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the American Farm School

THE **sower**



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Voices of Tomorrow

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From the President

Dear Friends,

On our cover you will see the words *Echoes of Tradition, Voices of Tomorrow*. They capture, in many ways, the living spirit of the American Farm School today: a place where deep-rooted values guide bold innovation, and where each new generation learns not only to inherit the land, but to shape the future.

This issue of "The Sower" reflects that powerful continuity.

We begin with a milestone that speaks directly to our mission and to the generosity of our community: the inauguration of the Joannie and Nicholas Danielides Wing, home of our new Nutrition and Culinary Center. This transformational addition to campus strengthens our "learn by doing" philosophy across all levels of education – from our youngest learners to Perrotis College students and lifelong learners.

Our students continue to show the world what is possible when opportunity meets preparation. From Singapore, where our high school team earned global recognition at the Aramco STEM Racing World Finals, to international science and astronomy competitions where AFS students represented Greece with distinction, their achievements are a testament to hands-on learning, inspired teaching, and donor-supported programs that open doors far beyond our campus.

Behind every student success stands a dedicated faculty. This issue highlights our investment in educators through professional development led by Dr. Andrew Baker; an initiative supported by Trustee Deborah Androus and rooted in our belief that teaching excellence is essential to student growth.

We also celebrate the rhythms of tradition that anchor our community. The Feast of St. John Chrysostom, our annual panigyri, reminds us that faith, culture, and service are inseparable from education. At the same time, projects such as camelina cultivation for sustainable aviation fuels and the OPTIMA digital olive protection platform demonstrate how our students and researchers are responding to today's environmental and agricultural challenges with creativity and purpose.

Our ties reach far beyond Thessaloniki. Whether welcoming Future Farmers of America students from Iowa or celebrating with donors in New York City, the American Farm School remains a global community united by shared values. Scholarships, partnerships, and exchanges continue to transform lives – made possible by friends like you.

For 121 years, the School has honored its traditions while preparing students to lead in a changing world. As you read this issue, I hope you will hear both the echoes of those who built this Institution and the confident voices of tomorrow rising from our classrooms, farms, and laboratories.

Thank you for believing in our mission and for helping us sow the seeds of a more sustainable future. Warm wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2026!

Sincerely,

Jeff Lansdale, Ph.D.
President

"Joannie and Nicholas Danielides Wing" Inauguration: A New Era of Education and Nutrition

On a momentous day at the American Farm School, the "Joannie and Nicholas Danielides Wing" was officially inaugurated in the presence of Trustees and honorary guests, including Maria Olson, former Chargé d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Greece. This significant event marked the beginning of a pivotal chapter in the School's ongoing efforts to enhance its educational offerings in nutrition through the development of the Nutrition and Culinary Center.

The primary objective of the Center is to create an environment that encourages a healthy, well balanced, Mediterranean diet to school students (from Pre-K) and their parents, extending to formal Food Science and Technology Education at Perrotis College and Nutrition and Culinary Studies at Junior College, and offering lifelong learning opportunities to those involved in nutrition.

As a central component of the Capital Campaign to revitalize the Educational Farm, the Center will offer students hands-on training in nutritional science, food preparation, and sustain-

ability, bridging the gap between academic knowledge and practical, real-world applications. The event was a celebration not only of the Danielides family's generosity but also of the partnership between the American Farm School, its community, and its supporters, all united by a shared vision for a healthier, more sustainable world.



AFS Shines at Aramco STEM Racing 2025 World Finals

AFS High School students earned global recognition at the Aramco STEM Racing 2025 World Finals (formerly F1 in Schools), held in Singapore, where their team, Velkoi Racing, earned a top-three spot in the Innovative Thinking Award category. The team, which also included members from the Moraitis School and the 2nd Model High School of Athens, stood out among 83 teams from 65 countries, showcasing their creativity and technical expertise.

Students Katerina Vasilaki, Giorgos Katsaros, and Aristeidis Moschopoulos, guided by Physics teacher Nikolas Pegiopoulos, traveled to Singapore to proudly represent Greece. Their achievement highlights the School's focus on hands-on STEM education, encouraging students to develop research, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. "This success is a testament to what can be achieved when talent is paired with guidance and knowledge," said Mr. Pegiopoulos.

As part of their recognition, the team had the incredible opportunity to visit the Alpine F1 Team paddock during the Singapore Grand Prix, meeting Formula 1 engineers and exploring cutting-edge racing technology. The team's use of recycled materials and advanced modeling techniques demonstrated how sustainability and innovation go hand in hand.



