

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SOFIA ANNUAL GIVING REPORT 2018-2019





The American College of Sofia integrates the values and best practices of American pedagogy with the rich educational traditions of Bulgaria and Europe. We seek to develop critical thinking, lifelong intellectual curiosity, leadership, and collaboration among multi-talented students of various social, cultural, economic, and geographical backgrounds.

The American College of Sofia (ACS) provides an outstanding private education for 872 Bulgarian and international students. Accredited by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, and IBO, ACS offers a rigorous academic program and an impressive variety of extra-curricular activities.

ACS is operated and funded by Sofia American Schools, Inc. (SAS), a non-profit, educational corporation chartered in 1926 in the United States by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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The American College of Sofia

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Thank you for taking the time to read this Annual Report on giving to the American College of Sofia, and I hope you find it helpful in understanding the institution and its financial needs. Charitable contributions to ACS are a critical source of funding. We aspire to provide the finest secondary school education in Bulgaria while keeping tuition affordable and providing need-based financial aid in the form of scholarships for students who could not otherwise afford to attend ACS. We could not do this without the generous financial support from donors, and that need is growing every year.

There are a variety of ways to support ACS. Unrestricted donations, as a crucial part of Annual Giving, are critical to meeting the costs of operating the school, as faculty salaries are naturally the largest category of operating costs. We of course encourage capital gifts to pay for specific assets, from construction to lab and sports equipment. Large donations can also serve as an endowment, invested to provide long-term funding for the school. Finally, donors can include ACS in their estate plans and let us know they have done so.

I would be remiss not to mention by name a few of the largest contributors. Dr. Carl Djerassi's bequest when he

passed away a few years ago, recognized with the naming of Djerassi Hall, will continue to benefit the school for years to come. ACS's broad scholarship program is just one part of the very generous financial support provided every year by Bob and Nellie Gipson (Nellie is a long-serving trustee). Needless to say, the ACS campus has been dramatically altered by the America For Bulgaria Campus Center, which opened last year. ACS would not exist without the funding it has received over the years from American School and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA), part of USAID. The American government agency responsible for foreign aid has provided critical funding for a variety of projects including renovation of the beautiful buildings dating from the initial construction of the campus before World War II.

I would not ask of you what I and other trustees do not do ourselves. ACS trustees do not receive any compensation for the time they invest in serving the school, and every one of them also contributed to ACS during the 2018-19 school year, and they and their families are many of the largest contributors to the school. ACS has benefitted from the generosity of trustees and other major donors over the years, but the school must broaden its fundraising base substantially to meet its future needs.

We look for help from a variety of groups that traditionally support schools. These include:

- Alumni who value their experience and want to give back
- Parents and grandparents who have the means to donate beyond the tuition they pay and improve the experience for their own children, schoolmates, and future students
- Faculty who see first-hand, every day, the needs that contributions help address
- Local businesses who recognize the value the school creates and build a relationship with the school community

While support from all of these constituencies is needed, I would like to emphasize the importance of donations from parents. ACS models itself in many ways after American independent schools like the one my daughters attended. I know from experience what it feels like to pay tuition and get asked to donate in addition. Yet parents value these schools so much that they do donate and in fact their gifts make up most of the school's fundraising. I hope that ACS generates the same feeling of pride in its parents and that those parents who can afford to donate, generously do so.

What fills me with optimism is the growing leadership of the Parent-Teacher Association. Not only in their most natural role as mentors and experts, but parents have also contributed financially, directly supporting student projects, as well as the arts and sports programs. After all, it is their own children who benefit.

And in this spirit of generosity and promise, I am looking forward to the academic year ahead.

Jonathan B. ClaytonChair of the ACS Board of Trustees



Dear Friends,

Two signature events in the life of ACS occur every May and September in front of Sanders Hall: celebrating our graduating seniors and welcoming our incoming Prep Class. Each ceremony reflects our unique mission and the change and continuity that characterize the work of the College. There is so much that lies behind these special occasions. This Annual Report seeks to provide some of that background, celebrating what our graduates, our students, and our community have achieved in the year just past and looking forward to the future as we are now well launched into the 2019-2020 school year.

Our newest alumni, the ACS Class of 2019, are an impressive group of young people, already accomplished in so many areas: science and technology, the performing arts, mathematics, the humanities, sports, oratory and debate, civic and social life. Their academic records at ACS were truly exceptional, with 37 graduating summa cum laude, 26 magna cum laude, and another 18 cum laude. And the achievements of this class were emblematic of amazing accomplishments and performances by

students throughout ACS in the arts, academics, sports, and across all areas of school life.

Over the past year, our students distinguished themselves in local, regional, national, and international academic competitions and events, ranging from national physics to national poetry competitions, from the national IT Olympiad to the Hack for Innovation Hackathon in Robotics, from area football championships to international basketball competitions. ACS students not only excel at such competitions, they organize and lead them as well. Among the many events produced and directed by our students this past year were the first Model UN Conference held at ACS, the ACS Debate Tournament, the ACS TEDx Event, the ACS Career Fair, and FISSION, our student-run international science fair.

In all that they do, our students continue to be inspired by the dedication and enthusiasm of ACS faculty and staff. Over the past two years as a faculty we have focused on increasing the use of educational technology and project-based learning; expanding and deepening the use of formative assessment; and establishing teacher learning communities – that is, professional development discussion groups – throughout the school. We owe our faculty and staff a continuing debt of gratitude for the extraordinary contributions they make as a diverse, talented, creative, and energetic group of men and women committed to the education of young people.

