianxun Performing Arts Center is named by Limin Kong in honor of her daughter Qianxun “Tiffany” Zhao, IMS Class of 2023 and current student at Andover. This center is more than just a building; it is a lasting symbol of community, generosity, and the enduring power of the arts.

“One of the best ways to leave your mark in life is to give back, if you can, to every community you live in,” Limin reflects. “When I was a boarding student myself, I saw parents contributing in ways big and small — leading concerts, sharing their art — and I knew then that when I had children of my own, I would take every opportunity to get involved.”

Limin’s involvement at IMS has been profound: parent, Trustee, and even faculty member when she stepped in to teach Mandarin for a term. But nothing speaks more to her spirit of giving than her vision and generosity with this performing arts center — a gift not only for her daughter but also for every student who will ever take the stage.

Tiffany’s name, Qianxun, is inspired by a Chinese poem about a beautiful moment of searching and finding. The poem speaks of looking amidst the vastness of the world and unexpectedly encountering something special in the quietest of places — a concept that resonates deeply with Tiffany’s own artistic journey at IMS. Like the poem she is named after, this new space will be a place for young artists to search, to experiment, and ultimately to find their own voice. Students will be given the tools, support, and encouragement to take their inspirations and turn them into something real, understanding how the performing arts can capture not just moments in time but emotions and experiences that words sometimes fail to convey. The search for meaning, for creativity, and for connection will find its home here.

Beyond individual growth, the Qianxun Performing Arts Center represents something larger: a space where the entire IMS community can come together. It will host community meetings, concerts, theater productions, dance performances, and celebrations of all kinds. Joy of childhood is at the heart of the IMS experience, and if there is one thing that defines both Limin and Tiffany, it is joy. They bring humor, warmth, and a sense of celebration to all they do. This playful, exuberant, and welcoming spirit will certainly fill the Qianxun Performing Arts Center with life.

As we step into this new era, we do so with gratitude to Limin and all of the supporters of this project. Performance is, at its core, about connection, and that connection is something that will thrive in this new space for generations to come.



“This center is for all students who dream of standing in the spotlight, who find joy in dance, who feel most alive when they’re creating something new,” Limin says. “My hope is that they all experience the same love and encouragement that Tiffany did.”



“Life doesn’t fit into a clean, neat box. It was always meant to overflow and spill into the borders around it. Life is in the rough edges, the bumps along the road, the detours that lead us somewhere unexpected. Maybe not knowing what comes next makes the journey worth taking.”

Amy Meng '25



Photo Credit:
Sammi D'Angelo

Climbing Higher Together

The Qianxun Performing Arts Center is the most recently completed milestone of a multi-year series of capital improvements, transforming daily life for our entire community. This exciting progress would not have been possible without the generous support of our donors.

7

Richards House

We are converting and updating this building into a new dorm, providing a beautiful space to welcome more boarding students.

7

6

Lower Campus Playground

Down the road, critical and sustainable improvements to our playground for Pre-K through Grade 4 campus will ensure that this space continues to support joyful learning, and healthy risk-taking.





1 Morehead Athletic Center & Centennial Field

Opened during our centennial year, this space has had an extraordinary impact on our community, providing a place for training, competing, and playing, all in one.



2 Qianxun Performing Arts Center

Opened in January 2025, this community space is multi-functional while underscoring our commitment to the performing arts.

2

1

3

4

5

3 Dining Commons

Opening fall 2025, our former Assembly Hall is being reimagined into a big, bright, energy-saving space that will be the heart of IMS, fostering community connections.



