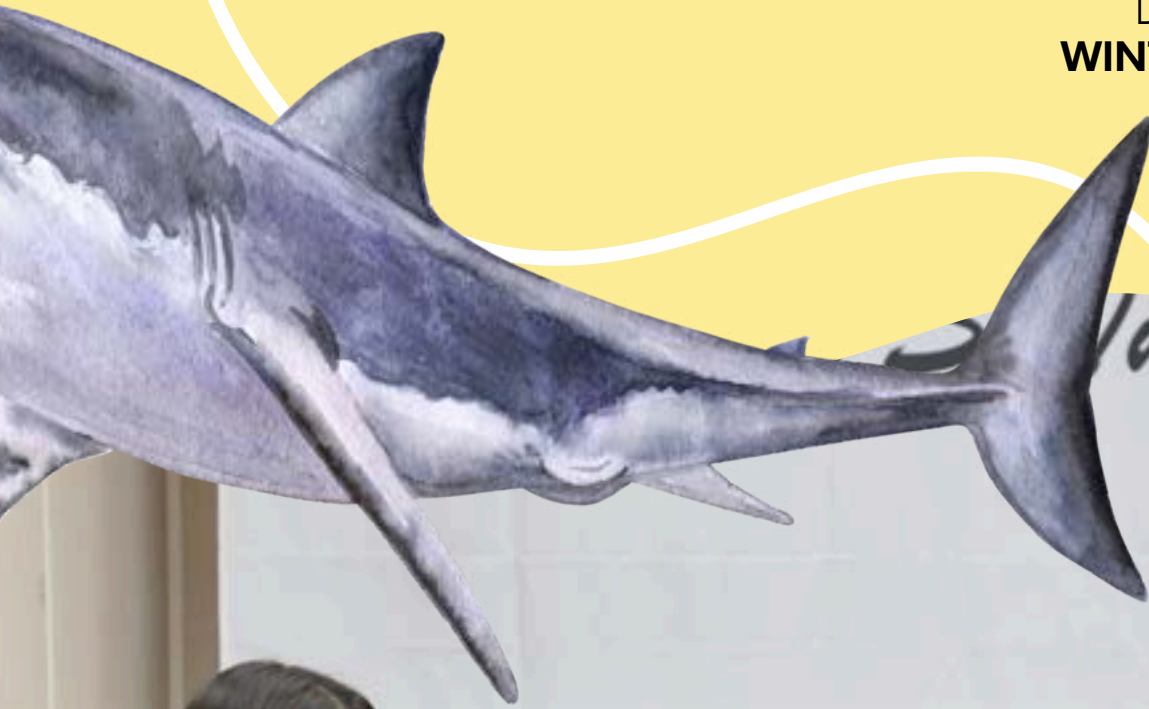


BUSAN FOREIGN SCHOOL

# SHARK TALES

DECEMBER 2024  
WINTER ISSUE NO. 1



NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY  
INDUCTION CEREMONY

# SHARK TALES BUSAN FOREIGN SCHOOL MAGAZINE, WINTER 2024

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## Team

PUBLISHED BY:

Busan Foreign School Marketing &  
Communications Department

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Holly Teal

DESIGN & PHOTOGRAPHY: Goeun Choi

A special thank you to everyone who  
contributed to this issue.

## Address

45, Daecheon-ro 67 beon-gil,  
Haeundae-gu, 48084 Busan,  
South Korea

67

45 | 48084

[www.busanforeignschool.org](http://www.busanforeignschool.org)

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COVER: National Honor Society Induction Ceremony

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# *from the* **EC/ES PRINCIPAL**

## **DEAR BFS COMMUNITY,**

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During the first semester of the 2024-25 school year, we've witnessed the seasonal transition from the warmth of August to the cool crispness of December. Throughout this time, we have remained committed to fostering positive and supportive learning environments where students are encouraged to engage socially and embrace the SHARK values.

The SHARK values strengthen and unite our diverse school community. Our Early Childhood and Elementary students are growing into Socially conscious individuals, cultivating empathy and care through Morning Meetings and socio-emotional counseling lessons. They are Hardworking learners, striving to do their individual best each day in the classroom, after-school activities, and athletics. Our students are also active communicators, standing up for fairness and advocating for others, as demonstrated by our Grade 5 class with their impactful refugee fundraiser. They are respectful citizens who share, take turns, and contribute to maintaining a tidy shared environment. Above all, our students embrace the Keep Learning spirit, meeting challenges with a growth mindset and the resilience to keep pushing forward.

The SHARK values provide our students with the essential skills to excel academically, thrive socially, and become compassionate global citizens and leaders. Research highlights the importance of social, play-based interactions in fostering

risk-taking, and problem-solving abilities—skills our Early Childhood and Elementary Sharks continue to develop and strengthen every day with the support of our dedicated teachers.

