Thessalonica Agricultural & Industrial Institute

THE SOWET



Learning apart, growing together





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From the President

Dear Friends,

As the school year draws to a close, we look back on what has been one of the most tumultuous years in the School's recent history. In spite of the difficulties plaguing Greece since the financial crisis, the academic year began on promising footing. We welcomed the first ever Middle School class. Important strides were being made in all divisions – our students were growing, and with them our plans for new programs and initiatives.

Our progress towards this year's goals was abruptly halted in February with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dealing with a global emergency whose components and reach still remain poorly understood has presented a very new kind of challenge, but one which our students and staff responded to with incredible efficiency, creativity, and courage.

We have been running all academic divisions online, providing an array of distance learning opportunities and support for students of all ages. Even as schools begin to reopen, we continue to work with our IT department and teaching staff to perfect this new digital learning environment, in preparation for any eventuality.

As of May 11, we have been able to slowly bring the School community back to campus, focusing on the High School seniors who will be taking the Panhellenic exams (national college entrance exams) shortly, and working our way through divisions. As we try to return to some sense of normality, we cannot help but be acutely aware of the longer-term repercussions these last few months will have had on the families of our students. While Greece was fortunate to have experienced few human losses, the blow to the country's finances is predicted to be notably greater than the European average, and the situation is likely to rival the financial crisis in impact. As an Institution we are doing our utmost to confront these new circumstances with care, foresight, and respect.

Despite the difficulties we remain hopeful; and we have been able to do so in great part because we have the unwavering support of our AFS family. Thank you all for continuing to stand by the School – in good times as well as during the challenges – and for always believing in the strength of our mission and the growing necessity of our vision.

Sincerely, Panos Kanellis, Ph.D.

President

American Farm School & Perrotis College

Digital Citizenship

Fostering mindfulness in learners of all ages remains a cornerstone of the AFS ethos. Given the ever-expanding role technology and the internet play in our daily lives, the Elementary School has created a program to tackle the most important questions surrounding internet use for its students. While the web is a powerful tool at the center of our personal and professional lives, it is necessary to be diligent and conscientious in utilizing this resource. "Digital Citizen", a program run with the help of the Head of the Dimitris and Aliki Perrotis Library, Ms. Damiana Koutsomiha, teaches students that along with the benefits of technology come the responsibilities of being a part of a digital community - the web can be a powerful asset to learning and communication, but one has to avoid pitfalls such as excessive use and be especially careful when curating their digital identity on social media and other platforms.

Starting in the 2nd grade, students participate in Digital Citizen, a program which is designed to coincide with their acquisition of a personal iPad for use in the classroom and for homework. Even at this early stage, students begin to learn about some of the dangers that inevitably accompany internet use with the help of the older students in the School, who put together an illustrated Best Practice Handbook for their younger counterparts.

After being introduced to these concepts by their peers, our students go into greater detail with Ms. Koutsomiha, who highlights through interactive





presentations the importance of our "digital footprint", and the need to shape our digital identity with care and respect because it follows us well into the future. The focus is always positive – rather than adopt a fearful stance, students are encouraged to grow their awareness and engage sensibly with the various platforms at their disposal. To illustrate that the digital world has a wide spectrum of applications, our 6th grade class spends time with the High School Robotics Club – where they get their first taste of programming from their peers.

While this generation is faced with a notion of citizenship that differs greatly in its scope, the School continues to foster in its students young and old the same time honored-values on which it has prided itself since its founding.



High School Distinctions

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Prize in Entrepreneurship Competition

The High School Entrepreneurship Club continues to impress with their innovative ideas that focus on important environmental issues. After last year's smartphone app tackled urban cleanliness, this year the club turned their attention to the ocean. Oclean (ocean + clean) was developed in response to the growing public concern about pollution of the seabeds in Greece's coastal regions.

The app allows users to notify the appropriate authorities when a polluted area has been identified. The user enters the exact location of the area in question, the type of pollution (glass, aluminum, plastic) and the size, which is immediately recorded in the app. An interactive map shows reported pollution in red, and tracks the progress of clean-up until the status is changed to green, meaning the problem has been addressed. The app also

includes the ability to upload before and after pictures. This platform makes it easy for everyone to contribute to the health of seabeds which are so important to Greece.