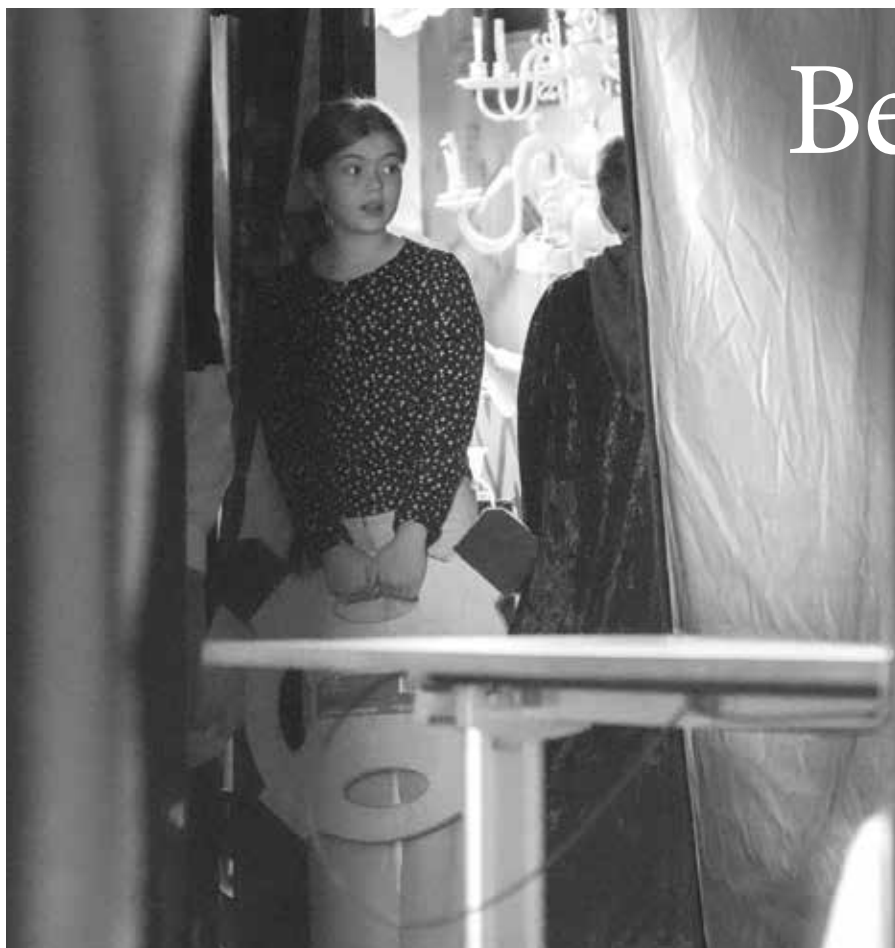
4 Larger Servery

Opening fall 2025, our former dining hall is being converted to create a natural flow for students and faculty at mealtime.

5 Classroom and Student Lounge

These thoughtfully planned spaces will provide more room for our students to learn and connect.

Behind the Curtain



Creative expression shines bright on stage, but what the audience can't see is where some of the real magic happens.

Within the IMS Performing Arts program, students are not required to act or sing. They can of course, and they are encouraged to try, but they are also given the opportunity to explore other aspects of production. Whether it be stage management, lighting design, set building, cue reading, or sound engineering, students can explore every element of working in theater throughout the school year. The fall student-produced production, *ReRun*, was a testament to our technical theater students' skill and vision as the production featured an untraditional set. Instead of physical pieces, they used lighting and projections to develop the immersive worlds we witnessed on stage.

12 Angry Men was also a technical feat, with no curtain at all (see page 21). It marked the final theatrical performance in our Assembly Hall before the mid-year opening of our new Qianxun Performing Arts Center. The shift in spaces presented a new set of possibilities for our technical students as the Qianxun Performing Arts Center is equipped with more advanced lighting and sound design systems, plus a full projector screen. The spring musical, *Wax Museum*, was a hilariously imagined, student-written piece involving a record number of students and was performed in our new theater. It also required intricate collaboration between the actors and the stage, lighting, and design crews. The audience witnessed the wonder of a middle-school musical, with little idea of all the joyful work being done simultaneously behind the curtain.



Top: Creating a set piece for *Wax Museum*.

Middle: Programming sound cues.

Bottom: A scene from *ReRun*, where lighting and projection were used in place of large set pieces.

Theater in the Round

Directors' note from Kelly Tieger and Dana Domenick

This winter, Indian Mountain School's Theater Company endeavored to do something new — a staged reading with only a few short weeks of rehearsal, to be mounted in the round as the last production in the old Assembly Hall before we moved to our new Qianxun Performing Arts Center. For this venue, we selected a classic work, the teleplay of *12 Angry Men*, by Reginald Rose.

This famous work, best known in its iteration as a 1957 film starring Henry Fonda, is a story of twelve jurors in a deliberation room for a murder trial, as one juror seeks to convince others of a reasonable doubt. We wanted to allow students to delve deep into a character study, examining these twelve archetypes and how they interact with each other over the course of these 31 tightly plotted and gripping pages.

As rehearsals unfolded, we saw seventh and eighth grade students grappling with questions that felt as timely and fresh in 2025 as they did when this teleplay was written over seventy years ago. We asked questions about class and identity, about



what justice looks like. As one juror articulates, “it takes a great deal of courage to stand alone” — to question prejudice and seek the truth.

