



OTAGO GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS **NEWSLETTER** TERM 4 2024

Message from our Principal, Mrs Bridget Davidson

Tēnā koutou katoa and warm greetings to each and every one of you.

On Monday, we featured in the New Zealand Herald, our country's national newspaper – who wanted to know our 'secret sauce' for achieving our excellent NCEA Level 3 results. They analysed the 2023 national results and Otago Girls' came out among the best. In response I explained that we had highly specialised and passionate teachers, high co-curricular involvement and great inspiration in our alumni. For example, former Dux Lucy Matehaere represented New Zealand in Sprint kayaking at the Paris Olympics this year.

Last week we also made the Crimson List of the Top 50 Schools in New Zealand for gaining entrance to the World's Top Universities - this based on 70% academic performance, 15% co-curricular and 15% access and diversity. This recognises us as a leading academic school in New Zealand.



This year, ex-girl Mai Chen, a top Public Law expert in New Zealand, has introduced a Transformational Leadership Prize of \$2000 recognising students who are able to collaborate, influence and lead meaningful change. This year Mai decided to award two prizes and first recipients of this prize were Rata Williams and Rosie Falcous.



With exceptional academic results, stable enrolments, excellent school behaviour data, increasing international business recovery and low staff turnover, we consider ourselves very fortunate.

School leadership is also very strong and we are delighted to announce that our new Academic and Global Prefect for 2025 is Alison Han. Other student leadership initiatives include the Year 13 Peer Support Camp at Warrington, the tuakana-teina 'Sisters' programme and the 2T High Performance programme. Fun and engaging lunchtime activities, music and evening events have further enriched this leadership, alongside our shared OBHS activities such as 'Friends First'.

I would like to thank Mrs Rose Gilani - Director of International Students and Mrs Katherine Boomer - Dean of International Students for their amazing work and support of students this year. The Department of International Students is thriving and growing under their guidance.

I will leave you with a quote from Otago Girls ex-student, Jenny Armstrong, former Olympic Gold Medallist sailor and parent here at our school:

"Dream big and just go for it. Don't let anything stand in your way."

Ngā mihi nui

Bridget Davidson
Tumuaki ~ Principal
Otago Girls' High School



Message from our Director of International Students, Mrs Rose Gilani

We are approaching the end of Term 4 2024 - the completion of a school year at Otago Girls' High School. How time flies! Having joined Otago Girls in November 2023, I feel like I have come full circle. This term has been all about NCEA exams, but parallel to that, our senior international students have had the opportunity to experience Dunedin and areas around Dunedin on a whole other level. One of our German international students commented that she had gone to so many places with her homestay family, but the places she visited with the school were completely different. A huge thank you to Mrs Katherine Boomer and the team of dedicated teachers and staff who showed our international students a wonderful time during those exam weeks. It was definitely worth it and our students loved it!

It has been a very fulfilling year, with students from numerous nationalities who have studied with us from one term to a full year and up to five full years!





We have seen our students develop, each one overcoming their unique set of challenges, and growing as both students and individuals.

A big thank you to our principal Mrs Bridget Davidson for her constant support and leadership in my first year. It has been great working with someone who is open to new ideas about how to best take care of our students, and creative ideas for making sure that potential students know about our wonderful school. Mrs Katherine Boomer has been a constant energetic presence as Dean of International Students; students really look up to Mrs Boomer and enjoy her company. Our homestay parents have given our students a home away from home. One homestay parent commented to me that she will really miss her international student because they had become just like family. Our international parents have been a great support and have always kept in close touch with me. Most of all, it has been so delightful working alongside our group of talented and caring education advisors and agents. Last but not least, we could not do it without the constant support of our administrative team who work diligently in the backgrounds to make things happen.

The weather is slowly starting to warm up for summer. Christmas is just around the corner and it is a time for giving and appreciating those around us. It is also a time for reflection. With so many activities and events at Otago Girls, the year has passed by so very quickly. Each term break has been spent preparing for the new groups of international students about to embark on their overseas adventure. The first few weeks of each term have been spent helping them get settled into their homestays, their uniforms, and their classes. The farewell ceremony for our Term 4 leavers was very touching as we listened to how each student had grown during their time here. Our vision for international students is *A Transformational Experience: We Create Leaders*. In our farewell ceremony, I could truly see how these students have had transformational experiences and how their time at Otago Girls has impacted their lives.





International Team

Mrs Rose Gilani (Director of International Students)

Mrs Bridget Davidson (Principal)

Mrs Katherine Boomer (Dean of International Students)



Term 4 International Students

YEAR 9	YEAR 10	YEAR 11	YEAR 12	YEAR 13
Moana Li	Gale Jan	Christine Cai	Allison Han	Grace Dong
	Sumika Moriya	Chihiro Homma	Mai Someya	Hebe Leung
	Alisa Song	Ada Hu	Juliane Stormanns	Pauline Strauss
	Yiling Zhang	Kira Linnewedel	Marlena Siefke	
	Silei Chen	Josie Menzel	Hanne Grossmann	
	Nora Li	Antonia Barten	Lea Graichen Diaz	
	Lucia Shen			
	Emma Koch			
	Mion Degawa			



Reflections of Term 4 from our Dean of International Students, Mrs Katherine Boomer



This has certainly been a whirlwind of a term with so many school events in a short space of time. The seniors had less than three full weeks of classes before they went on exam leave for NCEA. In the remaining weeks of classes, the students completed some presentations for their English Language presenting standards and I am very proud of how well they can present to a group in another language with only a few words on their cards. There were some magnificent visual aids made to go with the talks.

Once the exam leave started, the juniors had exams in their subjects and the senior international students who were not doing NCEA or had few exams, joined the international program. We ventured out and didn't let the weather change our plans to explore some of the beautiful locations we have near Dunedin. The day we went out on the Otago Peninsula to visit the Royal Albatross Colony and Larnach Castle was a most spectacular day. Otago Harbour was calm and there were hardly any clouds in the sky. That fine weather meant there weren't any flying albatrosses to see but it did make for a beautiful afternoon at Larnach Castle, sitting on the lawn eating scones and macarons.

On the other side of the harbour, we didn't have the best weather so we had a picnic in the van. We saw several seals along the mole (sea wall) so we couldn't go right to the end. Then later, we got to observe a massive sea lion get up from his slumber and waddle off into the ocean where he swam off. We were in awe of him and felt grateful for the chance to see such a thing. After many shells were collected we returned to Dunedin.

Competitive spirit was shown during the croquet and petanque matches. The students also watched some cricket at the University Oval but they were not taken by the sport. Learning a bit about playing rugby from Otago Rugby and getting their own rugby balls proved more popular. Other activities included a trip to Moeraki, playing mini golf and disc golf, morning tea, and baking/cooking at school followed by enjoying the food together. Unfortunately, we were unable to create macarons to the same level as the castle cafe. Surfing at St Clair Beach was popular





and fun. Hanne and Antonia had their birthdays at the beach, something they wouldn't be able to do in Germany at this time of the year.

Year 10 camp was a chance for our students to explore more activities and locations in Otago. Mion and Hanne went into the mountains on Routeburn and Caples camps respectively with superb weather to enjoy the great outdoors. Gale, Silei, and Alisa joined the Ōmakau camp, and seven others (Chihiro, Lea, Julianne, Antonia, Marlena, Josie, and Emma) joined the Ōtepoti Dunedin camp.

We are incredibly proud of all our students when we see how far they have come since they started at our school. They have taken the opportunities available to them where they have made some wonderful friends and created fantastic memories along the way.

