



ALUMNI INTERVIEW





Dear Members of IICS Community,

It is a great joy to announce that the Alumni Office of Istanbul International Community School has recently been established. The Office will work towards maintaining stronger ties between our alumni and our school.

As a celebration of the establishment of our Alumni Interviews section. We are always looking forward to hearing more stories from our alumni, revealing the history of our more than 100-years old school and staying in touch to provide opportunities for collaboration with our alumni.

Contact IICS Alumni Coordinator to join our alumni community and to get in touch with former IICS friends and other members of our community.

IICS Alumni Coordinator

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IICS Alumni Coordinator: Mr. Ferhangil, thank you very much for meeting me for this interview. It is exciting that this is a first of many alumni interviews!

I'd like to start by introducing you to members of our community. You are a very engaged alumni, an involved parent and a dedicated member of our Board of Directors and I would like to thank you on behalf of all our Community for your contributions.

Ferhat Ferhangil: It's my pleasure.

Can you tell us about your history and affiliation with IICS?

I started studying at our school in 1978 as a 3rd grade student. It was called Robert College Community School (RCCS) then and it was located in Rumelihisari. My family had just come from Iran and my brother and I started attending RCCS. As you know, it became ICS and IICS later.

During my time, the school offered an education from kindergarten to Grade 9, after which students would attend high schools. When I graduated, our school had a total population of around 170 people only. I finished the 9th grade in 1985 and graduated.

After my graduation, I reconnected with the school when it was time for my daughter to start school in 2011, twenty-six years after my graduation. I wanted my kids to experience what I remember so fondly of at IICS.

My older daughter Yasemin and my twin daughters Farah and Leyla started attending IICS from the Early Years 3 and now they are in Grades 6 and 4 respectively.

Also, I have been a member of the Board of Directors of IICS since 2013.



Great to hear that you are raising a second generation of IICS'ers! Hopefully they will be involved as you are.

Can you also tell us about your life following your graduation from IICS and your current endeavors as a business person as well?

I attended a Turkish high school after IICS and after receiving my high school diploma, I went abroad to study. I studied Business Administration at Eastern Mediterranean University and graduated in 1993. Following my graduation, I moved to London and worked there for 15 years for Balli Group.

Currently, I run my own private equity fund and we provide investments for textiles, construction and student housing projects. I also serve on several boards.

Going back to your experience in IICS, can you tell us how you remember life at school? How is it different between now and then?

Let me start by saying it was a different experience than now. We now have two campuses— one in Marmara and one in Hisar. When I was about the start school we were going to school in a building which was a little bigger than our Hisar campus building today. It was actually located in the white mansion just below our current campus. The current “White House” building was where music and arts classes were being held.

Also, we used to have older teachers who have been in our school for a very long time. Now, my kids have younger teachers and the teachers also change more often.

Do you remember any of your teachers?

Of course, I do. Unfortunately most of them passed away. I remember Mrs. Fonger, Head of School. There was Mrs. Vartaliti, School Secretary. Madame Odner, French teacher, Mrs. Greenwood, History teacher; Mr. Rice, Mr. Grady and Mr. Izeri, Mathematics teachers.

For example, I remember Mrs. Kett, who was teaching Grade 3 and almost went to the space.

There are also Ms. Orhon and Mrs. Alpauti who I still occasionally run into around Istanbul.

How were relationships between students?

We had lots of fun together but our friends would often leave. This was one of the hardest parts of being in an international school.

I still have two close friends from IICS; but one of them is in South Africa and the other one is in the USA. Most of our friends left Turkey after school and we lost contact with each other. It wasn't as easy as today to stay in touch with your friends.

So, would you be willing to reconnect with your friends from IICS and join some IICS networks if they were available?

Most certainly. For example, I travel abroad on frequent occasions and I know that some schools are great at providing these types of global networks for their alumni. I think we can have that, too. I would definitely join some events and platforms to reconnect with my friends.



As a member of the Board of Directors, how do you see our Board's and your role for our school?

As the Board, we are here to support our school. I personally try to contribute to our school as a member of the board with my experience as an alumnus.

Even though I graduated years ago and my kids are also going to be leaving the school at some point, I am still looking forward to leaving behind a positive legacy as a board member.

Surely, we always welcome volunteers who are wishing to dedicate their time and energy to our board and contribute in the advancement of our school. I believe that we have potential volunteers among our parents, alumni and friends of our school who believe in our mission. I would like to invite them to contribute as well.

What do you think are some of the main values that we maintain here at IICS? How would you describe our alumni and our students?

I would say that we raise global citizens. As children at IICS, we grew up in a very understanding culture. I didn't even know the nationality, social status or religious background of any of my friends. Differences didn't matter to us, on the contrary we welcomed and enjoyed them. This maybe one of the reasons that IICS resonates so well in my mind.

So, what is your allegiance to IICS based on?

I'm a sentimental person. I was attached to our school from the beginning. To be honest, I wasn't one of the best students in my class. But the school always tried to get the best out of me. I believe this school's education had a great role in making me the person I am – a global citizen.

How do you see Alumni Relations at IICS? Do you have any messages for fellow IICS Alumni?

I think that once we rekindle the school spirit, bring back some memories and establish some connections, we can grow into a more powerful network as IICS Alumni. I also think that having an Alumni Office will constitute a great part of this objective.

I consider myself to be one of the most engaged people with IICS – I don't see many people around wearing the IICS Hoodie! Therefore, as an alumnus, a parent and a board member, I am willing to contribute as much as I can for this cause and I call upon all my fellow IICS Alumni to do the same – connect, stay in touch and contribute to our Community.

