



inspiration

SJSU INTERNATIONAL HOUSE

newsletter : fall 2011



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Inspiration

BY LEANN CHERKASKY MAKHNI, Director

I am inspired by the residents of the I-House. I am inspired by the diversity of thought, culture, personality, interests, leadership styles, perspectives, ages, areas of study, and interactions among residents and with staff. I am inspired by the skills, talents, and insights I read between the pages of this newsletter where I see the caring, intelligence, thoughtfulness, and efforts of our residents who chose to become part of the fabric of life at International House. I am inspired by our alumni who take this diversity and energy and caring and spread it around the world, and who stay in touch with each other over the decades.



***What does it
really mean
to be inspired
by someone
or something?***

BY MARTINA DACH

Most of the time I don't even think about it; usually it just happens that you meet someone or you experience something that stirs you up and motivates you to try new things, or even to become a better person.

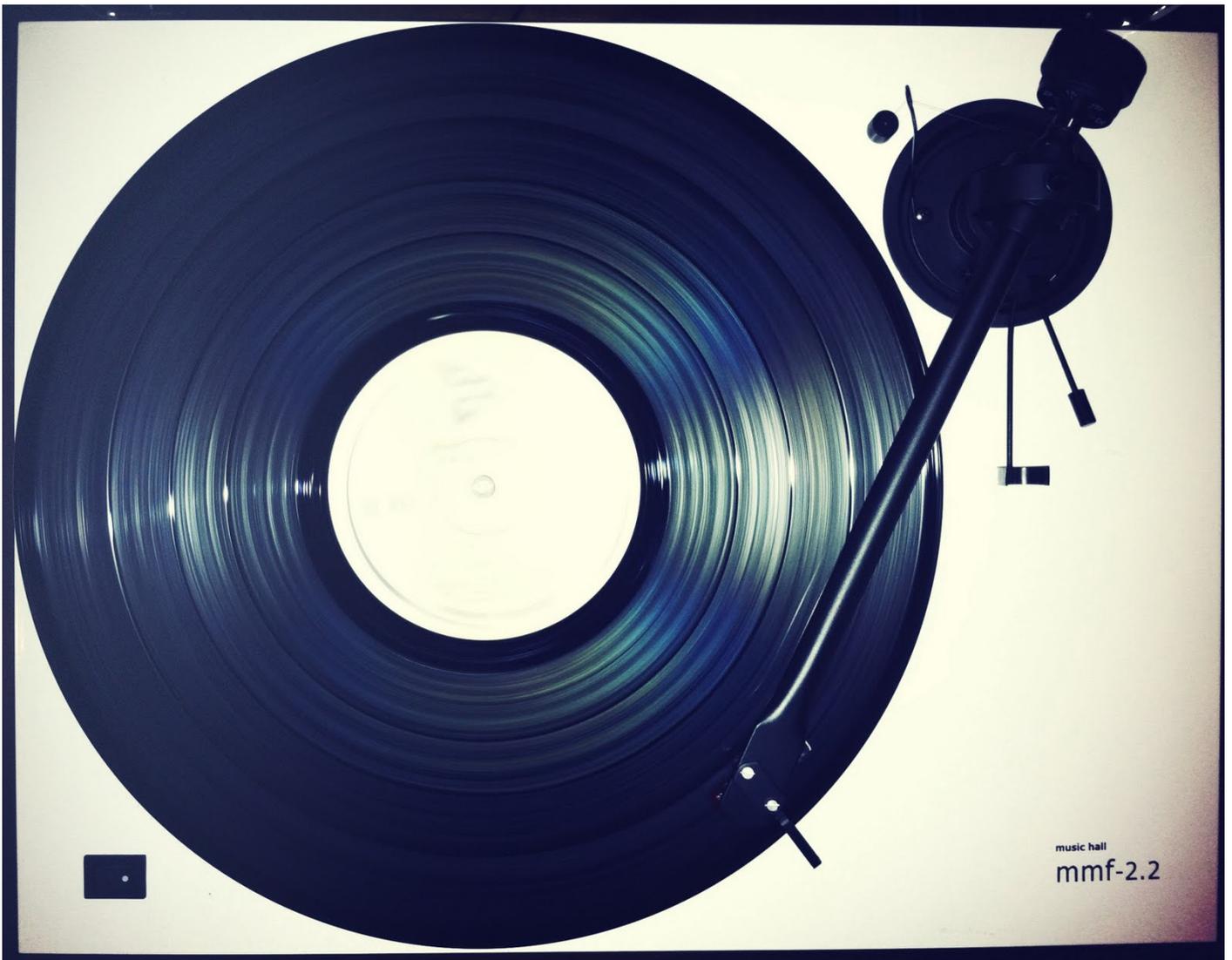
For me personally, spending time abroad is the greatest inspiration. Life here in the US is different from the way my life is back in Germany. The main difference is being able to meet new people from many different countries. In my experience, you learn to look at things from a different perspective and are able to face new challenges much better.

