上海 Shanghai American School
An International Community

SAS through the of Children
Members
Mathew
Junghan
Jessica
Jaeden
Egan
Colin
Mrs Ruth
Team Norms
• tidy up
• talking nice to
POL

Seeking Out Our Students' Voices

At Shanghai American School, we believe that honoring our students' ideas builds trust and empowers them to think critically. As the most valuable voice in our learning community, our students were invited to participate in the production of this school brochure. A group of eleven sudents from grades 1 through 3 signed up to participate in an after school activity called "SAS Through the Eyes of Children."

For six consecutive weeks, these students and two early childhood teachers met once a week after school to work together on this mission. During the project, the children had a voice and a choice on how to represent their feelings and ideas about our school. Children also had the opportunity to build an understanding of the purpose of a brochure by asking questions to experts in the field of communications and marketing.

The driving question that led this project was: **How can we share the essence of our school through a brochure designed by children?**

Through this engaging interaction our participating students:

1. Reviewed the SAS marketing resources to see what SAS was using for advertisement.
2. Agreed on the content of the brochure.
3. Walked around SAS drawing sketches and taking photos of their favorite learning spaces.
4. Shared their feelings and ideas about the different learning environments at SAS.
5. Agreed on the name of the school brochure, *Children's World at SAS*.

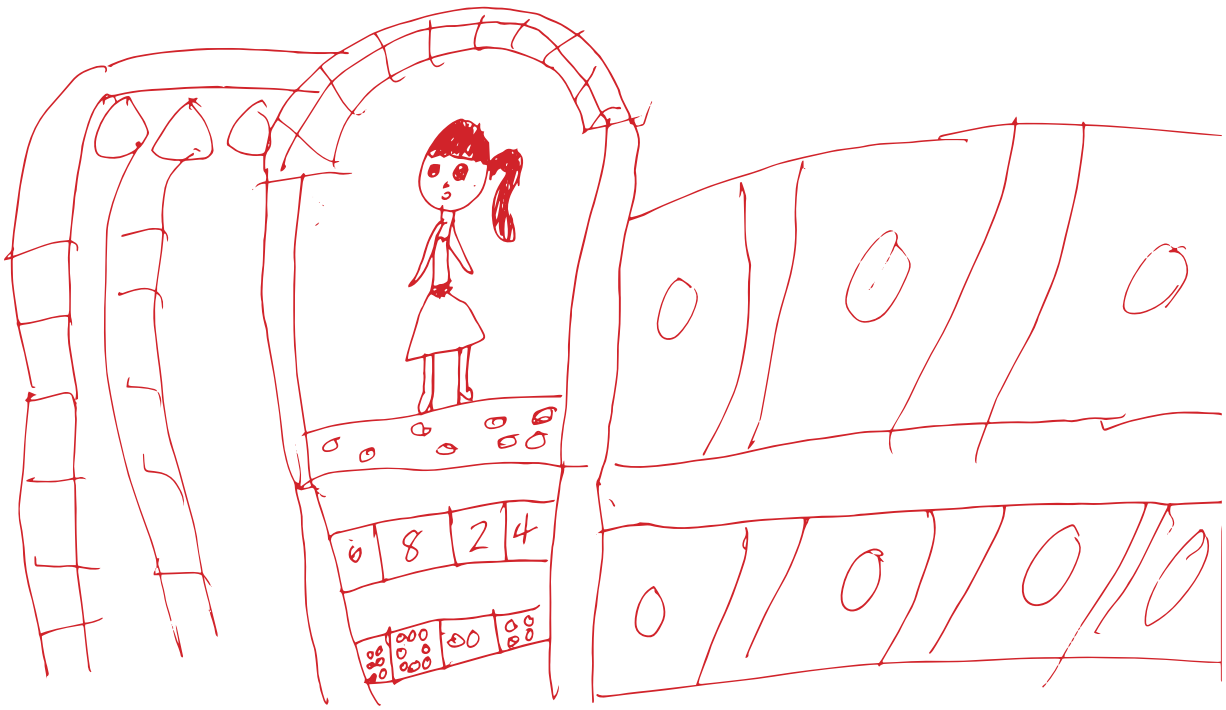
The final product of this endeavor is this brochure that includes sketches, photos, and quotes from our students.

