

The Sower

The American Farm School
Thessalonica Agricultural & Industrial Institute
Thessaloniki, Greece

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Dr. Athanasios Gertsis and Stella Vamvaka (Perrotis College Class of 2015) collaborate on an applied research project undertaken with Max Grow Salinity Solution Ltd. to evaluate the efficiency of its electronic water treatment system. For full story, see page 5.

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From the President

As we approach the holidays, the country continues to face overwhelming hurdles. The December landscape seems to mirror the political and economic climate of Greece. And yet, as we teach our students, even the most barren scene can yield important opportunities. Opportunities to learn, to explore, to embrace risk and mold adversity into a competitive advantage. Through calculated persistence and with an innovative mindset, much can be achieved even in the most difficult of circumstances.

This is a time to focus – to zero-in on those things necessary in order to move forward and continue to build future success. In all our educational divisions, we are doing just that. By combining the power of STEM education with our hallmark experiential learning programs, our students become thoughtful and creative thinkers, capable of applying their skills to solve problems and actively engage with the issues they encounter around them – be they in their academic, personal, or professional pursuits.

Our students' changing needs are always at the center of the programs and services that we offer, and as an institution we are consistently adapting in order to best meet these needs as they arise. We have recently reconfigured our Student Services division – a move that will allow us to provide academic and other counseling and assistance to our High School and Perrotis College students via a network of programs, including college counseling, student life, study abroad and more. We continue to expand our Scholarship Program, in order to offer these unique opportunities to deserving young men and women, especially during these difficult economic times. In this issue you will see that an American Farm School education, and the singular lessons learned while on campus, are still credited by many of our alumni as the launching pad for their current success.

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Perrotis College continues to expand its collaborations and is actively sought by many industry partners to perform applied research in areas related to the agro-food sector, sustainability and environmental science. One such example is the Max Grow Salinity Solution Ltd. project – one which has Perrotis College faculty and students testing the efficacy of the company's water treatment system, a project to span several terms and which you can learn about in more detail in the pages to follow. And these are just a few of the exciting undertakings here on campus.

Before closing with the traditional wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all of you – our friends and supporters who continue to believe in our mission, and help make our visions for the future a reality. Thank you for choosing to invest in the future of these promising young men and women, and for helping us prove that the gift of a quality education is the single most important gift one can give.

I am joined by the students and staff in wishing every one of you a joyous holiday season, and a prosperous New Year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Panos Kanellis'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

Panos Kanellis, Ph.D.
President

American Farm School & Perrotis College

Celebrating 111 Years with Friends in the US

The School celebrated 111 years of service with an elegant benefit Gala at the Grand Hyatt New York on October 22. This joyous event raised record proceeds for Perrotis College's scholarship and STEM education programs while bringing together more than 325 friends of the School and widening its circle of support.

Gala Honoree Aliko Perroti was saluted for her magnanimous contributions towards establishing and supporting Perrotis College. The evening was also an opportunity for President Panos Kanellis to announce Mrs. Perroti's transformative new gift to build the Aliko Perroti Educational Center at Perrotis College that will provide state-of-the-art classrooms, laboratories and other collaborative learning spaces to accommodate the college's growing student body.

Also recognized during the evening were Peter Schube, President & COO of The Jim Henson Company and alumnus of the School's community service and travel program for U.S. teens, "Greek Summer," as well as AFS graduate Christos Zafeirakis and Perrotis College alumnus Alexandros Chatziioannou, who received the School's Young Entrepreneur Alumni Awards.

During his remarks, Board Chairman Robert W. Uek acknowledged the long-time and valuable service of senior Honorary Trustees Philip G. Foote, Edmund Keeley, and Charles L. Thomas, Jr. Following a spirited raffle and auction, guests enjoyed hours of dancing to The Alex Donner Orchestra.