By creating a theater in the round, and having our jurors emerge from the audience, we wanted to include our viewers in an immersive experience. The judge addresses the audience. She speaks to each of us in turn, asking us to consider the facts of the case, to weigh them honestly and thoughtfully. We are faced with a grave responsibility. When the guard locks us in the room, we are all in this together.



“Thank you to Indian Mountain School for believing in the transformative power of theater!”

**Sarah Cuoco, Sharon Playhouse
Education and Outreach Manager**

Putting on a Show at Sharon Playhouse

IMS enjoys an ongoing partnership with the legendary regional theater, Sharon Playhouse that includes classes, third and fourth grade plays, and — thanks to a generous donor for the third year in a row — a two-term, after school enrichment program called “Putting on a Show!” Beginning in the winter term, second through fourth grade students audition, then rehearse and work with the exceptionally talented theater education team at Sharon Playhouse, Michael Baldwin and Sarah Cuoco. This year, it all culminated with a superb musical performance of *101 Dalmatians*, *Kids* on the main stage. Many thanks for the musical talents of IMS's Tamra Stephenson and the incredible organizational support from Lower School Daily Program Coordinator Amanda Halloran, the team at Sharon Playhouse, and the philanthropy that made this possible.





Playing Games in School

Every year, Mr. Tieger's sixth grade Social Studies students study the interconnectedness of the ancient Greek world to modern Western culture. They do this by embarking on a unique weeks-long, immersive, multiplayer-style experience called Polis.

The game begins with planning and building: students work in small groups to design their own Greek city-states. They choose a patron god, a location, and some of the attributes of their city. They create artifacts, write decrees, and draw maps — there's a lot of crafting involved. They even create "traditional" foods and songs. Once the teams have developed their city-state resources, cultures, and infrastructures, they begin to trade.

"While we roll dice and make trades, we start to learn about Athens and Sparta," says Mr. Tieger. "We talk about trade differentials: scarcity versus demand, and we talk about cultural identity: appreciation versus appropriation. This is the stuff that's being talked about in all of our history classes. So, suddenly, while playing this game, it all starts to have relevance."

A few more lessons in, and Mr. Tieger himself enters the game, introducing the existential threat of the Persian invasion. "I come in and offer incentives, with the caveat that if they accept my offers, I'm in charge. But by now they have truly identified with their culture, so they have become die-hard individualists. Very rarely does anyone take me up on an offer to join my empire."

Following historical narrative while playing the game, Mr. Tieger says, "I start taking their colonies — my example of the Ionian revolt. They feel an impulse to save them, they do, and then we're off to the Greco-Persian war. Then, I slowly

take them through the battles of Marathon, Thermopylae, Salamis, and Plataea. They're playing, feeling strong, but then I show a map which shows them around 400 BC. There's an audible gasp as they realize Greece is no longer visible. The Persian Empire is huge, and they understand what they're up against." To complement the game, students read sections of *The Persians* by Aeschylus, which offers a second perspective on the events and gives students a chance to add up Xerxes' host to calculate their odds.

The atmosphere in the classroom is light and fun. The kids are invested in it and they are learning. They are learning about a significant time in history and also about politics, resource management, and threat management. Along the way, they are gaining skills in diplomacy, presentation, and debate. Mr. Tieger adds, "Years from now, my students will hopefully have a deep connection to the material because of their time here playing Polis."



At the end of the term, the sixth grade city-states put aside their differences and compete in a fun version of the Olympic Games.



Reimagining *The Magic Flute*

Creative Learning in Second Grade

Every year, our Lower Campus faculty and staff select a theme for the school year that influences classroom projects, lessons, and exploration time throughout the year. This year's theme was "Design, Then Build."

Our second graders fully embraced the theme through their rendition of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. They began their months-long project by reading, listening to, and watching different

variations of *The Magic Flute*. Then, they dove into an analysis of the characters and the plot. Based on their interpretations of the piece, they worked together and developed their own iteration of the story. One way their retelling found life was through stop-motion animations. Ascend Teacher Erika Hollander collaborated with the students to animate seven scenes, which were accomplished by meticulously moving their handcrafted cutouts and backdrops frame by frame until their design and vision took shape. The second grade then combined the animations with shadow puppetry and live performance to tell their exceptionally crafted story to the Lower School.