This is the second time AFS students have reached the world finals, with Lupus Racing competing at Silverstone in 2022. The team's success is a proud moment for AFS, reflecting the School's commitment to fostering the next generation of STEM leaders. The team extends its warm thanks to AFS Trustee Frances Manthos for her generous support.

Professional Development for Faculty by Dr. Baker

Recognizing the evolving demands of education, the American Farm School continues to invest in the professional development of its teaching staff. With the active support of AFS Trustee Deborah Androus, the School welcomed back Dr. Andrew Baker, a distinguished American expert in educational psychology, for a series of faculty training seminars.

Dr. Baker's program addressed a wide range of topics, including contemporary teaching methodologies, the effective use of educational technology, and ways to integrate critical thinking and creativity into the learning process. Particular emphasis was placed on strengthening educators' interpersonal skills, enabling them to foster positive, supportive, and inclusive learning environments.



Dr. Baker will be returning to campus in June for 2 weeks of intensive workshops with our teachers and faculty. This initiative is expected to have a lasting impact on classroom practice across the School. Equipped with new tools and perspectives, faculty members are better positioned to design engaging lessons, respond to diverse student needs, and encourage active participation.

Young Minds, Global Achievements

Two AFS students recently made their mark on the international scientific stage, earning accolades that reflect their curiosity, discipline, and deep engagement with contemporary scientific challenges.

Alexandros Tzioras, a senior at General High School, views science as a bridge between technology and human well-being. Representing Greece at the 36th European Union Contest for Young Scientists in Riga, Latvia, he presented a research project focused on using artificial intelligence to predict cardiovascular diseases. As one of only three students selected nationwide to compete, Alexandros impressed the judges with the scientific depth, technological sophistication, and societal relevance of his work. He described the experience as both demanding and inspiring, crediting the School for providing the opportunities that allowed his ideas to flourish and reach an international audience.



Meanwhile, Alexandros Papathanasiou, a sophomore at the General High School, returned from Romania with a bronze medal from the International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics for Juniors. Competing against peers from around the world, he faced a rigorous combination of theoretical problem-solving, observational challenges, and hands-on telescope work. This achievement builds on a strong foundation from his time at Haseotes Middle School, where he earned first place in the Panhellenic Astronomy and Astrophysics Competition "Ptolemaios" and won first prize in the Panhellenic Biology Competition. Reflecting on the Olympiad, he emphasized the intensity of the theoretical challenges and the need for both deep understanding and quick thinking – qualities that continue to define his approach to science.

These accomplishments showcase the School's commitment to fostering inquisitive minds and supporting students as they explore diverse scientific fields. Through rigorous learning and valuable opportunities, the American Farm School encourages young people to think boldly, engage confidently with the global scientific community, and look toward the future.



Ties with Iowa

Strengthening partnerships with U.S. educational Institutions is a strategic priority for the American Farm School. In this context, two students from Gilbert School in Iowa and four students from Iowa State University, accompanied by faculty, recently visited the AFS campus through our collaboration with the Future Farmers of America (F.F.A.).

The F.F.A. members explored AFS programs, took part in hands-on activities at the Educational Farm, and visited alumni agricultural operations, highlighting agricultural education as a shared language across cultures.

AFS collaborates with the national F.F.A. organization and hosts the only F.F.A. chapter outside the United States. The partnership supports student and faculty exchanges and joint initiatives, further strengthening Greece-U.S. cooperation in agricultural education.