On the other side I also feel inspired by some of my professors. I have to admit that I sometimes don't know where I'm going to be after graduation. There are so many questions and everything is uncertain. Since I came here, however, I feel like my goals are much clearer than they were before, as my professors here really encourage me to find out what I really want to do later. They are interested in you as a person and care about the fact that you find what's right for you.

Sometimes it's the little things that inspire you and it can change your whole life.



INSPIRATION



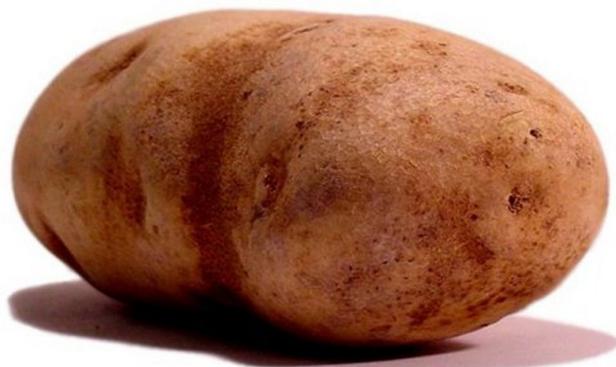
Spark of Inspiration

BY LAUREN CODLING

Music inspires me. A very common statement, but nevertheless, a true one. Music does really inspire me, in all sorts of different ways and manners. I can be in a nightclub and hear an obnoxious rapper pumping through the sound system, advising me to shake my backside, and this inspires me to get into my Beyonce persona and dance like crazy. I call up a company, only to get the drivel of an old instrumental tune ringing into my ears, telling me to stay on hold and that I'll soon be talking to an employee in regards to my needs. This is the kind of music that inspires me to read the handbook properly, instead of being lazy and calling up customer service. Or there is the other

type of music; the kind that means something. The lyrics remind me of that one brilliant unforgettable moment. The inspiration can make me want to live every day like it's my last; or it can just inspire me to be creative instead of sitting and eating yet another peanut butter cup. Music can inspire you in any way, shape or form, both positively and negatively. If you want some emotion after a long day or if you want some sudden burst of stimulation to clamber into your head, my advice would be to switch the music on. But for God's sake, don't play anything by Adele, if you're trying to forget a boyfriend. Trust me; that truly is one spark of inspiration you don't need.

Growing Inspiration



BY SERENA ORGAN

I've always loved growing things, even when I didn't know the first thing about gardening. When I was young, I would repeat what I had seen my parents do, most often to the detriment of whatever plant had fallen prey to my attention. Attempting to make sure that every plant looked its best, I took to "pruning" them. While enthusiasm cannot take the place of experience, I did try. Eventually, I graduated from smothering houseplants with affection to virtual farming, which I found much easier, as all you had to do was water every day, and you had grown a marvelous crop. Sadly, *Harvest Moon* couldn't contain the overabundance of desire to actually grow something with my own hands, and I decided to try my luck with potted plants. Finally, whether from wisdom gathered through repetitive past failures or false confidence from pixelated potatoes, I succeeded. Ironically enough, it was a real potato; in the dark too long, sprouting away. I helped it along with a pot, some dirt, and water every other day. Now, after seeing all of that forlornly empty space in the backyard of the I-House, a dying basil plant and a questionable garden box as the only inhabitants, I am delighted. Now a planter of beans, new basil, several pots of begonias and a bright (seemingly poisonous) orange-spotted ceramic mushroom later, I am still teeming with ideas. By the end of the school year, I hope to have added quite a lot more to the flourishing throng.

