

September 2018

## Greek Summer 2018

In July, AFS welcomed 16 high school students from nine U.S. states, Bulgaria, and Saudi Arabia for the 48th annual Greek Summer program. Over the course of their month-long journey across Greece, each participant was challenged to step outside their day-to-day comfort zone and engage with something bigger. They got dirty on our campus farm, planting aromatic herbs and working in the dairy. They gave back to their homestay village over a week-long English language camp for local elementary school kids. They reached new heights (literally) during their two-day trek to the summit of Mount Olympus. And on their final morning in Athens, no one could believe it was time to, or wanted to, say goodbye.



The students began their adventure on the American Farm School's campus in Thessaloniki learning about local food production and consumption, as well as rural traditions and customs. At the Honey Park they learned about the life cycle of bees and sampled over 20 different types of Greek honey. They took in the ancient wonders of Thessaloniki on an investigative tour of its churches and markets and picked up some Greek dancing essentials with our one and only Zina showing the way. The first 10 days in Thessaloniki set the foundation for the participants' homestay experience in the village of Stavroupoli, Xanthi.

The group arrived in the homestay village on a Sunday evening, eager but nervous, too, to meet their new families. After a dinner and introduction, the bouzouki music began and brought everyone to their feet, nerves having faded away. The next week brought fun afternoons at the pool with host families, a rafting excursion on the local Nestos river, and a visit to the nearby brewery and tea farm. Participants also met with community leaders to learn more about the Pontos region and its customs--even sharing a traditional dance or two. In the little time the group was there they clearly left a lasting impression on the village and homestay families--there was a not a dry eye in the group when the time came to leave.

But leave we did, to continue the journey. A two-day trip to Meteora and Vergina showcased the rich cultural history of Greece, from the 1000 year old Greek orthodox monasteries to the 3000 old civilization of Philippos and Alexander the Great, and the impact it has had on today's society. And just as the ancient Greeks roamed the sea, so did our participants on a 5-day adventure sailing trip to the Sporades islands. Each day started in a different port, followed by sailing to small inlets and coves to explore the magic of Skiathos, Skopelos and Alonissos. The tour concluded with a whirlwind tour of Athens, where participants raced down the track at the Panathenaic (Kallimarmaro) stadium and took in the magic of the Parthenon on the evening of the lunar eclipse.

For photos, click [here](#).

For information on Greek Summer 2019 click [here](#) or contact [greeksummer@afs.edu.gr](mailto:greeksummer@afs.edu.gr).

# AFS Commencement Ceremony 2018

On June 22, friends, parents, faculty, and distinguished alumni filled the Moscachlaidis Plateia in front of Princeton Hall to watch the Class of 2018 bid a heartfelt farewell to AFS.

The evening celebrated our students' successful completion of three years of hard work, dedication, and tremendous commitment to the institution's core values. In his welcome remarks, **President Kanellis** referred to the impressive fact that one out of three High School graduates will continue their studies in US universities on full or partial scholarship. "Our students receive a holistic experiential education. They are prepared to cope not only with the demanding needs of universities in Greece, Europe and the US, but also with the professional challenges in areas vital to the country's development."



As distinguished keynote speaker **European Commission Chief Spokesperson Mr. Margaritis Schinas** took to the stage, audiences were visibly moved by the heartfelt words of praise and encouragement as well as the wishes for personal success and positive contribution to the community he offered graduates. "You are graduating 40 years after the conclusion of the negotiations for Greece's accession to the European Union and about ten years since the beginning of the economic crisis. And of course just one day after the Eurogroup's historic agreement certifying the faith of European partners in our country and its ability to emerge from this unprecedented adventure". He underlined that peace, democracy and prosperity cannot be taken for granted but rather need to be worked for. "Europe is the solution, not the problem. Do not let

anyone tell you otherwise. You, AFS graduates, are a living example and a symbol of the value of international co-operation. You leave behind a School that is a model of excellence for many, not a castle for the few and the powerful," he added.

The School also welcomed back distinguished **AFS graduate Maria Anastasiadou**, a Neurobiology/Neuroscience doctoral candidate. "Do not be afraid to make sacrifices for your future. By being an American Farm School graduate, you have already laid the foundation for a successful career. Remember that the School supports its graduates and gives invaluable opportunities to its students", she said.

Dean of Student Services **Eva Kanellis**, Director of the General High School **Paris Petras**, and Director of the Vocational High School **Dimitris Slavoudis** in turn took the stage to confer honors and awards upon our deserving young graduates.

We join them all in sincerely wishing our newest alumni the very best on their future paths!





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# Perrotis College Commencement Ceremony 2018



The Commencement Ceremony for the Class of 2018 of Perrotis College was held on 8 June on the John Moscahlaidis Plateia in front of Princeton Hall. Graduates and their families, as well as faculty, staff and Trustees had the honor of welcoming Dr. Laurie Leshin, President of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, to give the commencement address. Audiences were visibly moved by the heartfelt words of praise and encouragement as well as the wishes for personal success and positive contribution to the community.