As we look ahead to 2025, I feel truly privileged to witness our students' ongoing growth and learning.

*Ms. Lauren Harvey*



# *from the* **MS/HS PRINCIPAL**

## **DEAR BFS COMMUNITY,**

---

BFS students are amazing, not just for their academic achievements, as shown in AP results or good grades. They're amazing because they genuinely love to learn and serve. During this first semester of the school year, so many of our students benefited from the student leadership shown by members of our student councils and officers of our clubs.

In September, the High School student council planned an off-campus fun day, pulling together a

coherent plan under a very tight timeline, and then executing it to perfection. The students and their faculty advisor stepped up and made their learning community a better place for everyone, accepting the challenge and overcoming all obstacles.

In October, BFS hosted a friendship concert with a school in Hong Kong. Behind the scenes, and working on this project for months, one BFS student took on organizational challenges befitting an adult as she helped bring about a moment of celebration and unity around music. With the support of our band and music teachers and our amazing operations team, this event far exceeded my expectations.

I could as easily have mentioned the hard work and dedication of our HOSA students, the volunteering of our Service Club, or the exceptional organization and dedication of our MS student council. They all work to make BFS a better place for all students.

I am proud to lead a Middle and High School where students serve the greater community. They are supported by caring and knowledgeable teachers. These teachers form the bedrock of the work of our school and I am humbled and grateful to be a school leader here. When combined with strong parent support, we will continue to exceed the sum of our parts.



*Mr. Carl Brenneman*

# CELEBRATING



# 28 YEARS



# BFS FOUNDER'S *day*



By Holly Teal & Goeun Choi

---

On October 11, 2024, Busan Foreign School (BFS) proudly celebrated Founder's Day, marking another year in our rich history of providing exceptional education in Busan. Established in 1996 by Jim and Amy Haddon, a military family with a deep connection to Korea, our school was founded on the vision of creating a diverse and inclusive learning environment. The Haddons saw a growing need for an international school in the vibrant city of Busan—one that upheld the highest standards of global education.



# FOUNDER'S DAY SERVES AS A TIME TO REFLECT ON OUR HISTORY AND LOOK FORWARD TO THE FUTURE

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The Founder's Day festivities kicked off with a whole-school assembly, setting the tone for a day of fun and reflection. Students from all grade levels participated in a variety of activities, ranging from arts and crafts, board games, karaoke, to dance parties, tailored for each division. The day not only fostered creativity and engagement but also celebrated the sense of community that the Haddons envisioned for our school.

One of the highlights of the event was a team-building activity where students and staff gathered on the soccer field to spell out the word "SHARKS"—a nod to our school mascot. This moment embodied the collaborative spirit that defines our school culture. The excitement reached new heights during the much-anticipated Students vs. Teachers volleyball matches, where the students triumphed in both games, much to the delight of their peers (sorry, teachers!). The energy and camaraderie were infectious, reminding us all of the friendly competition and teamwork that Founder's Day encourages.

The day wrapped up with some well-deserved relaxation as students enjoyed movies before heading home for an early release, concluding a memorable celebration of our school's founding and the vibrant community we continue to nurture.

Founder's Day serves as a time to reflect on our history and look forward to the future, continuing to live by the Haddons' vision of embracing diversity and striving for excellence in all we do. This was our 28th year and we look forward to bigger and better celebrations to come for BFS!





# RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE

*practices for the*

# FUTURE

By Lauren Harvey & Carl Brenneman

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In August 2024, BFS partnered with inclusion and belonging consultant **Mr. Juan Jacobs Sheblak** for faculty orientation training on restorative discipline practices. Rather than a punitive approach, restorative practices help to build and repair relationships, with a focus on helping students take accountability and understand the impact of their actions. By prioritizing accountability and healing to resolve conflicts between students, we are developing a more supportive community

Since our faculty orientation in August, BFS has continued its partnership with Mr. Juan Jacobs Sheblak. On October 2nd, Juan provided a follow-up

session for teachers on how to facilitate a listening circle, or a conversation designed to help students process an issue that has caused harm or impacted them in a significant way. Teachers practiced facilitating a listening circle to resolve common conflicts between students so that they could consistently utilize this approach in their classrooms.

On October 11th, teachers also engaged in a collaborative session led by Principals to learn more about relationship building and accountability circles based on their **National Center for Restorative Justice (NC4RJ)** training. Then, teachers reviewed the draft of the newly developed BFS-tiered discipline policy and student reporting tool.

These were developed with input from the Teacher Leadership Team and a teacher sub-committee to synthesize feedback into final drafts.