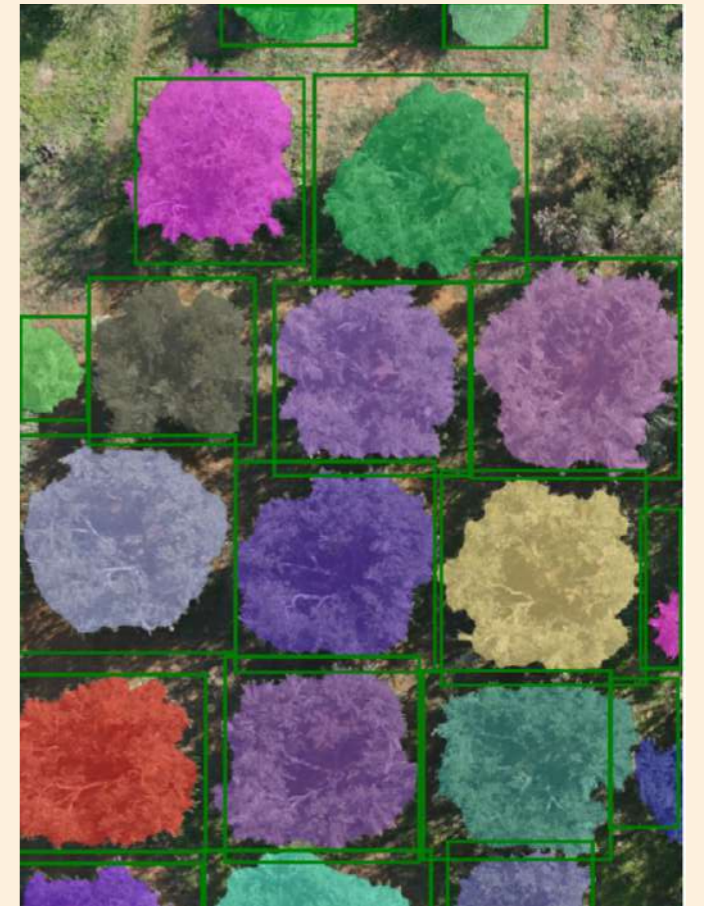
A Digital Shield for Olive Trees through a Pioneering School Project

By combining artificial intelligence with drone technology, the American Farm School's Innovation HUB is advancing olive tree protection through the OPTIMA research project (Olive Protection via Thermal Imaging). The project focuses on the early detection of verticillium wilt, a destructive disease that threatens olive productivity and growers' livelihoods.

OPTIMA uses drones equipped with visible-spectrum, multispectral, and thermal cameras to monitor olive groves. These sensors capture visible damage, assess plant health, and detect subtle temperature changes that signal infection before symptoms appear. The collected data are compiled into high-resolution maps and analyzed using a machine-learning model based on the YOLO algorithm, enabling accurate, real-time identification of infected trees.

The result is a user-friendly application that provides growers with detailed maps and clear alerts for targeted intervention. This allows farmers to act preventively, reducing costs, protecting healthy trees, and avoiding future losses. The platform can also be expanded to detect additional diseases in olives and other crops.

Through OPTIMA, the American Farm School reinforces its leadership in agri-food innovation, supporting sustainable olive cultivation and the transition to smart, digital agriculture.



Camelina Cultivation as a Sustainability Practice

What began as a classroom lesson on contract farming has evolved into a collaborative initiative linking agriculture with the green transition in transportation. The American Farm School's pilot camelina cultivation project – implemented last year in partnership with Verd S.A. of the Motor Oil Group and Bios Agrosystems of the "Redestos" Efthymiadis Agrotechnology Group – demonstrates applied innovation with tangible educational and environmental benefits.

Camelina, a resilient oilseed crop requiring minimal inputs, was incorporated into the School's curriculum to provide students with hands-on experience throughout the entire production cycle, from sowing to harvest. The success of the first year led to pilot-scale production, aiming to supply camelina for the development of advanced aviation biofuels. The School plans to repeat the cultivation in 2026.

The project underscores the increasing connection between agricultural production and energy innovation, contributing to broader efforts to decarbonize transportation.



In Gratitude

The American Farm School thanks the following individuals, foundations, corporations, and organizations for their generous support during the previous fiscal year, July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025. In these extraordinary times, their commitment to the Institution and its ideals has been exemplary, allowing the School to successfully achieve its educational goals.

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AFS Benefit Cocktail

In the heart of Manhattan, the American Farm School hosted a special benefit evening at Project Farmhouse, bringing together friends and supporters united by a shared belief in education's power to change lives. Proceeds from the event supported the School's historic Scholarship Program, which has opened doors for generations of students.

President Lansdale reflected on the School's remarkable 121-year journey, expressed deep gratitude to our donors, and invited guests to continue championing our mission. Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Petros Levis, spoke to the strength of unity in challenging times and the enduring impact of advancing the Founder's vision.

Alumni Panagiotis Dimtsoudis, Maria-Louisa Dimtsoudis, and Nikos Katsaros – now studying at U.S. universities – shared powerful personal stories of how the School's holistic education shaped their paths and how scholarship support made their journeys possible.

The evening also honored Dean Dakolias, Co-Chairman of Fortress Investment Group and founding member of The Hellenic Initiative, in recognition of his generous support and lasting commitment to vocational education.