Chairman of the Gala Benefit Committee, Trustee Joannie C. Danielides



Distinguished Alumnus Honoree Peter C. Schube with presenter Donna Hanover



American Farm School Trustee Theodora Valentis accepts the Gala Honoree award on her grandmother's behalf. Mrs. Perroti sent video greetings to assembled guests



Alexandros Chatziioannou accepts the Young Entrepreneur Alumni award from presenter Professor Joan Breton Connelly



Trustees David Acker and John Cleave, Laura Cleave, Dean Eva Kanellis, President Kanellis, Trustee Joannie C. Danielides, and Chairman of the Board, Robert W. Uek



Greek Summer 2015 alumni take to the dance floor

President's Scholarships



Five outstanding students were selected again this year to receive the President's Scholarship awards, granting full merit scholarships to incoming High School freshmen. This initiative, spearheaded by President

Kanellis and supported by gifts from trustees and friends of the School, is now in its second year. Candidates are selected based on their performance on written exams administered by AFS, academic record, extracurricular activities and personal interviews. This year's scholarship winners, pictured above, are Paraskevi Loupesi, Eleni Kitoudi, Nefeli Ivanovits, Danai Psaradelli, and Thomas Kipouros.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, March 12, 2016 at 6:00 pm

Greenwich Taverna 2016

A Greek Family Evening of Food, Dancing and Silent Auction

The Millbrook Club
Greenwich, CT

For table reservations and ticket information, please contact: Laura Sommers at lsommers@amerfarm.org or tel. 212-463-8434

Seasonal Activity on the Educational Farm

One of the mainstays of the Fall season on the Educational Farm is the grape harvest. A hotbed of activity in October, the 1.5 acre campus vineyard offers important year-round learning opportunities, not only for the High School students, who participate in the planting, pruning, plant protection and harvesting phases of the vine before engaging in wine, tsipouro and vinegar-making, but also for Perrotis College students, who retain a more experiment-driven relationship to the viticulture unit, focusing on applied research in areas such as comparative plant protection, soil treatment, sustainable practices, crop yield and efficiency, often as part of their work towards a B.Sc. in the Environmental Systems Management major. Adults enrolled in Perrotis College's Continuing Education program benefit from courses in all aspects of oenology, while teachers in the preschool and elementary divisions engage the School's youngest students in the hands-on science the vineyard and winery afford.

Managing this unique campus resource is Yiannis Gatzolis, (AFS Class of '88) and Head of Plant Production. He notes that, for educational purposes, the choice of vine varieties reflects those found across the Greek landscape. Ten varieties are currently cultivated on campus and include vines of both local and foreign provenance.

The main variety is Xinomavro, widely cultivated across Macedonia in northern Greece. This local vine yields approximately 3,000 bottles of wine per year, available for purchase from the School's Campus Store or by special order. The School is also home to some increasingly rare and distinctive indigenous varieties, such as Zakinthino, Plyto, Liatiko, and Vidiano. Although these lesser known wines have a smaller share of the market, they retain staunch followers among connoisseurs and present interesting agronomic characteristics for study, including their resiliency.

Students also learn how to mix varieties to produce retsina, a selection process that is

both a science and an art in its own right. A third phase produces the distilled products tsipouro and vinegar, so making use of every portion and by-product of the grape.

As the only educational institution in Greece that teaches both cultivation and production, AFS prepares students for both the practical operation of vineyards and wineries, as well as teaching them key problem-solving skills to enable them to succeed in this important industry for Greece. Through applied research and partnership with the industry, Perrotis College faculty and students investigate real world problems toward improving quality and increasing profitability of growers and winemakers.



AFS Alumna Writes and Directs Award-Winning Film

Stavroula Toska (AFS Class of '95), recently received the inaugural Van Vlahakis Award for Innovative Filmmaking for her riveting documentary "Beneath the Olive Tree" at the 9th annual Los Angeles Greek Film Festival. Her film, which she both directed and co-authored, is narrated by Olympia Dukakis, and recounts the stories of the atrocities suffered by women embroiled in the Greek Civil War in the aftermath of WWII. Her artistic prowess was already discernible from her days on the stage as a member of former VP Tasos Apostolides' High School theater troupe. "Beneath the Olive Tree" was also a finalist for Best Documentary at the Foyle Film Festival (UK) and a finalist at the Jaipur International Film Festival (India). She was most recently honored with the Award of Merit at the Indie Film Awards. Congratulations Stavroula!