INSPIRATION

BY SHANNON ROST

Nature

In my happy place I feel the cool breeze on my skin, and the warm orange sun beating down on my face. Golden hills ebb and flow around the valley and guide the river south, as orange and purple blend the soft sky and its delicate clouds. The first faint stars in the vacant celestial sphere slowly begin to surface, and the fading light unleashes the darkness and paints the full sky with scintillating stars and galaxies. Shooting stars streak across the night sky and the Milky Way seems to flow like a vast river in an open plain. On the darkest nights my ears are attentive to the sounds of the trickling spring and the croaking frogs by the pond. The rustling of the trees and

the snuffling of animals are heard in the darkness. As time keeps ticking, the world gradually spins and gently shifts the sky around it, until light returns again to the cool valley. Thick fog drifts over the mountains and covers the frondescence in the blanket of a cold, wet haze. When the brilliance of beaming light breaks over the burly butte, the warmth is restored to the wide valley. With every drop of sunshine I find myself unleashing my creativity in the deep corners of my mind. Nature gives me the motivation and the inspiration to accomplish anything I can imagine. I feel like I can conquer challenges, and face my problems.

My Role Model

BY SUELAN ZHAO



The 44th President of the United States, Barack H. Obama, is my role model. He made historic changes in the global political arena. He is the first African American to hold the office. His story is the American story.

When he became United States President, he became my role model too. There are three reasons why I chose Obama as my role model:

First of all, Obama has a strong social conscience and is a positive person both in his personal life and his political life. It may seem impossible that he dreamed of becoming the United States President as a black man. Despite this he remained very positive, and his ultimate triumph over racial discrimination changed American history. It is not simply just that he is the President that inspires me. He has done considerable volunteer work throughout his life. For example, after working his way through college with the help of scholarships and student loans, Obama moved to Chicago where he worked with a group of churches to help rebuild communities devastated by the closure of local steel plants.

Secondly, President Obama is a person with persuasive power. He is able to make every speech very positive, clear and sensitive. I like Obama's famous slogan "Yes, we can!!"

It seems very simple, but it is very powerful! He passed on a message to many listeners that they can achieve if they try. His speeches always encourage me and give me a lot of confidence. He also taught me how to express my opinion to an audience passionately. I was very shy with my speech, but now this has changed a lot. Because of my role model I have gained more confidence, and I bring this out with my communication.

Last but not least, Obama is very adept with time management, leadership, and foresight. As a President he has a lot of things to do, but he manages everything well. Until now, there has rarely been anything negatively said about Obama. Some people may think that he is not as good as a particular President in the past, but most American and non-Americans consider Obama a decent President. His management and leadership abilities are also attributes I want to learn from him, as in the future I want to be a leader of a company.

So I need to learn from him. I need to learn his speech skills, his time management and his leadership skills. I admire Obama's positivity and confidence and would like to use him as a role model as I work towards my life and career goals. I hope to be like him some day.

My Trips Through the Wild

BY ERIK NILSSON

Being an explorer and world traveler, I have been inspired by the vast amounts of beautiful landscapes and natural monuments to explore a career in Geology. Before I started my geological endeavors I would ride my bike for hours off of trails searching for any form of adventure. These adventures often lead to getting lost in the woods, and coming back to a scolding from a disgruntled but caring mother. After I began my work as a geology student, I started to see California's beauty in new eyes. Not only did the land become more beautiful, but it also became fascinating. I started to spend weekends out hiking and camping instead of staying indoors, and my collections changed from books to fossils. Never would I have imagined that I would go for fossil digs and study some of the most amazing things the world has to offer.