The Entrepreneurship Club presented their novel app at the Best Virtual Business competition organized by the Youth Entrepreneurship Association and Junior Achievement Greece in early March. AFS took second place, the culmination of months of hard work learning to develop an app, and a new business, from the ground up.





Students Heading to EUSO 2020



Since 2003, the European Union Science Olympiad has provided a platform for students under the age of 16 from across the EU to showcase their scientific capabilities in an annual multidisciplinary, team event. The 2020 competition will be held in Hradec Králové, Czech Republic in September and, once again, the American Farm School will be represented by an outstanding group of students from the General High School. Konstantinos Markopoulos, Konstantina Agapitou and Thanos Syntrivanis took first place at the Panhellenic Competition, held in Thessaloniki on January 25, demonstrating their impressive

problem solving and teamwork skills in biology, chemistry and physics, subjects which are emphasized through the School's focus on STEM education. The hands-on approach to learning prioritized in the High School curriculum, as well as the emphasis on developing critical thinking while encouraging effective communication, helped prepare the team for such a demanding competition. We congratulate these inspirational students on their achievements thus far, and wish them well in the final!

Study USA Continues to Thrive

Following the closure of schools in Greece, the Study USA program continues to offer its full range of support to students online. English and exam preparation courses, totaling more than 20 hours per week, are available to all high school students through distance learning programs such as Zoom and Moodle. Creative writing exercises are also assigned and submitted electronically, allowing Study USA participants to continue preparing for college life in the US, including those seniors who will be joining undergraduate programs in Fall 2020.

The Study USA staff were quick to offer their support to AFS graduates already studying in the US, assisting them in securing local accommodation or making travel arrangements to return to Greece when schools in the US closed down due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In spite of the current global challenge, the Study USA program has still placed 10 high school students from the class of 2020 at top colleges and universities in the US, with 100% of their financial needs being met (for a total of \$2.5 million). This year's graduates will be attending: Davidson College, University of Richmond, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Berea College, Union College, Dickinson College, Trinity College, Brandeis College, Pomona College and Brown University. The American Farm School family wishes them the best of luck!

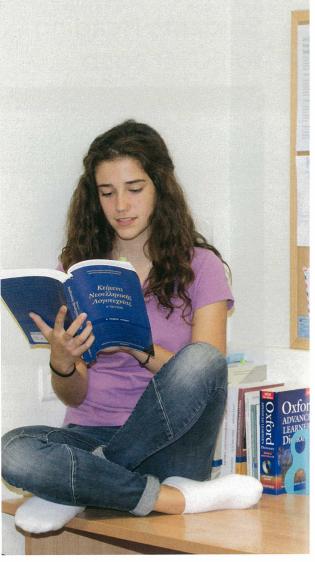
Learning apart, growing together

Distance Learning Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

Greece was quick to react following the first recorded case of COVID-19. All schools and childcare facilities, from nurseries to universities, closed on March 10. With almost four months remaining in the school year, the challenge became how to adapt and continue providing all our students with the quality education they have come to expect from the American Farm School.

From the onset, our educators at all levels, in conjunction with the IT department, have worked tirelessly to ensure that our students are able to continue their educational journey with as little disruption as possible. Using programs such as Zoom, Kahoot and Google forms, they have been able to successfully create a distance learning environment that engages students, providing continuity during uncertain times.





Our youngest learners in the Pre-K and kindergarten have maintained contact with their teachers and classmates, through pre-recorded video messages which include stories and activities, interactive live meetings, and even live puppet shows! The Elementary School has made every effort to maintain the regular learning program with daily lessons, including all subjects they would cover if they were at school. In addition to written homework which is submitted electronically, a variety of interactive online platforms are utilized to engage students with games and quizzes.

Similar efforts are being made at the Middle School and High School to ensure that students experience as little disruption to their studies as possible. Daily lessons are supplemented with presentations, worksheets and reading materials uploaded to online learning platforms. Although the practical training elements of the Vocational High School



have been suspended, every effort is made to support students' continued learning in their chosen fields to the full extent possible.

Leveraging their partnership with Cardiff Metropolitan University, which already has an established distance learning program, Perrotis College staff have been able to continue teaching our undergraduate and graduate students with minimal disruption. Despite the hands-on nature of the programs, Perrotis Junior College has also delivered numerous online seminars to students where possible, allowing these students to remain connected with their teachers and peers during these turbulent times.

