

Dr. Jimmy Kiritsis, PhD

Class of 1984

Educator

Entrepreneur

Athlete

Entertainer



The OWL

APRIL 2021

in review

Dr. Jimmy Kiritsis, PhD

We asked the multi-faceted Dr. Jimmy Kiritsis to tell us his story, and we're certain you will enjoy it as much as we have! Jimmy's story:

I felt quite emotional when asked to speak about my ACS years. To this day those years remain the most tender of my life, and still are quite vivid to me. My heart and soul will always be embedded in the school foundations forever. Every time I drive around the surrounding areas I still get that 'ACS feeling.'

Suddenly, I'm flooded with memories: friends, junior and senior proms, student council meetings, Greek Club, Soccer Tournaments, music, band class, the library, the ACS gym, games, competitions, and transitioning from Elementary School to Middle School (MACOS program) and then to High School. Growing and developing throughout the years in an American school environment. Overall, I feel that the teachers contributed most to this as most were special and each brought something of their own culture and philosophy to teaching. They were not only teachers but many were good friends and served as mentors. We could confide in them, they understood and embraced us from the beginning. The school was my home for eight very enticing years.

I was born and raised in Hartford, Connecticut in 1966. At the age of 10, my parents decided to move back to their hometown Greece.

It was in the fall of 1976 when I joined the school after a failed attempt to join a private Greek school. I found the Greek school completely different, with a whole new philosophy of schooling, nothing like the US system I was used to. I couldn't relate to anything except for P.E class! The language was difficult as well as the whole system and methodology. In the States we used to work in groups, where in Greece you worked alone with too much memorizing involved.

Class of 1984



Mr. Demetral was the first teacher I had in the 5th grade and he made me feel right at home. I spent 8 rewarding years at ACS and graduated in 1984 with mixed feelings: sad because I was so attached to the school, but glad to move on to the next phase in my life. I remember being very active throughout those years, especially during my junior and senior years, serving as student council Secretary and Vice President respectively.

At ACS I was a mediocre student, not very interested in being awarded high grades, but very responsible having almost no absences throughout the years! I was interested in the more communicative type of classes and teachers. Teachers who made the classes light, fun and inspirational. Always managing to get through with better than average grades, I did particularly well in the subjects I was interested in and developed a connection with the teachers, like English with Ms. Nicholas, Contemporary Problems with Ms. Karvouniaris (great course), Greek with Mr. Pisanias, History with Mr. Leisy, Ms. Winterer's classes,



Sue Dennis' Biology (even though I hated it), Ms. Arvanitis and Ms. Pazartzis. Mr. Leisy signed my yearbook saying "Jimmy, you're a great guy who always keeps my class from getting boring". That was me!

Who can forget "Coach" (Constantinides)? He was like a father to so many of us. No Coach, no school. He was always there with his cap and whistle ready for PE class, which was my favorite! He was the first to make me appreciate and understand the importance of PE, which I took very seriously.

Nonetheless, what excited me most at the school, was being a member of the ACS soccer team. My idol at the time was Demetri Pelidis. He was a couple years older and I always watched him play when I was on the JV team. I remember feeling so proud to make the team every year and wear the ACS jersey. Especially the Junior Varsity and Varsity years, where I was voted captain of the team in my final year, Most Valuable Player along with being one of the top scorers.

During my senior year, the team had not lost a single game except for a 2-1 loss to a college level team. We had won all tournaments in my final two years, in Cairo and in Belgium. We were a 'team' above all. Our coaches, Mr. Knowlten and Mr. Wright, taught us to be fighters, never give up, and whatever the result, to appreciate the game and effort we gave. The school and the coaches wanted us to exhibit good sportsmanship whatever the case. We were the team/school to beat, and my life revolved around the team. I established relationships, learned how to lead, shared glorious moments of success and dealt with defeats. These were very important essentials in order to move forward and make an impact in my career and life.

SOCCER





Luckily enough my parents planted the foundations in my upbringing, making me understand what ethos was from the beginning, to respect people and to understand the basic principles of behavior. Looking back now, this parental guidance interconnected with the school. I was very fortunate to be a part of ACS at the time. ACS prepared us for the many experiences we were to face in the future without us really knowing. The school provided a well-rounded education through the modern courses taught at the time (IB too!), through the teachers, coaches, administrators, and finally through the school norms. These “assets”, which were well ahead of their time, led us to become responsible and dependable human beings, to believe in core values, to be passionate, honest and loyal, but above all, ethical. These factors, along with my parents' groundwork were the corner stones on which I laid my life foundations.