Every year all Educational Farm staff and associated personnel are trained and certified in the most current food safety practices according to ISO90001 and ISO22000, the international standards for food safety and methodology and their application within the food industry. Staff from the Educational Farm participated in the fall seminar taught by Dr. Peter Androulakis (Veterinarian and Chemist). Participants will take a written exam through the national Center for Vocational Training at a later date, in order to receive state-sanctioned recognition for the course.

Innovative Technologies for Crop Irrigation Evaluated at Perrotis College



This fall, the department of Environmental Systems Management at Perrotis College tackled the problem of crop irrigation with saline water, a challenge that is increasingly on the minds not only of large players in the agro-food sector, but fast becoming a commonplace concern for the community at large. As many parts of the world face water shortage or a rise in water salinity, cost and resource-efficient methods for saline water treatment will be actively sought and implemented. Methods currently in use are often expensive, as far as implementation, energy consumption, and maintenance are concerned, and water treatment capacity for irrigation purposes remains limited.



In a recent collaboration with Max Grow Salinity Solution Ltd. (www.salinitysolution.com) - a company awarded for its development of innovative technology for use in agriculture by the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce among others - Perrotis College has become the chosen center to test the efficiency of its electronic water treatment system. The research, which is undertaken in several phases and includes a number of plant species, is led by Perrotis College's Dr. Athanasios Gertsis, with the participation

of students chosen from among the senior class. The Max Grow salinity dissolution system offers itself as a cost and energy efficient solution to saline water treatment, eschewing the use of chemicals, as the process is one of electric energy transmission using constantly altering radiowaves to increase the solvent capacity of the water. The early phases of testing look specifically at the effects of its use on greenhouse plants, with plans to extend research to field crops as well in the spring. Initial results have been very encouraging according to Dr. Gertsis, showing an increase in plant yield for the species irrigated with the highly saline water treated using the Max Grow device. Species evaluated to date include arugula, green onions, spinach and radishes, and now lettuce and celery.



Outcomes have already been presented at this year's International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies in Agriculture, Food and Environment (HAICTA) in September, and the initial study has been published in the peer reviewed Proceedings (<http://eur-ws.org/Vol-1498>), with additional publications to follow as more data is collected.

For a more detailed account, check out Perrotis College's scientific journal *Farm to Fork* (<http://journalf2f.afs.edu.gr/>) in January 2016.

FOODMatch

Perrotis College recently organized a workshop on Food Preservation and Fast Methods to Ensure Food Safety for local food entrepreneurs. Sponsored by New York City-based FoodMatch, a producer and supplier of Mediterranean foods, the program included presentations on food safety followed by technical training in the Aliki Perroti Research Laboratories. Participants, who included 30 individuals engaged in up-and-coming start-ups in the food sector, also learned about basic laboratory equipment they could purchase and use in their production facilities. Prior to the closing reception, those in attendance had the chance to suggest topics for similar consultancy seminars, showing keen interest in attending related workshops in the future.

Graduate Spotlight: Christos Zafeirakis



Readers may recognize him as one of our New York Gala honorees and the recipient of the Young Alumni Entrepreneur award, as well as the gracious contributor of the evening's wine bearing his family name on the label.

Christos Zafeirakis – like fine wine – is an eclectic mix of distinctive character and complexity, applying local wisdom with *au courant* know-how and taste to craft some of the most heralded new wines from Greece.

Hailing from a family of viticulturists, it may seem inevitable that Christos would follow in his father's footsteps to become the third generation Zafeirakis to pursue wine making. He notes, however, that he was never pressured by his family to tread this path; rather, his career has been a conscious and considered choice. After graduating from the American Farm School in 1995, Christos went on to study oenology in Athens, studies which culminated in a Master's degree from the University of Milan. While in Italy, he worked in three different wineries in the Piedmonte, Alto Adige and Tuscany regions. He credits this hands-on learning, as well as the exchange of ideas and active engagement in the European wine industry, with giving him the means to better analyze and appreciate the particularities of Greek market conditions.