The next steps are to:

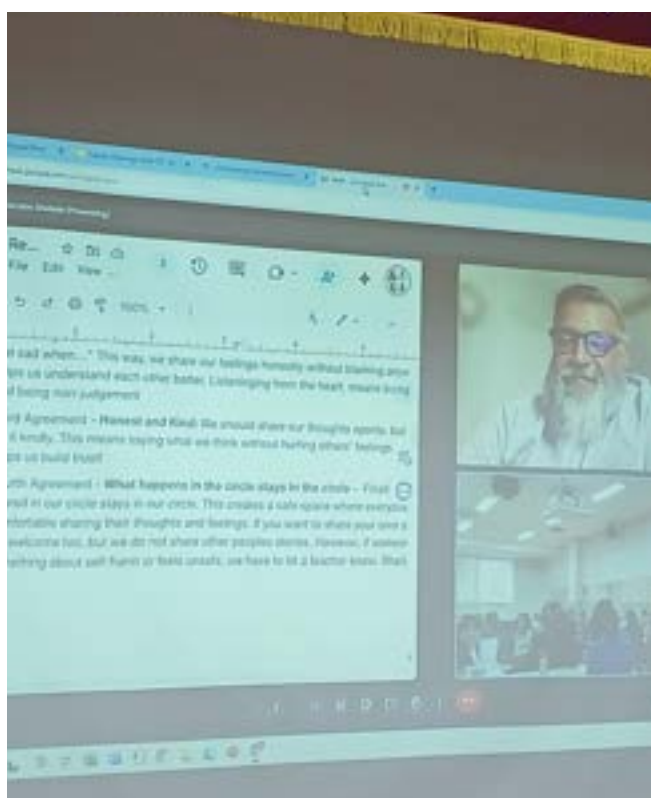
- Get MS/HS student input on the reporting tool
- Share updates with parents at the November PTSO meeting
- Implement the new tiered discipline policy and student reporting tool in January 2025

This initiative aligns with our schoolwide goal of improving students' emotional well-being and growth. In addition, this work is integral to supporting our school mission to empower learners in an inclusive environment that nurtures individual growth and fosters a sense of belonging.

As we continue to grow together, we are fortunate to have a team of highly qualified teachers and faculty who are deeply committed to supporting students' social and emotional well-being. We look forward to sharing more with parents at the November PTSO meeting.

**“I WOULD LIKE TO THANK  
MS. HARVEY & MR. BRENNEMAN  
& THE FACULTY WHO REMAIN  
STEADFAST IN THEIR WORK AND  
ALSO AN INSPIRATION FOR  
THOSE DOING THE WORK.”**

*- Mr. Juan Jacobs Sheblak*



# *new chefs are* **COOKING UP CHANGE**



## **BFS HIRES NEW CHEFS FOR MORE NUTRITIONAL MEALS FOR STUDENTS**

By Holly Teal & Goeun Choi

---

At Busan Foreign School (BFS), we understand that healthy, delicious meals are essential to fueling both academic success and overall well-being. After listening to feedback from our community, we made exciting changes to our lunch program, bringing in a talented new team dedicated to crafting meals that nourish and inspire.

This year, we welcomed two accomplished chefs, Jong-in Kim and Soo-jin Lee, along with a skilled nutritionist, Yun-mi Lee, to lead our cafeteria's transformation. Together, they are redefining school lunches—balancing nutrition, flavor, and variety to meet the diverse needs of our students.



From introducing international cuisines to incorporating fresh, seasonal ingredients, their vision is to make every meal a memorable experience.

We sat down with our new team to learn more about their backgrounds, philosophies, and plans for the future of BFS dining. Here's what they had to say.

## YUN-MI LEE, NUTRITIONIST

### **What nutritional guidelines or standards do you follow when planning school meals?**

We plan meals considering the amounts of energy, carbohydrates, protein, and fat according to nutritional standards. In addition, we operate a self-service bar with milk, cheese, salad, and fruits to provide micronutrients such as calcium, iron, and vitamins. My colleagues and I guide students to try various foods.

### **How do you ensure the meals meet the specific dietary needs of students, such as allergies or special diets?**

Considering the diverse cultural and age characteristics of an international school, we provide alternative ingredients for students with specific dietary needs. We prepare meals similar in taste and form to the regular menu to ensure these students don't feel uncomfortable eating different food alone.

### **What initiatives or programs do you plan to introduce to promote healthy eating habits among students?**

We aim to attract the interest of students, parents, and teachers by incorporating special ingredients that are rarely seen in typical school meals, as well as ingredients from suppliers working to improve environmental issues. We hope that students can have various experiences related to ingredients, such as field trips to food companies before and after menu offerings. We plan to create engaging elements during mealtime by displaying the raw ingredients used that day in the cafeteria and organizing simple quizzes and events.