My colleagues on the faculty and staff and I are immensely grateful in return for how our community has made possible the noteworthy achievements of our students and our school. This Annual Report acknowledges and reflects the many ways our community has supported the mission and work of the College. I want to note the institutional and philanthropic leadership of our dedicated Board of Trustees and in particular the role the Board played in implementing a much-needed compensation increase for our Bulgarian faculty and staff. We are also so grateful for the time, talent, and financial contributions we receive in addition from so many parent and alumni volunteers.

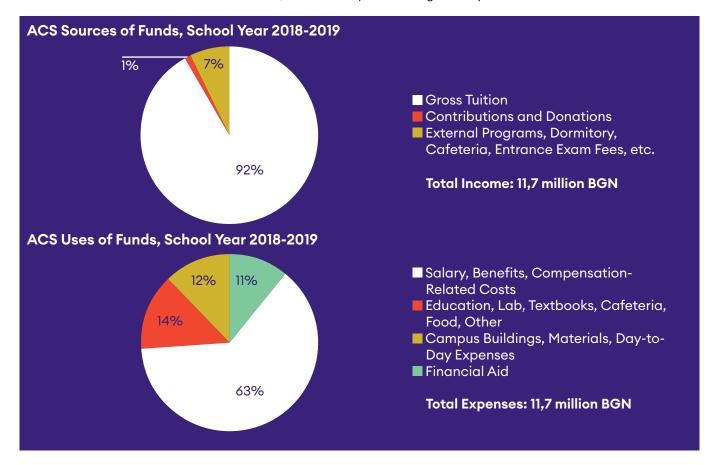
It is no secret that tuition alone does not cover the cost of an ACS education. Thanks to our exceptional faculty and students, amazing things continue to happen at ACS. In order to provide the extensive programs that we do, we rely on the generous donations, grants, and recurring gifts in support of teaching and learning, special projects, and financial aid that we have received over the years. In addition to generous gifts from alumni, parents, trustees, and friends, this past year we also received wonderful annual gifts from ACS students, grandparents, and faculty/ staff. We are so grateful for all the support we receive; every gift makes a difference. To all of you so involved and invested in the success and wellbeing of ACS, I say thank you for your faithful support!

Sincerely,

Richard T. Ewing, Jr.President

A VERY SPECIAL YEAR

2018-2019 was a year of transition. The school expanded in many new areas and developed further in a variety of new ways. Many new opportunities have opened up and we rose to the challenge. Please read the following pages for information on how we did and how we did it, and who helped us along the way.



In terms of institutional development, it has been a year of growth.

- We expanded our incoming class: 180 new students enrolled in the class of 2023, up from 160 the year before.
- At the same time, the number of student attrition fell sharply: from 4.55% the previous year to 2.26% in 2018-19.
- We raised the salaries of Bulgarian teachers. Attracting and retaining the most skilled and creative faculty is a strategic priority to the College.

In terms of philanthropy, we had a year of firsts. Current students, a grandparent, parents, former and current faculty members contributed to specific causes or projects, or to the annual giving pool, and thus joined the trustees and alumni in the charitable effort of all ACS constituent groups. Everyone coming together in such a powerful way makes not just an impactful statement of unity and trust but also a significant difference in our school's ability to fulfil and expand its promise.

- Student Spas Dimitrov '22 donated the state stipend that he earned for excellent grades to the Scholarship Fund.
- Student Maxim Selveliev '22 donated 10 specialized tablets to the Graphics Design Club.
- Elena Novakova, a grandmother of a current student, gave to the Annual Fund.
- The Parent-Teacher Association donated for student activities.
- A staff member, who chose to remain anonymous, donated to the Arts Program.
- We received a donation from Joan Wilson who spent several pre-war years on campus and attended the first grade as the elder daughter of English teacher Howard H. Bliss.

Over the year, we also expanded our community at an unprecedented scale. We forged new partnerships and made new friends, regionally and across the globe. The College has really blossomed into a community center of national and international significance, attracting TOM (Tikkun Olam Makers) Makeathon, the national English Spelling Bee finals, the International Association of College Admissions Counseling's European Institute, Founders' Day, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, a RobotiX lab in partnership with Technokrati, among other outreach and communal events.









Spotlight on:

Maxim Selveliev of the ACS Class of 2022 won second place at the Hack for Innovation Hackathon, which took place in March. He used his cash prize to purchase and donate 10 specialized tablets for digital drawing, worth 1475 leva, to the Graphics Design Club.



"To me this wonderful gift illustrates the essence of being part of the ACS community. It is not a secret that tuition alone doesn't cover the expense of an ACS education and that is why we count on generous donors: alumni, parents and friends of the school. I am so pleased and impressed that a current student could capture this concept in a single gesture. On behalf of our community, I thank him and express my hopes that others will follow his example."

Dr. Richard T. Ewing Jr., ACS President

Bliss Visit and Donations

In April, Joan Bliss Wilson returned to our campus. Mrs. Wilson is the daughter of Howard H. Bliss who taught English at the College in 1938-42. Their family lived in what is now Bliss House. She recalled games with the other children living in the college - American and Bulgarian, - and Floyd Black standing on his verandah, the bombing raids over Sofia playing out in the distance in the middle of the night, the German troops marching through the city on their way to Greece, and also recognized several trees still standing in the park. Mrs. Wilson riveted us with the harrowing story of her family's escape on a padlocked train through war-torn Europe, nearly missing the last boat leaving from Lisbon that eventually brought them back to the United States.