Throughout this project, the students had the opportunity to build 21st century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity, which will serve them well in life and in the workplace. We hope parents and visitors will experience the essence of our school through this brochure designed by our talented students.

Jessica

Favorite place:
Playground

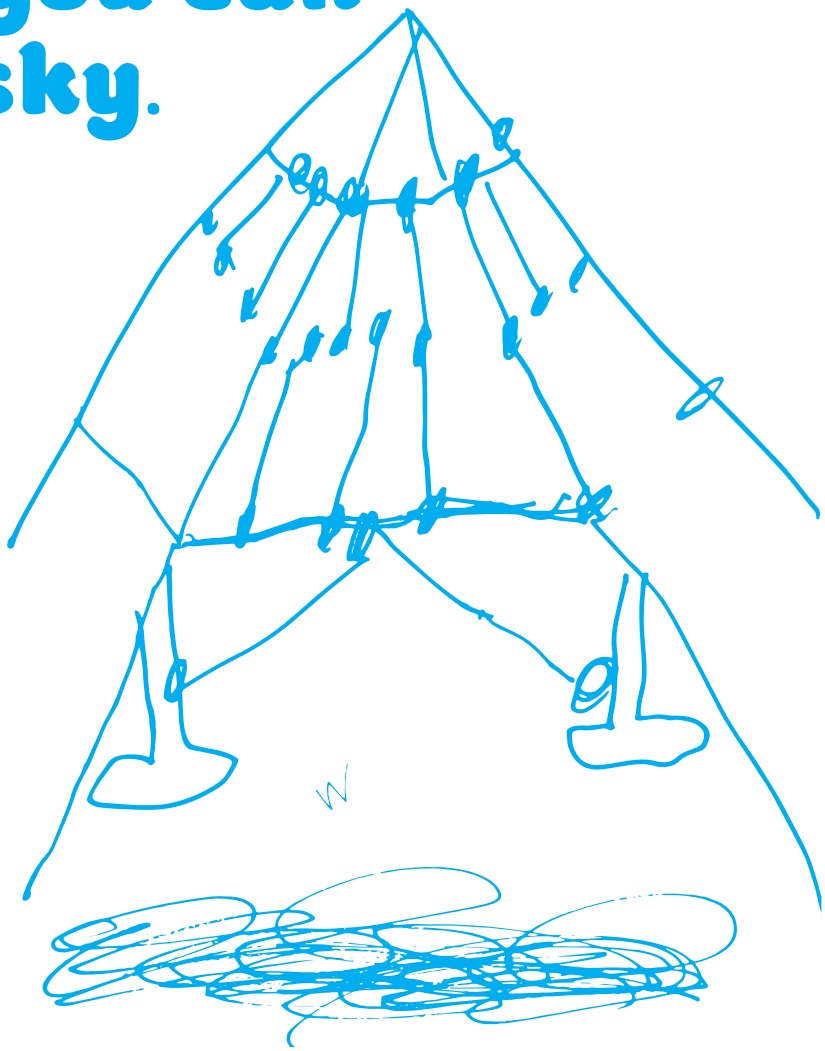
"When I go to the playground I am so happy and excited. I feel like I am on a castle."