Finding a rock is not usually exciting to most people, but to me it tells a story of its origin and the Earth's history. By hiking through the old Almaden area, where miners flocked for mercury during the gold rush, you can find the destructive impact on San Jose's nature that it had, causing persistent problems that the Bay Area experiences today. With the knowledge and care for the earth, humans can reverse the damage. The beauty of nature inspires me to help the world and help it recover, so everyone can experience the beauty of nature.

Inspiration From **Mongolia**

BY KELLY LEE



Last summer my friends and I went to Mongolia to hold summer camps for the disadvantaged children. This experience turned out to be much more inspirational than I expected it to be. Mongolia's pure, valiant and friendly characters moved me deeply. Mongolia is not a highly developed country, and Mongolians still maintain a nomadic lifestyle. It surprised me how simple life can be, and how happy people can be living such a life. For example one of the things that impressed me the most was that their restrooms are open air. To be more specific, it is just a hole in the ground with four boards around it. It was as harsh an environment as there can be, yet the people there are content and happy.

We taught the children about sanitation and mathema-

tics, and they were eager for knowledge. At the farewell campfire night, a boy stood up and expressed his thankfulness, and said he was determined to help people and become a teacher who educates children about fascinating things like we did. After a while our group leader told us that she initiated the camp because she really had a good time when she attended a similar camp in her elementary school. She wanted to pass this warmth down to other children in the world. This inspired me to think about how much positive influence doing a little good can bring. One good deed triggers another. You'll never know how much influence and happiness you can bring to the world. As long as one keeps doing virtuous things, or just keeps good intentions in mind, the circle of good will keep rotating and bring happiness to the world.

INSPIRATION

On exercising...

Metal music, particularly the song "Laid to Rest" by Lamb of God, gets me in the exercising mood. As soon as my earphones go in, my arms pump faster, my legs run at ultrasonic speed, and my head bobs uncontrollably. I start to look like a menace while on the elliptical.

On being a 'good' kid...

My parents are sometimes asked how they ended up with such a "good" kid, a kid with a 4.0 GPA since high school. They always say it's all my doing. I partly agree with this, but I do think my parents deserve some of the credit. Besides their love and support, it all comes down to my competitiveness and a love for learning. I compete with myself every time I take a test or write an essay. I want all my work to be the best that it can be. Is it nerdy to be pumped to take a test and show it who's boss?

BY BRITTANY BALZER

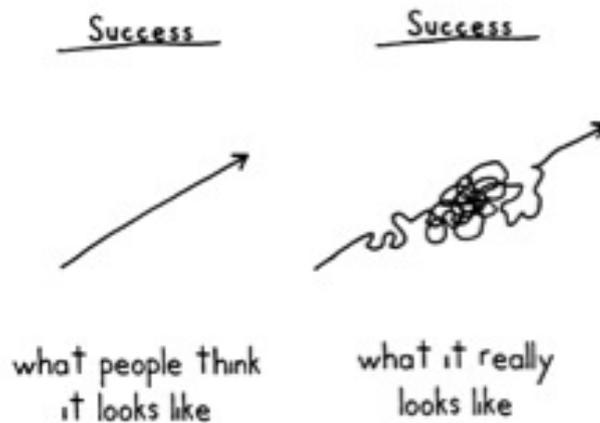
Tidbits From My Desk

On becoming more laid back...

Have you ever been around someone who constantly makes you laugh? I am lucky enough to have a best friend, my boyfriend, who keeps me laughing all day long. After three years, I look back and see how much more calm and relaxed I have become. I roll with the punches, and I think laughing and his presence have a lot to do with it.

On wanting to become a nurse...

1. E.R. the T.V. show
2. Doctors Without Borders, a no-fear and unbiased medical organization dedicated to helping people wherever needed.
3. My mom, a former dialysis technician and a once aspiring nurse.



All Or Nothing

BY SHANG-POH YU

Thomas Edison once said, "Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."

Good news: "Nearly all rich and powerful people are not notably talented, educated, charming, or good-looking. They become rich and powerful by wanting to be rich and powerful. Your vision of where or who you want to be is the greatest asset you have. Without a goal it's difficult to score." Paul Arden.