As of June 1st, all divisions are slated to reopen following directives from the Greek Ministry of Education.







Barbara Heming

We are proud to honor Barbara Heming for her tremendous leadership, support and generosity to the School for more than a decade. Barbara joined the AFS Board of Trustees in 2007 and has been outstanding in her devotion to the School ever since.

When asked about her commitment to the AFS, Barbara states that, "Giving to the American Farm School gives me great joy. The amazing and positive impact of the AFS on the world is impossible to overstate. Not only do I want to support the school during my lifetime, but I am also leaving a legacy gift through the Metamorphosis Society in my estate plans, to ensure the school continues to help students, our community, and the world in the future. I firmly believe we are developing the next generation of scientists, entrepreneurs, and agriculturists to solve the complex challenges associated with feeding the world in sustainable ways. Our students are innovators, leaders and entrepreneurs. Most importantly, they have the potential to lead us to a brighter future. I believe that it is imperative



that each of us do what we can to provide our students with all the tools they need to succeed."

We cannot begin to express how much we appreciate Barbara's unwavering passion for the school and its mission.

Friends

AFS

Spotlight

Tom Stephanopoulos

"Success may come from expertise and determination – but in order to achieve true greatness, above all else you must be a philosopher".

These are not words you expect to hear from a man who owns one of the largest farms and packaging plants in California. Tom Stephanopoulos is the owner of Stamoules Produce, a very successful, family-run operation in the San Joaquin Valley that includes over 20,000 hectares of rich farmland, and covers an expanse of roughly 18 miles; a small empire behind which he is the driving force. But little about Stephanopoulos would betray his countless accomplishments. With a talent for business, he has brought the company from the small, struggling unit his mother-in-law started in 1927, to where it is today – one of the premier growing, packaging and cooling facilities in the country.

Stephanopoulos invites us into a conference room at the Mendota, CA headquarters. He is reserved at first, perhaps sizing up the situation as it presents itself – you can see this in the way he takes in every movement as he offers us a seat and something to drink. It's not that he is not welcoming – quite the opposite in fact – he has come in on a Sunday morning expressly to make sure we have the quiet we need to conduct the interview uninterrupted.

We settle down and listen to the beginning of his story – a beginning not unlike that of many of the Greek-Americans of his generation – but what sets him apart is his rare perspective.

Stephanopoulos comes from a humble background. Born in Patras, he was raised essentially by his mother whom he admired greatly, (his father spent many years in political exile, an unfortunate reality not uncommon to many families in Greece at the time). It is to his mother that he attributes his business savvy and work ethic. In order to feed her family, she ran a mill and slowly supplemented her income by buying a small herd of cows, all of which were housed on the family lot in a make-shift stable behind the house. Stephanopoulos' day would start at 3

am with the milking, after which he would catch a little more sleep before heading out again to go to school.

At 18 he left home to pursue his studies in Athens, at what would be the rough equivalent of a Junior College, with only 300 drachma in his pocket. (Throughout the interview, he recalls with shocking clarity all the milestone sums in his life). After receiving his degree in Electrical Engineering, he returned to Patras to work as a teacher in a vocational school. It was during his tenure there that he realized that these limited horizons could never make him happy; so he announced to his mother that he was dropping everything to try his luck in the United States. Twenty days later, with \$199 to his name and not speaking a word of English, he landed in Chicago. This was the summer of 1964.

In Chicago he was lucky to find friends among the Greek community; he worked a variety of jobs around the clock for two years, while attending night school to learn English, managing to save \$7,300 – a sum that would cover the cost of tuition and living expenses to join a friend and former classmate at the University of Fresno.

Fresno is where things begin to take off for Stephanopoulos. While going to school he takes part time work in the packaging division of the then small business, Stamoules Produce Company. There he meets the owner's daughter and his future wife. They are married shortly afterwards in 1967, and Stephanopoulos starts his own produce company on land he rents from a fellow Greek. He keeps his endeavors separate from the family business; and while he does lend a hand to the operation, he does not acquire a stake in the company until he takes over to save it from financial ruin in 1980.

Having spent much time learning and perfecting the farming systems being used along the California coast, he is poised to build and expand the Stamoules Produce Company in new directions. Traditionally a producer of cantaloupes and cotton, under Stephanopoulos' direction Stamoules Produce becomes the first in the Valley to add corn and broccoli, as well as dry onions and bell peppers to the mix.