We cherished Mrs. Wilson's company and appreciate her gift to the College. She will always be welcome at the American College of Sofia, her home away from home.



MAJOR GIFTS

Our great friend and generous benefactor Robert Gipson spoke of his and wife Nellie's reasons for giving in an interview for Vagabond magazine: "The blessings that we have are largely attributable to free education. I would say that most of what we do both here and in the United States relates to education. Maybe we're just paying back society for the gifts that we received. The American College in Sofia is a beautiful example – if you look at how far it has come in the quality of the education and the quality of the students, it's exciting."



Gifts over 10,000 leva

Frank Bauer

Maddie Clayton (in honor of her grandfather James Clayton)

Nellie and Robert Gipson

Microsoft Corporation (matching the gift of Maddie Clayton)

Samuel Seymour

The Tianaderrah Foundation

"What motivates my support of ACS? Every trustee commits to make ACS a personal philanthropic priority. But for me, it's more than that. And it all comes from one simple visit to the Sofia campus in 2018.

"An independent school at the peak of its success calls on its mission, its leadership, faculty, students, parents, alumni and its physical plant – all these elements must be working in harmony toward the common goal of an excellent education in a supportive and creative environment. It took just one day of touring the ACS campus, meeting with students and faculty, and hearing the goals and strategies of the senior leadership of the school, for me to see that stars are aligned at ACS. I was bowled over by the academic caliber and the energy of the students. I was fortunate to sit in on several classes, where active student participation, unabashed intellectual curiosity and skilled instruction all came together. The mission of the

school is in evidence throughout the school experience and through the steady guidance of the administration. And meeting with the development and alumni affairs team demonstrated the school's commitment to keep ACS on its upward trajectory by cultivating its constituents. ACS has a storied history, but like Bulgaria, it has pivoted elegantly toward the future.

"I dare anyone to take this challenge – visit the school, speak with the students and faculty, marvel at the wonderful new facility. You will soon be a big supporter too!"



Samuel Seymour, Trustee

"Education is the key component for economic and social progress, and ACS is one of the few places in the Balkans which prepares students from all backgrounds to take an active role in shaping tomorrow's world. By giving back to the school, I hope that more capable students will be able to benefit from an international education and achieve their full potential regardless of their family's financial means."



Milko Paylov '02

Gifts of 10,000 - 5,000 leva

FiBank
Valerie Brackett and Nikolaos Monoyios
Jon and Anne Clayton
Karen Collias
John Dougherty
Ann Ferren
Rossen Georgiev
Ibrahim Meziad

Milko Pavlov Georgi Prohasky Marcie Ries Svilen Spassov Temcov Foundation Roger Whitaker William J. Williams

ANNUAL FUND

We plan our budget with the goal of providing ACS students with the best education and personal development in the country. However, new opportunities and challenges arise every day: new contests are inaugurated that our students can win, new tournaments or exhibitions or fairs pop up where we can triumph, or unforeseen conditions might prompt unscheduled maintenance work around campus.

For the instances that we couldn't have planned ahead, we rely on the Annual Fund.

For the convenience of givers and greater clarity of where the funds are allocated, at ACS we have five categories of annual giving: unrestricted, financial aid, student activities, excellence in teaching, campus improvement. Unrestricted giving allows us to allocate funds where the need arises as soon as it arises. Financial aid donations allow us to expand our tuition reduction programs so that every excellent student can benefit from an ACS education regardless of his/her family's financial capabilities. Student activities funds help the extracurricular experience that is such a vital part of what it means to be an ACS student. Excellence in teaching donations not only help us attract and retain the best teachers but also gives them the opportunity to further expand their expertise, as well as fund improvements in their classrooms. The campus improvement gifts allow us to maintain the historic beauty of our teaching and learning environment while propelling our facilities towards the cutting edge of modern education.

In 2018-2019, trustees, alumni, parents, students, faculty, and friends of the American College of Sofia gave, both in the US and Bulgaria, a consolidated sum of **64,142 leva** to the Annual Fund.

The impact of annual giving is felt every day in every classroom. Thank you!

You can contribute to the Annual Fund at https://acs.bg/giving/donate/









WHERE YOUR GIFTS HELP THE MOST

Scholarships

The College offers four full scholarships to entering students, accepted after Grade 7: two Polansky Scholarships, one Oberbauer Scholarship, and one Gipson scholarship. These scholarships are funded by the Tianaderrah Foundation of New York. They cover tuition fees for the five years that students are enrolled at the American College.

The Polansky Scholarships are named for the Hon. Sol Polansky (1926-2016), former U.S. ambassador to Bulgaria (1987-1990). Mr. Polansky was instrumental in helping the College reopen in 1992. Mr. Polansky continued his deep involvement with institutions committed to the political, economic, and educational development of Bulgaria. He served on the Boards of Trustees of the American College of Sofia as well as the American University in Bulgaria.

The Oberbauer Scholarship is named for Joseph Oberbauer. An engineer and architect, Mr. Oberbauer moved to Sofia in the 1890s from Austria. He was one of the principal architects of the city plan of modern Sofia. He lived in Bulgaria until his death in the 1930s.