I have always been a firm believer in the fact that you can be whomever you choose to be in this world. Your life,

whatever becomes of it, is not a stroke of fate. It is not like there is a blackboard in the sky that states, "You, _____ (insert name). Your purpose in life is to _____". No. There is no such thing. Your life is whatever you say it is. You can be whatever you want to be. I am not just saying that; I truly believe in it. You are the writer of your own story. Nobody else is going to write it for you. It is not just going to happen. Well it might, but whatever the "it" may be is completely up to you. Someone once told me "Trying is the first step to failure." So next time you do anything, don't just try... DO! You only get to live once. Give it all or nothing.

INSPIRATION

People In My Life

BY HARGUN HANSRAO

The first person I think of when I think of the word “inspiration” is my grandfather, being the first person in his family to go to college, get married and also pursue his dream of studying law, alongside taking care of his family and working. Thinking back on what he said to me, “No one can take away the knowledge you have. That’s your wealth.”

She gives you unconditional love, supports you in your rights and guides you in your wrongs. Being very religious, she believes that every deed you do matters. View people by their actions, not who they seem to be or have become. My mom always says, “No matter how high or far you go, never give up honesty along the way”.

I saw her with her big headphones on and a strong determination to always speak English, even with people from her own country - my roommate Tae Gyung. She was never afraid to be different, never afraid to speak her mind, and would leave traces of her witty humor here and there in her conversations. She inspires me to be who I want to be. Her favorite line, “Well, I don’t care if I am different”.

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The Pencil & Eraser

BY SANDEEP HATHIRAMANI

Pencil: I'm sorry!

Eraser: For what? You have not done anything wrong.

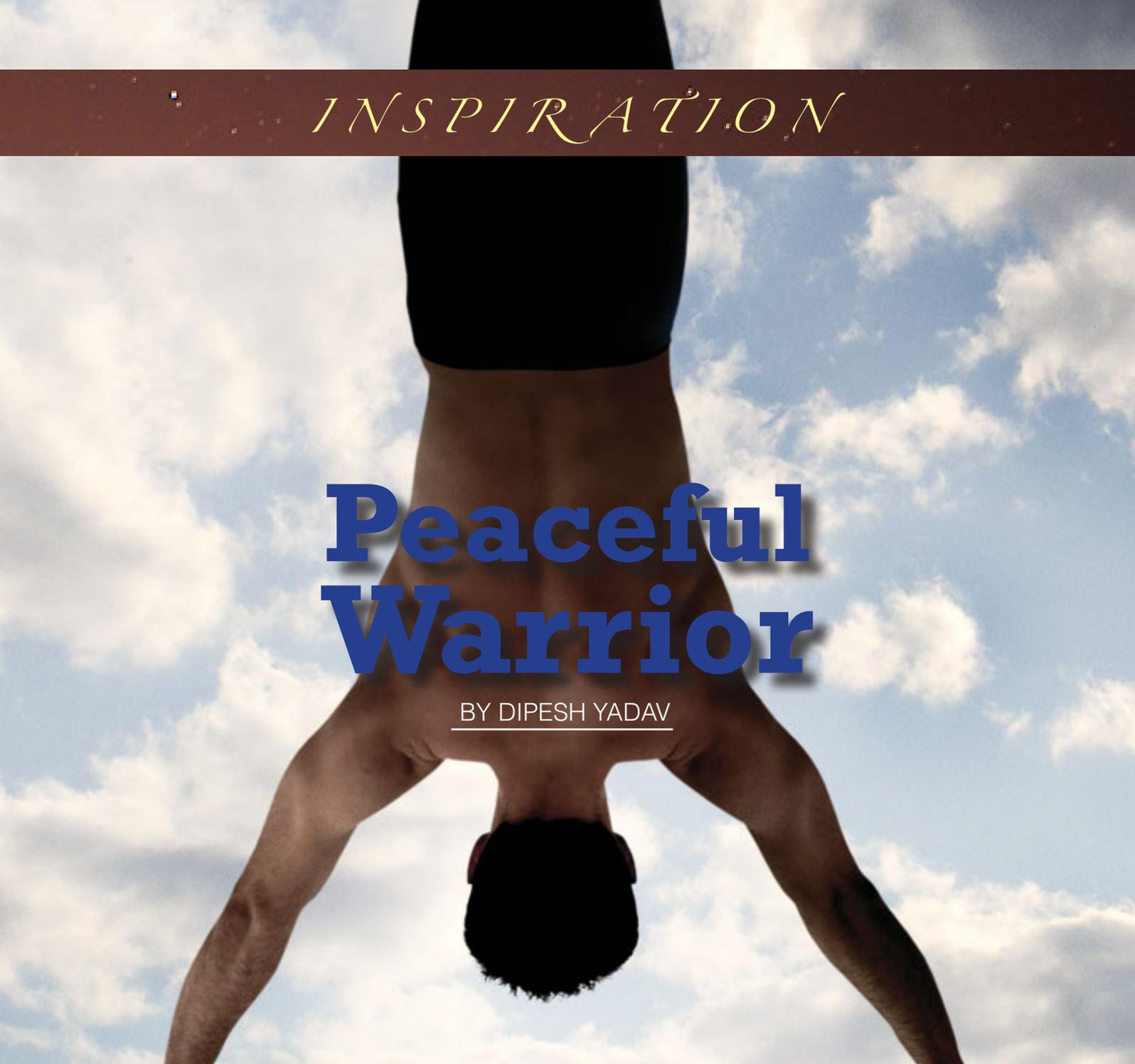
Pencil: I'm sorry, because of me you get hurt. When I make a mistake, you're always there to erase it.