Over the next 40 years, Stephanopoulos continues to innovate and expand the company. He helps develop machinery and an underground irrigation system that propel production to unparalleled lev-



els of output, while cutting costs and creating healthier working conditions for his employees. (Of all his achievements, he is so clearly proud of this - creating quality circumstances and improving the lives of the 2,000 or so individuals who work for him. He shows us a photograph of a machine used in crop harvest which he helped to develop, and which has greatly reduced back pain and injury for his workers. He is beaming with satisfaction as he outlines its manner of operation).

What is most incredible in his story is not the story itself, but the understated nobility of the man telling it – the marks of a born leader, poet and philosopher that shine through, in spite of a concerted effort to hide these virtues.

He recalls the name of every person who helped him along the way. He can point to even the smallest gesture of kindness, and in recounting it, relive with astonishing poignancy the gratitude he must have felt in the moment.

He draws inspiration from Alexander the Great, and in many ways he is like him, commanding awe, protecting and respecting all those who make him the figure that he is.

This is the reason a man who is so private has agreed to this interview.

"I shared with you my story because I believe it will hold particular meaning for the students of the American Farm School - what they are up against, in trying to build a meaningful future for themselves, is inconceivable. What the AFS is doing to help them achieve their dreams is incredible. I want the students to see that they can achieve anything they want - as long as they really want it".

Greek Summer

AFS

Alumni Spotlight

Anna Nicholas

Anna is one of the sweetest girls you could ever hope to meet. Her smile is contagious and her energy and enthusiasm palpable. Most importantly, though, she is thoughtful and curious. You can tell from the way she observes what's going on around her, the way her eyes come alive as she takes in the conversation or her surroundings. Now almost a year after participating in Greek Summer 2019, Anna reflects on her time at AFS, the experiences that changed her outlook, and the lessons she learned along the way.

On her most memorable GS experience:

I have so many fun memories from Greek Summer that it is hard to pick a favorite. I loved the boat trip we took through the islands, the time I spent in the village with my host family, hiking up Mount Olympus, walking through the

Acropolis, and everything in between. If I could only choose one, I think my favorite memory would be playing hide and seek with my host siblings. My host family was amazing and very welcoming. My host mother was so nice and understanding, and as she was the only one in the family to speak some English, she spent a lot of her time translating so that we could communicate with the rest of the family. My host sister, Sofia, had just started learning English in school, so we would practice her vocabulary using objects we found around the house. My host brother Rafael on the other hand. did not know any English as he was still very young, but he would always try to repeat the words we were working on. Even though we had no way of communicating through words, we all found a way to play together and appreciate one another in a different and more meaningful way.



It's equally difficult for me to pick one activity on campus; each was cool in its own way. Touring the dairy production facility to see how the cheese, butter, yogurt, and milk were made and packaged was fascinating. We even got to help with the packaging process. I think of that now every time I eat yogurt! The next activity was picking produce and herbs. I loved learning which plant was which, and how to tell if it was ready to be harvested or not. We also learned about aquaponics, which I found especially interesting; plants are grown in an enclosed ecosystem that help species grow and thrive (the fish eat the plants and the plants grow from the fish waste). There were so many other activities that I remember too, like seeing the winery, the snail farm, and the rest of campus. I think each activity was informative and engaging, and gave me a real sense of what is done at the school during the year. It was so different from anything I would have seen at an American school, so I think all of the activities were important in their own way.

On her family's GS legacy:

I heard about the program from my dad's cousin, Becky, who was one of my family members who participated in the program. My dad and all his siblings and cousins participated in the program and one even became a counselor. My family is quite big, but we are all very close so when Lilly Brooks, my cousin, told me about what her mom had said about Greek Summer, we both decided it would be fun for us to carry on the tradition of going. My dad told me more about the program and his experience, and I just knew



it was something that I wanted to do. I think the thing that really interested me was the homestay. Even though I was nervous going into it, I really wanted to learn about Greek culture and what Greece was really like. I had been to Greece only once before, but as a tourist, and I wanted to learn more about where that part of my family came from. My dad's experience of the program was very different from mine, but I think that was because Greece has really grown as a country, and the needs in the villages have changed. So instead of paving roads like my dad, I ran a camp for the kids in the area. I was very pleasantly surprised by the experience. I was definitely very happy that my cousin and I continued the tradition, and I think that my younger brother and cousins are also thinking of doing the same. It was fun to have my dad's cousins messaging Lilly and me throughout the program asking us how it was different and seeing if we liked some of the things that were still the same.