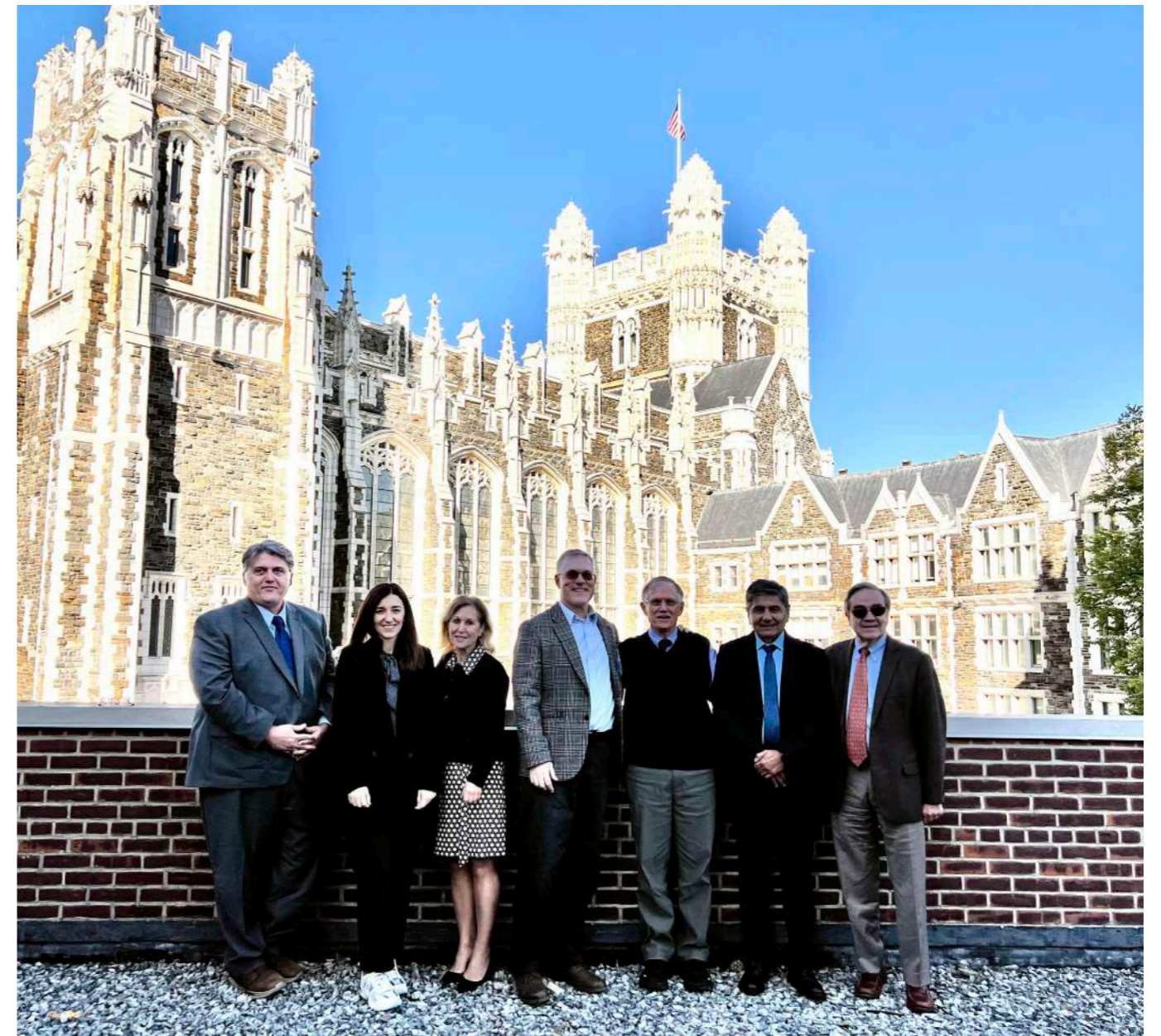


Visit to City College New York

The American Farm School was honored to participate in a public lecture and panel discussion hosted by The City College of New York (CCNY) and The Charles B. Rangel Infrastructure Workforce Initiative, featuring AFS President Dr. Jeffrey Lansdale and moderated by Rangel Initiative Executive Director and AFS Trustee Angelo Lampousis, and Dr. Kyle McDonald of CCNY. During the visit, Dr. Lansdale and members of the AFS delegation met with CCNY President Vincent Boudreau and faculty colleagues, including Drs. Kevin Foster, Juan Mercado, and Maria Tzortziou, to explore opportunities for collaboration and shared initiatives between Institutions.