Many thanks need to go to our whole school community for enriching the experiences of our students. Happy holidays to everyone!





Otago Girls' High School Ranked Amongst Top 50 NZ Schools 2024

For Gaining Admission to the World's Top Universities

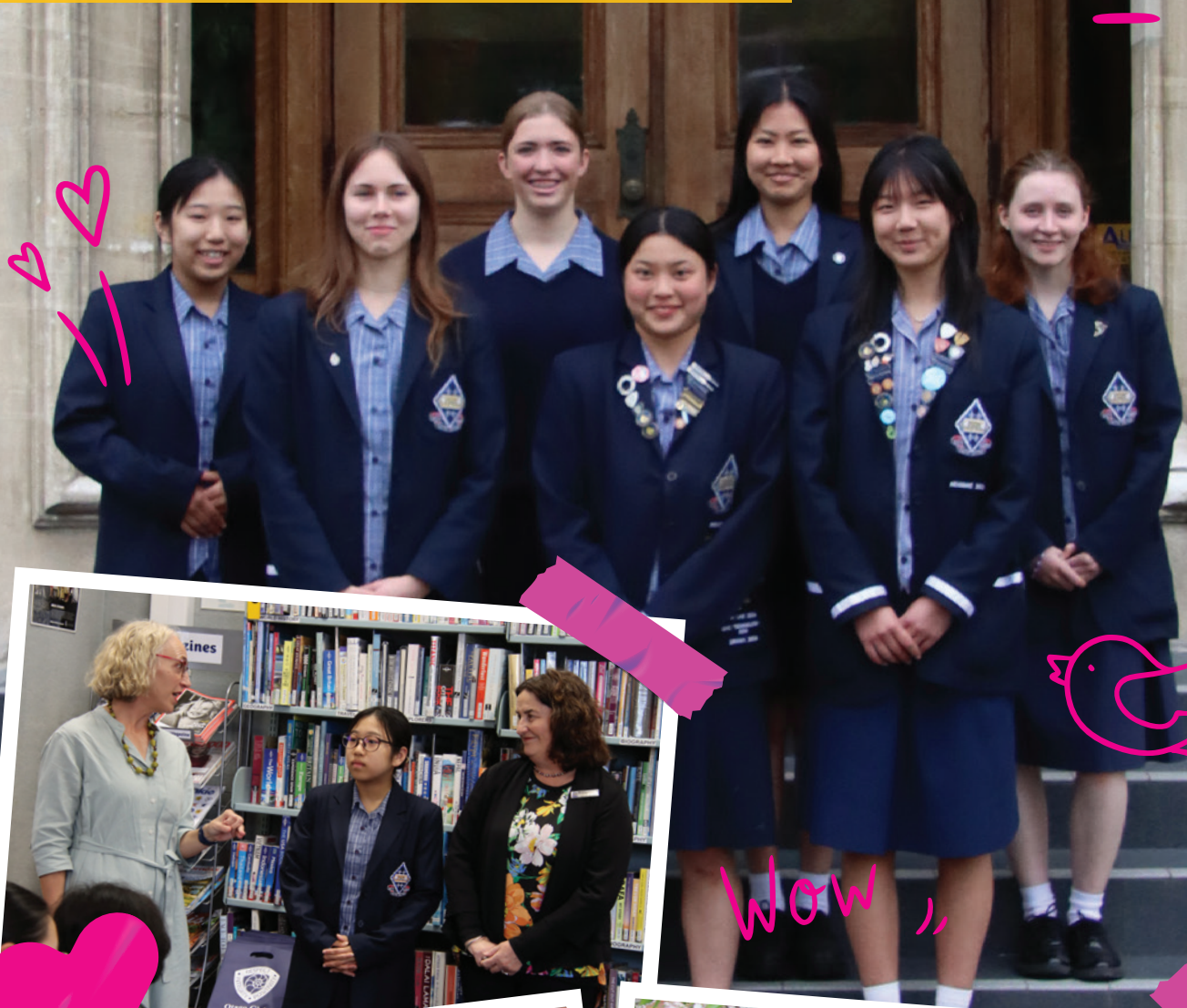
We are honoured to be featured among the most academically prestigious schools in New Zealand as one of the Crimson Education list of best high schools for gaining admission to the world's top universities.

Crimson Education is an organisation that supports students to gain admission to top international universities – the likes of Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, Duke, Johns Hopkins, Oxford and Cambridge. Each year, Crimson publishes their Top 50 list, based primarily on academic performance, along with consideration of extracurricular and leadership opportunities, and access and diversity.

Single-sex girls' schools dominated this year's Top 10, reflecting the culture of achievement that is created in girls' learning environments. We are proud of the high academic performance of our students, as well as their enthusiasm to grasp extracurricular and leadership opportunities with both hands.



FAREWELL TO OUR LEAVING LEADERS



Hanne Grossman

Nationality: German

Hanne is such a positive, enthusiastic, and cheerful student! A hard worker, Hanne is always striving to be the best she can be. She is also friendly and kind. Hanne has been a wonderfully positive presence in her History class, actively engaging with their studies of 1930s Germany. Her enthusiasm and hard work shine through in her detailed written answers, reflecting her deep understanding of the material. Classmates appreciate Hanne's contributions and enjoy her presence, which creates a supportive and collaborative atmosphere. Hanne's dedication and positive spirit make her a valuable member of our learning community.

Hanne will be returning to Germany full of fond memories and we hope she will come back to visit OGHS one day.



I will never forget the Term 3 ski trip. We went skiing in the Remarkables for three days and visited Queenstown.

1. How long did you study at OGHS?

I studied at OGHS for Term 3 and Term 4 of 2024 which is in total 5 months.

2. What did you love about studying at OGHS?

I liked the opportunities that I have been given at OGHS, such as trying new sports like surfing and sailing. In addition, I liked trying out new subjects like Outdoor Education and Drama.

3. What is one OGHS memory that you will never forget?

I will never forget the Term 3 ski trip. We went skiing in the Remarkables for three days and visited Queenstown.

4. How has your experience at OGHS transformed you?

I improved my English during the time at OGHS and got to see a new culture. I also found new friends who I hopefully will stay in touch with.

5. Would you encourage other international students to study at OGHS and why?

I would encourage other international students to study at OGHS because I had a wonderful time here, got so many opportunities and enjoyed the experience.

6. What advice would you give to other students who are thinking about studying abroad?

I would give them the advice to be as open-minded as possible and to try out new things.



Hebe Leung

Nationality: Hong Kong

Hebe is one of a few students who has completed all her years of high school with OGHS. Hebe is really a Kiwi at heart as she has fully immersed herself in life in Dunedin and been involved in so many activities and sports. Hebe has always been keen to help new students and she has a great sense of fun and humour. She gets along with everybody and has a wonderful group of friends. Her homestay mother has commented that she will miss Hebe very much because Hebe has become just like family.

Hebe has also achieved very well academically as she got both Levels 1 and 2 with Merit.

Hebe's teachers have commented that she has excellent participation in class, particularly in practical work and demonstrations. Hebe has solid leadership skills and is not afraid to speak up and demonstrate problem-solving steps in Physics. Hebe has been a standout student in Digital Technology. She is bright and self-motivated, and every year has made projects that have interested her. She has developed many skills that will aid her in whatever her future brings. Hebe is a great basketball player and has had very successful seasons in the last two years as a senior.

