

INTERNATIONALS CONNECT

May 2009

MICHAEL SOET, PRINCIPAL OF INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AT LAFAYETTE: SAYS GOODBYE



Michael Soet

It is difficult to believe that our first class of students is graduating this June. It does not seem so long ago that I

was sitting alone on the floor of my living room in pajamas stuffing envelopes with “Congratulations! You’ve been accepted to International High School!” letters. At that moment, the school existed only in my head and in the mailing labels I had at my side. I looked carefully at each name and wondered who these kids were and what had made this

diverse group of 8th graders take a chance on a school that did not yet have a building, much less books or teachers. They must all be a little adventurous, free-spirited, and naïve, I thought. In hindsight though, I realize this description applies to our school’s founding staff just as much as it does to our first class. What did we know about starting a school? What did I

know about being a principal?

In thinking about these questions now, I realize how far we have all come in this journey. In this sense, the upcoming graduation isn’t just about the academic and linguistic achievements of our first cohort of college-bound, recent immigrant students; this event celebrates the creation of a community

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THE INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AT LAFAYETTE: STUDENT GOVERNMENT TAKES A STAND ON DARFUR CRISIS

Janet Parrales,
Development Assistant

The Student Government at the International High School at Lafayette (IHS at Lafayette) is currently in the planning stages of an awareness campaign to address the human crisis in Darfur.

Last month, all students gathered in the auditorium for a presentation with guest speakers from Me to We, a Toronto-based human rights awareness organization. The presenta-

tion was based on the film “Darfur Now” which was sponsored by Amnesty International. After the presentation, members of the Student Government had the opportunity to ask questions to the two speakers, and also express their feelings on video. The event inspired students to spread the word about the Darfur crisis by writing letters to the United Nations ambassador and possibly raising money for a relief organization.



International High School at Lafayette, Student government meets with special guest speakers from Me to We and talk about making a change.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Claire E. Sylvan

The International High School at Lafayette (IHS at Lafayette) is the seventh school in the Internationals Network for Public Schools and will celebrate its first graduation this June. It opened in September 2005 under the leadership of Michael Soet, who began his career with Internationals as a student teacher at The Manhattan International High School (MIHS) in February 1999. Michael took on successive leadership positions at MIHS, including that of Assistant Principal, before opening IHS at Lafayette with a staff of nine, which included experienced teachers from both MIHS and Brooklyn International High School (BIHS).

IHS at Lafayette first opened in Canarsie, a part of Brooklyn with few English language learner immigrants.

The location proved difficult for the new school, as parents were wary of long student commutes – most students traveled well over an hour just to get there. Despite the recruitment challenges, the school grew steadily. Happily, in the summer of 2008, the school moved to the Lafayette Education Complex (formerly Lafayette High School) in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, near to public transportation and easily accessible to various diverse immigrant communities in Brooklyn.

Since opening in 2005, IHS at Lafayette has grown not only in terms of its student body, but in the knowledge, skills and overall capacity of its faculty and leaders to successfully address the needs of its immigrant students. Jon Harriman, a science teacher and coach who worked at Brooklyn International, Flushing International and the Internationals Network, joined the

school as Assistant Principal in 2007.

The school has had strong support from Emily Bristle, the Coordinator of Special Programs, throughout its start up as well as from Sara Newman, the principal mentor, who founded Brooklyn International High School in 1994.

These two positions, and many other services, activities and programs such as New Teacher Institutes and Curriculum Libraries were provided by the Internationals Network as part of our extensive and intensive support for both existing and new, growing schools in our network.

As we develop our existing and planned schools in New York City, it is clear that Internationals is serving a significant portion of New York City's English language learners. Internationals Net-

work for Public Schools has expanded the number of International High Schools from 4 in 2004 to 12 as of August 2009 and is presently serving 19% of all recent immigrants in high schools in NYC and is building a strong network in the Bay Area for our two young schools in Oakland and (soon!) San Francisco.

Congratulations to Michael and his staff for substantially increasing the opportunities for recently arrived immigrant students in Brooklyn. This school is on track to graduating a large majority of its first senior class, who are prepared to enter college and participate actively as adults in our democratic society. This school, like all International High Schools, turns the immigrant dream into the reality of a bright and prosperous future!

TALENT SHOW

Emily Bristle,
Coordinator of Special Programs

IHS at Lafayette held its second Talent Show of the year in April. Stand-out acts included songs

performed with guitars, bass, piano, and vocals by both students and teachers, a fantastic juggling act by a Russian student, and a skit about traditional West African family life.