The AFS team also toured CCNY teaching laboratories, including facilities supporting courses on the sustainability of high-value crops—such as coffee, wine, and olive oil—that integrate academic learning with hands-on experience, as well as the Rangel Initiative's Intensive Barista Training program, which prepares participants for careers in the coffee industry.

We are grateful to our hosts and to everyone who took part in this meaningful exchange, which highlighted the powerful connections between agriculture, education, and sustainability at both the local and global levels.



Feast of St. John Chrysostom



The American Farm School celebrated the Feast of its patron saint, St. John Chrysostom, with its annual *panigyri* on Thursday, November 13, at the campus Chapel. Students, faculty, families, and visitors from the wider Thessaloniki community gathered for a celebration rooted in faith, tradition, and shared values, guided by the charisma and spiritual leadership of our new priest Fr. Chrysostomos.

The day began with a Divine Liturgy, attended by students from across the School, followed by a procession of the icon. Students played a central role in the festivities, offering products from the Educational Farm as well as handmade items created

specifically for the occasion. This initiative highlighted the importance of learning through practice, community engagement, and stewardship, with part of the proceeds supporting the Chapel's maintenance and needs.

The celebration concluded with traditional dances performed by students and teachers, reinforcing the *panigyri's* significance as a living connection between education, culture, and the wider community the School serves.

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Planned Giving

Planned Giving allows supporters of the American Farm School to integrate gifts into their overall financial, tax, and estate planning. A planned gift enables a donor to make a lasting impact by contributing significantly to the School and making a difference by helping future generations of students.

METAMORPHOSIS SOCIETY

The Metamorphosis Society recognizes and honors the generosity and foresight of those individuals who have made provisions in their estate that include the American Farm School and who have apprised the School of their intentions. The name “Metamorphosis” is chosen for its deeper connection to the School’s tradition of providing education that brings about positive change, or “metamorphosis,” in the individual.

David Acker, Deborah Androus, Peter Bien, Emily Carey, Mr. and Mrs. C.W. Carson Jr., Joannie and Nicholas Danielides, Marvin Fisber, Dr. and Mrs. Alexander Doolas, Mr. and Mrs. George Draper, Phillip G. and Mary Foote, Barbara K. Heming, Sarah Holland, Elizabeth (Tad) Lansdale, Jeff and Marjorie Lansdale, Petros Levis and Ann McCalley, Susan Mees Longfield, Daniel and Mayo Morgan, Nicholas Pizaris, Gail Schoppert, and Nancy Worcester.

BEQUESTS

By including the American Farm School in their wills, the following individuals provided a final gift that will strengthen the School’s endowment or support other educational needs.

Theodora Abrames, Charlotte Armstrong, Charles Storrs Barrows III, James Michael Broomas, Gregor L. Calender, Estber Carbart, Jean S. Crosby, Maria Couvaras, Hugh Cullman, Alexander Drapos, Angeline Ducas, Lula Ducas, Marvin Fisber, Claire C. Katsanis, Elizabeth M. Godley, Alice L. Hansen, Truda Jewett, Darlene Keeley, Edmund Keeley, Eve Curie Labouisse, Clara Nickolson, Eleanor McKay Norris, Mr. and Mrs. James G. Paterson, Sr., Andrew Ponaras, Ruth Schoppert, Aristides Sideropoulos, Mary R. and Charles F. Lowrey, Mary Elizabeth Stewart, Barbara L. Wood, Charles L. and Joan Thomas, and Winifred E. Weter.

ESTATES AND TRUSTS

By creating an estate or trust, the following individuals provide annual support to the American Farm School that will last past their lifetimes.

Estber Carbart, Ernest Thomas Cbepou, Philip and Hazel Constantinides, Lois Kerimis, Fred W. Kolb, Mary P. Gill, Henry T. Maijgren, Demosthenis Raptelis, and Dean C. Zutes.

For more information about joining the Metamorphosis Society and other Planned Giving opportunities, please contact Laura Sommers at lsommers@amerfarm.org





AMERICAN
FARM SCHOOL
THESSALONIKI

SAVE THE DATES

February 26, 2026

Reception at the Consulate General
of Greece, San Francisco

March 7, 2026

Reception at the Consulate General
of Greece, Los Angeles

RSVP: events@afs.edu.gr

Stay in touch!

If you want to receive news about the American Farm School & Perrotis College send us an email at sower@afs.edu.gr and we will add you to our electronic newsletter contact list.

American Farm School & Perrotis College





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NOTE: If you are not receiving our invitations/save the dates via email, please contact us at info@afs.edu.gr

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