“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”

-Jane Goodall

**IMSA INSPIRATION : i^2**

“It was only a sunny smile, and little it cost in the giving, but like morning light it scattered the night and made the day worth living.”

-F. Scott Fitzgerald

“*If you light a lamp for someone else it will also brighten your path.*”

-Buddha
i^2: Past, Present, and Future

IMSA Inspiration, better known as i^2, began in 2011 when Shawon Jackson ('11) made it his mission to spread the word about the power of the IMSA community. Through the experiences of students, staff, and faculty, i^2 seeks to show that the power to inspire is present in the smallest actions and within reach for all.

Reading this year's submissions has been an incredibly meaningful experience for us. Thank you to everyone who made a submission, everyone who was mentioned, and everyone else who continues to inspire and be inspired. It is an honor to share these stories.

Though Mindy's hard work for i^2 must end here as she moves on to a bright future, please congratulate rising junior Danny Atten ('15), who will be helping continue the project this upcoming year.

Please enjoy!
Submissions

“Adrienne Coleman inspires me. Every day I watch her lift students and staff “up.” She encourages everyone to reach for higher goals—believe that you CAN. That is her attitude every single day. If she sees someone is “down,” Adrienne seems to sense it instantly and “brings them right up” again to make their day just that much brighter. Adrienne comes in with a bright smile, retains it all day, and ends her day just as brightly as when she came in. I wish we could clone her!!! She is continually thinking of new ideas and initiatives to move our mission and student achievements higher. She never rests in her endeavors. She always takes the time to check how a person is doing—not just work focus—she cares about the ENTIRE person. We are blessed to have her in our community.”

“Shruthi Mothkur is one of the most genuine people I have ever met, and is truly an inspiration.”

“Dan Riemersma has inspired me to be happier and a good person to everyone I meet.”

“Nisha, you have inspired me by your surety in your beliefs.”
“Saieesh’s selflessness and intelligence, combined with an unparalleled humility and cheer, truly inspire me. Other than being one of the smartest people I know, he is always ready to help others. He will never be condescending, and his patient, methodical way of teaching and sharing information really astound me. In addition, he is one of the most caring, kindhearted, and genuine people I know. His mere presence commands respect, not out of intimidation or authority, but out of pure admiration. Keep it going, bucko.”

“Katrina Toman, your ability to see the good in anything and anyone has kept me so positive this year, and I am so glad to be a friend of yours. Your attitude is inspirational.”

“Jean Bigger inspires me to be environmentally conscious, to find ways to "go green," and to live a healthy life. Thank you, Jean.” - Julie

“Jimmy ‘Jamal’ Huang, because of his outright sexiness, as well as his confidence, which put a feeling of inspiration into millions.”
“I am inspired by Arjun Tambe every single day. His bright personality, ability to block out negativism, and refusal to take dishonest short-cuts definitely deserve recognition. His passion, genuine love for learning, and talent in everything he does—whether music, math, or just helping out a friend—are things that are extremely rare. However, what is even rarer is his humility through it all. I don’t think Arjun realizes how much he means to me. Never have I met just one person that so resembles the traits that I myself would like to emulate. I’m so lucky to have met such a great friend on whom I can always count on. His actions have made me a more forgiving, passionate, and better person. Arjun truly embodies i^2; he is a real IMSA Inspiration.”

“Joan Shang really helped me this year with her advice and creativity. She was an amazing person and a good friend. I know that she will continue to succeed in life wherever she goes.”

“Bree Pusey has inspired me this school year. When I have been down at my lowest, she was always there to tell me that I could get through it or put things in perspective, even when she was going through a lot worse. Thank you, Bree :)”
“My wingmate, Lydia Abraham, has personally impacted my life so much over the past couple of months since we had the joy of meeting each other. She is truly the most selfless person I’ve ever known, and she has also grown to be one of the most mature people I’ve ever met as well. Her absolute determination to help anyone who is in need truly makes me believe that a brighter future for the world can truly be possible if more people are like her. She’s helped me in the past couple of weeks more than she’ll ever know, and I just hope one day I can repay that kindness. For now, though, I’ll settle with writing this about her. Thank you, Tansy!”

“Bindi Patel and Eunji Jeong are two people who truly are inspirations. They are always smiling, laughing, and working hard. They know how to make everyone feel loved and how to comfort those who need it. Their involvement in activities such as PME, FBLA, Ethics, the peer tutor program, and more are amazing, for they never fail to put their heart and soul into all they do. No matter how they feel, they get up, dress up, and show up, something that is very hard to do. They never judge, and they see the good in everyone. Each of them is talented in her own way, whether it be in hair-braiding, dancing, or playing violin. I am lucky to have them in my life, and I hope I can continue to call them my close friends for a very long time.

Eunj & Fer, love you qurls :)

"Emily Ling is the best."
“Saieesh Rao.”

“Though she can be weird at times, Mary Do is enjoyable to have around. She is incredibly intelligent and humorous. I hope that she will continue to be unique in college and not be so seductive to everyone around her.”