Seeing Hebe arrive as a young Year 9 student and seeing her leave now as a fine young woman is fabulous. All the very best for the future, Hebe!



**FAREWELL
HEBE!
FIVE YEARS
WITH US!!**





Year 10 camp is one OGHS memory that I will never forget.

1. How long did you study at OGHS?

5 years.

2. What did you love about studying at OGHS?

My friends! I've also learnt more about different cultures.

3. What is one OGHS memory that you will never forget?

Year 10 camp is one OGHS memory that I will never forget.

4. Would you encourage other international students to study at OGHS and why?

Yes I would. OGHS is a good environment for international students.

5. What advice would you give to other students who are thinking about studying abroad?

It's scary at first! But you get used to it.



Josie Menzel

Nationality: German

Josie started in July this year and was quick to join in activities. Her outdoor education teacher commented that Josie made an immediate impact upon joining the class. She is willing to give things a go and it was great seeing her tramping in the local environment and rafting down the Taieri River. She is well organised, interacts well with others, and has a positive attitude. It has been a pleasure to teach Josie for the short time she was here.

Josie's attitude not only enables a student to gain a lot from an exchange, but also enables our OGHS students to interact with people from another country to create lasting memories and friendships.

Josie's abilities and positive attitude will surely contribute to her success in the future.



I will never forget Celebration and preparing for it in the assembly hall.



1. How long did you study at OGHS?

5 months.

2. What did you love about studying at OGHS?

The atmosphere of most classrooms was very relaxed and it was easy to catch up on stuff I missed.

3. What is one OGHS memory that you will never forget?

I will never forget Celebration and preparing for it in the assembly hall.

4. How has your experience at OGHS transformed you?

I became more confident and independent, not only academically, but also socially.

5. Would you encourage other international students to study at OGHS and why?

Yes because OGHS is very multicultural, so you don't only experience Kiwi culture, but also other cultures as well. Many students show lots of engagement during performances and organizing activities.



Grace Dong

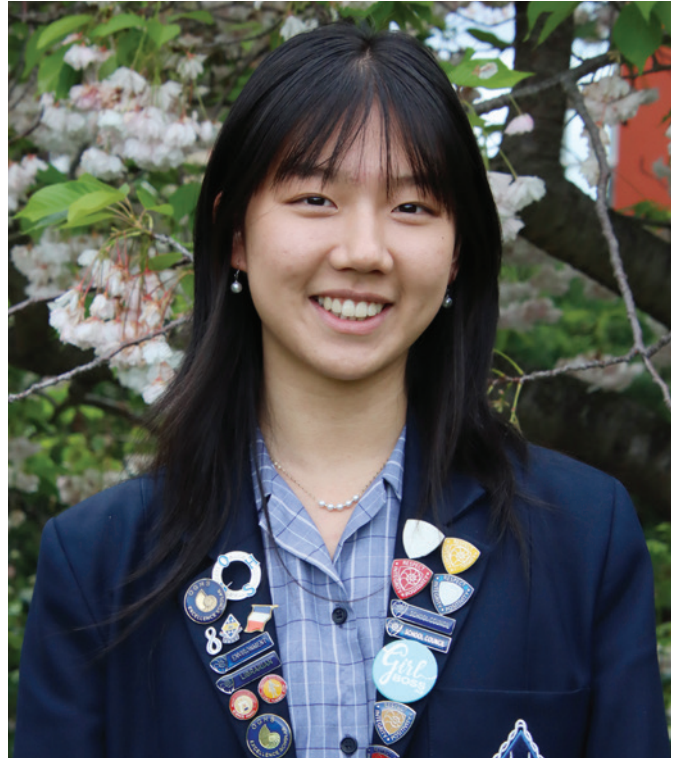
Nationality: Chinese

It is fortunate that Grace and her family decided to come to OGHS. Grace has a real presence within the whole school, among staff and her peers. Being a prefect has provided Grace with the opportunities to show her leadership skills and gain new experiences.

Grace has been a wonderful supportive member of Enviroschools and she has held a very important role in the School Council. In her studies, she is always engaged and attentive, has an eye for detail, asks interesting questions which show a deep level of understanding, yet has an element of fun where she can fit it in. Grace works hard to improve her understanding in all subjects and produces work to a high level.

In her French class, Grace always works hard to improve her understanding and the work that she produces. She always participates enthusiastically in class and is well liked by her peers.

The school looks forward to seeing where Grace will be in the world and what she will be doing. Whatever it is, she will do it wholeheartedly!





1. How long did you study at OGHS?

2 years.

2. What did you love about studying at OGHS?

OGHS has good classes.

3. What is one OGHS memory that you will never forget?

I'll never forget the time spent with friends and teachers.

4. How has your experience at OGHS transformed you?

I have gained more leadership skills and life experiences.

5. What advice would you give to other students who are thinking about studying abroad?

Be confident and talk to people, and don't be afraid to put yourself out there and try new things.

I'll never forget the time spent with friends and teachers.



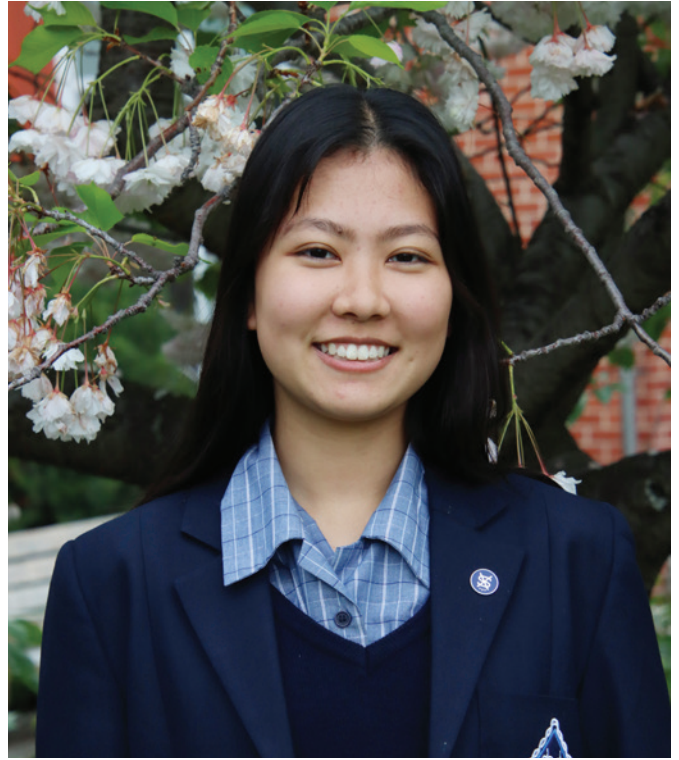
Chihiro Homma

Nationality: Japanese

Chihiro has shown diversity in her interests and has taken the opportunities presented to her. Her Outdoor Education teacher commented: “Chihiro has had a great year participating in a variety of outdoor education activities including rock climbing, mountain biking, tramping, orienteering and rafting. She is always organised and has a positive attitude, giving everything a go. Chihiro is highly respectful and has been an absolute pleasure to have in class.”

Chihiro is a very kind and gentle soul, along with a strong determination to succeed. She completes all tasks set in class and chats with classmates in English. The jazz band trip to Blenheim has most likely been her highlight of the year as she has spent countless hours with the band and performed numerous times.

All the staff have enjoyed being part of Chihiro's experience of studying at our school and everybody wishes her well for her return to Japan and the future.





1. How long did you study at OGHS?

One year (four terms).