Christos returned to his native village of Tyrnavos on the Thessaly plain to devote his passion and expertise to the development of high quality wines from grapes of organic farming under the label of Domaine Zafeirakis. After extensive soil testing and the evaluation of other production factors, he began work with very encouraging results. In addition to introducing new grapes, he also revived distinctive local varieties. Today, Domaine Zafeirakis produces six varieties (Limiona, Malagousia, Chardonnay, Sangiovese-Syrah, Roditis, and Merlot) with an annual output of 120,000 bottles. Roughly 65% of production is reserved for export, notably to the U.S., Germany and other markets. Though he has undeniably come a long way since his days at AFS, Christos acknowledges the School for having laid the foundations for his present success.

General Mills Gift Transforms the Primary Division's Educational Greenhouse



A recent grant from the General Mills Foundation has enabled the refurbishing of the educational greenhouse adjoining the Primary division's "Discovery Garden." The greenhouse and garden play an essential role in the School's experiential learning program. Teachers use these spaces to actively engage our youngest learners in the sciences and to multiply opportunities for hands-on investigation to develop a deeper understanding of the world around them. The project, the third that the School has undertaken with funding from the General Mills Foundation, included expanding the existing structure, installing new flooring, repairing the roof, changing the glass panels, installing climate control, and adding furnishings and equipment. The facility is now operational, and already being put to good use by our enthusiastic Pre-K through 3rd grade classes.



Eleni Gkini, 2nd year High School student and President's Scholar, spent part of her freshman summer on the Northfield Mt. Herman campus in Gill, MA, where she engaged in 5 weeks of intensive academic writing and SAT preparatory courses. At the camp, she and fellow students from around the globe (representing 38 countries and 20 states) honed their writing skills focusing on areas such as research papers, personal statements and literary analyses. In reflecting on her time at Northfield Mt. Herman, Eleni points out that she has gained a great deal from the experience; not only has she improved her academic writing in English – which is crucial as she hopes to attend college in the US – but she also made friends from around the world, and experienced the American academic culture in a profound way. This has given her an in-depth perspective and renewed vigor as she pursues her journey towards college in the School's Study USA program.

Planned Giving

Planned giving allows supporters of the American Farm School to integrate gifts into their overall financial, tax, and estate planning. A planned gift enables a donor to make a positive financial difference for the donor and his or her family, while also contributing significantly to the School. Planned gifts leave a legacy that benefits not only the donor and the donor's family, but also future generations.

METAMORPHOSIS SOCIETY

The Metamorphosis Society recognizes and honors the generosity and foresight of those individuals who have made provisions in their estates to include the American Farm School, and who have apprised the School of their intentions. The name "Metamorphosis" is chosen for the resonance this word has in the School's tradition of education that brings about positive change, or metamorphosis, in the individual; and also by association with the titles of books by the late Bruce M. Lansdale (long-time AFS Director), *Metamorphosis: Why Do I Love Greece?* and by his wife Elizabeth Lansdale, *My Metamorphosis*.

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Charlotte P. Armstrong	Claire C. Katsanis
Peter Bien	Edmund Keeley
Emily Carey	Elizabeth (Tad) Lansdale
Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Carson, Jr.	Susan Mees Longfield
Hugh Cullman	Mary R. and Charles F. Lowrey
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Phillip G. and Mary Foote	Charles L. and Joan Thomas
Barbara K. Heming	Nancy Worcester
Sarah Holland	

BEQUESTS

By including the American Farm School in their wills, the following individuals provided a final gift to strengthen the School's endowment or to support other educational needs.

Theodora Abrames	Eve Curie Labouisse
Charles Storrs Barrows III	Clara Nickolson
James Michael Broomas	Eleanor McKay Norris
Esther Carhart	Mr. and Mrs. James G. Paterson, Sr.
Maria Couvaras	Andrew Ponas
Alexander Drapos	Mary Elizabeth Stewart
Angeline Ducas	Barbara L. Wood
Lula Ducas	Winifred E. Weter
Elizabeth M. Godley	

ESTATES AND TRUSTS

By creating an estate or trust, the following individuals provide annual support to the American Farm School past their lifetimes.