"Jennifer Ren gave useful advice to me over the years. Though she is incredibly abusive, JenRen continues to bring positivity. I hope that she will loosen up and party once in a while. Have fun in college, and don’t forget me."

“Alice Chang has inspired me to be a better person overall. Her extraordinary work ethic, high morals, and outstanding attitude leave me in awe. She is such a gorgeous individual, inside and out, and truly illustrates all of the qualities of an exceptional student, friend, and role-model. Alice is genuine in everything she does, which makes me look up to her in all facets of life. Thanks for being such an outstanding young woman and an amazing leader.”

“Dr. Judith Scheppler has helped me reassess my priorities and my goals. I’ve learned that it’s most important not to do things to do things, but to do things because you love them.”
Several upperclassmen have inspired me to pursue my dreams. If I had stayed at my old school, I would have stayed on the path determined by my parents of taking AP classes, competing in Math Team and Science Olympiad, competing in piano competitions, applying to Ivy League colleges, and then becoming a doctor. However, after seeing successful and hardworking upperclassmen pursue their true passions through clubs such as i^2, SPARK, LEAD, Class Club, ALI, and many more, I realized that there is more to life than simply becoming a doctor. I realized that students could be both successful and happy when engaging in activities that meant something to them. These students inspired me to step off the path I had been following my entire life and try something new.

"Big guy Anthony Marquez is going to be in the White House some day. I've never been more inspired and impressed by hearing someone speak; Anthony really is a natural. He is a natural at speaking, at coming up with new ideas, at organizing, at planning, at leading, and most importantly, at being willing to take time out of the day to help people. Serving people is his calling, and there's no doubt that he will advance the human condition on an incredible scale. Anthony, I'd like you to know that IMSA appreciates all that you do, and we will always have your back. Thanks for being an inspiration =)"
"Saieesh Rao is always an inspiration to me in so many different ways. His humility, his grace, and overall intelligence continue to astound me and inspire me to push myself to become more. If I can be half the man Saieesh is, I would consider myself blessed. He’s been a supportive friend, a truly gifted tutor and teacher, and, most importantly, an amazing roommate. Saieesh Rao is my inspiration, and it’s a blessing to have lived with such a man."

"Doc Nok, you rock! You have rekindled my interest in history and inspired me to want to travel the world."

"Mitchell Bienek ('12), although you’ve graduated, you continue to inspire me to work to the best of my ability and stay strong no matter what happens. You give the best advice, and I and so many other people on campus miss you. You’re actually so great!"

"Grace Ren, you inspire me to be my best. Your unconditional dedication, your compassion, and your goofiness make me smile and make me envy you more than you could ever know—but who could harbor ill-feeling towards someone so sweet? Girl, please never give up on yourself, because without your support and your inspiration, I could never have made it."
“Sandy Perez. She is so beautiful. I don’t understand how she can be so intelligent, caring, involved, and just an amazing person. She helps me with my schoolwork all the time. She’s involved with so many clubs and does so much for each of them. She cares about people and always has a positive attitude. She is also one of the best dancers I have ever seen. I strive to be more like her because she is an ideal, strong, young woman. I love you, Sandy, and I’m going to miss you so much next year.”

“I was one of the students in Excel this summer. It was a very stressful 3 weeks, filled with all work and no play. It was literally the first time I had ever needed to put any kind of effort into my work, and even my best effort was barely getting me by. Between the stress of Excel and issues happening at home, I almost decided to drop out and go back to my old school. Joe Reda, who was one of our Excel tutors, calmed me down and stopped me from backing out of IMSA. Without him, I would probably still be miserable at my old school. Because of him, I want to be an Excel tutor too.”

“Grace Li has an incredibly entertaining and interesting personality. She continues to surprise me with her positivity and her contrastingly dark side. Grace is extremely intelligent and always helpful. I hope her the best in all her endeavors.”

“Joan Shang, you have influenced me in ways you will never know. With your effervescent personality and great hugs, you never fail to make me feel better. I’ll miss you so much next year; maybe I’ll end up being a Georgia peach ;) I owe you so much more than the world, and I hope you know that <3”
“Anthony Marquez... I can’t begin to explain how admirable you are. You hold one of the strongest presences at IMSA and seem to manage it so, so well. Your speeches are powerful, and the messages you convey are inspirational. Your professionalism is trustworthy, and I can always count on you to get the job done. You always seem to know what to do, even in the most difficult situations. No matter how much work you have, you always put time aside to take others under your wing... to give them advice...and to help them. You’re one of the most genuine, intelligent, and inspiring leaders IMSA has had, and you’ll be one of the most effective leaders in the future. Stay amazing, Anthony.”

“Two people have impacted my life significantly this year: Ryan Eberhardt and Nicole Aldridge.

Ryan showed me the value of hard work and that the world is what I make of it. Conversations with him gave me a new perspective on life that I will keep with me for a long time.

Nicole has given me hope for the future by showing that there are people out there that genuinely care for others and will provide support, no matter the circumstances.”