IMS STUDENTS' GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH ACHIEVES HIGH HONORS

The 2025 Connecticut Science and Engineering Fair was held this spring with more than one hundred middle and high school teams from across the state showcasing their research. The fair is judged by academic and industry leaders in partnership with the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) — the world's largest international STEM research competition. IMS eighth graders Bonnie Zhao and Tino Xie were selected to compete in this year's final round of judging at Quinnipiac University. They developed a prototype of a micro-needle patch capable of delivering drug treatments for diabetes. Their outstanding research earned them the third-place distinction in the Stanley Black and Decker Applied Technology Awards, as well as individual finalist medals in the Alexion Biotechnology Awards and Connecticut Science Fair Association Life Science Awards.



Boarding Life

Living on campus at IMS is something special. Approximately one hundred students from all over the world live here, as do dorm parents and their families. Living on campus means deep bonds with friends, life skills, growth, and leadership. All of this, with the mountain as your backyard.





Late Study Hall

By Kelly Tieger

Spring sunset light filters over Soja Field. The swings creak, and frisbees hurtle through the air. Kids cradle and throw lacrosse balls. Dogs stretch out on the grass, their bellies rubbed by many eager hands. Eighth graders kick soccer balls to second graders. A baby or two is passed around. Above it all, the mountain stands at attention, as the sun sinks lower and lower to the lip of the ridge.

“Late study hall” is a beloved spring tradition at IMS. It is an impromptu call, decided by the administrator on duty on any especially lovely spring day, and it is always received with whoops and hollers. Instead of proceeding from the dining hall to classrooms for study hall, the whole boarding community spills out of the school building and out to the playground on Soja Field. Residential faculty and their families often join in, and the sounds of young children mix with older ones. Later, when the sun sets behind the mountain, the titular “late study hall” will begin; homework will be waiting, and all the routines of the dorm as well. But for this golden hour, the community gathers for a moment of childhood suspended in time.

Ms. Tieger is the Science Department Chair and lives on campus with her family.



Athletics



Our Upper Campus students participate in a different sport every season. Some seek to push themselves competitively, while others desire to develop a new skill. No matter their end goal, students are encouraged to reach their highest potential through teamwork, sportsmanship, and determination. We're proud of our Falcons for their tremendous hard work this year.

Highlights

- For the second year in a row, the girls of the IMS Ski Race Team took home first place at the NEPSAC Class C Championships, competing against high schoolers.
- Two IMS skiers qualified to compete at the CanAms U14 Ski Race at Mont Tremblant in Québec, Canada.
- Our Boys Varsity Basketball Team won the Housatonic JV Boys Basketball Jamboree.



"The highs and lows, then highs again, showed the character, grit, determination, passion, and teamwork that allowed this special group of players to achieve the goal that they set at the beginning of the season."

Coach Rich Horosky

For the first time in IMS history, our Boys Varsity Soccer Team took home first place at the New England Junior School Boys Soccer Tournament. The tournament was held at Eaglebrook School in Deerfield, MA with the top six junior boarding schools in New England competing.



FALL

Cross Country
Equestrian
Intramural Sports
Mountain Biking
Soccer
Volleyball

WINTER

Basketball
Dance
Ice Hockey
Squash
Skiing
Swimming

SPRING

Baseball
Golf
Lacrosse
Outdoors and the Arts
Softball
Tennis
Ultimate Frisbee

"It was hard fought and challenging, but the team showed a ton of resilience and played some of their best squash all season."

Coach Geoff Perkins

In January, five members of our Varsity Squash Team traveled to Philadelphia to compete in the 2025 U.S. Middle School Championships Tournament, alongside eighty-six middle school programs competing across seven divisions. Our Falcons proved their determination and passion for the game by clinching the Boys Division III Championship Title in a stunning 5-0 sweep against Cincinnati's Seven Hills School.



New Studio Art Intensive

More Time and Space For Students To Pursue Their Passion

This year, a select group of ninth graders participated in IMS's first-ever studio art academic class on ceramics. In this course, students studied the fundamentals and various artistic styles of ceramics which they then translated into their own works. Our young artists were challenged to master the techniques they were being taught in order to meet the requirements and expectations of the course.

"I really appreciate this class because it has helped me explore subjects I never thought I'd be able to in middle school. I feel like I finally have the time and ability to take my art seriously thanks to this new course."