Esther Carhart	Mary P. Gill
Ernest Thomas Chopou	Henry T. Majjgren
Philip and Hazel Constantinides	Demosthenis Raptelis
Lois Kerimis	Dean C. Zutes
Fred W. Kolb	

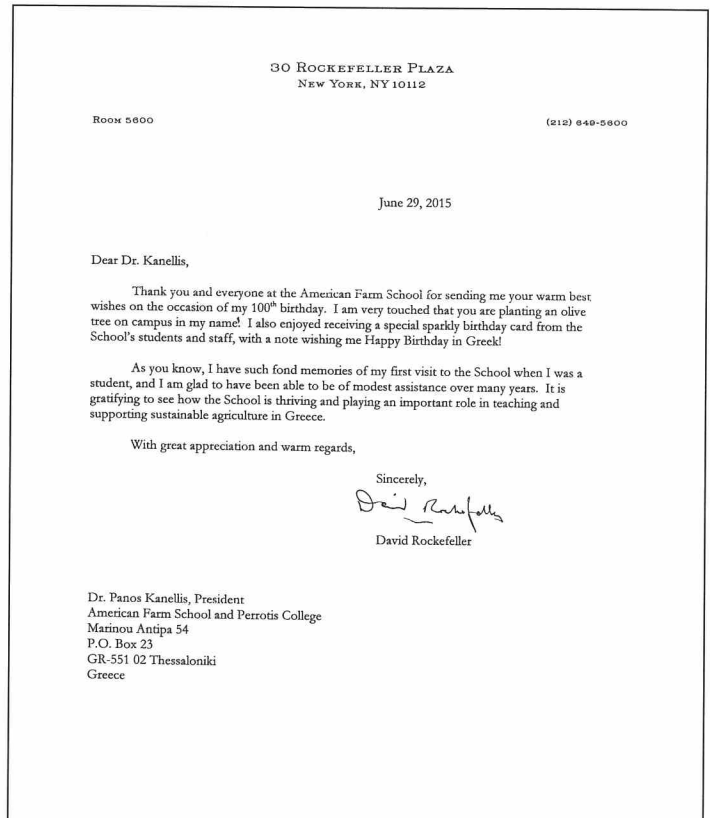
For more information about joining the Metamorphosis Society and other Planned Giving opportunities, please contact Laura Sommers at lsommers@amerfarm.org.

New Student Services Center

Thanks to a generous gift from the Samourkas Foundation, the Student Services Center now welcomes students to an inviting, newly renovated space on the ground floor of the School's historic Princeton Hall. An important resource for students as they navigate their academic and personal lives, the Center is devoted to helping the young men and women of the High School and Perrotis College by providing the guidance and support services required to help them excel in their studies, extra-curricular pursuits and contributions to the community. Under the supervision of interim Dean of Student Services, Eva Kanellis, the space is now home to the offices of the Student Life, Study Abroad, and U.S. College Counseling programs, as well the Arcadia Program serving students with learning differences.



Director of Student Life Leighanne Penna meeting with first year High School students in her office located in the new Student Services Center.



On the occasion of David Rockefeller's 100th birthday, President Panos Kanellis and the students of the American Farm School and Perrotis College sent him special congratulatory wishes. Mr. Rockefeller is among the School's most loyal donors, making a gift to the Annual Fund every year since his first visit to campus as a student, and contributing to the School's special initiatives, both privately and through the David Rockefeller Sustainability Fund. Above, his touching response.

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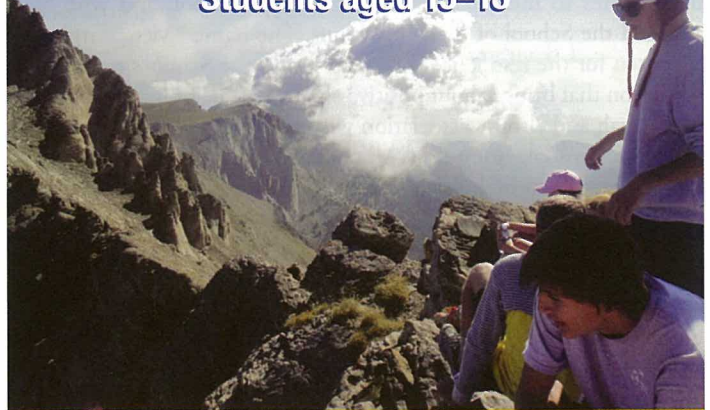
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