Eraser: That's true, but I don't really mind it. You see, I'm here to help you whenever you do something wrong. Even though one day, I'll be gone and you will replace me with a new one, I'm just doing my duty.

The conversation between the pencil and the eraser, is very inspirational. Parents are like the eraser while their children are the pencil. Parents are always there for their children, cleaning up their mistakes. Along the way, at times they get hurt for us, become older and eventually pass on. Over time children will eventually find someone new like a spouse, but parents will still be happy doing what they do for their children no matter what.

All my life, I've been a pencil and it pains me to see the eraser getting smaller and smaller each day. For I know that one day, I'll be left with just a few eraser shavings.

For the all parents out there this is for you. For you have supported us children, covered us from our mistakes and never asked anything in return. You are the greatest inspiration somebody could ask for.

A person is performing a handstand against a blue sky with white clouds. The person's body is inverted, with their head at the bottom and feet at the top. They are wearing a black tank top. The background is a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds.

INSPIRATION

Peaceful Warrior

BY DIPESH YADAV

Inspiring someone is not easy. Getting inspired by a movie is way harder. Yet there are movies that actually make you wonder if you are you doing enough with your life, and if there is a little more push that is required to achieve satisfaction in your life. I consider happiness as the main criteria for satisfaction in life. But is happiness that important? How could I achieve happiness? How is it that even as life is going on, that I stopped caring about stuff? Am I really mindful of the things I say or experience? Now these are some real heavy-duty questions, and I am going to be honest, the movie never answered any of them in any detail. What it did for me however, was to get me thinking about

how I treat people and how I treat myself. It provided me with a better sense of understanding regarding human behavior, and how I should treat others. The main lesson that I learned from *Peaceful Warrior*, however, is presence of mind. That is not just limited to being aware of where you are, it goes much deeper and covers the aspects of having a conversation with other people and listening to them. Happiness is heavily dependent on your surroundings. When you are mindful of your surroundings, you appreciate them more and can enjoy them. It's been a year since I have seen the movie, and the lessons learned from it have been extremely valuable.

