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the American Farm School

THE sower



Thessalonica Agricultural & Industrial Institute

Pangenomics at Perrotis College



**AMERICAN
FARM SCHOOL**
Thessaloniki · Greece

 **Perrotis
College**
Agriculture · Environment · Life Sciences

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From the President

On campus another fall season is in full swing – and while climate change may be affecting our ability to gauge seasons from the weather, there is a special “back-to-school” energy in our students that inevitably betrays the time of year. New faces are lighting up the classrooms, and animated voices of young men and women laughing, teasing, and debating can be heard as we go through our days as a small community.

A closer look reminds us that we are all growing together – new programs, new facilities, grounds, and a brand new Middle School are just some of the many highlights of the past few months. Across academic divisions, students and staff are working tirelessly to ensure the School’s continued success and to secure its place as a regional leader in all things related to agrifood, science and the environment.

In this issue of the Sower, you will read about some of the latest developments around campus – from the Vasilios S. and Aphrodite B. Haseotes Middle School, which opened its doors to the first class of 7th graders, to research in pangenomics at Perrotis College, or industry partnerships through the School of Professional Education, all of our programs are making waves in Greek education, and very real changes in the lives of our students.

None of these accomplishments – large or small – would have been possible without the help and support of the extended AFS family. It is in great part thanks to all of you that we are able to drive these efforts forward, and continue to serve the mission that has served so many students over the more than 115-year history of the Institution.

Sincerely,
Panos Kanellis, Ph.D.



President

American Farm School & Perrotis College

High School Graduates Studying in the US

Six students from the AFS class of 2019 are now studying at colleges and universities in the United States thanks to the Study USA program, which provides support to High School students wishing to pursue their education in American institutions of higher learning.

All six are attending their first choice schools, including Yale University, Bowdoin College and Mount Holyoke College, and all have had 100% of their financial needs met through scholarships. We wish the Study USA class of 2019 all the best in their new adventures!



Perrotis Junior College Students in Detroit

Two students from Perrotis Junior College spent the previous months completing their required internship in Detroit. Alexandros Keramidas and Thomas Katokhianos were selected for paid internships at Eastern Market, a non-profit organization which has been providing Southeastern Michigan with fresh, nutritious food since the early 1800's, attracting visitors from Detroit and the surrounding areas. More recently, they have built an infrastructure around the market to support their mission of enriching Detroit nutritionally, culturally, and economically.

The six-month internship program, which can be completed in one or more phases, offers employment to students in related disciplines, so as to supplement the knowledge they have



gained on campus with real world experiences. The internship component is a requirement of the program of study. Students complete their placements in a variety of industries and the experience provides participants with valuable knowledge and professional contacts.

In the academic year 2019-2020 two new specialties have been added to the roster of programs available at Perrotis Junior College: Dairy-Cheese Technician and Viticulture and Oenology Technician. Both programs are drawing great interest, and are an important next step for the Institution.

Events

Smith College Alumni on Campus

The American Farm School had the pleasure of welcoming 30 graduates of Smith College to campus in September. Among them were well-known *New York Times* journalist and food blogger, Florence Fabricant, Tourism and International Relations Officer of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, Maria Karagiannis, and Press Officer for the Thessaloniki Tourism Office, George Basmadelis.

The group was treated to an olive and olive oil tasting session presented by Dr. Kiki Zinoviadou, Chair of the New Food Product & Business Development program at Perrotis College. This was followed by a brief but comprehensive lecture on the virtues of the Mediterranean diet and the nutritional value of olive oil by Ms. Fabricant.

Chicago Event Draws Friends Old and New

On October 29th, the American Farm School hosted a gathering of friends at the National Hellenic Museum in Chicago. A venue of historical importance to the community as the second oldest American institution dedicated to celebrating the cultural contributions of Greeks and Greek-Americans, the museum served as the ideal backdrop to an evening spent sharing stories and news from the School.

The event featured a presentation of the Institution's programs and latest initiatives to supporters of all ages – from Greek Summer candidates still in high school, to Greek Summer alumni and their families, as well as other prominent members of the community interested in matters pertaining to education, sustainability, food systems and the environment, and how these areas can be nurtured in Greece. The informal reception, which included wine generously gifted by American Farm School graduate Christos Zafeirakis, was followed by a private tour of the Museum and its exhibits. The event was graciously underwritten by the Doolas family, who were born and raised on the campus of the American Farm School, making it their first home. We are immensely grateful to all those who attended, and look forward to working more closely with the Chicago community – a community that has historically played an important role in the Institution's development.