The Gipson scholarship is named for the Gipson family, extraordinary ACS friends and supporters, and philanthropists of long-standing. Nellie and Robert Gipson share an abiding belief in the essential role of education in building a civil and democratic society. Nellie Gipson worked at ACS in the 1990s and joined the ACS Board of Trustees in 2004. Robert Gipson is the recipient of the Cyril and Methodius Medal for his many years of leadership in support of Bulgarian education, science, and culture.

Financial Aid

Traditionally, the most popular giving category at ACS has been Financial Aid.

The tuition reduction programs are essential for promoting economic diversity at the American College of Sofia.

30-40% of the entering 8th grade classes over the past two years have received financial aid, between 10% and 100%

12.5% of tuition income goes to financial aid

Increased financial aid would allow more generous aid packages. That would attract a more diverse student body and open bridges to an ever-increasing number of Bulgarian youths.



FISSION

Our student-initiated, student-organized, and student-run international science forum FISSION would not be possible without the generous sponsorship of various like-minded organizations which come together to support invention, innovation and imagination in the future scientists.

FISSION offers students of different ages, schools, and countries a meeting ground with peers where they can exchange knowledge, experience, and ideas in the area of scientific achievements. Participants present their own scientific work in two categories: experiments and working models, while a competent jury evaluates and awards the projects.



For the 2019 edition of FISSION, New Bulgarian University contributed 3350 leva, the America for Bulgaria Foundation gave 2500 leva, Juliany LLC donated 2000 leva, and the Student Activities Fund helped with 1000 leva.







SPECIFIC GIFTS FOR SPECIFIC PROJECTS

Sutherland Global Services gave 500 leva in support of the TEDxYouth event organized by the ACS TEDx club.

Donations made to the Student Activities pool have financed a team of 6 students and 2 teachers to the Vienna International Science Fair, and Zachary Nickolaev '20 for his participation in the Vienna Debate Club's international competition.

A staff member who chose to remain anonymous gave 1500 leva to the Arts Program which contributed to the spectacular sets and costumes of the student production of the musical Les Miserables.

The Tzonov family donated sports equipment from Sport Depot to the gym.

Queisser Pharma donated 250 leva for replacing the basketball hoops in front of the Dormitory.

The Parent-Teacher Association gave 1000 leva to the Student Activities Fund.

FiBank donated 7200 leva to be used for student activities during the 2019-2020 school year.









Spotlight on:

The Tzonov family, whose daughter Dimana graduated with the Class of 2017, donated sports and fitness equipment for the ACS gym:

"The American College is a place that challenges the students to grow as individuals. Because of the demanding learning environment, we believe that sports should be part of their everyday lives, not just to benefit their health but also to diminish the stress and help them socialize with friends. With this gym we want to give students an opportunity to develop their minds and physique through sport."

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS



The 2018-2019 school year was challenging, thrilling, and very successful for the students at the American College of Sofia. The America for Bulgaria Campus Center unveiled new possibilities for them to shine on stage or in the makerspace. Then there were all the "regularly-scheduled" accomplishments.

On September 30, 2018 four members of the ACS Class of 2019: Taniel Gulian, Kaloyan Kolev, Stoil Nikolov, and Georgi Vichev ranked first in one of the coolest events to take place in Bulgaria that fall, the Red Bull Soapbox race. Their vehicle was called The Teacher (Госпожата).

In October the ACS boys' football team, led by coach Borislav Dimitrov and Dean Tam Smith, beat the hosts from the Walworth Barbour American International School in Tel Aviv, the Kiev International School, and the Anglican School of Israel.

In the first days of November 2018, the Autumn National Physics Competition took place in Sandanski. The majority of participants came from math and science schools from all over the country. ACS was represented by a team of 16 students: grades 9-12 each contributed 4 contestants. They won awards in each grade level, while the seniors won first place as a team.

ACS senior Christo Simov was awarded the best delegate award for representing Turkey, and fellow senior Joana Nikolova received an honorable mention for representing Austria at the Model United Nations conference organized by Deutsche Schule Sofia on Nov. 9-10.

In March 2019, ACS team MAL Inc. Oh, comprised of talented 9th and 11th graders and their teacher Radostina



Chipanova from the Physical Computing with Raspberry Pielective, won the second place in the Hack for Innovation Hackathon, in competition with 20 crews composed predominantly of students at the Technical University in Sofia, the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics at Sofia University, or actively employed software developers. In just 48 hours, team MAL Inc. Oh created a solution for taking care of pets in the absence of their humans.

At the Spring National Physics Competition in Varshetz, held March 8-10, ACSers reaped 5 out of the 9 possible medals in the age groups they



competed in. Remarkably, team-wise ACS seniors ranked first in the country and our juniors got the silver!

The regional round of the IT Olympiad took place on March 9, and the outstanding presence and remarkable projects of the ACS students qualified them for the national IT Olympiad. Seniors Atanas Pashov and Taniel Gulian presented their invention: the EcoScanner mobile app, which provides information, including manufacturing materials, about products made in Bulgaria after scanning their bar code. Ninth grader Ognyan Trayanov and Junior Boris Radulov showcased their Enhanced Reality Teaching which is an app that gives students the opportunity to have their textbooks at the tip of their fingers so they can save both money and the environment. The Platform for Learning English (EnglishKo) by ninth graders Yoana Stankova and Kaloyan Yanchev helps students learn English easier by employing different levels, interactive problems, and various tests on different topics such as animals, colors, clothes, etc.