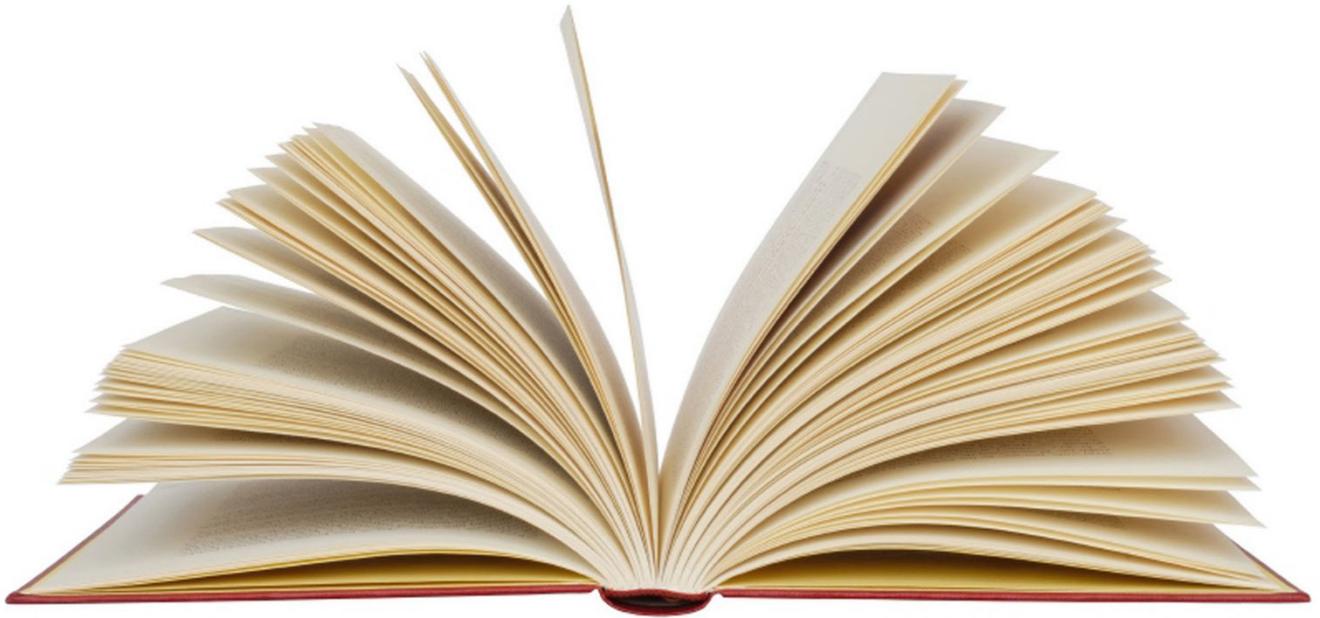
*One conversation
could be inspiration for a
lifetime*

BY SONJA LESLIE

There are many things that inspire me, wherever I go. When I started moving home, to different cities and even countries, I found something that inspired me in each new environment. But thinking about it more deeply, people are the main inspiration in my life.

I remember when I was in Australia by myself, knowing I wouldn't see my family and friends for one year, because I was on the other side of the world. I looked down to my feet and up to the sky though, and it felt exactly like anywhere else. I was standing on ground, and there was a bright blue sky. Of course travelling and experiencing different cultures is inspiring, but much more interesting are the people you meet on your journeys. Sometimes I walk down a street, and I know that everyone that passes me has a story to tell. The great inspiration to me is meeting people from all around the world, getting to know them and their story.

People I met in life are the main basis of my personal growth. When you develop tolerance and open up to any characteristics, you might be surprised how they add value to your own life. Learning to see things from a different perspective, trying to understand why they think that way, and creating your own opinion. Some people will be in your life for a certain time, some might be there for the rest of your life. However, it might occur that in an unexpected place, you will meet a person that will open up to you, due to the likelihood that you will never meet again. Just one deep conversation with a person can be an inspiration for a lifetime.



Appreciate

BY SHIORI AOYAMA

Something that inspired me, is a book that I read when I was in 7th grade. The book was *Tsuki wo Yobu Mahou no Kotoba*, which means “magic words that bring you good luck”. My friend recommended that I read it, so I did (although I seldom read books). This book taught me how important it is to “appreciate”. Since then, my life has been so much more fun, and I have been doing very well. Basically, you always should thank and appreciate. By using words such as “Thank you” and “I appreciate”, your life is going to be better, and you are going to be happy. These would make you relax, think very positively, and bring you good luck! You should never say bad things about others.