I remember in 1978 I had found two hundred drachmas in the middle school hallway, and without second thought returned the money to lost and found. Dr. Pimenides, Middle School Principal at the time, found out about my action, and called in my parents to congratulate them. Dr. Pimenides took this very seriously, and he told me that returning the money was the honest and correct thing to do.



The memories I have from the school will always be cherished and never forgotten. I remember the trip to Crete and the hike at the Gorge in 1982 with Ms Sue Dennis. I remember the extra effort when trying out for the team as nothing was given for granted to pass down an example. I remember how disciplined and committed I was to the team and to my fellow teammates. I remember the eagerness after every summer to go back to school and see my 'family' again. I remember the big earthquake in 1981 where we missed school for two days, I remember going to my first prom with my first date, I remember the trips to Corfu and Thessaloniki, the Greek Club, and I remember with awe graduating in June 1984. I remember my first dance in the school gym, and all the precious (true) friendships that I made and the arguments we got into, the Cafeteria, the Senior Taverna, the music (many songs) that defined a whole era and the feelings generated. I remember



the lockers, bus monitors, the 3.30 bell, the Student Store, Field Days in the late 70's, and playing baseball at the school and at the US Base in Nea Makri. I remember the treasured guidance received from my counsellor Peter Nanos as to how to further my education; the list could go on.

Even though my mind was set to play professional soccer, Mr Nanos abetted me to see beyond this. He was the one that mapped my next move and saw my interest in English, Communications and Sports. My parents were against me playing professionally because of a minor health issue, so we decided to prioritize and try and combine studies with some playing, but not at the highest level. Inevitably, this led me to the American College of Greece where I earned my Bachelor's degree in English Literature minoring in Communications, in 1989. During two of those years I served as secretary of the student council, and amongst other things, was appointed the official DJ of the college. After soccer, it was music. This is where the music part really took off.

I played collegiate soccer at the time, but didn't feel it was competitive or fulfilling enough. Feeling not quite complete with both my studies and how the sports issue cultivated, I decided to apply to King's College London where I completed my Master's Degree in English Literature. There I played very competitive soccer for the first team, out of five that the college had, winning the Collegiate cup out of 32 college teams, and making the best 11 team from all the colleges. I received my Master's degree with distinction which really boosted my confidence as a student.

Upon my return in 1990, I commenced work at the first ever European University branch in Athens as an Assistant Director in charge of logistics (payrolls, recruitment, interviewing prospective teachers, payments, teaching, logistics, orders, etc. in conjunction with forming the sports department). Attaining as much experience as possible that year, I left to finally chase my ultimate dream, which was sports.





Upon my final 'educational' return to Greece in 1996, I began work at the University of Indianapolis Athens Campus, where I held many positions simultaneously throughout my 4 years, beginning with Assistant Director of Admissions, Director of Academic Advising, Leader of the MBA Development Project, and finally Sports Director. There I created the first ever Sports Department from scratch, organizing and coaching three teams: Men's Soccer, Men's Basketball, and Woman's Basketball. Being an Assistant Professor for the University, I also delivered courses in Public Speaking, English, Business Communications, Sports Management, Radio Broadcasting, Group Dynamics, and Marketing.

In the 90's, and for 12 years, I was privileged to work for a very popular, historical radio station (Jeronimo Groovy FM, 88.9) where I had my own weekly show during the weekends totally in the English language. It was a colossal experience as the owners gave me the chance to interview well known pop personalities like ACE OF BASE, ROBERT MILES, ERASURE, for Jeronimo Groovy TV as well as famous sports figures like Dino Radja and Grigoris Georgatos for the radio's official magazine. I also hosted my own sports show on JGTV. In addition to the radio and TV, I played at hundreds of events, parties, weddings, bars and clubs. Playing music for crowds was always a passion - I still do it professionally after 36 years and going strong.