2. What did you love about studying at OGHS?

I loved the opportunity for new subjects, and also how easy it is to try something new.

3. What is one OGHS memory that you will never forget?

Meeting many lovely people!

4. How has your experience at OGHS transformed you?

My purpose was to improve my English skills, and I did improve them, but more than that I learned many things that are important in my life.

5. Would you encourage other international students to study at OGHS and why?

Yes, because I learned a lot and had many amazing experiences. OGHS was a great experience for me.

6. What advice would you give to other students who are thinking about studying abroad?

Do it and stay positive. It might be hard to adjust to a foreign country at first, but it will be okay. It is going to be the best time of your life!

My purpose was to improve my English skills, and I did improve them, but more than that I learned many things that are important in my life.



Pauline Strauss

Nationality: German

A note from Pauline's homestay family: "We feel honoured that Pauline decided to stay and complete her secondary schooling and University Entrance here at Otago Girls' High School. Pauline has made many friends here, from many cultures, due to her warm, fun and thoughtful personality. She has travelled widely throughout the country, and made the most of cultural experiences in Dunedin. A highlight for us was seeing her beautiful performance in Polyfest this year - which her parents watched live-streamed from Berlin! Pauline's parents are extremely pleased with how mature, independent, and happy she has become during her time in New Zealand. Pauline has gained incredible skills that will help her in the future.

Pauline has thrived academically and was the Academic Achiever for 13 Science in Term 3. In food and nutrition, Pauline has demonstrated increased confidence and skills during practical lessons and has continuously approached the learning with positivity and enthusiasm.

The school wishes Pauline the very best for her return to Germany and for whatever may come in the future.





Try to join as many activities inside and outside the school as you can to meet interesting people and get to know Kiwi culture.

1. How long did you study at OGHS?
One and a half years.

2. What did you love about studying at OGHS?
The supportive staff and peers.

3. What is one OGHS memory that you will never forget?
I will never forget being part of Polyfest and other cultural projects.

4. How has your experience at OGHS transformed you?
I got to meet new people with different perspectives, which broadens my perspective on things too.

5. Would you encourage other international students to study at OGHS and why?
Yes, everyone is really nice and welcoming.

6. What advice would you give to other students who are thinking about studying abroad?
Try to join as many activities inside and outside the school as you can, to meet interesting people and get to know Kiwi culture.

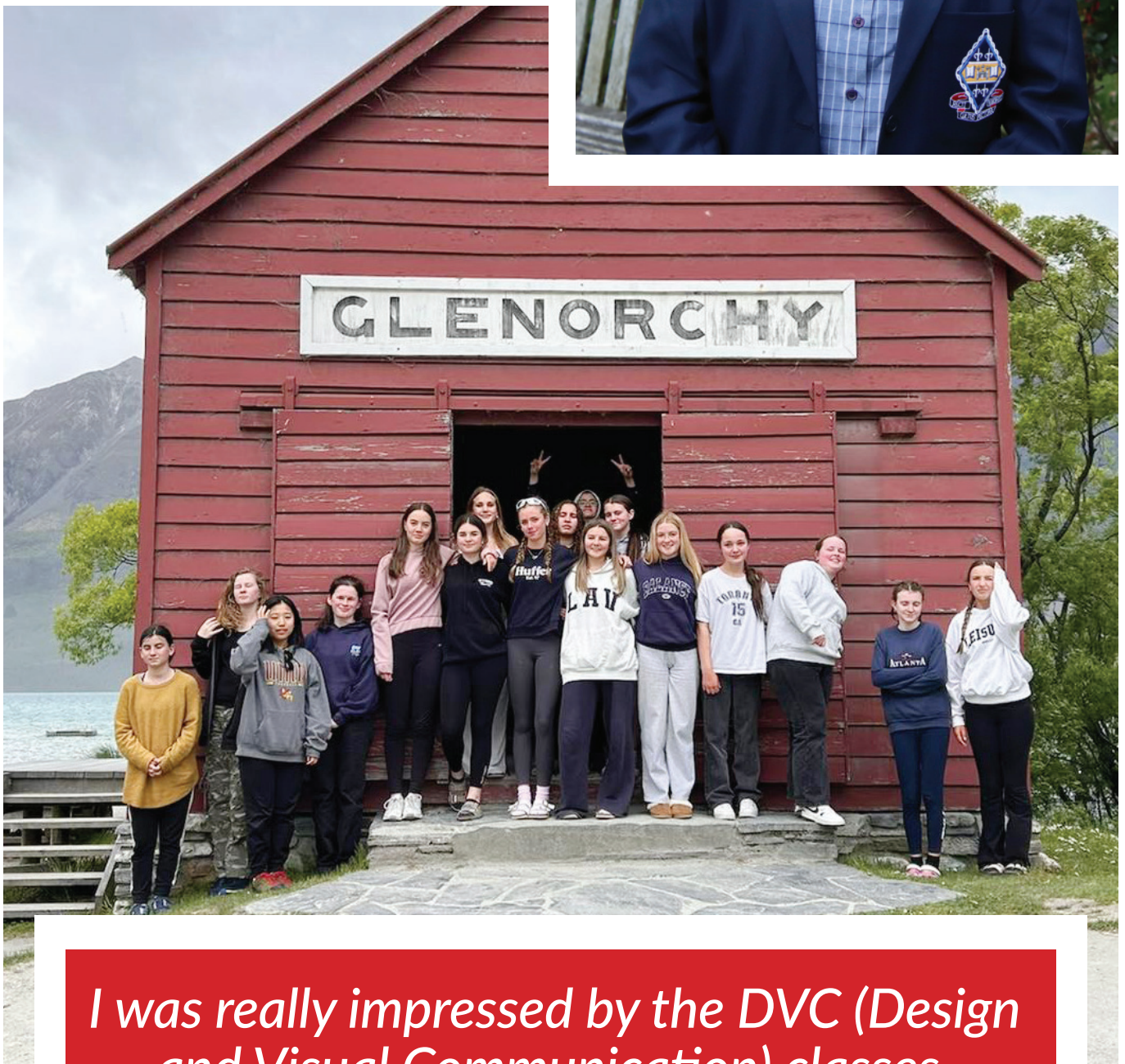
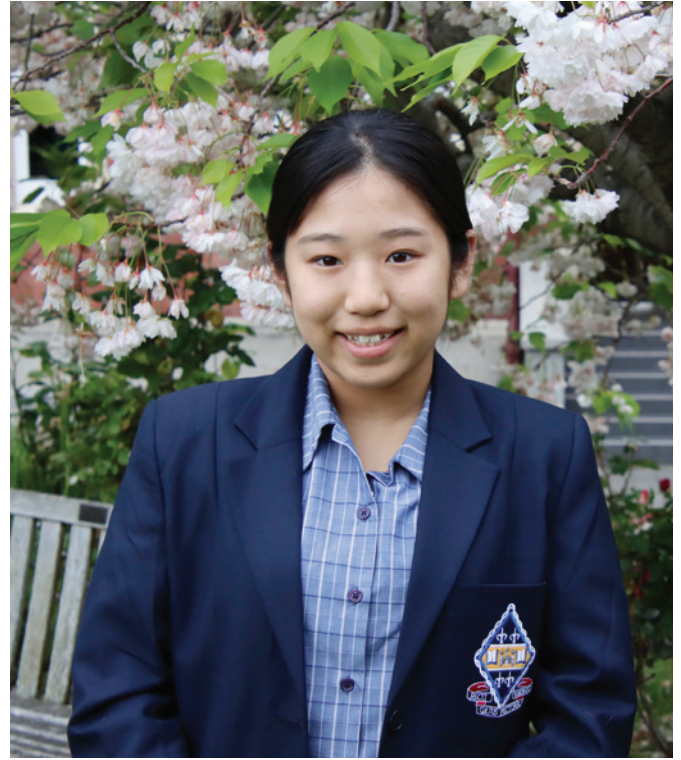


Mion Degawa

Nationality: Japan

Mion only started this term and it is so sad that she is leaving. Upon arrival and meeting her whānau class, Mion was quickly taken in and became a part of her class with friendliness and enthusiasm. She is a bright and diligent student, she gets along well with the class, and is a very hard worker with a great attitude. The school is very impressed with Mion's attitude to study, meeting new people, and taking on new challenges.