## JONG-IN KIM HEAD CHEF

### **What excites you most about working in this school's cafeteria?**

I hope that the delicious meals students eat every day will become good memories of our school. I want the tasty meals eaten at Busan Foreign School to be a source of pride for our students wherever they go in the world after they graduate.

### **How do you plan to collaborate to ensure the success of the lunch program?**

As a Western cuisine chef at the 5-star Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Gangnam, I'm using my 20 years of culinary experience and know-how to provide meals tastier than any other school. I'm diligently passing on all the recipes I've worked hard on and collected to the other chefs, and I'm also making great efforts to share more food knowledge with our school nutritionist.

### **What are some upcoming projects or changes that students and parents can look forward to?**

Every Tuesday, we want to offer foods from various countries, giving our students the opportunity to experience multinational cuisine and learn about different cultures and foods. We're collecting recipes and materials to provide healthy meals using eco-friendly ingredients (Organic Day), and we're improving the hygiene and work environment in the cafeteria to ensure safe food provision.



## SOO-JIN LEE SOUS CHEF

### **Can you share a bit about your culinary background and what drew you to work in a school setting?**

I've been interested in cooking since childhood and gained experience through various part-time jobs in restaurants, buffets, and hotels. I volunteered as a cook during my military service, experiencing different kitchen systems. After graduating from university, I started a new experience in Singapore.

### **What changes or innovations have you introduced to the school lunch program?**

While it's difficult to say we've introduced many changes or innovations yet, we're certainly focusing on both the taste and quality of the food. We're making efforts to provide meals tailored to individual needs as much as possible. We're putting it together piece by piece, like a puzzle.

### **How will you balance offering healthy meals with ensuring the food appeals to students' tastes?**

We discuss this with the nutritionist daily. We check students' preferences and reactions during meal times, noting popular and unpopular foods to minimize leftovers. We also strive to always provide menus that are comfortable and delicious for students sensitive to halal and allergies, without being overly stimulating.

# SCHOOL *happenings*



## SEMESTER 1 EVENTS

### **FROM CHUSEOK TO THANKSGIVING, HERE'S A GLIMPSE OF BFS EVENTS**

By Holly Teal & Goeun Choi

At our American international school, nestled in the vibrant city of Busan, South Korea, we are privileged to embrace and celebrate a diverse array of cultural traditions. From cherished Korean holidays to beloved American festivities and globally recognized celebrations, our school community thrives on unity and shared experiences. These events offer our students, families, and staff unique opportunities to connect, learn, and grow together, fostering a deeper appreciation for the world's cultures. Here's a glimpse into the vibrant array of events and holidays that make our school truly special and memorable.



## **FAMILY ORIENTATION DAY**

A day to meet families, teachers, share information, and start building connections for the year!

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## **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

We welcome students to campus for their first day of school! Here we go 2024-25!

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## **MIDDLE & HIGH CLUB FAIR**

Students get together to promote their club while other learn about the different clubs available.

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## **ELEMENTARY SLO ASSEMBLIES**

Held every month, this assembly is a change for students to share what the SHARK values mean to them!

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## **MIDDLE & HIGH ASSEMBLIES**

Held every quarter, students receive SHARK Awards that teachers have previously voted on.

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## **MIDDLE & HIGH TEAMBUILDING**

Each year, MSHS students embark on trips designed to strengthen their bonds and foster teamwork

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## **HAPPY CHUSEOK, BFS!**

One of the most cherished holidays in S. Korea, students wear their traditional cultural attire before the holiday!

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## **FRIENDSHIP CONCERT**

students from ISF in Hong Kong collaborated with BFS students to make music together, to connect, learn, and grow together.

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## **HAPPY FOUNDER'S DAY, BFS**

Celebrating 28 years! A day packed with fun activities to celebrate our founder's and amazing school!

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## GRADE 5 FUNDRAISER

Every year, G5 students raise funds for their charity of choice, this year was for the Korea Hana Foundation.

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## HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

Our Halloween event celebrates the holiday with costumes, PTO hosted Trick-or-Treat, activities, and a Haunted House!

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## PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Held twice a year, PTC is a chance for parents to meet their child's teacher and learn about their progress.

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## NHS INDUCTION CEREMONY

Each year, new students are inducted into the National Honor Society with this special ceremony.

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## SCHOOL PICTURE DAY

Students take pictures for the school yearbook and parents have a chance to purchase those photos.

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## HAPPY THANKSGIVING

We celebrate the traditional US holiday by having a feast together with parents, Turkey Trot, & Turkey BINGO!

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## EC & ES WINTER CONCERTS

These concerts allow students to show off their hard work and parents can attend for a musical fun evening!