After I read this book, I started using these words, even when I faced something extremely unfortunate. Sometimes I actually say them to others, and sometimes I just say them to myself. My life has really changed. Everything that happens to me is good, because I try to take everything positively. I give thanks to all the unfortunate incidents, because they give you experience and strength. I never say bad things about others, because I do not think people have fun listening to someone saying bad things about others. It also does not make you feel good. I would like many people to use those words that inspired me and always think positively, because I want them to be HAPPY like me.



My Inspirations

BY VILOK 'VILLY' BHATIA

There are times when nothing seems to be working out,
When even our abilities we begin to doubt,
It seems like everything is going wrong, nothing right,
When the dark tunnel seems like a black hole, devoid of
light

When it seems that life just kicked you when you're
already down,
When all you see is broken and empty like a ghost town.
When even your inner fire seems to sputter,
When the desolation appears to be complete and utter

Its times like this when I yell for those whom I call
"friends"
Who remained besides me, despite the changing trends,
These are the people who inspire me to carry on,
And give me strength, when my own is long gone.

Now these days the word "friend" is tossed around a lot,
But I don't mean the chaff, that a dime a dozen can be
bought,

I mean those who truly know that being a friend and
being family are the same,
If life were a photograph, they would be the frame.

Inspiration isn't really hard to find, if you're looking in the
right place,
Sometimes all it takes, is a smile from a friendly face,
It's nothing but the feeling that someone close believes in
you,
And this belief strengthens you, and gives you confidence
anew.

I get my inspiration from the people who were always
there for me, never gone.
Who didn't see the ugly duckling, but instead saw the
white swan,
It would be wrong to call them pillars of support,
For pillars are few and far between, instead they make up
the very ground I stand upon.

BY TOM FOX

Global Abode



When it comes to humans, the unknown tends to either strike us with strong interest, or with fear so great it can lead us to make impetuous decisions. I have personally always been interested in the unknown or foreign, especially when it comes to people and cultures. Despite this, I never really gave thought to totally immersing myself in another country for more than a short vacation. However, meeting all of the diverse people, and hearing the copious amounts of thrilling stories at the International House have inspired me to pursue studying abroad. It has also inspired me to travel more frequently, so that I can see all the wonders that this amazing world has to offer. Although my time here at the International House has been remarkable, and I have met many great people whom I will never forget, I need to expand my horizons and see the world from another culture's perspective. I still have yet to live further than forty-five miles away from home, so a change of scenery is extremely overdue. I am certain that the International House has inspired many before me, and will continue to do so in the future. This is just one of the various reasons that this global abode is such a magnificent place.

Memories from the Semester

fall 2011



Memories from the Semester

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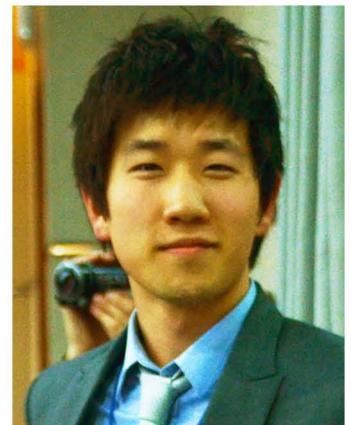
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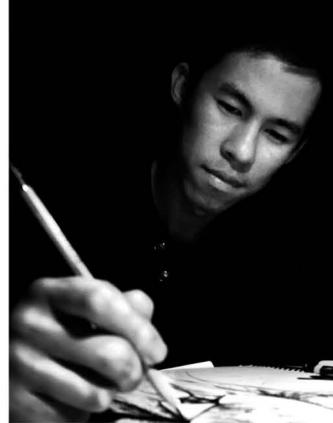
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Thank you for making
this special newsletter
more special.



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inspiration is **everywhere.**



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