It is very sad that Mion is leaving OGHS because she would do very, very well at our school.



I was really impressed by the DVC (Design and Visual Communication) classes. There are no classes like this in Japan!



1. How long did you study at OGHS?

One term (Term 4).

2. What did you love about studying at OGHS?

I was really impressed by the DVC (Design and Visual Communication) classes. There are no classes like this in Japan! I loved the DVC classes so much that I continued to draw a lot after I got home.

3. What is one OGHS memory that you will never forget?

Year 10 camp. It was an experience I'll never forget.



4. How has your experience at OGHS transformed you?

I can accept different cultures since I came to OGHS. OGHS has a lot of international students, so I can meet students from a variety of backgrounds. In Japan, I learned that there are various peoples in the world, and that you should be proud of diversity, and I thought I understood. But now that I'm here, I've come into contact with many different languages and I feel like I can truly understand diversity.

5. Would you encourage other international students to study at OGHS and why?

Absolutely, yes. OGHS students are very kind and heartfelt. They have always supported me in class and in everyday life. My favourite place is the courtyard. Beautiful cherry blossoms bloom around October! And OGHS is near the city.



6. What advice would you give to other students who are thinking about studying abroad?

Since we are here to learn a different language, it is better to interact with people who speak the same language at a reasonable distance. At school, I didn't interact with any Japanese people and basically spent all my time with local friends.

Emma Koch

Nationality: German

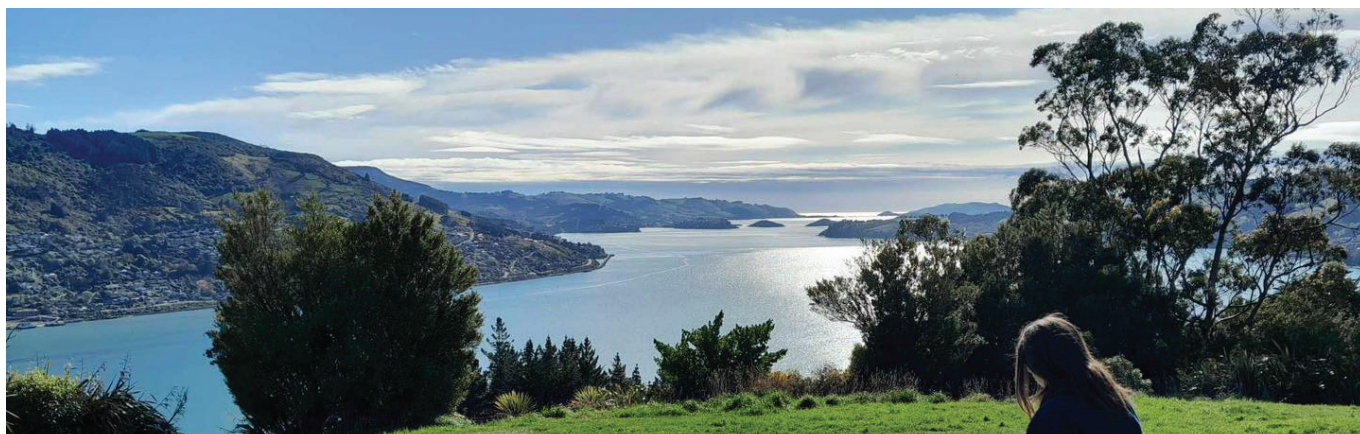
Emma is a very talented and humble student. It was very clear that she is quick and able to grasp concepts taught in her subjects. Emma has grown in confidence as a speaker in her English class and has gained the respect of her peers. Emma is a capable writer and has shown the ability to develop and express her ideas in a variety of genres.

Emma engaged well in physical education and was very competent in skill- based activities. Emma is a phenomenal athlete and basketball player. She played a crucial role in the Junior A basketball team, and it was an absolute pleasure to have her come to the basketball tournament with us.

We wish Emma all the best for the future which we know will be very bright.



It was really easy to make friends with other Kiwi students. I had a good group of friends here.





1. How long did you study at OGHS?

6 months.

2. What did you love about studying at OGHS?

It was really easy to make friends with other Kiwi students. I had a good group of friends here.

3. What is one OGHS memory that you will never forget?

One memory I will never forget is how I met my friends here.

4. How has your experience at OGHS transformed you?

It made me a lot more relaxed. In terms of timing, I am not always early. I also feel more relaxed about everything as well. I also learned to work with computers better.

5. Would you encourage other international students to study at OGHS and why?

Yes I would because the teachers are very nice and you don't get stressed about anything if it doesn't work out.

6. What advice would you give to other students who are thinking about studying abroad?

Think about it carefully before you come and just give it a try. Maybe try it at a later age, not at a too young age.



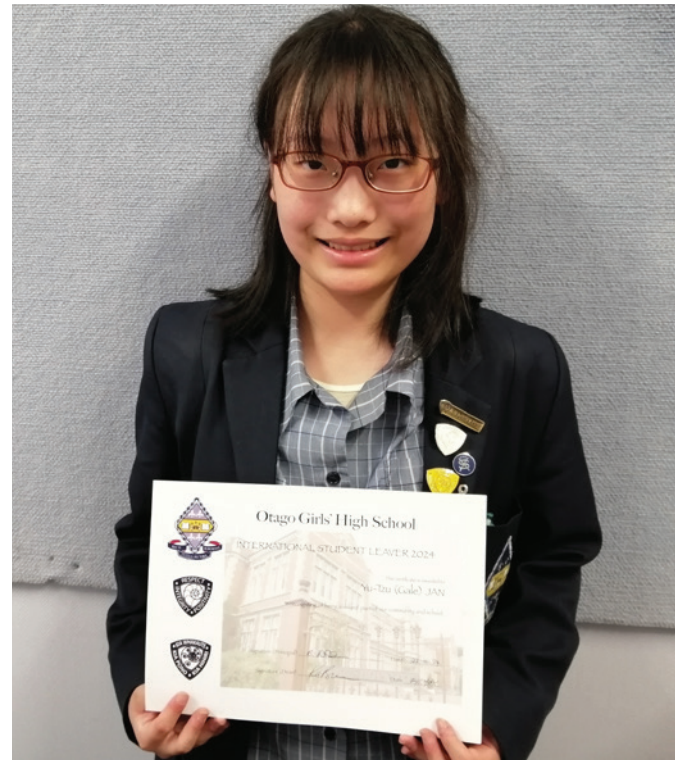
Gale Jan

Nationality: Taiwanese

After having lived almost half her life in New Zealand, Gale is returning to Taiwan with her family. Gale has been a model student by being diligent and respectful with a good sense of humour, as well as a being a pleasure to teach. She has always joined in with discussions about her learnings and how to solve linguistic issues she encounters in her Spanish language lessons. She has also given presentations in English and Spanish, showing her ability to not only speak in front of the class, but to be able to do it in two non-native languages.