After 4 aspiring and memorable years, I managed to earn my PhD in Physical Education & Sport Management from the University of Loughborough UK. During my four-year tenure there, I utilized my time constructively in becoming a licensed soccer coach by the English Football Federation (Preliminary/Preparatory Certificates 1993), taught University level courses to my fellow colleagues, and presented findings of my research at a Sports conference in Komotini Greece, compiled with highly appreciated sport professionals. I also managed to play soccer at the highest level (semi-professional) for the University making first team selection out of 100 players.

By chance, I made my way into the business world in 2000 where I joined Globaltraining Athens as a Deputy Executive Director. The company specialized in High Profile Professional Qualifications related to accounting, financial managerial and performance topics through the ACCA, CFA, CIA and DipIFRS Professional Qualifications.

In 2008, I joined PwC, specifically the PwC Academy. I was mainly engaged with the previous descriptions mentioned above, but in reality I was one of the two (the other my brother) who fabricated the Professional Qualifications Department from the beginning. I carried out my responsibilities as the Business Development & Studies Coordinator in addition to teaching specialized topics for the ACCA. After three very productive years at PwC, the same PQ department was set up at the American College



of Greece in 2011, where I was appointed Director of Professional Qualifications. Once again, the main occupation was the setting up of the PQ department from its inception.

I also associated myself with BCA (Business College of Athens) for 3 years as a Part-time Professor teaching Human Resource Management in Hospitality, Tourism and Creative Industries as well as Global Strategic Issues in Hospitality and Tourism Management to final year students.

In 2012, I joined forces with Doukas School, a prestigious Greek private high school where I was employed for close to two years. There I held the positions of G.C.E Director, Higher Education Adviser (part of the IB program), and Scholarship Committee Director.

Since 2014, I am the Deputy Executive Director for StudySmart. StudySmart is a unique educational organization that offers training opportunities, master classes, articles and research findings on professional qualifications, professional designations, certifications and selected expert programs.

Furthermore, I still teach various specific soft skill seminars as well as ACCA courses for StudySmart and abroad (Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, Qatar), specializing in the areas of Business & Finance in a Digital World (CIMA), and Business & Technology for the ACCA.

In terms of personal advancement, I hold a Verified Professional Certificate in Business Communications from the Rochester University of Technology in collaboration with edx.

Teaching has been one of my passions. After all these years, I have developed into a motivational trainer and a charismatic speaker with close to 10,000 hours of teaching, providing educational support and advice to students, as well as career consultation to business professionals.

In the fall of 2010 I attended an ACS Alumni meeting. It was time for elections, and it seemed that I was at the right spot at the right time. I ran for president with the encouragement of fellow alumni, won the elections. I felt so happy to be a part of ACS again and contribute. My mission was to build Alumni connections and bring more of us closer together. At the time, social media seemed like a great start off point and lead. We had an incredible team, an active bunch who worked together to