History blooms with examples of journeys emerging to be more important than the destination. This seems to be the case for 9th grader Angel Karchev who came within 0.25 points from being first at his grade in the History & Civilization Olympiad in Sofia.

On March 23-24, 2019, three ACS seniors successfully accomplished their Senior Independent Honors Project, the ACS Model United Nations Conference. Supervised by Dr. Zornitsa Semkova and with SAF funding, the conference was organized by Aleksandra Zidarova, Vladislava Mateva, and Christo Simov, and was made possible by the efforts of the members of the ACS MUN Club who chaired the sessions and helped with whatever tasks were necessary to perform in the course of the conference. Among them, the contributions of Joana Nikolova, Simona Barokova, Yoan Uluzov, and Lora Dimitrova deserve special recognition.



In late March 2019 our students took part in the National Math Competition for Language Schools, and took a bunch of medals, again. Alexander Zhelyazkov, and Ivan Nikolov from Grade 11 and eighth grader Lubomir Kotsev qualified for the National Round of the Math Linguistics Olympiad.

The annual ACS Debates Open returned this year with more participants than ever. Thirteen teams from all over the country took part, including the Bulgarian National Debates team which features two ACSers. After 5 exciting rounds and a semi-final, two ACS teams qualified for the final round, securing the victory for ACS.

In April, the Human Rights Club successfully held the first of its kind European Court of Human Rights Mock Trial, together with undergrad law students from Sofia University and practicing lawyers and moot trainers. Kudos for the smooth execution of the Mock Trial go to ACS Human Rights Club President Kristabel Konta, Vice-President Dora Angelova, and Rado Angelov, as well as Club Members Maria Tsanova, Karl-Jan Jakubik, Ralitsa Yolova, Kristina Stratieva, Alina Angelova, and Julie Dimitrova, all of them juniors at ACS.

Gold medal in math from Thailand for ACS 9th grader Teodor Tankov. Fifteen hundred students from 22 countries took part in the last round of the International Math Olympiad TIMO in Phuket, Thailand. Teodor Tankov is also Asia Open 2017 Champion.

At the beginning of spring two ACS students took part in the National Round of the English Speaking Union Public Speaking competition. The contestants competed on the topic "Nature is a Common Language". The jury recognized both ACS representatives: tenth grader Yana Peeva took the second place while senior Ana-Maria Markovska won the Audience Award.



In May 2019, ACS senior Elena Lapteva won the de-Lux Prize for creative writing, while ACS junior Elitsa Bineva scored the third place.

ACS 9th grader Ognyan Trayanov's and 11th grader Boris Radulov's project in the Applied programs category for the mobile app "Augmented Reality Training" obtained the impressive 85 points at the National Olympiad in Information Technology in Vratsa and ranked fourth among the 20 best projects in the country.

On May 9, ACS seniors Alexander Nenov, Bistra West, Matthias Hofmann and Phan Nuyen were handed the gold badges and certificates at The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award by



Republic of Bulgaria President Rumen Radev in the presence of H. E. Emma Hopkins, British Ambassador.

**

At the beginning of May, ACS senior Kaloyan Kolev received an encouraging award from one of the oldest, most serious and challenging literature contests – "Petya Dubarova" – for his compositions "Voice Mail" and "Pink Albatross". As he himself shares, three years ago he never imagined that writing poetry would become one of his favorite activities. Apart from his achievements in literature, Kaloyan is known by the ACS community in several other roles: a physicist, mathematician, programmer, engineer and a member of the team which developed and produced the infamous "The Teacher" Red Bull Soapbox award-winning vehicle, a singer and a nationally recognized poet. Is it a surprise then that his fellow seniors elected him to be the student speaker at their Senior Dinner?



CLASS OF 2019

Graduates from the Class of 2019 have been admitted to prestigious colleges and universities the world over, including Yale University, MIT, Vassar College, King's College and Queen Mary University in London, the University of Bath, Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, The American University of Paris, the Bocconi University and the Instituto Europeo di Design in Italy, the University of Amsterdam and Erasmus University in the Netherlands, the Politécnica de Madrid in Spain, Tel Aviv University in Israel. They will study subjects as diverse as Film Production, Law, Mechanical Engineering, Biology, Architecture, Dentistry, Urban Planning, Animation, Astrophysics and Cosmology, Fashion, Forensic Science.

The wonderful Class of 2019 has had many opportunities open up because of generous philanthropy. Contributions to the Student Activities Fund made possible the science forum FISSION, the TEDx event, and support student clubs and extracurricular activities like The Fountain literary magazine. And gifts for scholarships make sure to maintain our high academic standards. Here are some great graduates who have been helped by philanthropic contributions:



Joana Nikolova: FISSION honcho, Model UN delegate, founding member of the Circus Club, winner of the Senior Awards of the departments of Bulgarian Language and Literature, Science, Math and Computer Science. Summa Cum Laude.

Taniel Gulian: a key FISSION organizer, creator of an amazing mobile app, and of course engineer and pilot of cart Госпожата which won the Red Bull soapbox race. Magna Cum Laude.

Niya Dobreva: president of the TEDx club and organizer of its great event on campus, organizer of a chess tournament for families, writer and poet published in The Fountain. Summa Cum Laude.

In loving memory of their classmates Bilyana Boshnakova and Denislav Todorov, senior senators Nadezhda Ivanova and Dimitar Nemsky started a fundraising initiative: "Both of them loved music, and it became a central force in their lives. Our idea for the senator project is to buy a piano and a guitar - the instruments, which Bilyana and Denislav played - as a symbol of their presence at ACS and in our lives."