School of Professional Education Provides Training to Producers and Livestock Breeders



The School of Professional Education of the American Farm School is working with Barba Stathis S.A., a major provider of frozen vegetables in Greece, to offer training to its network of approximately 150 contract farmers.

The experiential training, which focuses on the sound management of natural resources and the use of modern agro-meteorological forecasting technology, began in October and will be offered in several locations throughout Greece, including Thessaloniki, Kilkis, Giannitsa, Larissa and Florina.

Similarly, 25 young livestock breeders have successfully completed a specialized experiential training program to improve

business viability. The endeavor was offered in collaboration with Delta, one of the leading dairy producers in Greece. Delta also generously provided scholarships to the participants.

The scholarships have been awarded through Delta's Gaia Action Plan to support and sustain the development of the primary sector, particularly livestock, as well as the company's long-term strategy to provide opportunities to young people. In an effort to reach young farmers in remote areas who cannot travel to Thessaloniki, the company has announced that 20 scholarships will be available this year to offer the training program in Florina, a town in northwestern Greece.

Research at Perrotis College

Pangenomics

The study of the pangenome (the entire gene set of all strains of a species) of the Colocynth (squash) family of plants by Perrotis College staff and students has ensured a Greek presence on the map of Plant Patients. The results of the study, published with NATURE publishing house, is the outcome of a collaboration between Perrotis College and the Hellenic Institute for Agricultural Research, the Genetics Bank, the Centre for Research and Technology Hellas, and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Perrotis College – thanks in part to state-of-the-art laboratory equipment – contributed to providing the computing power necessary to perform the required bioinformatics analyses.

Dr. Athanasios Tsiftaris, Academic Dean of Graduate Studies at Perrotis College explained, “We chose to study the squash family because it is plentiful in Greece. Studying all of these genomes has allowed us not only to understand it, but to find answers that can help growers.”

What determines a zucchini's length? How do varieties differ?

“Today, pangenomics is at the forefront of the field of bioscience,” added Dr. Tsiftaris, underlining the fact that Perrotis College boasts significant infrastructure and knowledge to contribute to current scientific developments. “We have also managed to build strong relationships with other agencies and have already partnered with additional organizations to conduct similar research on cherries.”





Biostimulants

French agribusiness conglomerate, Groupe Roullier Chemical Company, recently partnered with Perrotis College to conduct research on biostimulants. The company, which specializes in the production and chemical processing of nutrients and feeds for plants, animals and humans, enlisted Perrotis College to test their line of chemical and organic plant nutrition products for their effect on olive trees.

The Perrotis College research team, which included Dr. Athanasios Gertsis, Dr. Christos Kissoudis, Dr. Christos Vasilikiotis, Dr. Kiki Zinoviadou, and MSc. candidate Leonidas Karampekos, worked together to study the effects on tree physiology, harvest yield, and

leaf and fruit quality following the application of Groupe Roullier's biostimulants. The stimulants were applied to both table olive and olive oil producing trees, and initial results showed visible differences in the size of sprayed olives (15-20% increase in the weight of 100 olive batches), as well as in the physiological parameters of the trees.

Graduate student Leonidas Karampekos was offered a paid internship at the company's headquarters in France to complete the project and work to further develop more effective and efficient agrochemicals and organic fertilizers.

TODAY, TOMORROW,

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MAKING SUSTAINABLE IMPACT

The comprehensive campaign for the American Farm School and Perrotis College 2015-2022

To learn more about the campaign or to [make a contribution](#), please contact us: usoffice@afs.edu.gr.



Partnerships

Smart Farming Training Program at Perrotis College



The second annual Smart Farming training program was hosted by Perrotis College from June 10-21. The Smart Farming program - run by Erasmus+ and funded by the European Commission - is a collaboration among seven European universities: ISA Lille - Yncréa Hauts-de-France, UTAD Portugal, NMBU Norway, SLU Sweden, University of Helsinki, University of Liège, Gembloux Agro-BioTech Belgium, and Perrotis College. The program emphasizes cooperation, innovation, and the implementation of best practice principles in Precision Agriculture.

Fifty students and 14 teachers from the participating universities were hosted by Perrotis College, and joined in interactive workshops in areas including Precision Agriculture Robotics, IT, Geographic Information Systems, Data Management and more. During the final phase of the program, participants spent five days working with partner companies and received a certificate for nine MSc-level course credits upon completion.