On how Greek Summer changed her:

I think the program helped me to understand my Greek heritage. I already loved that part of my family, but I don't think I ever fully understood what being Greek meant. This program taught me a lot about Greek culture, traditions, and language, in a real, firsthand way. I liked learning about the little things, the lesser-known traditions; for example that Greeks don't really celebrate birthdays, but instead they celebrate name days. On your name day you get gifts from all your friends and family, but you treat them to a meal, sweets or drinks, and the gatherings tend to be large and very inclusive. I think it is a fun way to celebrate the people around you, especially because a lot of people have similar names in Greece. Most importantly though, I think I learned what it really means to have Greek blood and how to celebrate that part of me. I definitely don't know everything about Greece or being Greek, but I am interested in learning more. For instance, I am going to try and



learn conversational Greek, so hopefully when I get to go back to Greece I'll be able to communicate directly, instead of through translation.

On her gap year, and how her time in Greece helped color her subsequent adventures:

Greek Summer was actually the first adventure of my Gap Year. I was far outside my comfort zone; a homestay for more than a week is intense. I had participated in international programs before with school groups, but not until the Greek Summer homestay was I fully immersed in a culture without the safety net of friends from my home culture. I learned a lot about finding common ground to connect even when it may seem you have nothing in common with others. In the homestay I grew more confident in my ability to communicate; I learned to enjoy my siblings even though they couldn't speak English and I couldn't speak Greek. I used what I learned in my next adventure which was a seven week long trip up the east coast of Australia. In Australia, I stayed in different hostels meeting lots of interesting people from all over the world. Because of my experience in Greek Summer. I knew how re-

warding it could be to get to know people from a different culture, so I made the effort to reach out. My most recent trip was to Cape Town, South Africa, to work at the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB), helping to rehabilitate injured seabirds and release them back into the wild. Here too I found the skills I learned on Greek Summer while teaching the children in the summer camp helped me to better nurture and care for the injured penguins. Although both of these experiences were so different from Greek Summer and even from each other, I found that I could still use what I had learned to make friends and grow in each of these cases.

On the one word she would use to describe the program:

If I had to describe Greek Summer in one word it would be life-changing. It may be a little cheesy but I think it's true. I learned a lot about Greek culture and the country, but more importantly. I learned a lot about myself. I also made friendships that I know will last a while. Overall I really think that the experience I had is one that I will treasure and carry with me forever.

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 lasting impact by contributing significantly to the School and making a difference by helping many future generations of students.

METAMORPHOSIS SOCIETY

The Metamorphosis Society recognizes and honors the generosity and foresight of those individuals who have made provisions in their estate that include the American Farm School and who have apprised the School of their intentions. The name "Metamorphosis" is chosen for its deeper connection to the School's tradition of providing education that brings about positive change, or "metamorphosis," in the individual.

David Acker, Charlotte Armstrong, Peter Bien, Emily Carey, Mr. & Mrs. C.W. Carson Jr., Hugh Cullman, Marvin Fisher, Dr. and Mrs. Alexander Doolas, Mr. and Mrs. George Draper, Phillip G. and Mary Foote, Barbara K. Heming, Sarah Holland, Truda Jewett, Claire C. Katsanis, Edmund Keeley, Elizabeth (Tad) Lansdale, Susan Mees Longfield, Mary R. and Charles F. Lowrey, Daniel and Mayo Morgan, Nicholas Pisaris, Gail and Ruth Schoppert, Charles L. and Joan Thomas, Nancy Worcester

BEOUESTS

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

Theodora Abrames, Charles Storrs Barrows III, James Michael Broomas, Gregor L. Calender, Esther Carbart, Jean S. Crosby, Maria Couvaras, Alexander Drapos, Angeline Ducas, Lula Ducas, Marvin Fisher, Elizabeth M. Godley, Alice L. Hansen, Darlene Keeley, Eve Curie Labouisse, Clara Nickolson, Eleanor McKay Norris, Mr. & Mrs. James G. Paterson, Sr., Andrew Ponaras, Aristides Sideropoulos, Mary Elizabeth Stewart, Barbara L. Wood, Winifred E. Weter