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## MSHS WINTER CONCERT

Another opportunity for MSHS students to perform their talents on stage for our school community.

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## COLLEGE WORKSHOP

Every year, Mr. Saunders hosts a workshop on the college application process for students and parents.

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# HONG KONG *to* BUSAN

## FRIENDSHIP CONCERT

By Mr. Carl Brenneman

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Twenty-five students and five chaperones from the International Schools Foundation (ISF) in Hong Kong visited Busan for a music exchange with Busan Foreign School (BFS). This event, envisioned by Dr. Don Grant—former BFS band teacher and current MS/HS Principal—was realized on Tuesday, October 8, at the Hong Kong to Busan Friendship Concert held at the Design Council Event Hall in Centum City, Busan. The goal: to promote friendship and understanding through music.

The ISF students, led by Dr. Grant, arrived at BFS on Monday, October 7, for their first joint rehearsal with BFS intermediate and advanced band and choir students. They also worked with BFS beginning band students, providing valuable coaching across all levels. Despite having just one shared rehearsal before the dress rehearsal, both schools had been preparing since spring 2024.

On concert night, the Event Hall, transformed by the BFS operations team, welcomed guests with flowers, event posters, and a professional video of the dress rehearsal. "I felt rich!" remarked BFS student Hailey when cameras captured her during the recording. The warm atmosphere set the stage for a remarkable evening of music.

The program featured performances from the ISF band/orchestra, followed by BFS groups, including the advanced band's showstopping Havana



Nights, with grade 11 student Joy as a soloist. Joy played a crucial role in the event's success, organizing logistics like booking the concert venue and a Korean BBQ restaurant to host the ISF group.

A highlight of the evening was the combined performances. The ISF strings and BFS choir joined forces for *More of Me*, featuring an arrangement by grade 9 ISF student Cheryl. The closing number, *Together We Are Better*, left the audience moved by the unifying power of music. The joint bands capped



“GETTING TO BE WITH  
PEOPLE FROM  
ANOTHER CULTURE  
AND SEEING HOW  
WE ARE SIMILAR WAS  
A GREAT EXPERIENCE.”

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Planned by Dr. Grant, Joy, Ms. Harris, Mr. Henzi, and Ms. Pochon, the ISF/BFS music exchange surpassed all expectations, leaving the BFS community inspired and united by the shared joy of music.

the night with The Great Locomotive Chase, a thrilling finale. “It was amazing to hear the piece come together with all the missing parts,” said BFS grade 8 student Neel.

Throughout the evening, music teachers from both schools supported the students, playing alongside them and showcasing their professional expertise.

The next day, the combined bands performed a mini-concert for BFS Middle and Elementary students. School Board Chair Mr. Ronald Haddon presented grade 11 Joy with an official citation recognizing her contributions to the event’s success.

The students then spent the afternoon at Haeundae Beach, followed by a fried chicken feast, dance party, and karaoke at BFS. Despite two late nights, BFS students were energized by the experience. “Getting to be with people from another culture and seeing how we are similar was a great experience,” said grade 8 student George.

The exchange highlighted the differences between the two schools—ISF students study the IB curriculum and are bilingual in Mandarin and English, while BFS students come from diverse backgrounds and follow an American-style curriculum. Yet, these differences only enriched their connection.



*A special thank you to the  
International School  
Foundation in Hong Kong,  
Mr. Don Grant,  
Ms. Nikki Harris, &  
Mr. Jakob Henzi!*

# ATHLETICS



## SEASONS *in review*

### **A LOOK AT VOLLEYBALL, CROSS COUNTRY, & FUTSAL SEASONS IN SEMESTER 1**

By Patrick Galles & BFS Coaches

As the first semester draws to a close, we take a moment to look back on all the achievements of our BFS Sharks during Season 1. From their determination and teamwork displayed on the futsal field to the grit

and endurance shown in cross country, our student-athletes gave their all and represented our school with pride. Our Sharks dedication, whether in practice or competition, has set the tone for a culture of excellence and sportsmanship at BFS.

As we look ahead to the upcoming basketball and futsal seasons in semester two, we're excited to see our Sharks' continue to grow as individuals and teams. With the same passion and drive, we know they will achieve great things. Let's keep cheering them on as they strive for success both on and off the court!

GO SHARKS!



# VOLLEYBALL

The BFS high school varsity boys volleyball teams wrapped up a spectacular season, with the boys finishing 13-12 and securing 2nd place in two tournaments. Captain Jun P. led the team with 106 kills and 23 blocks, and the boys claimed an unforgettable comeback win in the Battle of Busan.

The Lady Sharks varsity team continued their dominance, achieving a 22-2 match record and winning two championships, bringing their two-season total to 40-2. Their consistent excellence reaffirms their place as one of the region's top teams!

