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December 2019



Alumni Newsletter

WG HS

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Hi everyone

Welcome to over 300 new members of our alumni community from the Westlake Girls Class of 2019. We hope everything goes well for you all as you await examination results in January.

We were delighted to welcome back two former students as guest speakers for end-of-year events.

Jolie Hodson, the new CEO of Spark NZ, spoke at our senior Prize-Giving, and Jean Yang, Emerging ICT Leader 2019, spoke at our Leavers' Graduation function.



We have also farewelled some long-serving staff members at the end of this year.

These alumni and retiring staff members are featured in the Alumni section of the newsletter.

Thanks to all those who have played a part in extending our alumni network this year and re-connecting with Westlake.

We wish you all a happy holiday break.

Alumni Community

Our new alumni for 2020 - Year 13 students 2019 in front of the Gernhoefer Administration Centre.

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New Facebook group - Alumni based in the USA

We have set up a new group for Westlake Girls alumni based in the USA. Our premier choir will perform in Boston and New York, as well as Toronto, in April 2020 and we hope there will be an opportunity to meet up with alumni during the tour.

[Westlake Girls High School \(Auckland, NZ\), Alumni USA](#)

Founders Group

The new FB Group for our co-ed founders, set up in May, has over 35 members now, so please keep joining and sharing news.

[Westlake High School Founders \(WBHS and WGHS\)](#)



Our new **LinkedIn group** has over 300 alumni.

[Westlake Girls LinkedIn Group](#)

Facebook groups

All the Facebook group links are at the end of the newsletter. (The alumni year is your Year 13 / Form 7 year of high school, regardless of whether or not you attended for those 5 years. For example, if you started in Form 3/Year 9 in 1982, your alumni year would be the 'Class of 1986').

Events

Alumni Events - 2020

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who is working with the Alumni Co-ordinator on plans for the 25th Reunion later in the year.

There are an additional 50 members of the [Westlake Girls Class of 1995](#) Facebook Group since the previous newsletter in May. Further details to come through the FB Group.

Alumni in the UK

We have a Facebook group for Alumni based in the UK. We hope to have opportunities for a gathering in London in the future, so do keep in touch through this group if you are based there, long or short term.

[Westlake Girls Alumni UK](#)

Decade Facebook groups for possible 2020 reunions:

We are keen to gauge interest from alumni in these decade groups to have reunions in 2020. Please email the Alumni Co-ordinator or contact through your FB groups if you are interested in helping organise informal reunion gatherings next year.

[Westlake Girls Class of 2010](#)

[Westlake Girls Class of 2000](#)

[Westlake Girls Class of 1990](#)

[Westlake Girls Class of 1980](#)

[Westlake Girls Class of 1970](#)

(Our 1960 alumni are part of the Westlake High School Founders Group - next get-together to be decided)

Alumni Updates

Alumni Updates

Emily Melhuish and Basma Hassan - STEAM Expo judges at Westlake

Two former students returned recently as judges at the Westlake STEAM Showcase.

Emily Melhuish (2012) and **Basma Hassan** (2013) are pictured below with the Teacher in Charge of STEAM, Susana Tomaz.

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Emily (left) and **Basma** (right) both graduated with Bachelor of Engineering degrees (Electrical and Electronics) from the University of Auckland.

Basma is currently a Development Operations Engineer with Vodafone. She was active at university in the Women in Engineering Network, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Association and the Muslim Association.

Emily is currently the Lead Data Engineer with Halter, a NZ Agritech startup. In her final year at university, she was awarded the top prize at the GT Murray Awards for Excellence in Research and Design.

Emily has previously had roles in software development with TradeMe, Udacity (Self-Driving Cars), and RocketLab.

Thanks to both for giving their time and expertise to judge and engage with the students about their projects at the Expo held in Westlake's library.

Westlake students will stage their STEAM Showcase again at the B:Hive in the Smales Farm Business Park in late January and we would welcome alumni along to see their work. Details in the Westlake News section (below).