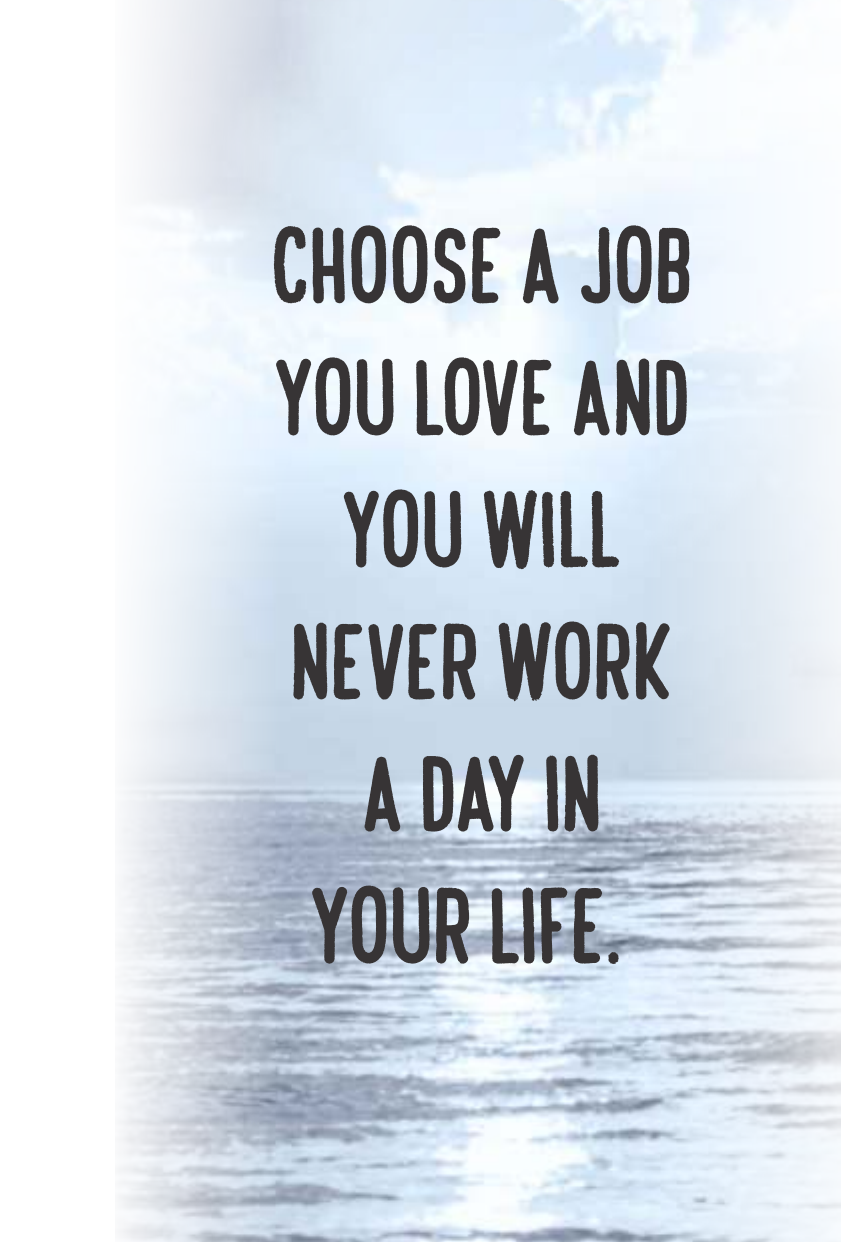
accomplish this target. We believe it worked looking through all the connections being made after ten years. We established the first ever Alumni facebook page, came up with a motto, "ACS Alumni, a timeless connection", organized numerous events for alums to meet up and hang out (all were packed), had regular monthly meetings with more than 10 people attending as more alumni volunteered to be part of the group!

We donated many toys and clothing to children's foundations. The next step was to approach and expand to the younger alumni, slowly introducing some fund raising along the way. Unfortunately I had to step down due to professional commitments at the time, leaving our work unfinished. The

members deserve mentioning and credit as without them nothing would've materialized. Special thanks to:

Maria Kardamenis, Raymond Srouji, Steve Kourkoulis, Christina Mefalopoulos, Chris Moukas, Thelxi Trohalis, Eleni Aravanis, Maria Triantafyllopoulou, Niki Kardamenis, Angie Spiliot, Sandy Kormalis, Evanne Sharpe, Katrina Adreadis, Demetri Pelidis, Fouad Kabbani, Mariana Savvas, and Michael Kondylas just to mention a few. Of course, we had the support from previous committee members who deserve credit, too: like Belina Korovessis, Lia Sterghos Kassanis, Joanne Tzouanacos, Cynthia Goudis, Mikki Hatjulis, and the late Dr. Stefanos Gialamas along with Mr. Steve Medeiros. We were blessed to have them with us.





**CHOOSE A JOB
YOU LOVE AND
YOU WILL
NEVER WORK
A DAY IN
YOUR LIFE.**

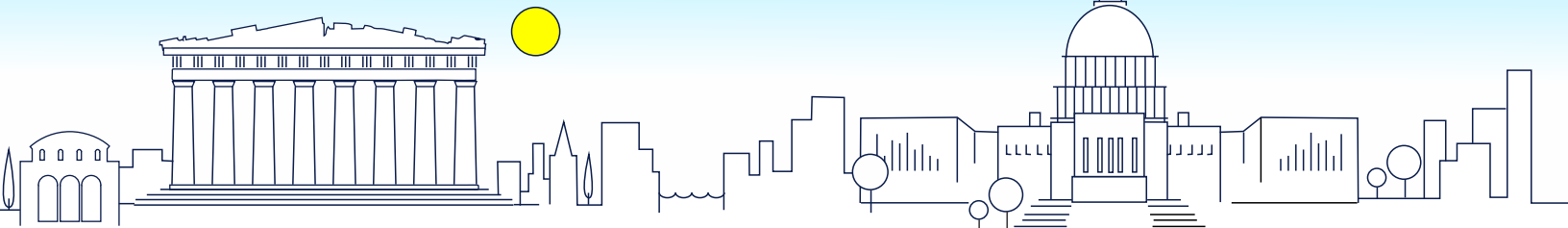
It was an honor to serve as President of the ACS Alumni Association for four years.