Making the Band at Lafayette

PSAL

SCHOLAR ATHLETE AWARD

Emily Bristle,
Coordinator of Special Programs

Senior Nafissatou Traore was awarded the PSAL Scholar-Athlete Award for her participation on the Brooklyn-champion Lafayette Educational Complex (LEC) girls basketball team. Nafi was the only member of the team from IHS at Lafayette, and her amazing academic and physical skills made her stand

out from the crowd.

IHS at Lafayette has had a wonderfully successful year participating in the varsity sports of LEC, including boys soccer (featured earlier this year in the NY Daily News), girls soccer, girls and boys basketball, girls and boys track, baseball, handball and bowling.

iMENTOR: CONNECTING YOUTH TO PROFESSIONALS

Emily Bristle,

Coordinator of Special Programs

The 11th grade class of IHS at Lafayette has joined in the tradition of other International High Schools by becoming involved in iMentor, an innovative mentoring program which connects youth and professionals through email and face-

to-face meetings.

Internship teacher Sean Burke has been instrumental in coordinating the program and many special events. Mentors and mentees have participated in college and career planning at IHS-L, and also have gone ice skating and to a Yankees game.



INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL: PARTNERSHIP

Maria Hundersmarck,

9/10 English

The English Department has partnered with 826NYC a nonprofit organization committed to working with

students of all levels to support creative and expository writing. They provide writing workshops, drop-in tutoring, field trips and in-school writing projects. International Community High School is currently partnering with 826 for a May writing project. Stu-

dents are taking personal journey stories or maps and working one-on-one with tutors to create a personal memoir. Sixteen students, grades nine through eleven, will leave with a snapshot of their story, bound into a book and published by 826NYC.

THE BROOKLYN INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL: SOCIAL JUSTICE EXPO

Lilian Ghali,

Parent Coordinator

On Tuesday, April 28th and Wednesday, April 29th, students from the Brooklyn International High School visited The Tolerance Center through service-learning grants from NY Learn & Serve. Students participated in interactive museum exhibits discussing the ideas of tolerance ranging from the 1st Amendment rights of freedom of speech to

genocides throughout history. They saw startling imagery that made them think about the power of words, how they are used, and the consequences of them. The explicit imagery contrasted the words of Dr. King with the words of White Supremacists; the words of Franklin Delano Roosevelt with the words of Adolph Hitler. This was inspiration that in our time, we have the power to use words

w i s e l y !
In the afternoon, students saw presentations from each other about service-learning projects they conducted. Seniors from Brooklyn International High School spoke about their research papers on International Trade, Child Labor, Sweatshops, and Fair Trade. They explained the complexities in solving these issues and how they will exhibit this research in an effort to

raise awareness on May 22nd at NYU in a Social Justice Expo. This Expo will be held with other schools such as Pan American International High School, Validus Preparatory Academy and the Facing History School. Students are very excited to exhibit their videos, artwork, and websites in an effort to show everyone that indeed, one person can make a difference.

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where everyone is a learner working collaboratively. The students have learned to navigate working in groups on projects these last four years and so have we. Together, staff and students have repeatedly

jumped head first into the Great Unknown - internship, a shared campus, mixed-grade classes, advisory, "selectives" and a thousand others - and emerged closer and wiser.

While our upcoming

commencement ceremony marks an end for our graduates, it also signifies a beginning for our school. The "expansion phase" of our existence has ended. As an institution we are, like our senior class, all grown-up. But

the challenge for us, as much as for our graduates, is to remember that being "grown-up" does not mean that the growing has stopped.

Find us in all five Boroughs

Brooklyn

- Brooklyn International High School
- International High School at Prospect Heights
- International High School at Lafayette

Bronx

- Bronx International High School
- International Community High School
- Pan American International High School at Monroe

Manhattan

- Manhattan International High School

Queens

- International High School at LaGuardia Community College
- Flushing International High School
- Pan American International High School

Out of State

California

- Oakland International High School

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide quality education for recently arrived immigrants by growing and sustaining a strong national network of innovative International High Schools, while broadening our impact by sharing proven best practices and influencing policy for English learners on a national scale.

Internationals in the News

Future dim for immigrant college grads: An elegant young woman who has wavy dark hair and wears a Vichy shirt, she laughs and then adopts a serious tone when discussing how her life changed when she moved to New York from the Dominican Republic eight years ago. "I was depressed when I had to come to this country. I was just a child," Rodriguez said. "As first generation, we have no choice when we come here." -NYCityWatch

Click on the links to read the full story

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Have a Story?

If you are from one of our schools (Faculty and/or student) and would like to include your story in the following newsletter, please email me:

Janet.Parrales@internationalsnetwork.org

Subject: Newsletter

Please be sure to identify which school you are writing about.

Deadline: June 19, 2009



Opening Doors to the American Dream

For more information please visit our website at:

www.internationalsnps.org

Or Email us at:

info@internationalsnps.org

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