AFS Smart Farming Project Gets Awarded

A collaboration between the American Farm School's Strategic Project Management Office, the Bodosakis Foundation, and the supermarket chain AB Vasilopoulos took first place in the 'Collaboration with Local Producers' category at the 2019 Supermarket Awards for the Smart Farming Program.

The innovative Smart Farming Project introduces new technologies to producers and is an important step in the development of intelligent agriculture in Greece. Through the installation of 12 state-of-the-art telemetry devices in selected locations, producers have access to accurate, real-time interactive data maps on their mobile devices. In this way, they make informed decisions based on important meteorological and soil parameters. The locations were selected for their production of crops of vital importance to the local and national economy, including: vineyards in Kavala, Kilikis and Peloponnese; olive groves in



Kalamata and Halkidiki; kiwi orchards in Central Macedonia; and grasslands in Ellassona and Xanthi.

Katerina Halkou, Corporate Communication Manager at AB Vasilopoulos, stated: “We are very happy about this award. This is a program we have supported and believed in from the very first moment. The Smart Farming project is implemented in collaboration with the Bodosaki Foundation and the American Farm School, two partners with whom we have been linked from the outset. The program leverages the capabilities of new technologies to provide smart tools to Greek producers in order to make crucial decisions about the present and the future of their cultivation. To them we dedicate this distinction with a promise: to continue to support them while promoting our country’s unique food culture!”

The results of the program will serve as a roadmap for European agricultural policy post-2020, putting Greece at the center of developments, and Greek producers in a privileged position at the forefront of technological advances in farming.



Balkan Road Project for the Growth of Rural Businesses

Perrotis College is partnering with seven organizations across the Balkans, including the Benaki Institute of Phytopathology and the Institute of Mediterranean Studies at the Institute of Technology & Research, in the “Balkan Road Project: Roadmap for sustainable management strategies for the Balkan agricultural sector”. The collaborative effort aims to open new trade routes for Balkan agricultural products, while strengthening local and national economies of countries in the Balkan region through the development of a Balkan Action Plan. Deliverables will include tools and strategies for the growth of rural businesses through the adoption of environmentally friendly practices, as well as flexible and easy-to-use software (ROAD software) that will record, calculate and evaluate the environmental footprint of marketable agricultural products. The efforts are monitored by stakeholders including producers and local authorities, to ensure long-term sustainability of the outcomes, and to assist with the dissemination of results to their respective networks.

Representatives from the partner organizations of the Balkan Road initiative recently met at the Agricultural University of Tirana to initiate the next groundbreaking phase of the project: printing the carbon footprint of agricultural products directly on the packaging, providing consumers with vital information about the products they consume. The meeting was attended by Dr. Christos Vassilikiotis, Chair of the Agro-Environmental Systems Management Program at Perrotis College, and Katerina Roumelioti, Head of Europe Direct Central Macedonia & EU Co-funded Programs Coordinator.

Hellenic Hope Gives the Gift of an AFS Education

Since 2014, Hellenic Hope – a UK-based charity that supports children at risk in Greece – has partnered with the American Farm School to provide middle school students from very disadvantaged backgrounds with the opportunity to experience the benefits of a unique, high quality education. In the first year of this initiative alone, 700 children from nine different institutions visited the School and Dairy Farm, learned about academic programs and opportunities in the agricultural, environmental and life sciences, and participated in small projects intended to build confidence and other personal skills.

The participating schools are selected with the help of Greek NGO Prolepsis and come from communities in Northern Greece where the crisis has hit particularly hard, and unemployment rates hover around 30%. Of the visiting students, 60 are selected to spend an additional three weekends at the AFS participating in workshops and group activities on the Farm.

As this program ultimately aims to expand these children's horizons, students are selected each year to receive a full scholarship to attend High School at AFS after having successfully completed the admissions process. To date, seven students have received this particular award, and more than 3,000 middle schoolers have participated in the Hellenic Hope-sponsored program at AFS.

First Students Welcomed to The Haseotes Middle School



With the traditional blessing to start the new school year, the Haseotes Middle School welcomed its first students on Tuesday, September 11th. The 7th graders and their parents toured the premises of the brand new building, admiring its state-of-the-art facilities and stepping foot into the classrooms for the first time.