Katherine Dingus '25

The first major project of this year-long course required our ninth graders to construct and decorate vases using Mishima, a Japanese slip decorating technique that involves carving intricate patterns into clay and filling them with contrasting colored slips or glaze. In viewing the students' end-of-term projects, it was clear that their imaginations had no limit and they drew inspiration from all forms of life, including city skylines, ocean waves, and even grazing cows.

The presentation of their completed vases not only showcased their talent, but also the compassion and respect they cultivated for one another in the process. Students expressed the thrill of

seeing their classmates' creative visions come to life during their final peer critiques. Mr. Visockis, our ninth grade studio art instructor and Art Department Chair, commended our young artists for exceeding the expectations of the course through their creativity and dedication to their craft.

"This class has been such a great opportunity for our students. It places a higher level of importance on their art, and allows them to pursue their passions more seriously with the extra time allotted each week."

Vic Visockis, Art Department Chair

As a new addition to our ninth grade program, this course has furthered the high school level opportunities our students receive at IMS.





At IMS, students are able to explore many different creative interests and our visual arts rooms are always buzzing with activity. Whether it's pottery, woodworking, painting, sketchwork, or sewing, our students are encouraged to create and the halls and walls on both campuses are filled with the fruits of their labor.

Take a Look Inside the Studio:



ARTFULLY AFTER

Our students in Pre-K through fourth grade take art classes weekly and are given further opportunities to create art through the after school enrichment program, "Artfully After." These enrichment classes give extended time for our young artists to explore their creative expression. Art teacher Ms. Jenkins introduces them to numerous techniques that enhance their skills and widen their artistic repertoire. It's also a great way to wind down creatively after a big day at school.

Life Through Service

Leading by Example at IMS

Each year, as students arrive on campus, they see our motto *Life Through Service*. That motto stands as a call to action and guides our community in how we interact with each other, and how we lead. Everyone at IMS can find opportunities to lead and to be of service to the community and beyond, whether in subtle ways like listening to a friend in need or offering to help with clean up after an event, or more obvious ways like being a prefect, mentor, student council member, or club leader.



Student Fundraiser Supports Overseas Education

May is a busy time of year for our students, with classes wrapping up, final exams, and end-of-year events quickly approaching. But this doesn't hinder them from following our school motto. For the last three years, IMS students have been working with the American Chinese Culture and Education Foundation (ACCEF) to help send a young boy in rural China to middle school. He is preparing to enter high school next year and his education costs have increased. This year, students developed a strategy to help meet the higher financial goal to support Zhong Shenglin in the next chapter of his education.



Students in IMS's Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Affinity Group and Mandarin Language courses rose to the challenge through their entrepreneurial spirit. Rather than making mooncakes from scratch as they have in the past, they prioritized selling a higher quantity of items with fewer labor constraints, including bubble tea and popular Asian snacks, to help raise more funds efficiently. More than a dozen students helped organize the fundraiser, and thanks to the enthusiasm and passion of the IMS community, they were able to reach their goal in less than a week.

"I want our students to see their impact — that their actions are directly contributing to a child's future."

Lucy Dong, Mandarin Teacher

Lucy Dong is the Mandarin Teacher and AAPI Affinity Group Leader at IMS. She first developed the idea to host a fundraiser during AAPI Heritage Month back in 2020 as a way for students to feel connected during the pandemic. ACCEF provides progress updates so our students can see the impact of their work in real time. Ms. Dong looks forward to supporting more students like Zhong Shenglin in China and other countries in the future.

Taking a Walk in Her Shoes

Fifteen IMS students traveled to Litchfield, CT, this spring to participate in the community event, “Walk a Mile in Her Shoes,” organized by the Susan B. Anthony Project in support of survivors of domestic violence. More than 200 people joined the march, with male students and faculty members donning heels in solidarity. The Walk, an international effort, encourages communities to talk about a difficult subject, increase awareness, and offer opportunities for healing.



Students Helping Students

Peer Mediators are ninth grade student leaders within the IMS community who are trained to help mediate disagreements or challenges that may occur between two or more students. Students apply for this position and participate in extensive training with our school counselors. The ability to reach out to a fellow student rather than a teacher or counselor for support can be a positive experience that further deepens peer connections.



Fifth Grade Establishes Award for Ninth Grade Mentors

In the spring Prize Day Ceremony, a new award was presented by the fifth grade class in the spirit of our school motto, *Life Through Service*. In presenting the award, students said, “Service can take many forms, and one of the most valuable of these is when older students take the time to create friendships, mentor, and inspire our younger students. As John Quincy Adams said, ‘If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.’” It is in that spirit the fifth grade class presented the first ever Ninth Grade Mentor Award to Katherine Dingus ’25.