The goal was 5000 leva. 7460 leva were raised from students, parents, and friends.

Rest in peace, Bilyana and Denislav!

"Mid-May'19, a parent of a graduating ACS student contacted me to tell me that the Class of 2019 were urgently collecting money to buy a piano and guitar in memory of their fellow students who had passed, and were short of a certain amount of money. I decided I had to act quickly so that the piano be ordered immediately and be delivered to ACS before the graduation ceremony. The piano and the guitar are not just objects of memory, they have "souls" and every piece of music played on them will bring the souls of these two kids to life."

Elena Onbright, mother

ALUMNI GIVING

The alumni giving campaign is the highlight of our summer, because we see such a surge in good will and desire to help. Alumni are special, because their only stake in the school is their faith in it. When donating they don't gain anything but helping others have the same great experience they had at the College. Many of them come to visit the campus in the quiet months of July and August. Perhaps not coincidentally that is when most of alumni giving happens.

Here is a summary of the 2018-19 alumni giving campaign:

Total gifts: 48,705 leva

Number of alumni who gave: 118

Champion class with largest sum of donations: Class of 2002 with 18,500 leva and 16% participation rate

Top 3 most popular giving categories:

53% unrestricted; 37% financial aid; 5% student activities

"I want to make sure ACS keeps attracting the most incredible individuals, and preparing Bulgaria's most capable students for a life of significant impact. Empowering alumni to support ACS financially so it can become more affordable for all Bulgarian families is thus paramount."





The ACS alumni are a group of friends. They have a vibrant network which lights up during the campaign. As every year, the campaign was driven by the tireless efforts of Alumni Fund Advisory Committee's Chair Georgi Klissurski '10, assisted closely by Nikola Kouzmanov '02 and AFAC members Yana Staneva '12, Alex Kanov '12, Nicole Levakova '16, Kalina Kourdova '11, Hristo Popov '01. In the decisive stages they were joined by Alexander Tomov '04.



ALUMNI GIVING



"ACS continues to matter to me in so many ways even after graduation back in 2003. Every time I meet alumni, regardless of whether we had ever met while I was at ACS, we have an instant connection because of the ACS bond that we share. ACS offers an ever-expanding network of world-class educated alumni who are always ready to help, which I am grateful for.

"This is the reason why I became involved, as soon as the opportunity showed up, with the Alumni Fund Advisory Committee (AFAC), an alumni-led organization which aimed to help alumni give back. I try to be involved with ACS as much as I can to help remind alumni of all that ACS gave them and to also explain how they could help the institution and its current students. I enjoy working with alumni, the ACS administration, and the board of trustees, as I sincerely believe this helps improve the school, and offers current and future students the opportunity to get an even better experience than I had."

Boris Statev '03

"I want to help kids with the skills and drive, but without the required finances, have the chance to experience and achieve the high-quality education (academic and personal) that I believe ACS provides and has certainly provided me."

Nikola Kouzmanov '02





PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

2018-2019 has been a transformative year for the Parent-Teacher Association. The number of registered members sky-rocketed to almost 100, with many more contributing time and expertise as volunteers, mentors, or organizers of the various events initiated or aided by the PTA:

- Christmas Bazaar
- Career Fair
- Book Island Book Fair
- Student Activities Fund
- TEDx

We appreciate the enthusiastic involvement and proactive initiative of PTA's leadership: Zheko Zhekov, President, and members Elena Onbright, Evgenia Selvelieva, Daniela Setchkova, Tania Tsvetkova, Krassimir Velkov.

After the closing presentations of the projects supported by the Student Activities Fund, the parents who were involved in the projects throughout the year, were so inspired by the students' work that they donated 1000 leva for student activities in the new school year.

Thank you, parents, your children will use your gift to inspire you even more!

"One of the many advantages of ACS's educational approach is the fact that it enables its students to develop skills in an environment beyond the academic. The activities organized by students' clubs help their members discover their real passion in certain areas or honing already established knowledge and abilities, all while sharing them with other students. The opportunity to nurture a personal project and the ability to turn it into a reality is extremely valuable and a crucial step in career orientation for the students. Equally as valuable is SAF's assistance in funding these ideas. One of the PTA's primary goals is to support SAF both financially and with parents' experience and knowhow in order for more projects and events to be realized. That realization is a three-way process, and parents hold an important role in it."

Evgenia Selvelieva, mother



Spotlight on:

Elena Onbright decided to co-fund an initiative by the ACS Student Council: StuCo Social Life Director, junior Martin Kirilov proposed the purchase of umbrellas to be available to students free of charge for the rainy days when people got stuck at school without one. The idea immediately appealed to Mrs. Onbright, mother of a tenth-grader:

"The need to replace and produce a larger number of ACS-branded umbrellas appealed to me, as it was both tangible and practical: it is good to know students won't get wet if it suddenly starts to rain and there are no umbrellas in their backpack.

"I share the idea that every little gift helps. We have different ideas of how much "little" is, yet many "little's" make a big one. In my life, and in my job, I believe in leading by example, so I urge other parents of ACS students to donate. The Parent-Teacher Association will guide you how."