Colin

Favorite place:
Spiderweb

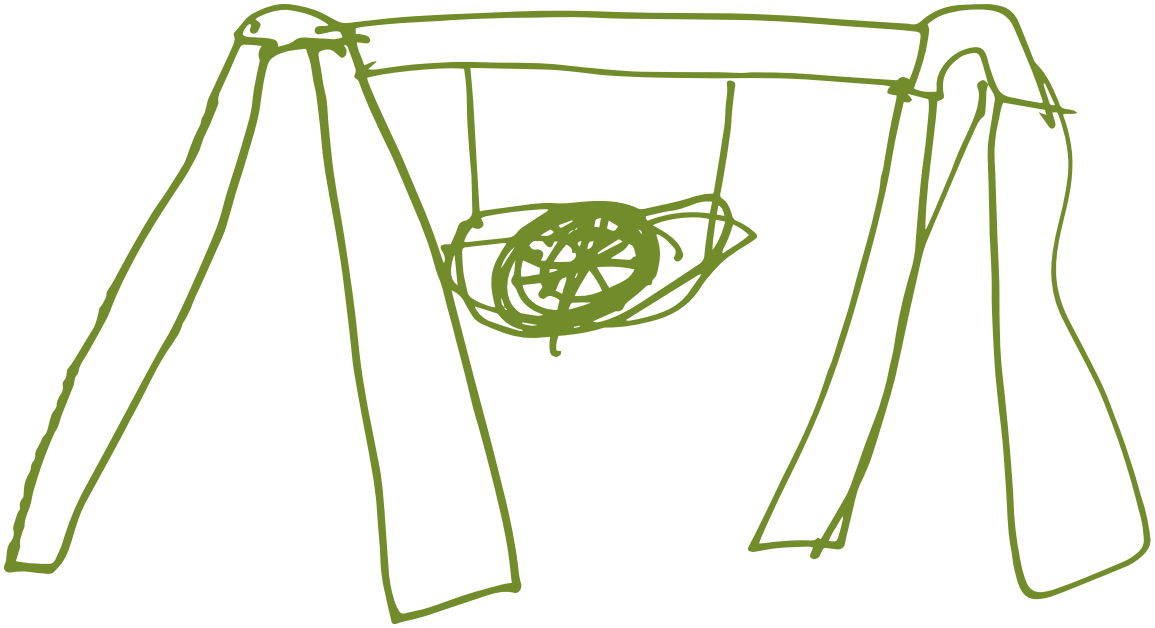
"You feel like **you can touch the sky.** You have to be **strong and brave.** Everybody can come and **I feel included.**"



Serena

Favorite place:
Swingset

"It makes me feel excited, happy and cool. I'm relaxed and feel free."