ESTATES & TRUSTS

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

Esther Carbart, Ernest Thomas Chepou, Philip and Hazel Constantinides, Lois Kerimis, Fred W. Kolb, Mary P. Gill, Henry T. Maijgren, Demostbenis Raptelis, Dean C. Zutes

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



In loving memory



Stavros Constantinides Trustee

With heavy hearts we bid farewell to beloved Trustee, Stavros Constantinides, who passed away in December 2019. Stavros proudly served as a member of the Board of Trustees from 1974 to 2013. He was a visionary leader who pushed the School to achieve the highest educational standards, especially in the sciences. Stavros and his wife were the first to step forward to pledge their help in rebuilding the School after a major earthquake hit Thessaloniki in 1978. Stavros will be greatly missed by his AFS family, the community, and by the countless people whose lives he touched. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family.



John Cleave Trustee

Former Trustee and longtime champion of the American Farm School, John Cleave passed away in March 2020. John joined the Board of Trustees in 1996, bringing with him years of international experience as an agricultural economist, and a 21-year career with the World Bank. An avid writer and photographer, he published several books, including African Farmers, a study of labor use in smallholder agriculture, and most recently a series of best-sellers based on his photography of Washington, Athens and Istanbul. John will be greatly missed by the American Farm School community.



David Willis AFS Family Member

It is with great sadness that we bid farewell to David Willis, who passed away in May 2020. David, the son-in-law of the School's third President, Bruce Lansdale, began working at the School in 1978, serving as the Associate Director for Administration and later as the lead for the USAID grants program. He maintained close ties with the School throughout his life, and in June 2019 he released a book honoring his father-in-law, The Sower: Bruce M. Lansdale. David will be remembered for his compassion and warmth, and will be deeply missed by all who knew him.



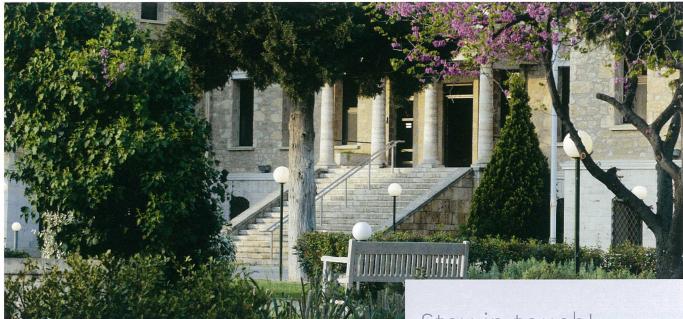
Claire C. Katsanis Longtime Supporter

Claire C. Katsanis, friend and supporter of the American Farm School for 30 years, passed away in April 2019. The School is grateful for Mr. Katsanis' long-time support, as well as for the generous bequest he left to the School on his passing.



Kitty Kyriacopoulos Longtime Friend

A friend and supporter of the American Farm School for over 20 years, Kitty Kyriacopoulos passed away in May 2020. After completing her studies in physics and mathematics in the United States, she returned to Greece, where she eventually took over as Managing Director of her family's mining company. A strong advocate for human rights, the environment and education, she sat on numerous boards and received many distinctions for her tireless efforts. Kitty touched many lives and she will be greatly missed.



Event Changes

The past few months have presented the human race with a challenge unlike any other this generation has seen. While the reactions have been varied, in many respects the experience has been shared – and though it was with great disappointment that we have had to postpone three of our 2020 US events, as well as several others on campus, we have never felt so close to our AFS friends.

We would like to announce that the following events were postponed, but will be rescheduled for the 2020 – 2021 season:

Greenwich Taverna (Greenwich, CT)
Cincinnati Taverna (Cincinnati, OH)
Inauguration of the Vasilios S. and Aphrodite B. Haseotes Middle School (Thessaloniki, GR)
Greek Summer 50th Reunion (NYC, NY)

We hope that you will mark your calendars as dates become available, and join us for one or several of these gatherings – we are confident in the power of our community's spirit, and that this deferment will only make the next time we can come together to celebrate the values of AFS a much more special occasion.

NOTE: If you are not receiving our invitations/save the dates via email, please contact us at info@afs.edu.gr

Stay in touch!

If you want to receive news about the American Farm School & Perrotis College send us an email at sower@afs.edu.gr and we will add you to our electronic newsletter contact list.

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American Farm School & Perrotis College

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