“Evania Hong is a true inspiration to me. Seeing her makes me want to be better, do better, and act better. Her selflessness, strength, passion, and focus all combine into the wonderful individual she is. Before meeting her I had no idea one single person could be so genuine and so concerned for others. There is not one moment where she puts herself before a friend or even a stranger. As she is always a helping hand, I am blessed to call her my friend. Seeing her has changed me and the way I see others. Because of her, I try to be more helpful and more caring in every situation. Thank you, Evania, for showing me the meaning of a true friend <3”
“Just about on a daily basis, I am inspired by Tracy Townsend for the following reasons: her capacity for taking on work is astonishing; the speed and clarity of her response to any request is superhuman; she has made selflessness her hallmark; she thinks both macro and micro; her intellect is like lightning; her heart is a marshmallow; her honesty is terrifying; her ability to anticipate needs (or to finish your sentence for you and save you the trouble) is extrasensory; and, to make us all feel small, with two little ones at home, a full-time job, and a household to manage, she has, since November, written a novel of 150,000 words. On second thought, I’m not inspired; I’m awed.”

“Sharon McMurray inspires me. She comes to work each day on top of the world. She spreads her sunshine to everyone she comes in contact with. I see her volunteer to help out with various departments—and she does it cheerfully. She remembers EVERYONE’S birthdays!!! That is amazing and wonderful. She makes sure people feel valued. Her quick wit and sense of humor can “make your day a better day” for sure! We are so lucky to have her in our IMSA community.”

“Merik Ducker has inspired me to become a much more thoughtful and conscious individual. By discussing out-of-the-ordinary topics with him (and with others later on) and opening up my thoughts in new ways, I have developed my personality extensively this year. Merik, though he may not realize it, has helped me get to know my own identity. Whether it was by him asking a compelling question or just the example he put forth of appreciating art and literature, I admire him very much so. He has inspired me to appreciate the beauty of life and become a cultured and responsive person.”
“Gina Liu. Whether it’s kicking back and listening to some Childish Gambino or going all night to do last-minute work, Gina is always there. She has been an unwavering force of good in my life this year at IMSA. I can always count on her when I need someone to talk to, no matter what the topic. I’ve definitely had some stressful times this year, but, with Gina there, they were at least somewhat bearable. Beyond helping with the worse parts of life, she is just a happy person, a thing that makes any situation better. Whether it’s asking for help in math or about the new Arcade Fire album, no one is a better person to ask than Gina. I can’t express enough how thankful and lucky I am to have Gina in my life. She knows exactly what to say and when to say it. Luckily for me, she isn’t afraid to be up-front about it either. Even something as seemingly insignificant as making puns in Doc Nok’s class can make a large impact on someone, in this case Doc Nok. What teacher wouldn’t want a student to be actively participating in their class while making them laugh too? I could go on and on about the amazing things that Gina’s done, but I’ll stop there and wrap things up. Gina’s been the glue that helps hold a big part of my and countless others’ lives together this year.”

“Caitlin McMahon, 03B RC, has inspired me this year, as I’m sure she has for many others. Her tireless dedication to the students, her caring attitude, her sense of humor, her receptiveness, her six-pack abs :) – just a handful of things that cause students like me to respect and look up to her. Caitlin’s been there guiding me through the challenges of this place, helping me and countless others through everything under the sun. She’s taking a new step in life next year, away from IMSA, and I know that she will continue to inspire people wherever she is. We love you, Caitlin!”
“I’ve been inspired by my fellow English teachers this year—and in years past. We’ve been through a lot—family illnesses, grave illnesses, maternity leaves, even the total destruction of a family home—and in each situation, we’ve been able to support each other not just by picking up classes, or grading, or logistics here at work, but through unbidden acts of courtesy, care, and decency that make us a team in both our private and public lives. Not everyone has the fortune of such good company.”

“Linsey Crowninshield has inspired me through her dedication to service and leadership. Her passion for everything she does is infectious, and she can really spread the love of giving back and doing good in our society. She is an incredible individual who has made such a great impact in this world and IMSA as well. I’m sure she will go on to do even greater things. IMSA will really miss her.”
“Dr. McGee has inspired me in so many ways. His dedication to IMSA, as well as to his family and friends, is incredible. Dr. McGee has somehow managed to find the perfect balance between working hard and playing hard, and this is something I will always strive to pursue. He is a genuinely good person with sincere wishes to inspire others to truly advance the human condition, and guess what? He has.

Not only has he advanced the human condition in so many ways, but he has inspired several others to attempt to follow in his great footsteps as well. I know I can speak for my classmates when I say he was an exceptional President for the academy, and IMSA will never be the same without him.”
Far from the End

Thank you once more, IMSA, for both being inspirational and being inspired. Though some members of the IMSA community will not be able to be here next year, the impacts of their actions will not be forgotten—rather, they will live on through the actions of the inspired.

In Shawon's words, "Never forget: IMSA Inspiration is real." As we look eagerly towards the future, don't forget to reflect upon those whose actions, no matter how small, have left you for the better. As individuals and as a group, we are capable of achieving so much, of impacting so many lives, and of making such a difference.

One last thank you is due to those who took the time to applaud the individuals mentioned by writing a submission. We applaud you, IMSA!

Best wishes,

Mindy Jian ('13) and Gina Liu ('14)