Lower Campus Service Trip to Animal Shelter

Our fourth graders rounded out their last weeks on the Lower Campus with a day of service at the Little Guild Animal Shelter. They planted flowers and painted flower pots with pictures of cats and dogs up for adoption. Those pots were displayed at the Great Country Mutt Show to help the animals find forever homes.





Mountain Fest



A Beloved Annual Gathering Brings Alumni Back to the Mountain

Our third annual Mountain Fest brought our alumni and parent community together for a morning hike up the mountain and a lively evening of music, wood fired pizza, laughter, and reminiscing under the tent on Soja Field.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us for this event, especially our alumni and faculty performers who lit up the stage!

Our lineup of musical artists this year included:

- Darlingside *Don Mitchel '98, Auyon Mukharji, & Harris Paseltiner*
- Mike Cobb '85
- Ava McCoy '15
- Wade '20 and Nash '21 Barillaro
- Jayden Lee '23
- Pearse Kintzel '23
- Ram Miles, IMS Music Department Chair



Save the Date:

Join us at
our next
Mountain
Fest on
May 9, 2026!



Photos: (Top L to R) Darlingside, Jayden Lee '23, (Middle L to R) Dean of Faculty Alex Hodossy and Wynn Miller '71 at the Chimney, Pearse Kintzel '23; (Bottom) Ava McCoy '15



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Ram Miles:

A Legacy of Music and Mentorship

25 Years at IMS and Still Rocking the House

By Alex Hodosy, Dean of Faculty

“Careful, follow. Now! From the G to the D Major! There you go!” You’ll hear this sort of thing regularly coming from the music room in the Student Center, usually followed by a run of guitar strings and someone’s happy laugh. That voice belongs to Ram Miles, who has been teaching music at IMS since 1998. If you’ve wandered the IMS halls at some point in the last couple of decades, chances are you’ve caught the sounds of a bass line or a full band in rehearsal — and at the center of it all, Ram, coaxing, encouraging, and pushing his students to give just a little more.

Ram has been a guiding force in the performing arts at IMS for more than 25 years. He has helped shape the school’s music program into something that is alive and personal. For Ram and his students, it’s not just about learning chords or getting through a song; it’s about building confidence, discipline, and joy through music.

Students who’ve had the chance to work with him often talk about how much he believes in them — and how much he expects from them in return. “Something that Mr. Miles says a lot is to make sure you’re practicing 13 hours a day,” one student joked. “But really, he’s a great person, and he always wants his kids to push themselves to work hard and be the best they can be. What he teaches me is going to live on with me for the rest of my life.”

“He’s the reason I play guitar and bass. He has created a welcoming and encouraging space where creativity can thrive.”

Harper Leigh Cullen ’25

That kind of connection isn’t unusual for Ram. He has a way of making members of the community feel seen and know they matter. His dedication shows up in all the small details, like how he insists every guitar is in perfect tune before a group starts playing. To him, it’s not just about sound. It’s about being in sync, paying attention, and showing care for the people you’re playing with. It’s a small act that speaks to his larger philosophy: work hard, work together, and take pride in what you’re creating.

With the opening of the new Qianxun Performing Arts Center, Ram’s students have a beautiful new space to rehearse and perform. It’s an exciting next chapter for music at IMS — and one that feels fitting for someone who’s given so much to helping young musicians find their sound. Ram’s impact is lasting, and the music — just like the lessons — will carry on for years to come.

A Conversation with Scott Erickson

Scott Erickson came to the Mountain in the summer of 2024, stepping into the role of Interim Head of School. It's not an easy job to take on for such a brief period of time, and Scott led with warmth and an open-door policy. As Scott packed up Becket House and prepared for his next headship at Berwick Academy in southern Maine, we asked him to reflect on his year at IMS.

How would you describe your year at IMS?

Scott: I would describe it as very engaging and invigorating for me professionally and personally. This was a bridge moment: I completed a 13-year headship at Phillips Brooks School, and I was so proud of it. And now I'm excited about what I'm doing next at Berwick Academy. Yet to be stimulated in this interim year and to be highly engaged in collaborating with IMS teachers, staff members, parents, and kids has been really good for me as a way to exercise my leadership skills in a new environment. So I have found this year to be professionally very invigorating and personally very gratifying.