I've maintained many friends from back then. Over forty years later, these friendships are the strongest and most authentic. Even when we haven't seen each other for years, every time we meet up or speak on the phone, it's as though not a day has passed. That's the magic of ACS. Peter Tzortzatos, Dino Demetroulis & Steve Froustis were and still are very special to me. Being a parent has been a particularly elevating experience. I am a proud husband of a wonderful wife for 22 years and father to a very talented young man.

My words of wisdom: This could sound cliché but I relate to a Confucius quote. "Choose a job you love and you'll never work a day in your life." Follow your passion, believe in your heart and success will come to you. Never stop learning because life never stops teaching, cherish the moments, and above all, Seize the Day!

Finally, I would like to quote a page in the ACS 1982 yearbook, which sums it all up, "A new visitor walking through the halls of the Academy is immediately assailed with the wide range of cultures and nationalities that abound our beloved school. He or she, will be amazed at the varied birthplaces of teachers and students. The Academy is a melting pot of nations and peoples which smoothly combines to create a unique experience and lasting relationships."





MONTHLY MESSAGE



PEGGY PELONIS, Ed. D.
PRESIDENT

AMERICAN
COMMUNITY
SCHOOLS
OF ATHENS

ECIS, the Educational Collaborative for International Schools, held its annual Leadership Conference. Focusing on "Diversity and Belonging – the power of commonality and inclusion," the virtual Conference took place in April over 3 days of inspiration and collaboration, during which acclaimed educators and leaders from across the world came together online to explore, discuss and make conscious decisions on Diversity and Belonging.

I spoke about the courage to lead, offering a female approach to leadership. During my speech, I analyzed how understanding your Personal Leadership Thread is an important concept that will provide insight and tools to leverage your authentic leadership style. Through the approach of both authentic and dynamic leadership, including the ideas of 'reflective practitioners' and Collaborative Learning Communities, emerges a framework with intentional excellence.

ECIS includes members from more than 425 schools and 35,000 educators and leaders in over 80 countries. Click the image below for more information on ECIS

Sincerely,
Peggy Pelonis, Ed.D
President



ACS Athens
American Community Schools



Maria Korolessis Sewell
class of 1975

Starting something new and want to look like you have your act together? A Beginner's Guide to Marketing and Branding

Marketing is the set of tools, processes, and strategies you use to promote your product, service, and company: the actions you take to connect your customers to your products or services. It is the external face of your business to customers. Think of it as your business personality – the way you promote your product or service.

Branding is about defining who you are as a company: your mission, values, and character as a company. Branding is as much internal as it is your face to the world. Think of it as your business character. Your brand elements include your logo, website, and your style guidelines, and good consistent branding builds your value to customers over the long term.

You need separate strategies for both the goals of your marketing and your branding, as they garner different results. Marketing creates sales, branding creates recognition and loyalty.

Who Are You? Some Tips to Button Up Your Brand

No brand is built overnight - start laying the groundwork for what you want your brand to represent in all of the most crucial, self-defining aspects of your business.

- Get your logo right – If you're using a dated font in your logo, for example, please reconsider. Make any improvements you can without losing ground in terms of brand recognition.



Apple logo's evolution from 1976 to 2015

- Internalize your tagline, mission statement, defining headline on your homepage, so you can more effectively communicate to audiences what you do and why it matters. Avoid buzzwords, vague language and emulating your competitors.

- Adhere to your brand guidelines – look like you have your act together:
 - Logo usage
 - Color schemes
 - Visuals and imagery
 - Voice and messaging
 - Fonts and typography
- Jumping on trends is fine for marketing campaigns, but don't dilute or lose your brand in something that comes and goes. Don't let trends influence your branding.
- Remember what makes your brand distinct even in the face of changing customer demographics (for example, a younger age group you wish to incorporate). Integrate new market segments as a new subset of your customers.
- Even if you are a local business rooted in your community, the world is becoming more diverse. Avoid your brand's association with ignorance by:
 - Using language everyone can understand
 - Practising cultural sensitivity
 - Including and respecting feedback
 - Researching unknown territories very well before communicating with customers
- Facing a crisis? Own up. When something at your end slips through the cracks, address the situation.