In a brief address to those gathered, the President of the American Farm School & Perrotis College, Dr. Panos Kanellis, did not hide his joy at the opening of the new academic division. He thanked all those involved in the construction, as well as all the staff, emphasizing that the Middle School was the last piece of the American Farm School's educational puzzle, with instruction starting at the pre-K and continuing through to postgraduate and adult education. "The Haseotes Middle School adheres to the principles and philosophy of the School and aims to create a community of students and

teachers that, through collaboration and support, will foster children's confidence, initiative, love for learning, and will lead to academic and personal development," he said.

For his part, the new principal, Dimitris Slavoudis, described the moment as "historic". "We believe that through holistic education we help children not only to love school and succeed, but also to acquire skills useful for their lives in general and, above all, to be happy. We connect life with knowledge", he said. He added that while the Haseotes Middle School implements the curriculum required by the Ministry of Education, it reaches far beyond these directives, through the enhanced teaching of mathematics, science, English, environmental education, the provision of academic-vocational guidance, as well as the fostering of important life skills related to leadership and personal de-

velopment, digital literacy, environmental awareness and culture.

Students also have the opportunity to participate in a variety of extracurricular activities and clubs, as well as in preparatory groups for the Study USA program for high school students who plan to attend colleges and universities in America.

The Haseotes Middle School is a two story building containing six classrooms, three state-of-the-art labs, teachers' offices, public and auxiliary spaces. Its construction was funded in part through a generous gift from the Haseotes family. The surrounding spaces blend harmoniously with the natural environment of the School, and include environmentally friendly elements such as a rainwater management system, which collects run-off water to be reused for irrigation. The official inauguration ceremony is set to take place in June 2020.

Alumni AFS Spotlight



Christos Zafeirakis Featured in the New York Times

AFS '95 alumnus and celebrated vintner, Christos Zafeirakis, recently had two of his wines feature in the *New York Times*. Christos continues the tradition of four generations of winemakers in his family, at Domaine Zafeirakis, tucked away in the foothills of Mount Olympus. Domaine Zafeirakis produces a variety of wines, including Limniona, Malagouzia, Chardonnay, Sangiovese-Syrah, Roditis and Merlot. The production of Limniona is particularly notable, as the native variety of grape was nearly extinct following a phylloxera epidemic.

It is the Limniona which was singled out in two recent *New York Times* editorials. The Rosé of Tyrnavos Limniona 2016 featured in an article identifying 20 wines for under \$20, while the Red Tyrnavos Limniona 2016 is included in a piece showcasing red wines from Greece.

Following his graduation from AFS, Christos studied oenology in Athens before going on to complete a Master's degree in the same subject at the University of Milan.

Giannis Dimotsis

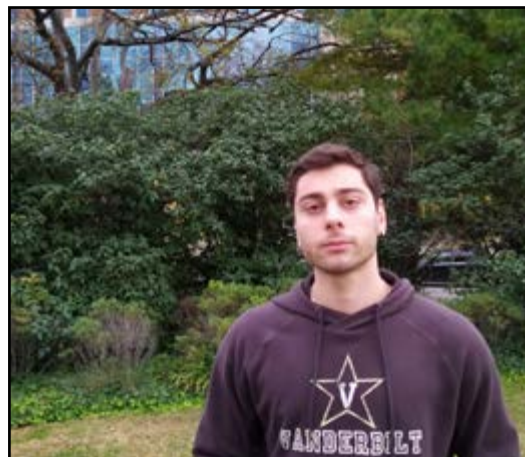
Now in his sophomore year at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, AFS '18 alumnus Giannis Dimotis, who is working toward a double major in Computer Science and Mathematics, recalls his time at AFS, which he credits with having opened the door for this incredible opportunity.

Initially drawn to the American Farm School for its unique approach to education, it was the Study USA program, and the opportunity to work towards an American college education, that tipped the scales for Giannis. Once on campus, Giannis found the academic environment challenging and stimulating, but remarks that he was always impressed by the dedication of the academic staff, who frequently went out of their way to get to know students personally, offering assistance and advice on how to make the most of their time at the School and grow as individuals. "There were numerous times that I either worked one-on-one, or as part of a small group, with teachers after school to expand my knowledge on certain topics and to take part in various competitions."

Ultimately, it was the Study USA program that played the most critical role in helping Giannis to realize his dream of studying in the United States. In addition to academic performance and strong English-language skills, the program places an emphasis on preparing students for life in the US and the demands they will encounter both inside and outside the classroom. Although it was difficult to leave his family behind, the welcoming environment at Vanderbilt and Giannis' ability to quickly make new friends and get involved in this new community helped him overcome his homesickness.