What are the top things you have learned in this role?

Scott: I would call what I learned important reminders, which were possible in part because I was new to IMS last summer. I was reminded that I like working with ninth graders, I like working with Pre-Kindergarteners, and I like working with all of the ages in between! So when I looked for my new headship, I knew that I wanted to aim for a PK-12 school. Another thing I learned is being reminded of the importance of the head of school listening to people, not to be defensive or resistant to feedback, but rather to understand and then to work for positive, meaningful change. My core job in terms of leading people is listening to understand, and that was something I worked hard to emphasize this year.

What moments from this year will you cherish?

Scott: I thought Commencement was a beautiful, memorable experience because it was a culmination of the graduates' accomplishments. I liked the other end-of-year ceremonies — the Fourth Grade Moving Up Ceremony and the Eighth Grade Recognition Ceremony — because they brought closure to a great year and celebrated many achievements and accomplishments.

Also wonderful was the grand opening of the Qianxun Performing Arts Center. This was the completion of a project that was important to the School in a series of important projects. The way it came about in the middle of the winter,

when we all needed a boost, and in close proximity to the Lunar New Year celebration, was gratifying — to be together and celebrate that moment.



Another thing that stands out is the opening faculty and staff picnic back in late August of 2024. We were all fresh and well rested and we had great energy that comes with the start of a new school year. I remember thinking, "This is going to be a great group to work with."

On your walks every morning from Becket House, what did you look forward to most each day?

Scott: I loved my drop-off duty whether it was on the Lower Campus or on the Upper Campus. I like the start of the school day, and it was a great way for me to make connections, to say "good job" to students for their performance in a show or a game, and that was something I really looked forward to. The second thing is that one day is never like the other in this job. My calendar might tell me what I'm supposed to do, but there is always a surprise or two every day. I love thinking about that on my "commute," and I always look forward to the surprises, even the difficult ones!

What advice do you have for IMS students?

Scott: Keep bringing your best self to school, every day.

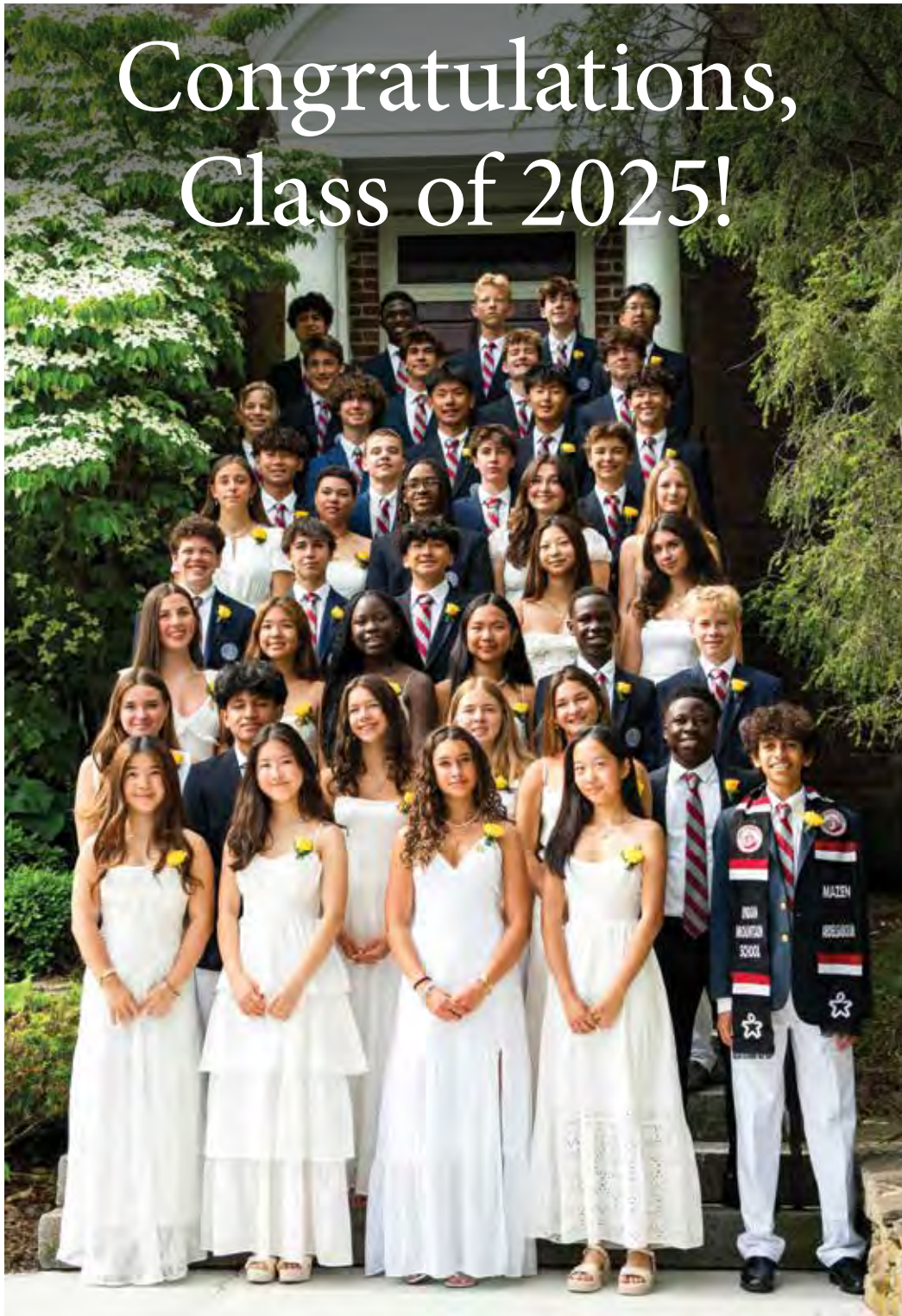
What do you think is special about IMS?