American Farm School and Perrotis College President Dr. Panos Kanellis pointed in his remarks that Perrotis College is - undoubtedly - among the top educational institutions focused on the agri-food sector in the area. He made a special reference to the 1<sup>st</sup> International Olive Center Conference, which was held in May and was organized by the Krinos Olive Center, as well as other important collaborations of

Perrotis College, such as the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and TAP. "Perrotis College has established dynamic partnerships with some of the top US universities. WPI is one of them. It is obvious that the ties between the two institutions are strong and we are working hard to make them even stronger", he concluded.

Dr. Leshin's inspirational speech had a sense of... space. She is an accomplished academic and administrative leader, geo-chemist, and space scientist. Before joining WPI, she was the deputy director of NASA's Exploration Systems Mission Directorate; the Dee and John Whiteman Dean's Distinguished Professor of Geological Sciences at Arizona State University; and dean of the School of Science at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where she also continued her work as a scientist for the Mars rover Curiosity mission. She is a recipient of NASA's Outstanding Leadership and Distinguished Public Service Medals, and the Meteoritical Society's Nier Prize. She has also served on the board of directors of Women in Aerospace, and on the Council of the American Geophysical Union.



"You certainly inherit an imperfect world. A planet, a society, with flaws. But I have faith in you. You have the vision. You have the intelligence, and the drive. And if you can you think big, pursue audacious ideas, and do so with passion and commitment, mind-blowing things are possible", she said addressing the graduating class. "You can change your community, your country, your planet, even outer space. You can change the trajectory we are on. You can launch the next moonshot. You can do it, and we are counting on you".

Perrotis College Academic Dean Dr. Athanasios Tsiftaris addressed the necessity for continuous learning. "The degree you received is very important, but it is only the beginning of a learning process that should last. Let this degree be the first step towards a lifelong learning process!" he said.

Olga Papandreou, Perrotis College alumna, talked about her journey from a small village in northern Evia to the John Deere headquarters. "Today you receive your diploma and your ticket to a brighter future. But don't settle; the journey is just starting and no one guarantees it will be an easy one. But never stop learning, never stop trying for the best, stay positive and motivated and you will surely get rewarded ", she said.

School of Professional Education Dean Dr. Evangelos Vergos addressed the graduates of the "Contemporary Agricultural Practices" program, who also graduated, inviting them to open the doors of their professional life, become visionaries and lay the foundations for their careers. "Your choice to come to the American Farm School was the right one. It is a unique educational institution that offers fundamental opportunities for a productive future career with social aspects. Sciences and technology will always dominate the evolution of the agricultural sector. The implementation of sustainable innovation will require the presence of a leader - a graduate of the American Farm School and Perrotis College", he concluded.

Trustee Mr. Thanasis Martinos awarded the “Athinoula A. Martinos Endowed Professorship” that he established himself to Perrotis College Professor Dr. Avraam Mavridis.



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## The new Middle School

Construction of the new **Vasilios S. and Aphrodite B. Haseotes Middle School** is now well underway. Demolition of existing structures has been completed and the foundation has already been laid, with construction due to be completed by summer 2019, in time to welcome students in **September 2019**.

Funded in part through a generous gift from the Haseotes Family Foundation, the Vasilios S. and Aphrodite B. Haseotes Middle School is designed by the award-winning Thessaloniki-based architectural firm 406 architects. The school will serve up to 200 students in grades 7-9. In addition to the classrooms, facilities will include multiple science laboratories and STEM Maker spaces. Cutting edge educational technology will facilitate the development of

Design Thinking skills and equip students to master digital tools to create and communicate knowledge.

The new Greenwich Auditorium, part of the same complex, is also well underway. The new auditorium will provide a versatile focal point for campus-wide events accommodating up to 225 guests for lectures, performances, conferences, and other gatherings. A contemporary stage, lighting, sound system, projector and screens will support educational and other needs.

The green spaces surrounding the complex will mesh functionally and aesthetically with the buildings and comprise a beautiful and sustainable environment that will include wooden seating areas intended to encourage informal learning. Keeping with the campus' sustainability goals, the surrounding space will feature an integrated rainwater management system. Rainwater will be collected and filtered through rain gardens and recycled to irrigate green spaces across campus. The system will also be integrated into the learning experience, with students actively engaged in the maintenance of the rain gardens and analysis of water consumption.



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## Institute of Technological Studies at the American Farm School

The new Institute of Technological Studies (IEK) of the American Farm School offering studies in multiple disciplines in the agri-food sector opens its doors in October 2018.