Now settled in the US, Giannis participates in a number of on-campus clubs and is taking full advantage of this time there. "I really like the cutting-edge technology used in laboratories and lectures, which makes learning more interesting and stimulating, as well as the fact that everyone is so passionate about what they do, which leads to great conversations," says Giannis.

With his enthusiasm and strong AFS work ethic, we are certain that Giannis will succeed in whatever he puts his mind to. "At AFS I learned that if you want to achieve something, you have to work for it." We couldn't agree more!



New Spaces

George and Charlotte Draper Information and Media Hub

Friends and staff came together in the Aliko Perroti Education Center over the summer to pay tribute to George and Charlotte Draper with an annex of the Dimitris & Aliko Perrotis Library named in their honor. The George and Charlotte Draper Information and Media Hub dedicated to the American Farm School's fourth President and his wife, offers computers, projectors, free wi-fi and selected print materials for students enrolled at Perrotis College, enhancing the student learning experience through personalized services.

President of the American Farm School and Perrotis College, Dr. Panos Kanellis, spoke at the naming ceremony, referring to the many achievements during Mr. and Mrs. Draper's tenure, including: the creation of Perrotis College, the introduction of Omega 3 eggs, the creation of the Adult Education departments, and the establishment of the School's Historical Archive, which resulted in the publication of *The American Farm School of Thessaloniki: A Family Album*.



New Courtyard for the Elementary School

To accommodate the growing student body, two new classrooms were built on the south side of the existing Elementary School building. Through a generous grant from General Mills, a new courtyard has been constructed right outside these new academic spaces, to ensure all students have ample access to outdoor play and discovery areas. The new courtyard complements the existing network of play spaces for the Elementary School, providing an ideal backdrop for class breaks. Through this generous gift, the School is able to reinforce the principles of "learn-by-doing", while strengthening the sense of community among students and promoting a healthy lifestyle.



USAID Funds Two New Laboratories for Perrotis College

The School recently secured a USAID grant to be used towards the construction of two laboratories, one for Sustainable Agro-Environmental Systems Management (SAESM) and the second for New Product Development (NPD). The funds, made available through the generous support of the American people, will also cover the ancillary spaces, and the procurement of related equipment and furnishing. These labs will be an important tool for the School's undergraduate and graduate programs, applied research, and extension services, increasing research opportunities, generating new knowledge in food science and in sustainable and precision agriculture practices, and encouraging innovative thinking.

The SAESM laboratory will include a new Soil Analysis (SA) lab equipped with advanced scientific equipment to conduct wet chemistry and complete physicochemical analyses of soil, plant tissue and water. This laboratory will allow the College not only to support the growing teaching and research demands created by the School's Graduate curricula, but also to provide a wide range of applied research and extension services in the areas of Precision Agriculture and Sustainable Agriculture. The NPD laboratory, though focused on food science, will serve all academic and teaching needs across divisions, as well as applied research projects and extension services.