Her teachers and classmates will miss her, along with her Kiwi friends, as she is a loyal and supportive friend. Gale is a very competent student and is sure to have a very bright future.

The school wishes her well for her return to Taiwan and would welcome her back here anytime.



1. How long did you study at OGHS?

I studied at OGHS for 2 years.

2. What did you love about studying at OGHS?

What I love about studying in OGHS is friends and loads of options to choose from.

3. What is one OGHS memory that you will never forget?

All the subjects that I attended these 2 years.

4. How has your experience at OGHS transformed you?

I believe that the experience in OGHS has transformed me into a more confident person.

5. Would you encourage other international students to study at OGHS and why?

Yes, because there are loads of opportunities to choose from in OGHS that some schools do not offer.

6. What advice would you give to other students who are thinking about studying abroad?

Do not be afraid to ask questions, most people will be more than happy to help out.



I believe that the experience in OGHS has transformed me into a more confident person.

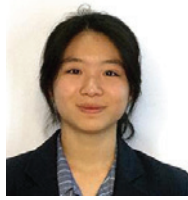
STUDENT ARTICLES

Hiking

By Ada Hu

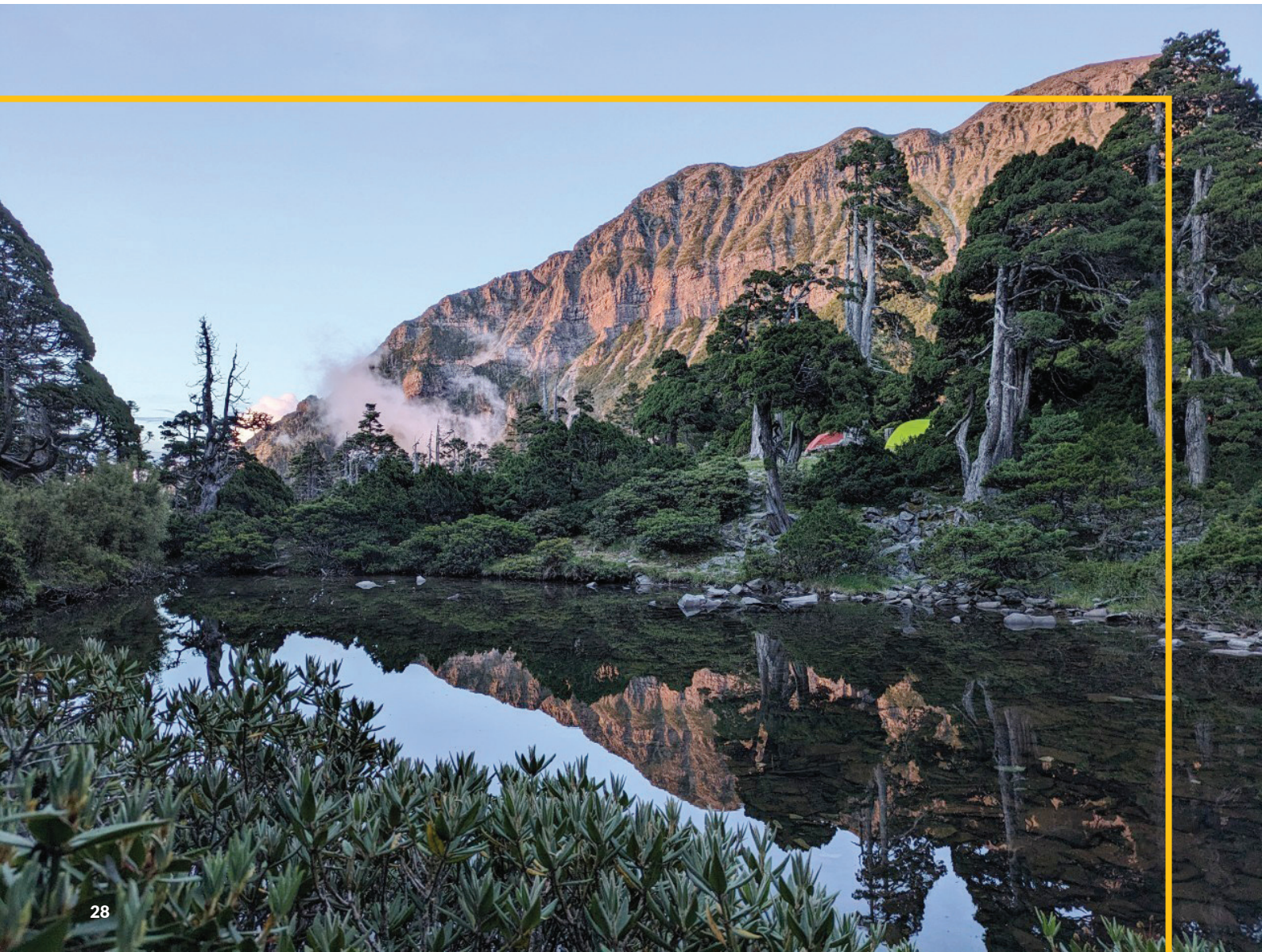
I am an outdoorsy girl, which means I really like to do things in nature including hiking, surfing, photography or similar things. Hi everyone, my name is Ada. Today I am going to talk about hiking.

I remember my first time going hiking was seven years ago. I went to Walami Trail with my mom and some other people, which is a very old trail. People can walk through the Central Mountain Range by this trail. This memory is the main reason I keep hiking. After this hike, my family and I started going on some easy tracks that only take 1-2 hours. During 2018-2021, our family went hiking very often.. Mostly we went to Seven Heroes in Guguan because we tried to finish those seven peaks in a year.