Both teams' hard work and achievements have set a high standard for the future of BFS volleyball. Congratulations, Sharks!

# CROSS COUNTRY

Our elementary cross-country team ended the season on a high note with a stellar performance at the final meet in Daegu. The elementary girls claimed the SKAIS championship, led by Klara D.'s 2nd-place finish and Isabella B.'s 3rd. Perfect weather and determined efforts made for an unforgettable day, setting the stage for future success.

The MS/HS cross-country team showed their competitive spirit throughout the season. Highlights included David C.'s impressive 2nd and 3rd-place finishes for the high school boys and standout performances from middle schoolers Luke R. and Elliot D., who secured top spots in their category. Kaila P., a newcomer, earned 2nd place in her debut race, while high school girls Sasha P., Chae M., and Vivian C. finished strong in a tough field. Congratulations to all our Sharks for their dedication and achievements this season!

# FUTSAL



Our Grades 3–5 futsal players showed great dedication, practicing twice a week and competing in an invitational and a tournament. The Boys C Team went undefeated at the invitational, while the Girls Team celebrated hard-fought wins that boosted their confidence. Boys A & B Teams focused on refining skills, and the addition of Coach Moon, from our security staff, brought fresh energy to the program. The season wrapped up with an all-day tournament on November 13th, showcasing teamwork, new uniforms, and a promising future.



The middle school boys' soccer team demonstrated incredible growth and teamwork, highlighted by a 2nd place finish at the SKAIS tournament with 17 goals scored. Standout players included MVP George M., Most Improved Yooan K, Defensive Player of the Year Neel K, and Best Teammate Robin M. Their dedication and camaraderie made this an unforgettable season.

The middle school girls' soccer team grew stronger together, building skills and resilience throughout the season. Their efforts culminated in a 4th-place finish at KISAC, where they played with heart and determination. Captain Michelle U, the team MVP, led the charge, supported by defensive standout Liz R. and motivator Audrey L. The girls' spirit and teamwork made BFS proud.



## *Honorable Mentions or Stats*

### **2024-25 ES Cross Country:**

SKAIS Tournament: Champions  
1st Place at SKAIS: Klara D.  
2nd Place at SKAIS: Isabella B.  
Top 4 Finishers: Klara D., Isabella B., Edith M., & Taeyang K.

### **2024-25 Varsity Girls Volleyball:**

Match Record: 22-2  
Set Record: 46-7  
Busan Invitational: Champions  
SKAIS Tournament: Champions  
Jeju Invitational Tournament: 3rd Place  
KISAC Tournament: 2nd Place

### **2024-25 Varsity Boys Volleyball All-Tournament**

#### **Selections:**

Busan Invitational: Justin, Jun P., & Egor  
Jeju Invitational: Jun P.  
SKAIS All-Tournament: Jun P., Justin H., & Mir O.

### **Varsity Girls Volleyball All-Tournament Selections:**

Jeju Invitational: Angie G. & Sophie G.  
KISAC: Angie G. & Maria Y.  
Busan Invitational: Sophie G., Skylar F., Angie G., & Maria Y.  
SKAIS: Skylar F., Angie G., & Sophie G.

# MEET *the* COACHES



Pat Galles  
**Athletic Director**



Coach Pehl  
**Varsity Girls Volleyball**



Coach Kim  
**JV Girls Volleyball**



Coach Barnes  
**Boys Volleyball**



Coach Ndjana  
**ES Futsal**



Coach Kuo  
**ES Boys Futsal**



Coach Van Genderen  
**MS Boys Futsal**



Coach Brock  
**MS Girls Futsal**



Coach Simnett  
**MS Boys Futsal**



Coach Kavanaugh  
**ES Cross Country**



Coach Singley  
**ES Cross Country**



Coach Bishop  
**MSHS Cross Country**



Coach Kebbas  
**MSHS Cross Country**

# FEELING THANKFUL

## *for our community*

By Holly Teal

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At Busan Foreign School (BFS), our Thanksgiving celebration was a heartwarming success, filled with delicious food, connections, and the loving support of our incredible community. This year, we were thrilled to welcome parents to join us for a festive feast, made possible by the tireless efforts of our new chefs and the **Parent-Teacher Support Organization (PTSO)**. The PTSO volunteers arrived early to help prepare and serve food, ensuring that everyone could enjoy a memorable holiday meal together.

In the spirit of fostering quality time, this year's celebration featured extended lunch periods, allowing families to spend more time together. Our dedicated staff also stepped in to assist, giving some of our hardworking PTSO volunteers the chance to sit down and savor the traditional Thanksgiving meal alongside everyone else.