STUDENT ACTIVITIES FUND

The Student Activities Fund /SAF/ started as an Alumni initiative back in the spring of 2014 and 13 funding rounds have been held over 6 school years since then. The mission of SAF is to support student projects and initiatives by providing financial support in the role of a donor agency, professional project guidance and mentoring throughout the full project cycle. Our aim is to build a community of committed alumni, parents, and ACS staff members who are eager to dedicate efforts for creating an environment of professional, citizenship and innovation curiosity outside of the classroom.

SAF has continuously evolved since its beginning. In the 2018/2019 academic year the focus was to increase the funding support, increase the number and diversify the nature of student projects supported by SAF, to provide professional mentorship, to actively involve more parents, alumni and ACS staff, to engage Faculty Advisers in the SAF project cycle, to further evolve the application and reporting processes.

The number of grant applications increased more than twice in 2018/2019. SAF supported first-time student initiatives (Chess Tournament, Biotechnology Club, ACS MUN Simulation, Hug Me Project, Charity Run, Tennis Tournament, Human Rights Mock Trial, Student Council initiatives for student life, etc.), repeating student events and projects (College Life Newspaper, Debate Club - ACS Debate Open, FISSION, Friends of UNICEF, Medical Club) who provided a vision for added value towards their previous club initiative. SAF provided continued support for a few student projects who applied for funding in both funding sessions. We provided 3 grants that exceeded 500 BGN, the amount that was initially decided. Priority was given to projects and initiatives that established and enhanced high-visibility and engaged not only the ACS community, but tapped potential for regional, national, and international outreach.

This year's SAF in a few key numbers:

- 7,599.75 leva granted to 20 student initiatives and projects
- 23 applications submitted for support from SAF
- 16 student teams presented at the final round of reports in June, 2019

You can support the student clubs and activities at https://acs.bg/giving/donate/

"As a parent of an ACS student and an education expert, I believe that the collaboration of parents, alumni, teachers and students adds value to the development of the kids' social skills. The opportunity to participate in SAF activities makes me very happy, because I get to participate directly in the development of skills such as project presentation, execution and reporting, which are so important to young people in the 21st century. I will continue to be committed to SAF's activities and to share my knowledge and experience with the students in the College."

SAF co-chair Gergana Rakovska, chair of the Business for Education Foundation and of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC Bulgaria), is a mother of an ACS tenth-grader



ARTS FEST 2019

ACS's Arts Fest is more than our school's largest community outreach event, more than our greatest fundraising effort: it is a ton of fun.

The open stage and the open barbecue grill, the performances of theater, classical music and modern dance, the student clubs offering cookies, juice and insight into their activities, the chess tournament and the horse riding, and the many many people come from all over Sofia to spend a day in our parkcampus - it is the most fun day of the year.

And we were happy to host the reunion of ACS Classes of 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014. The alumni started arriving early, even before the official start of Arts Fest, and then quickly dispersed from their special corner to mingle, seek out their teachers, take selfies on the steps of Sanders Hall, or explore the America for Bulgaria Campus Center which many were visiting for the first time.

A friendly competition was held between the classes who had anniversaries - the members of the class which had their 5th year anniversary would donate 5 leva to the school, the members of the class with the 10th anniversary would donate 10 leva, the class with the 15th year anniversary would donate 15 leva, and 20th year 20 leva. The competition was decisively won by the Class of 2004. Congratulations and thank you!

After the student clubs put aside funds necessary for their activities next year, the total sum gathered at Arts Fest was 6798 leva.









ARTS FEST 2019

Spotlight on:

What the Preps Did

Arts Fest is, first and foremost, fun. It is also a great way to boost the ACS scholarship fund. The participating student clubs donate 20% of their coupon sales for scholarships. But let us now tell you what the 8th graders do.

In the week leading up to Arts Fest, the first-year students, our precious preps, do a pre-sale of raffle tickets. 100% of what they sell goes to the scholarship fund.

Fun first and foremost, remember? Well, part of the fun is a contest among the prep sections which one will sell most tickets. The kids can go to their classmates, they certainly knock on the doors of their teachers and the administration – it's a nice way for all of them to give back to the community, - they also take tickets to their friends who study elsewhere, and to their families. Not only does it contribute to scholarships, it also spreads the word about Arts Fest and the College.

This year the preps sold tickets worth 2896 leva.

Special thanks go to champs 8/7 who won the inter-section contest. 8/7 leader Adriana Chapanova collected the well-deserved award for her classmates, provided by Arts Fest sponsors Playground and Mondelez.

ACS scholarships can really make a difference to families who have deserving children but limited means. We can all help those great students come and study at ACS.

Special, heartfelt thanks to the generous benefactors who make Arts Fest possible:

Technopolis, Jamadvice Travel, IKEA, Rotary Club Samokov, Grand Hotel Sofia, MatStar, Mondelez Bulgaria, Ozone.bg, Domino's Pizza, Playground Center, Izida Ice Cream, Kilim World, Party House, Elizabeth Filipova-Alexieva, ACS Parent-Teacher Association

























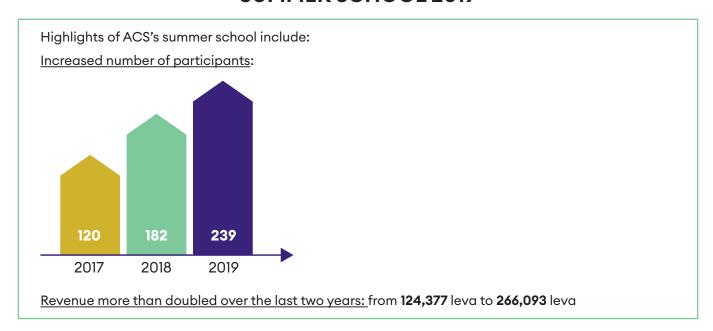








SUMMER SCHOOL 2019



"Our daughter has a talent in arts," was the beginning of a letter from the mom of a summer school student. "She draws and plays the piano. For years she's been preparing to apply to the Fine Arts High School in Sofia. But after spending a month at ACS in the summer, she was so impressed and excited that she decided to apply to the college too."