Westlake winners at the AIMES Awards 2019



Tayla Woolley and Mae Everett

The annual AIMES (Arts, Innovation, Music, Education, Sport, Service to the Community) Awards were recently presented by the North Harbour Club and Charitable Trust to outstanding young people in the North Harbour area.

Congratulations to former student **Mae Everett** (Year 13 2017) who received the AIMES Emerging Talent Award for Service to the Community.

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in Business Law to become an arbitrator. She hopes to incorporate this career with her passion for working with the community.

Her service to the community includes working alongside the Takapuna North Community Trust, the Takapuna Local Youth Board and Shore Junction – the developing innovation hub for youth that is taking shape on the site of the former Takapuna RSA. Over the past five years she has spent over 250 hours volunteering.

At the AIMES Gala evening, another Westlake student won an award. **Tayla Woolley** who is Year 13 2019, and one of our newest alumni, received the inaugural Ross Finlayson Award for Future Exceptional Leadership.

Tayla was the North Shore Youth MP for 2019, working alongside Maggie Barry and attending Youth Parliament. She was a fundraiser for Cure Kids New Zealand, and on the organising committee for the Auckland Schools Strike for Climate Change. Tayla was leader of the GirlBoss Committee at Westlake, and a member of Amnesty International.

Tayla is planning to study Law and Politics at Victoria University of Wellington in 2020.

Prize-Giving Speaker

We were delighted to welcome distinguished alumna **Jolie Hodson** back to Westlake as the guest speaker for the Senior Prize-Giving.

Jolie Hodson (née Hampton), Class of 1989

CEO Spark NZ



Jolie Hodson is Chief Executive and a Board member for Spark New Zealand. Her appointment to Chief Executive in July 2019 follows a substantial career with Spark, leading different components of the operating business over a six-year period. As Chief Executive Jolie is responsible for ensuring the company has a sound strategy and applies her leadership to delivering on that strategy, while building a

team around her and a business that is able to adapt to the fast changing world of digital services.

Prior to this, Jolie was the Customer Director, which required a strong understanding of dynamic, competitive markets and what customers value. Having joined Spark in 2013 as Spark Chief Financial Officer, she played a pivotal role in re-orienting the business from a 'telco' to a 'digital services provider', before being appointed in 2016 to Chief Executive Officer of Spark Digital, Spark's ICT services division.

In 2016 she was awarded 'CFO of the Year' at the Deloitte Top 200 Business Awards. Prior to joining Spark, Jolie held a number of executive roles for Lion Group Australia. She holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Auckland and is a Fellow of Chartered Accountants Australia New Zealand.

Jolie is a member of Global Women, a founder of On Being Bold and is passionate about mentoring women in business. She enjoys family time, supporting her children's sporting adventures, walking their goldies and travelling.



Jolie speaking at the Westlake Girls Prize-Giving

The Year 13 Graduation function was held at Crowne Plaza Hotel this year and we welcomed back **Jean Yang** as the guest speaker.

Jean Yang, Class of 2010
Emerging ICT Leader of the Year 2019



Jean is Chief Operating Officer of McCarthyFinch, a technology business which is changing the way lawyers work with their legal artificial intelligence technology.

She was recently named the Emerging ICT Leader of the Year and has previously won Australasian Digital Experience Awards. Jean is also a founder of LegalTech New Zealand, writes on the future of law, and is a regular speaker on the LegalTech circuit throughout Australasia.

At Westlake, Jean received academic awards for Economics and Statistics, represented the school in the Premier Debating Team, Business Competitions, and MUNA, and was a Leader in the Amnesty Group.

She graduated with a conjoint law and commerce degree from the University of Auckland, which included a semester on a bi-cultural exchange in Oslo. She represented the university in Debating and Mediation competitions. She went on to be a lawyer at commercial law firm Minter Ellison Rudd Watts.

