

# Fate Brings New Alum Coordinator 'Home'

**After attending Elementary and Junior High at JIS, Beth Owen returned nearly 18 years later as our alumni and development coordinator:**

*Tell us where you went after leaving JIS?*

I left JIS at the end of eighth grade, in 1986, after nearly eight years. Following two years in London, I went to Canada and graduated in 1991 under the 5-year system of the time. Having left Canada when I was six and returning nine years later, I really didn't know my 'home' country at all. The four years I spent at university there – at Dalhousie in Nova Scotia, – were therefore invaluable. I developed a huge love for Canada – for its beauty and space, laid back attitudes, liberal politics, its approach to health, education, peace, and wealth. While I had no illusions about staying there for the rest of my life, I at least felt 'Canadian' and could answer quickly and honestly when asked the question 'where are you from?'

My degree in Political Science and Philosophy took me to Pakistan for a year (1995-1996) — the idea was to go back for a law degree after a year of work. I fell in love with working and travel and independence and earning money, and the law degree never happened — I think 'what if...?' sometimes, but I have no regrets. Since then, it has been working and traveling. I lived in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City), Vietnam for 4 years – first in PR and then in market research, and was then headhunted by a market research company here in Jakarta, in 2002. I hadn't planned to come back here, but when the offer came up it seemed like fate. After 18 months I switched from market research to brand and marketing consulting – my real passion – and fate once again stepped in and put me in the path of Gay Larsen, my predecessor as the alumni and development person here at JIS. Here I am!

*What are your major responsibilities and objectives as alumni and development coordinator?*

My main job is to provide any services to the alumni that the school can offer. Given the wide geographical spread of our alums, this tends to be primarily providing means and ways of communication and keeping people in touch with each other – via the web site and maintaining an up-to-date database. I also try and keep Alumni interests at the forefront of campus activities wherever possible – inviting local alumni to events, featuring alum in any campus communications possible, and generally keeping local communities aware of our perspectives, interests, and values.

One of my favourite parts of my job is facilitating Alumni visits to campus. While not nearly enough of you have the opportunity to visit, it is a pleasure to facilitate and share in the visits of those of you who do. The introduction of the alumni IDs has been great. For the first time 100% of the graduating Class of 2005 received alumni IDs at graduation, ensuring that their future visits will be smooth. Alumni are always welcome here and I am trying to make sure you all feel that way!

*What do you enjoy most about being back at JIS?*

There are such a number and variety of things on both a personal and professional level. Obviously the people have enriched my life the most — fellow alumni, colleagues and parents. Being involved in JIS Cares since last January is also an extremely rich experience. Being part of the JIS community again is heartwarming. So is seeing and feeling the strength and passion with which we have come together to help others in the greater Indonesian community in need and seeing the reaction from alumni — here in Jakarta and all over the world. Make sure you have a look at what JIS



Beth (left) accepts a check from Charlie Ishino's class for Annual Giving.

Cares has been doing later in this magazine. In addition to the alumni and JIS Cares, working on the rebranding and new 'look and feel' of JIS in terms of its logo and advertising has been a great experience. How often do marketers get to 'sell' something that we really believe in? I know the change is a big one, but I hope you, our valued alumni community appreciate and enjoy the new look.

*What do you have planned for the 2005/2006 school year?*

My two key tasks for the 2005/06 school year are: (1) to revamp the Alumni web site to make it more user-friendly and to more closely reflect JIS' new, modern image and (2) to distribute as widely as possible a survey to all of our alumni around the world and get some feedback on how we are doing as a community, and what more Alumni office here at JIS could do to provide you with services. So keep an eye out for these things – make sure that your contact details are updated in the directory, and regularly check out the web site for events and announcements.

Will Woodruff  
Publications Director