This new post-secondary program aims to provide students with the knowledge and skills to apply current and leading edge technologies and practices in selected specialized disciplines in the agri-food sector while in parallel ensuring they develop a strong environmental sensitivity and an appreciation for the value of sustainable farming practices. The School uses innovative experiential teaching methods leveraging the unique and advanced laboratory facilities, pilot production and

educational farm facilities on campus so that students acquire scientific knowledge and specialized technical skills that will ensure their professional success.

The 2-year (4-semester) intensely practical program is certified by the Ministry of Education according to the National Qualifications Framework. IEK graduates may also continue their studies at Perrotis College, entering directly into the 2nd year of the undergraduate program of their choice (Agro-Environmental Systems Management, International Entrepreneurship or Food Science & Technology).



**I.IEK**  
**Αμερικανικής**  
**Γεωργικής**  
**Σχολής**

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## Road Scholar program participants share their stories

Thousands of tourists visit Greece every summer – most heading for the bright lights of Athens center or popular Cycladic islands and beaches. But this summer two very special groups of US visitors began their unique journey at the American Farm School... and all took a big piece of Greece back home with them.

They came from Oregon, Texas, Iowa, Florida, from all over the USA...but they were not like any other group visiting Greece! These explorers of Greece were **Road Scholar** participants ([roadscholar.org](http://roadscholar.org)) with the American Farm School guiding their way to discovery. The groups were made up of grandparents and grandchildren coming for more than common sightseeing - they came to have a special adventure with one another and to learn about REAL Greek people and culture.

Grandparents and grandchildren lived in Perrotis Residence Hall while exploring our campus, farm life, and Greek culture. They tasted olive oil from the trees outside their windows and learned how to tell fine olive oil from poor. They learned to cook many Greek dishes (and have been sending us letters from their homes telling us that they continue to cook pitta, Greek salads, and lots of tzaziki). They learned to dance hasapiko and kicked their heels all over the country! They met the most famous archaeological photographer in Greece and with an art historian followed the story of Greek wine through ancient art to the vineyards our students tend.

Not common tourists, their “tour” was hands-on from dawn to dusk. They walked, danced, and cooked - initially staying on a working educational farm then climbing Mt Olympus for a day with the gods - then staying in a very small mountain village hardly noted on a Michelin map.

They traveled to lesser known islands in the heart of the Greek National Marine Park, there visiting MOMA and some adopted orphaned seals, then had another cooking class in the hotel which had hosted the main actors from Mama Mia when filming there!

And everywhere they stayed they met local Greeks and shared their lives.

They did finally visit the acropolis as all visitors to Greece must – but the children saw it first on their bicycle tour through ancient Athens and one group had their introduction to the famous Acropolis Museum by Dr. Pandermalis, the renowned archaeologist and President of the award-winning museum.

Insider's experiences galore – they met Greek students of the same age who shared their lives and stories with the US grandchildren, small groups of grandparents shared meals in the homes of local families, even an intimate private tour for all at the Benaki museum after hours ...their own “Night in the Museum.” Everything about their experience was





unique, their own life-changing Odyssey.

They experienced a face of Greece that few visitors see.

The core of Greek culture is family – and the heart of every Greek family is founded on grandparents and their essential role with their children's children. Greek Grandparents are truly the Homers of today - continuing our culture through stories of our past.

Greek hosts at every stop were thrilled to meet these unique guests who embodied the very core of what we proudly claim as the best of Greece – family and passion for life!

#### **A few comments from Road Scholar grandparents:**

A heartfelt thank you for an unforgettable experience. In spite of having been to Greece two times before, I feel I saw it in a new light. All of you were amazing hosts and guides. You make your country proud. I loved the combination of food, culture, and place. There are so many highlights that it is hard for me to focus on a couple. Nonetheless, I will try.



I loved the Acropolis and the Museum. I felt I was seeing it for the first time. My talks with you helped me understand Greek family life, food, and current events. I loved my time in nature at the Farm School and on the islands. I could go on and on! Most of all I loved how you handled grandparent/grandchild interaction. You emphasized love, connection, and respect. I left feeling a deeper bond with Natalia and for that I am forever grateful.

*Lydia*

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I can't tell you how much I enjoyed meeting everyone, especially our five wonderful Greek hosts. I do feel like I could return any time and reconnect for a delightful evening of great food and stimulating stories. I greatly appreciate the way our trip was made so perfect, even small bumps turned into additional elements of interest that heightened my appreciation for our visit and our hosts. Thank you all for all. Everyone on the trip was an integral part of the superb nature of the whole.

*Molly*

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Experiencing Greece was wonderful, especially because it was well planned for both age groups and our leaders were perfect. And the trip reinforced what we all know -- that many grandparents have wonderful grandchildren.

*Joan*

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[sower@afs.edu.gr](mailto:sower@afs.edu.gr).