Adding a touch of creativity and thoughtfulness, our Student Council designed beautiful table decorations for the occasion. These handcrafted pieces featured heartfelt messages from students across all grade levels, sharing what they are most thankful for.



The day concluded with an exciting game of Turkey BINGO, a tradition that brought laughter and joy to the entire BFS community.

We are deeply grateful to our wonderful community for coming together to make this celebration so special. A special thank-you goes to our PTSO, whose dedication and hard work continue to enrich our school environment, fostering a warm and welcoming space for all.

Thanksgiving at BFS is more than just a holiday; it's a reflection of the gratitude that resonates throughout our community. It's a reminder to embrace thankfulness not just on one day, but in every aspect of our lives. We encourage everyone to take a moment to express appreciation—whether through kind words, small gestures, or simply sharing time with loved ones. Together, let's continue to celebrate the spirit of gratitude every day.

## A BIG WARM THANK YOU TO OUR PTSO & STAFF VOLUNTEERS:

- Abigail Gross
- Hermina Schultz
- EJ Ratje
- Elizabeth Abraham
- Seonjeong Lee
- Chandani Persaud
- Hyunjung Yoo
- Jeewon Park
- Hannah Park
- Sophie
- Poonam Shukla
- Yumi Vaas
- Gong Xiaoye
- Carolina Munoz
- Kyunglee Doman
- Natalia Kim
- Natalia Lysenko
- Lea Juloc
- Lauren Harvey
- Carl Breneman
- Jeff Kuo
- Caitlin Kimak
- Glenn Saunders
- Almu Martinez



# TAKING ACTION

# REFUGEES

*to support*

By Lauren Harvey & Andrew Hernandez

---

In Elementary, Social Studies is based on the American Education Reaches Out (AERO) standards. In their Quarter 1 Social Studies unit, the Grade 5 class focused on AERO Standard 2: Connections and Conflict to understand the causes and effects of interactions among societies that result in movement. Students learned some reasons why people move including jobs, family, safety, and even for survival. The students compared and contrasted the needs, motivations, and challenges of refugees and immigrants. They conducted a case study with North Korea to understand why, how, and what forces North Koreans to flee their home.

The Grade 5 class learned how activism can help solve global problems involving inequality by informing others and persuading them to take action. Grade 5's action was to help North Korean refugees resettle in South Korea. They raised awareness about the issue by visiting classrooms across Grades 1-12 to share the what, why, and how.

Students, with support from their families, organized an exciting two-day bake sale,



# 1,300,000 KRW RAISED FOR KOREA HANA FOUNDATION!

*A special thank you to Mr. Hernandez for continuously involving students in impactful initiatives.*

raising 1,300,000 KRW (\$950.00 USD) for the Korea Hana Foundation. With the support of their teacher, Mr. Andrew Hernandez, the Grade 5 class learned that they can make an impact in the world.

This project supports the Busan Foreign School's mission to shape empathetic and open-minded global citizens who think critically and have the skills to thrive in a rapidly changing world.





# BFS ALUMNI

*happenings*

By Glenn Saunders

Looking back, we continue to celebrate the remarkable achievements of the BFS Class of 2024. These outstanding graduates truly exemplified hard work, resilience, and dedication throughout their final year at Busan Foreign School. Supported by BFS's robust college prep curriculum, dedicated college counseling, and a commitment to excellence, this senior class not only upheld our proud traditions but surpassed them. Their accomplishments remain a source of immense pride.

Despite being a small class of just 12 students, the Class of 2024 showcased extraordinary talent and ambition across diverse fields. From academics to the arts and athletics, their accomplishments were remarkable: several achieved exceptional SAT scores, including six scoring over 1500, while others excelled in unique pursuits. One graduate, a classically trained pianist, joined the prestigious Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University. Another, a nationally ranked short-track speed skater, began studies at Columbia University, and one chose to serve their country through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC).

As they look ahead to bright futures, the Class of 2024 remains deeply connected to the BFS community. Over the winter break, they celebrated

their first alumni gathering, a testament to the enduring bonds forged during their time at BFS. Here's to their continued success and inspiring journeys ahead!

## Class of 2024 Highlights

- **\$3 million in merit scholarship awards (over 4 years)**
- **4 Ivy League acceptances (Columbia, Brown, Cornell 2)**
- **72 acceptances to 55 different schools**
- **23 acceptances to Top 50 US schools**
- **2 acceptances to Top 10 UK schools**

## Matriculation Highlights

- **Brown University**
- **Case Western Reserve University**
- **Columbia University**
- **Cornell University**
- **Georgia Tech**
- **George Mason University**
- **Jacksonville University**
- **Johns Hopkins University**
- **New York University (NYU)**
- **University of Southern California (USC)**
- **University of Sydney**
- **University of Toronto**



# LEARNING *through* PLAY



The BFS Early Childhood program is inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach®, and our teachers are trained in theory and practice. This educational philosophy centers on children as having a strong potential to develop and grow with peers using the hundred languages, or ways of learning, belonging to all people.