239 children and young adults spent part of their summer with us, played and laughed in the ACS park, brought life to the empty classrooms, produced their own movies, TV commercials and news reports, and enjoyed the secrets of experimental science, discovering small miracles every day. Together with learning a wealth of new vocabulary in English, they mastered soft skills like working in teams, speaking in public, and using technologies. But mostly they loved spending time together, and left the college with more friends than they ever expected.

We are proud of it. Since the summer of 2017 we have doubled the number of students attending our summer school and, most importantly, have created such a life-changing experience for them that made them wish to stay part of the ACS community longer. An increasing number of parents use the ACS External Programs to showcase the College learning environment and values. "Thank you for selecting

such a wonderful team of teachers," another summer school parent wrote us.

2018-19 was an incredible school year for the ACS External Programs. We expanded substantially our community outreach and our programs became more popular. Our staff is committed to continuing this way. And we would like to thank them from the bottom of our hearts.

To make the signature summer school such a success, these ACS colleagues stayed on campus and worked through the summer:

Diana Zapryanova, External Programs Director Shumana Akhtar Valeri Banchev Elka Dacheva Borislav Dimitrov Raya Gigova Ivaylo Lozanchev



Graeme Pattison Sandra Radeva Dancho Stoychev Stiliana Vodenicharova

LIST OF DONORS

The Bulgarian saying goes, drop by drop a pool makes. Every gift is a gift, no matter its size. We appreciate every contribution, because it expands and enriches our students' education. Thank you!

4999 - 1000 leva

America for Bulgaria Foundation

Slavena Bardarova Christina Black Avis Bohlen Nikolay Borisov Vassil Chatalbashev

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New Bulgarian University

Ivo Panteleev Evgenia Peeva Todor Penev

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David Wilson

"Studying at the college expanded my horizons.

"I donate to ACS every year to help provide this opportunity to other Bulgarian students. I hope that ACS would develop the future leaders of Bulgaria and even the world. My donation is a small token of appreciation for the good times I had at the beautiful campus and the great education I received. It connects me to the community of ACS students and faculty. As an Executive Director of an environmental non-profit organization, I understand the importance of donations and volunteer support. I know that planting seeds in people's minds is even more important than planting seeds in the ground."



Maria Mircheva '97

999 - 500 leva

Lyudmil Angelov
Ivelina Borisova
Elena Gerasimova
Yordan Cenov
Lyubitsa Gerasimova
Todor Dimanov
Stefka Gerova
Lilia Dobreva
Thomas Marshall

Zori Miltcheva Youlian Petkov Lilyana Yankova



499 - 200 leva

Anonymous '97 Mira Kovacheva Toni Pashova
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Berta Darakchieva Ting-May Liao Trayan Trayanov

Suzanne Farnham Kalina Manova Sonia Vaklinova Kostadinova

Elina Foutekova Maria Mircheva Gergana Vassileva Alexander Khasymski Dara Nikolova Zornitsa Vodenska

"I have only fond memories and boundless gratitude and pride for ACS, so it is a delight to be able to support its mission going forward."

Kalina Manova '98



199 - 1 lev

Anonymous Desislava Karakoleva Bojidar Rangelov

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Todor Kalaydjiev Zara Rancheva *8 of our donors have opted to remain anonymous

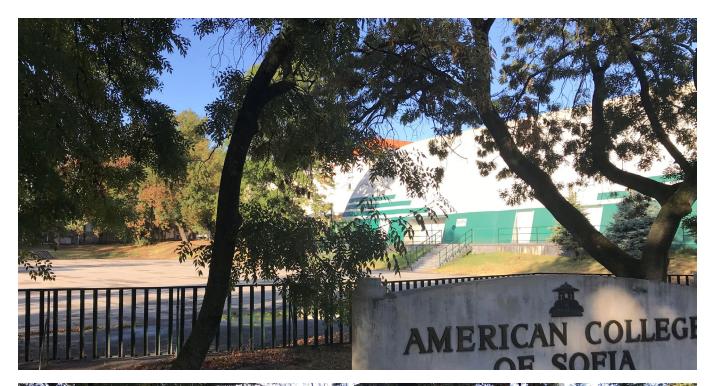
THE NEXT BIG THING

We don't achieve continuity by staying the same. We achieve it through change and renewal. That is why we initiate new, ambitious projects.

The asphalt field at the entrance of our campus, next to the Bubble, can and should become a modern sports field. Rehabilitating the asphalt base and laying artificial turf on top will transform the lot into a safe and useful facility for all-purpose, all-season sports activities.

Thorough professional research has identified the price tag - **360,000** leva - and two construction companies that can compete for the execution of the project.

With the strong support of the Parent-Teacher Association, we embark on this new challenge. Contact Georgi Metodiev at the Development Office to find out more and support us in this initiative.





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Please support ACS at https://acs.bg/giving/donate/

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^{*} on leave

^{**} acting director of development