Good luck!

Maria has years of experience creating content for non-profits and corporations. Her efforts as Series Designer for "Wetlands and the World" garnered her a National Association for Interpretation Award in the US, First Place, as well as a Seal of Excellence by Creative Child Magazine.

MariaSewell.com



ATHENS

Reunion

Cautious Optimism for Summer 2022

It wouldn't be a grand reunion without our Global alums there, so we continue to hope and plan for the possibility of summer 2022.

We remain so grateful for the support of those who intend to sponsor, to attend, to musicians and performers committed to organizing the eventual reunion of the century.

We at Global wish to express our gratitude to the Reunion's perseverant committee, and look forward to enjoying the eventual results of their appreciated commitment!

Wishing you all good health till we can all meet and celebrate together!



ACS ATHENS GREECE
ALL-CLASS REUNION
TARPON SPRINGS, FL
September 17-19, 2021



Updates

and News



PROFESSIONAL NOTES



Alum Afaf Shawwa Bibi's Voice Work.

Need a professional voice for your media project? Afaf Shawwa Bibi's is excited to share her brand new Corporate Narration Demo, recorded in my home studio. Produced by the fabulous Anne Ganguzza and sound engineered by John @ Atlantis Group.



Alum Vicky Doganis' Spring Collection. Enjoy it here!



Alum Micah Stathis' film The Sisters Karras!

Let's help him get this interesting story produced!





PROFESSIONAL NOTES

Over 30 years
of market
research with
heart and soul
for people
and companies

damaS
technology • strategy • research

Congratulations Alum
Stephanie Damas !

"After many years of commitment to empowering connections between people, companies and brands, I'm excited to share my new venture with you all, a boutique - full service - research agency. stephanie@damas.gr"



ACS Athens is Hiring



THIRD GRADE
TEACHER
Deadline June 30

FIFTH GRADE
TEACHER
Deadline June 30

ALUMNI OUTREACH
AND FUNDRAISER
COORDINATOR
Deadline May 30

ACS Athens NEWS


ACS Athens wins second place at Stem Stars Greece Competition



An amazing distinction for ACS Athens 2020 graduate **Melina Opperer**, who won second place in the Finals of the Stem Stars Greece Competition on Sunday, during the Athens Science Festival.

With her research study on "An investigation into the relationship between sensory physiology and operant learning in *Pantherophis guttatus* and *Python regius*", Melina won, representing ACS Athens with great success, scientific accuracy, enthusiasm and sensitivity.

Melina is one of the two winning teams who will now participate in the International Competition ISEF (International Science and Engineering Fair), representing ACS Athens.



ACS Athens
American Community Schools


Join ACS Athens Virtual Modern Greek High School Courses

Discover Greek Language & Culture through mythology, philosophy, history & drama texts

www.acs.gr/greek_courses_online

All courses are taught by native Greek Instructors

Program starts May 7, 2021



[Click Here](#)

ACS Athens
VIRTUAL

ACS Athens PTO reinstates the 'Families Sponsoring New Families (FSNF)' program.

The ACS Athens PTO Board is pleased to announce the reinstatement of the "Families Sponsoring New Families Network" (FSNF) program.

During this challenging year, the ACS Athens PTO received an enormous amount of feedback, especially from new families who have not been able to connect with their new school community.

Would you like to be a family that supports a new family? Raise your hand!

Please fill out the form [here](#).

By registering, you give ACS Athens PTO your permission to share your contact information with new families that register at ACS Athens.

All efforts will be made to match families with kids that are of similar ages and live near each other.

Hopefully, the ACS Athens FSNF program can further support families' transition to ACS Athens and Athens to be smoother, happier and more welcoming.

The ACS Athens PTO looks forward to hearing from you and working as a team to support new families!



**Register here to be a
Welcome Family for the
Families Sponsoring New
Families Program (FSNF)**

UPCOMING PTO EVENTS

May

- 5th - Parent and Principals' Coffee Meeting and General PTO Meeting

June

- 5th - Spring Fair
- 14th - PTO Volunteer Thank You Coffee