Based on this approach, the BFS Early Childhood program uses the following basic principles:

- Children are strong, capable, and resilient.
- Children are rich with wonder, curiosity, and knowledge.
- Children pursue their own interests and build upon ideas at their own pace.
- Teachers are supportive, gentle, and caring.
- Teachers carefully observe and document students, rather than direct them.
- The environment is another stimulating teacher, allowing students to play, explore, and learn.

## THE REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH AT BFS

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By Lauren Harvey, Jennifer Sandstrom & Amanda Robinson

Through inquiry and project-based learning, Early Childhood students at BFS have opportunities to actively participate, explore, and question their interests as they develop socially and build relationships with other children, their families, and teachers. Our youngest Sharks are valued as active learners, and the program emphasizes collaborative experiences, hands-on learning, and visible documentation.

Teachers provide encouragement and positive reinforcement as students develop independence and self-awareness. Students explore different ways to express creativity, understanding, and thoughts. Students engage in real-life problem-solving among peers with opportunities for creative thinking and exploration.

As part of this approach, the outdoors is another classroom for Early Childhood students to explore.



# HANDS-ON LEARNING CREATIVITY EXPLORATION COLLABORATION

The EC playground provides a safe place for PK3 and K4 students to engage in play-based learning that helps them to identify and explore their interests. As they climb, run, jump, and play, they also build fine and gross motor skills and hand-eye coordination; learn to appreciate the outdoors; and develop interpersonal and communication skills.

EC students and teachers take weekly walks in the community. As they explore parks and playgrounds, students encounter insects, birds, and a variety of trees and plants, building an understanding of their place in the community. This fall, they will be exploring the fire station and other exciting outdoor locations.

The Early Childhood years are a foundational time in a child's life, and we are very proud that our youngest Sharks engage in such a positive learning environment.



# FEEDBACK *or* IDEAS?



## LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!

Would you like to see something else in the magazine?

Got a fun idea for it?

Want to submit an article?

**Email: [bfs\\_communications@bfs.or.kr](mailto:bfs_communications@bfs.or.kr)**

Since this is our first issue, we want to know what YOU think! If you have feedback, ideas, comments, or want to submit content for the next issue, please send us an email!

[busanforeignschool.org](http://busanforeignschool.org)

# Thanks to the authors!

Mr. Carl Brenneman, Middle & High School Principal  
Mrs. Lauren Harvey, Early Childhood & Elementary Principal  
Mr. Glenn Saunders, Director of Admissions & College Counseling  
Mr. Patrick Galles, Athletic Director  
Ms. Holly Teal, Director of Marketing & Communications  
Ms. Goeun Choi, Marketing & Communications Manager  
Ms. Jennifer Sandstrom, PK-3 Teacher  
Ms. Amanda Robinson, K-4 Teacher  
Mr. Andrew Hernandez, Grade 5 Teacher  
Mrs. Prescilia Ndjana, Grade 3 Teacher & Futsal Coach  
Ms. Courtney Pehl, Grade 4 Teacher & Volleyball Coach  
Dr. Dylan Barnes, MSHS Computer Science Teacher & Volleyball Coach  
Mr. Jeff Kuo, MSHS Math Teacher & Futsal Coach  
Mr. Michael Van Genderen, MSHS Math & Futsal Coach  
Mr. Chris Brock, HS Social Studies & Language Teacher & Futsal Coach  
Mr. Steven Simnett, HS Science Teacher & Futsal Coach  
Mr. Lucas Kavanaugh, K-2 ELL Teacher & Cross Country Coach  
Ms. Sofi Singley, School Counselor & Cross Country Coach  
Mr. Alec Bishop, HS English Teacher & Cross Country Coach  
Mr. Nate Kebbas, MS ELL Teacher & Cross Country Coach

For more information about our school & how to apply, please contact:



**Mr. Glenn Saunders**  
gsaunders@bfs.or.kr  
(For English)



**Dr. Jiyoung Lee**  
jylee@bfs.or.kr  
(For Korean)



happy holidays  
FROM ALL OF US AT  
BUSAN FOREIGN SCHOOL



## BUSAN FOREIGN SCHOOL

45, Daecheon-ro 67 beon-gil, Haeundae-gu, 48084 Busan, South Korea

67 45 | 48084

Tel +82(0)51 747 7199 | Fax +82(0)51 747 9196

[www.busanforeignschool.org](http://www.busanforeignschool.org)



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