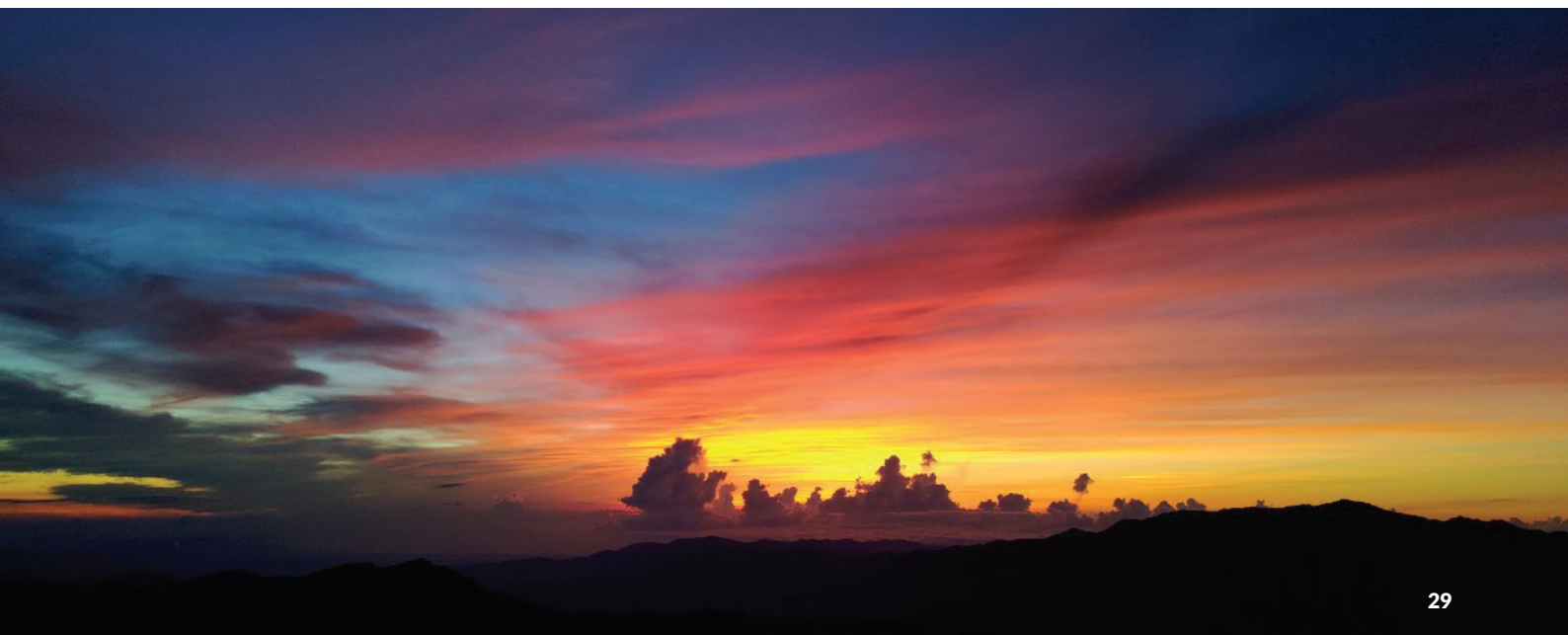
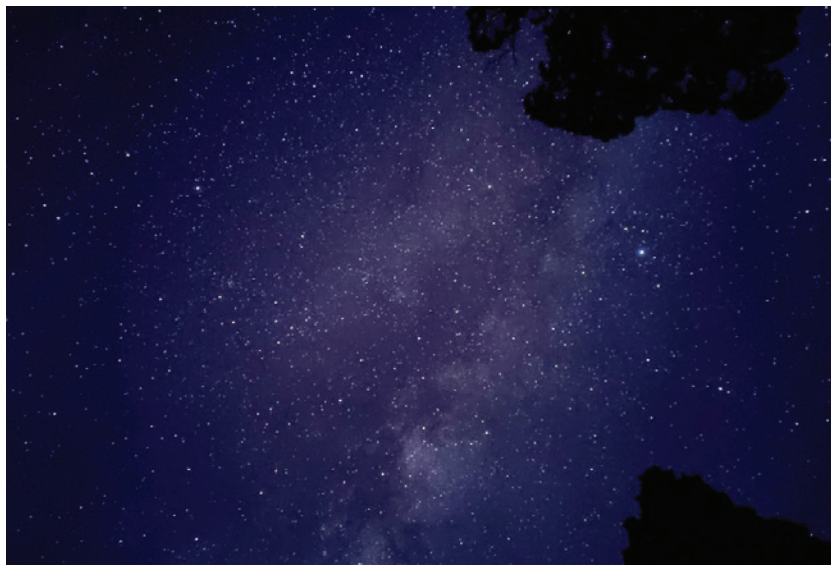
When you're hiking, you might feel tired, your feet might hurt and you might feel like you're about to die, but those are an important part of your hiking experience. If you overcome these challenges you will see amazing views and you will feel your mental wellbeing and will. Although the weather will sometimes cover the whole view on the top of the mountain, that means it tells you to visit him again another day.

In the second term's holidays, I went back to Taiwan for three weeks. One of the things I did was hiking. I went trekking to the second top of the mountain: Xueshan and the other mountains around it. This was a four-day hike so each person brought a tramping bag to put all the foods and camping stuff inside. My bag was 10 kilograms. I brought it to walk through Sijielan Creek, Black Forest, Cui Pond, scree, and the Yushan Cane Grassland.





We were very lucky because we had great weather during the whole trip. It didn't rain when we walked and we had great views even being able to see Turtle Island. On the third morning, I woke up early when the moon and stars were still shining in the sky. I went from the camping ground to the top of Xueshan to see the sunrise. The sunrise was very beautiful. The sky goes from dark blue to red, orange, yellow then turns back to light blue. I think that is why I love hiking. Although hiking can be very tiring and you have to walk a long distance in a day, nature will make you forget the pain and enjoy the hike.



My Winter Holiday

By Lucia Shen

I had a full and productive winter in China this summer. Surprisingly, my hobbies of photography, makeup, and wig styling became my first career, and the total amount of money was enough for me to buy my own round-trip airfare for school and holiday.

What surprised me the most was the sales of styling wigs. I love anime culture and cosplay. Therefore, I had often thought about turning my hobby into a way to make money. At the beginning, I just shared my handiwork on the Internet in a casual mood. When the first wig styling sold, I was really excited! The next month, every day I received a lot of orders. At the same time, the high intensity of styling wigs every day made me feel tired, but the good thing is that I finished the daily orders on time!



During the first six months of schooling in New Zealand, I made a lot of friends, and at the same time I missed my friends in China. So when I was practicing my photography skills, I invited my Chinese friends to be my models! After practicing my photography skills, I was able to get commissions for photo shoots. In addition, many buyers would choose to do their make-up with me before the photo shoots.

This winter holiday has taught me a lot, not only in terms of starting my career, but also in letting me know how to deal with problems on my own, how to communicate with buyers and how to organise my time. It's been a wonderful experience for me.



Introductory Letter

By Summer Li

Dear Otago Girls' High School,



My name is Summer Li, and I was born on May 22, 2012, in Nijmegen, Holland. I lived there until I was four years old, then moved to New Orleans, USA where I spent six years. Currently, I live in Xi'an, China with my family.

In my free time, I enjoy reading novels and writing them as well. I've been playing the violin since 2020, and I absolutely love animals. I have a pet hamster and several cute fish. My grandmother has two cats and three dogs, and I love spending time with them. I am very curious and enjoy learning new things, which is why I often visit museums and parks to learn more about history. I'm looking forward to learning about New Zealand's culture when I arrive.

My parents are very supportive of interests. They encourage me to pursue my passion for writing and other activities I find interesting. We chat every day, and they keep up with my daily life, whether it's about school or what's bothering me. My mom loves traveling, and she has taken me on trips for years, so I've developed a love for travel as well.



New Orleans, USA



Nijmegen, Holland



Although I'm not very sporty, I enjoy PE class, and my favourite activity is high jump. Gaming is fine for me, but I don't spend too much time on it. I only play video games if they are really fun.

The reason I want to study in New Zealand is because as I mentioned earlier, I lived in the US for a decent amount of time, and I miss learning in an English-speaking environment. I'm also eager to experience a different educational system from what I've experienced in China. Additionally, I've heard that New Zealand is beautiful throughout the year, and I'm excited to see what it's like to have winter with so much greenery.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to study at Otago Girls' High School and experiencing everything New Zealand has to offer.

Sincerely,

Summer Li



Outdoor Education Trip 2024

By Marlena Siefke



This year I participated in the Year 12 Outdoor Ed trip. On this trip you spend a lot of time outdoors, hiking and biking along Dunedin's Peninsula. Before the trip started I really didn't know how to feel. Of course I was excited but I also was quite nervous, because I never did a trip like this before. I always thought the outdoors was not for me, so I also was scared that I would not enjoy the trip. Spoiler: I really enjoyed the trip with all the fresh air and exercise.