Jean has continued her connection with Westlake and was a founding alumni in the Westlake Girls Alumni Association, setting up a range of social media networks, helping record Westlake milestones, and was active in expanding the network from a small group of people on a committee in 2013, to a community of several thousand Westlakers today.

Long-serving Staff Retirements - Dru Rose, Sue Wood, Pravina Ali

The Maths Department is losing three long-serving staff members to retirement - **Dru Rose** (29 years), **Sue Wood** (25 years), and **Pravina Ali** (23 years). We thank them for their significant

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Dru Rose started at Westlake in 1990 and has enjoyed being part of the Maths Department, and the many changes at Westlake over the years. She has been through five revolutionary changes in assessment: UE, Sixth Form Certificate, Bursary, Unit Standards, Achievement Standards and Realignment of the Achievement Standards.

She is highly regarded for her knowledge and skills in teaching Statistics and has international teachers regularly 'shadowing' her to benefit from her experience.

She says, *"My most cherished memories will, of course, be the many students I have taught over the years. I take great pride in the number of Westlake alumni who appear in*

news items about their successes".

Dru is looking forward to a move to Hawke's Bay and semi-retirement on a life-style block close to family.



Sue Wood has taught at Westlake for 25 years. As well as her Maths teaching role, she has been a lead teacher for AUT Trainee teachers, assistant HOD Maths, a Year 12 Dean, and had a year's fellowship with the Royal Society.

Sue says, *"I've been privileged to play a small part in the lives of hundreds of students – through Maths, Premier Basketball. Equestrian teams, and for the last decade or so, Enviro Group. It has been rewarding for me to see their progress and initiative. We have amazing students!"*

We wish Sue well as she 'dials back from the commitment of full-time teaching'. Her passion for finding ways to live more sustainably and play our part within our environment remain at the forefront of her future plans.

Pravina Ali has loved her 23 years teaching Maths at Westlake including a position of responsibility for Year 9 Maths, Teacher in charge of Mathex Competitions and mentoring beginning teachers.

In 1998 she started the Bollywood Dance Group which has won numerous awards over the years. She has continued her association with alumni students, who love to dance, through the group *X-Lake*.

Pravina's strong humanitarian passion led to her initiative to send a container of donations and school supplies to those affected by Cyclone Winston in Fiji in 2016, and to set up the Westlake Salam Group after the attack in Christchurch this year.



Pravina is moving back to Fiji and is looking forward to having more time for hobbies and other activities in this transitional step. She expects to be regularly back in New Zealand.

Zelimir Jovic has taught in the Science Department for 17 years, coming to Westlake with a background as a medical doctor. He has been TIC of the Neuroscience (Brain Bee) group, led a successful Chess Club, as well as the Table Tennis group.

In his retirement he plans to travel around New Zealand and overseas and spend more time on his other interests.



Lyn Swan, Director of International Students.



Lyn has had various roles in the International Department in her 15 years at Westlake. She has welcomed and guided many international students through their study, met up with parents overseas, and kept in touch with many international alumni.

Lyn will be moving out of Auckland and will have a part-time role working with

international students at Whangarei Boys High School.

Lyn and former Westlake international student **Pauline Supardi**, Class of 2011, (pictured above), met up again in Jakarta in July this year. Pauline completed a degree in Japanese and Business at the University of Auckland before returning to Indonesia, where she is currently working as a Recruitment Consultant for a Singaporean Company.

Looking Back

Your memories of the hall

Thanks for sharing so many memories of the Westlake Girls school hall. They came flowing through from near and far.

You recalled sitting on the parquet floor in the early days, hard wooden forms that snagged stockings, the compulsory song book for assemblies, the annual shows and, the most commented on, lunchtime visits by NZ bands popular at the time.

Pictured here are Westlake students and a visiting Japanese exchange group in the '80s or '90s combining for a traditional Japanese dance (odori).