Scott: No matter whether you're a first grade day student or a boarding student from Singapore, IMS students know how to build relationships in a way that engenders a beautiful, diverse learning community. Students receive a terrific education at IMS, for sure, and the faculty delivers an excellent curriculum. Yet, as I said in my Commencement address, schools are all about relationships. The IMS community prioritizes relationships particularly well.

Thank you Scott. All the best to you at Berwick.

Scott: Thank you for a great year!

Congratulations, Class of 2025!



“We are a class defined by our energy — lively, curious, open to new ideas, and inclusive of new people. We’ve made the most out of every opportunity, whether it was in one year or eleven. No matter how our different beliefs drive us, we all know that we can’t do it alone.”

2025 Ninth Grade Commencement, “This We Believe”

Our students will be matriculating to the following schools in the fall:

The American School Foundation
Berkshire School
Blair Academy
Choate Rosemary Hall
d’Overbroeck’s Oxford
Deerfield Academy
Emma Willard School
The Frederick Gunn School
The Governor’s Academy
The Hotchkiss School
Kent School
The King’s School Canterbury
The Lawrenceville School
Loomis Chaffee
Marin Academy
Middlesex School
Millbrook School
Miss Porter’s School
Northwood School
Phillips Academy Andover
Phillips Exeter Academy
Proctor Academy
Salisbury School
South Kent School
St. Andrew’s School
St. Paul’s School
Suffield Academy
The Taft School
Trinity School
Westover School
The Williston Northampton School

We are Maroon & Gray

At the beginning of every school year, students in grades 5–9 are welcomed to our 600-acre campus through a color-sorting hike up the mountain. Once new team members join their ranks, Maroon and Gray face off in a series of friendly competitions throughout the year, in academics, athletics, and leadership. Maroon's flag was raised for the second year in a row after their victory was announced at this year's Prize Day Ceremony. Will Maroon keep their winning streak going or will Gray come out victorious next year?



Your support fuels what matters most: extraordinary teachers, excellent programs, and a community where students thrive.

For information about the many ways to support IMS, please email advancement@indianmountain.org.

Or make a gift to the Annual Fund today:

indianmountain.org/giving



Thank you for
making a difference.

Photo Credit:
Sam Decock



Indian Mountain School
211 Indian Mountain Road
Lakeville, CT 06039

(860) 435-0871
alumni@indianmountain.org
indianmountain.org



indianmountain.org/commencement-2025

VIEWS
2024-2025

Editors: Emily Benson, Gwyn Foley

Contributors: Emily Benson, Gwyn Foley, Sonya Friel, Alex Hodosy, Sharon Mutoni,
Ingrid Schmitt, Kelly Tieger

Photographers: Gwyn Foley, Emily Benson

Design: Graphic Details, Inc.

Printing: Qualprint

Indian Mountain School inspires in each member of our community the courage to climb, the joy to create, the passion to learn, and the spirit to contribute in kind and meaningful ways.