The trip started on Sunday 13 October and we met at 9am at the school gym. After loading the van, checking all the gear, and a safety talk from Mrs Matthews, we started our journey with a bike ride to Bethunes Gully.

The 6km bike ride was easy, but at the end we needed to ride up a little steep hill that was surprisingly hard to get up. In the end everyone got up and we had a short break. From there we went all the way up to Mount Cargill. We walked 4.5km up the mountain,

where we had our well-earned lunch break. From the top of Mount Cargill we walked to the Organ Pipes, which are stones that formed, shaped like Organ Pipes, over a hundred years ago. They formed like this because of the pressure of the volcano that Dunedin was built on. The best part of Sunday came after we walked down to a street where our bikes were. We got onto our bikes and started a great bike ride to Waitati that was pure downhill for 9km. We didn't need to do anything, just to be careful not to fall over, and the view was fantastic. On the bike ride we went past farm land with lots of sheep. The sheep were cute but the little lambs were very adorable.

In Waitati we stayed at Te Whare Arohanui, where we prepared our sleeping room and dinner. We cooked outside on camping cookers. This resulted in not completely cooked pasta with sauce for my group. In the evening we spent our time playing card games and spoons. At the end of the day I and probably everybody else was ready for a good amount of sleep.

The next morning we woke up at quarter past seven, which is way too early for my liking, but we needed to start early so everybody could eat breakfast and





clean the whare. We needed to clean everything including the bathrooms, which luckily was not my task.

After cleaning the whare we started our day with walking to Orokonui; there we met with a very nice and colourful woman called Tahu, and her assistant Pearl. With Pearl we walked through Orokonui and looked at the stunning nature and animals.

Orokonui was wonderful to walk through. At one point of our walk we had a break and Pearl and our teacher Mrs Matthews saw some excrement of a Kiwi bird. She picked it up and made us smell it. It was not the nicest smell but it is a nice memory because of how everybody reacted to the smell. The faces everybody was making were great and made us all laugh.

From Orokonui we went to Mihiwaka, where we met with Tim for an abseiling session. The walk up to the abseiling spot was a real challenge because there wasn't a real path to walk up. Even though it was probably not the safest walk on our journey I think it was one of my favourites because it was physically challenging but still fun.

What I thought would be the worst part of the journey for me turned out to be quite nice. This part was the abseiling. I am not the biggest fan of heights, so the abseil was very scary for me. But luckily I still did the abseil because the view was definitely worth being scared for a few minutes.

From Mihiwaka we continued our journey to Port Chalmers. From there we caught a boat to spend the night on Quarantine Island.

After arriving at Quarantine Island we unpacked the chilli-bin and settled in for the night. On the island we students needed to cook dinner in a big group. Before the trip we all agreed to make baked potatoes with multiple toppings, garlic bread and veggies on the side. Because there were a lot of people the cooking in the small kitchen was exhausting but the end result was worth it.

Later in the evening we had a small walk around the island where we saw a wonderful sunset with bright colours and a great view because of the low tide that reflected the colours of the sky.

After the walk we had a little quiz night, where my team clearly did not win but still had a good time. After not winning the quiz night I spent the evening playing card games with the others. But after a while everybody went to bed because we all were exhausted from the day.

The night on the Island was probably one of the worst nights of sleep I ever had. As beautiful as the Island is, the beds are not so great. They were really hard but if one person turned around everybody knew it, because the beds were extremely loud.

Even though the night was not the best, I was excited for the bike ride back to school.

But before we started to bike back to school we stopped at the Marine Studies centre. There we looked at different animals and went to the touch tanks where we could touch some small crabs, snails and more. We also helped to collect some food for the seahorses at the centre.

After our small visit at the Marine Studies centre we started our 20km bike ride. As we experienced the whole trip, the weather was not one of our supporters. We started our bike ride with a little bit of rain but that turned into full rain with a headwind. We didn't have the best conditions but we all managed to complete the bike ride. Luckily we made breaks so everybody could catch up and everybody was fine. The bike ride was not as exhausting as it sounded. The 20 km bike ride sounded quite intimidating but in the end I really enjoyed it. And once you start there's no turning back.

If somebody now asked me what I thought about the trip I can say that even though I was not convinced I would enjoy or like the trip, I really did in the end. Exploring and getting to know the area you live in is great. Of course some things are not as necessary to know like how Kiwi poo smells but it's always good to at least know where you live and what this place has to offer.



BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE HOMESTAYS

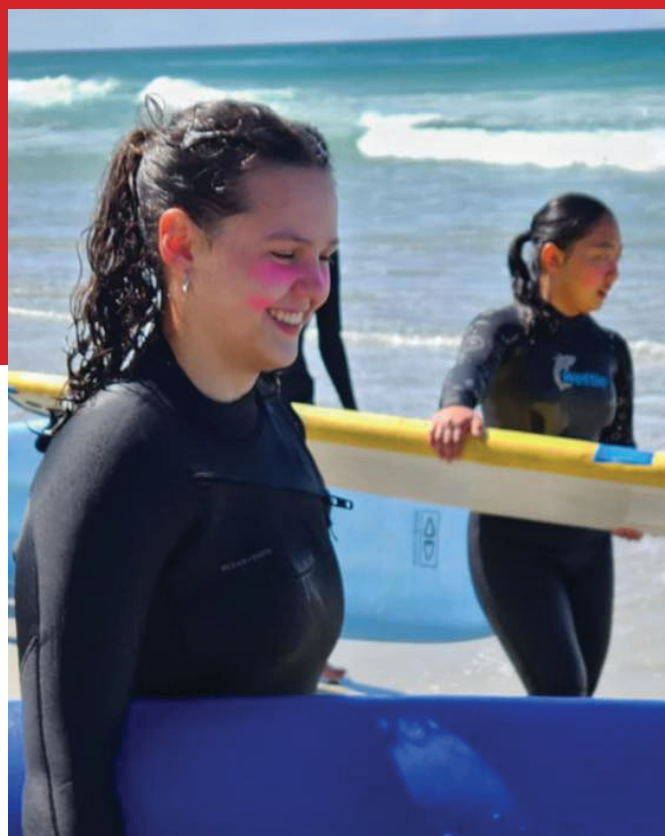


TERM 1 2025 EVENTS*

- Week 1 International Orientation (29 Jan)
Full school starts (30 Jan)
ID Photos (31 Jan)
- Week 2 13 Outdoor Ed High Ropes, Pukerau Columba (5 Feb)
Waitangi Day long weekend (no school on 6 - 7 Feb)
- Week 3 12 Outdoor Ed High Ropes, Pukerau Columba (10 Feb)
International BBQ (13 Feb)
Sports Day (14 Feb)
- Week 4 Year 9 Meet the Teachers (17 Feb)
Year 13 Outdoor Ed First Aid Course (21 Feb)
- Week 5 Changemakers Leadership Day for all Y13 (27 Feb)
- Week 6 Year 9 Wellbeing Day (6 March)
Otago Athletics Champs (7 March)
- Week 7 Cross country (12 March)
Year 13 Outdoor Ed Lake Dunstan Cycle Trip (13 March)

- Week 8 Summer Tournament Week (17 March)
Neurodiversity Week (17 March)
- Week 9 Otago Anniversary Day (24 March)
Year 11 Outdoor Ed Rock Climbing Camp (27 March)
- Week 10 Borland Camp (31 March)
SISS Athletics Champs (4 April)
- Week 11 13 GEO Camp (8 April)
12OE Clutha Gold Cycle (8 April)

***There are numerous other events and activities taking place during the term.**



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