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The three photos of principals visible here on the hall wall are now displayed in the Gernhoefer Administration Centre, along with the subsequent former principals, Mrs Alison Gernhoefer and Ms Roz Mexted.

Westlake News

Westlake's combined Show wins Awards



Westlake has continued its proud history of producing award-winning shows.

The 2019 combined Westlake production of “Les Misérables” received 24 nominations across various acting, technical and production categories, competing against 25 other productions at the Auckland Showdown Awards held at The Bruce Mason Theatre in November.

The combined Westlake production was awarded an amazing six trophies: Best Sound Design, Best Lighting Design, Best Musical Direction, Best Direction, The iTicket People’s Choice Award, and The Auckland Live Award for Best Production (play or musical).

Cantare Choir prepares for a tour to New York, Boston and Toronto - end of Term 1 2020



Cantare choir will have the opportunity of performing in Carnegie Hall, New York during their tour next year.

If there are alumni in Boston, Toronto or New York we'd love you to make contact with us :
alumni@westlakegirls.school.nz

Boston - Tuesday 14 April

Toronto - Saturday 18 April

STEAM Power-ED partnership

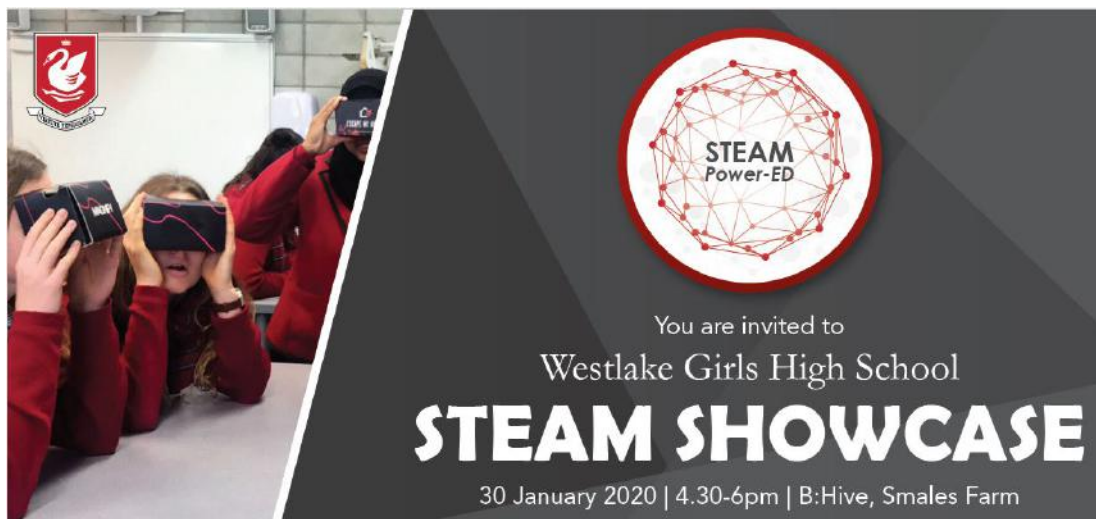
Westlake Girls High School has launched *STEAM Power-ED* - a partnership between Westlake Girls High School and Industry. It is designed to encourage young women to pursue careers within the STEAM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Maths) and entrepreneurship.

Please email Susana Tomaz (TIC STEAM) to discuss ways you could partner with us to forge connections and mutually beneficial relationships with our industry/business community. Industry visits, mentoring or classroom talks are just a few ideas.

stomaz@westlakegirls.school.nz

STEAM Showcase January 2020

We'd love to see some of our alumni come along to the Westlake Girls STEAM Showcase on 30 January 2020, 4.30 - 6pm at B:Hive, Smales Farm.



Alumni Association Update

Westlake Girls Alumni

Westlake Girls LinkedIn Group

Westlake Girls Class of 1966

Class of 1967 Westlake Girls

Westlake Girls Class of 1968

Class of 1969 Westlake Girls

Class of 1970 Westlake Girls

Class of 1971 Westlake Girls

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