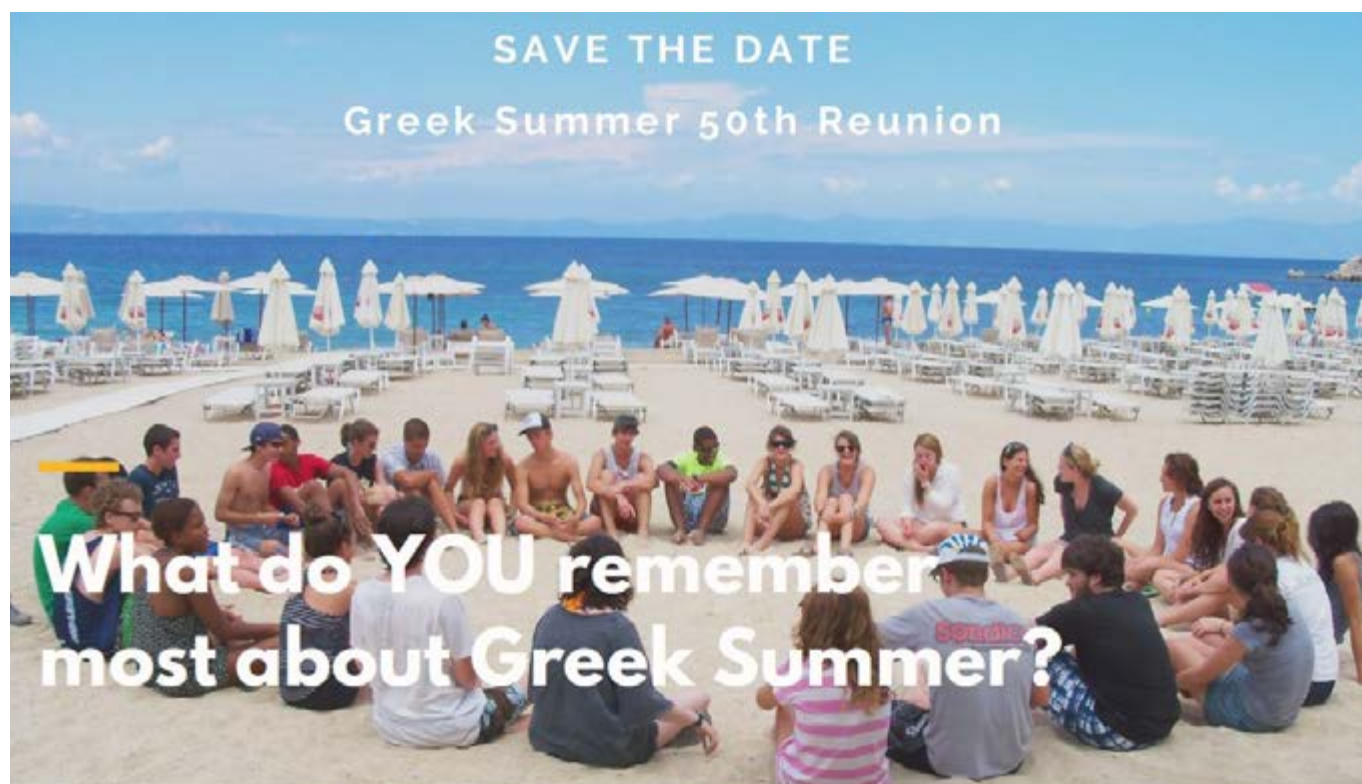
This grant will help to strengthen the programs at Perrotis College, at both the undergraduate and graduate level, and support the School's strategic growth. The project is due to be completed in late 2021.

Greek Summer

This past July, the School's signature summer program welcomed its 49th class to campus. Young men and women from the ages of 15 to 17 join the program every year and spend a month learning and gaining one of a kind experiences – from working on the campus farm, leading a community service project while staying with families in a nearby village, learning about the local history and culture, and exploring the natural wonder of the area, to a sailing trip, a visit to the Parthenon, and a hike to the top of Mt. Olympus.

Participants come away with a sense of maturity and fulfillment, but most importantly a changed perspective, and, for many, friendships that last a lifetime. The villages, too, are changed by the presence of our students, and the communities they work with are transformed in a lasting way. This year, GS participants collaborated with the informal community center in Stavroupoli (near Xanthi), to help see through needed projects - resurfacing the basketball and tennis courts, and leading a free English language daycare service for the local children.

Enrollment for the 50th class of Greek Summer is now open – for more details visit <http://www.afsgreeksummer.com/>.



Saturday October 24, 2020
New York City

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 Fisber, 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, Nicholas Pisis, Gail and Ruth Schoppert, Charles L. and Joan Thomas, Nancy Worcester

BEQUESTS

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, Esther Carbart, Jean S. Crosby, Maria Couvaras, Alexander Drapos, Angeline Ducas, Lula Ducas, Elizabeth M. Godley, 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 Cebou, Philip and Hazel Constantinides, Lois Kerimis, Fred W. Kolb, Mary P. Gill, Henry T. Maijgren, Demosthenis 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.



The Sower: Bruce M. Lansdale

The American Farm School recently honored its third President, the late Bruce M. Lansdale, at a ceremony commemorating his life and the 10th anniversary of his passing, with a presentation of the book, *The Sower: Bruce M. Lansdale*.

Written by his son-in-law, David L. Willis, the work remembers the life of Bruce Lansdale, who left an invaluable legacy of leadership in agri-food education and development, as well as in shaping the paradigm of the “inspirational leader-manager” in all facets of life.

Although the book is not for general sale, those who wish to acquire this work and contribute to the School through this purchase may contact info@afs.edu.gr. Proceeds will benefit the American Farm School Historical Archive housed at the Dimitris & Aliki Perrotis Library on campus.

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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Issue 180 did a 180! Do you like the new look? Post a photo using #sower180 and let us know!