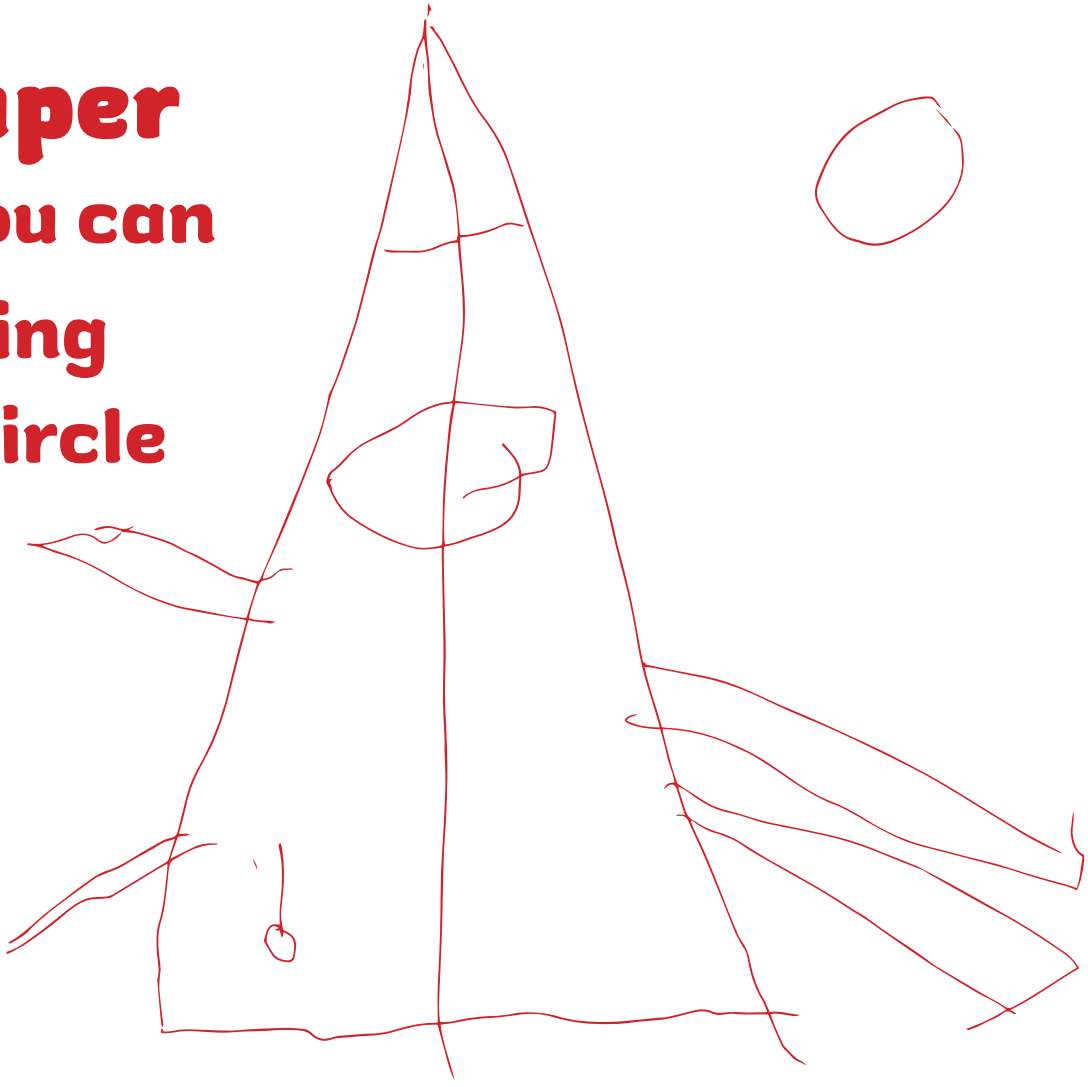


Mexico

Benjamin

Favorite place:
Spiderweb

"It's super good, you can climb, swing and the circle goes around."



SHANGHAI
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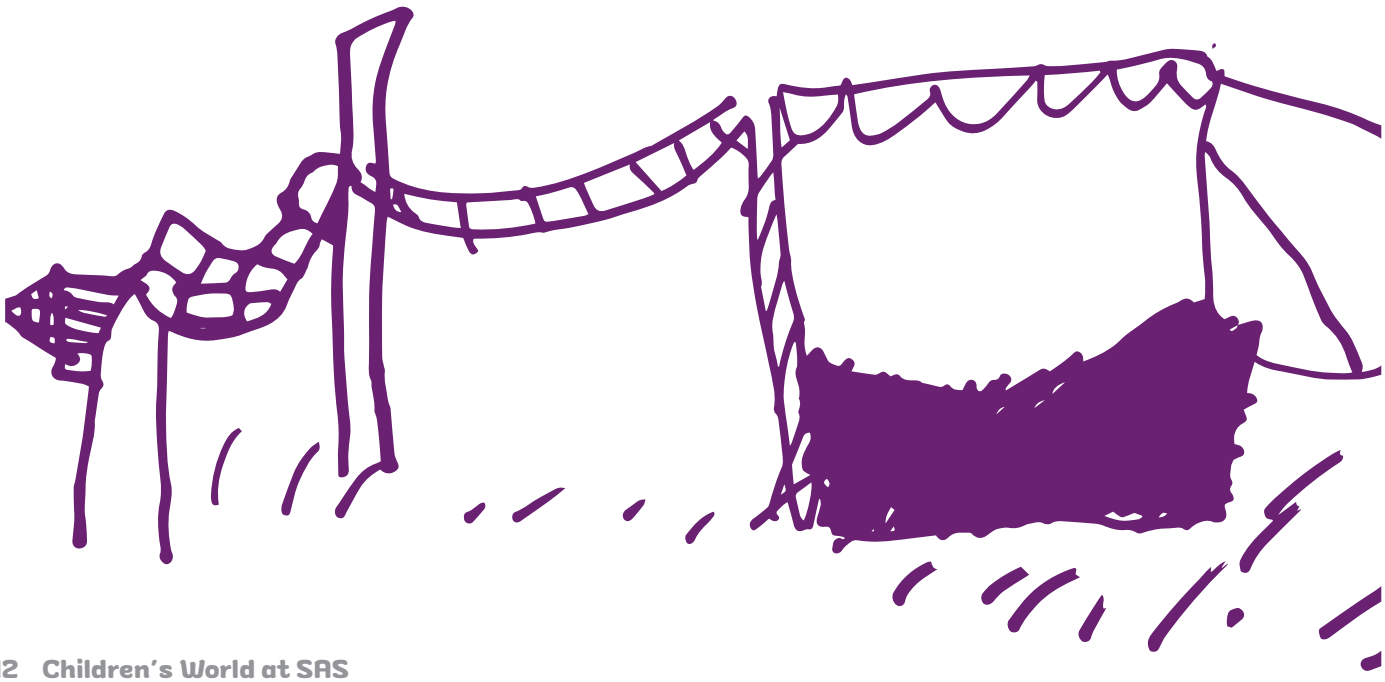
Heidi

Favorite place:
Spiderweb

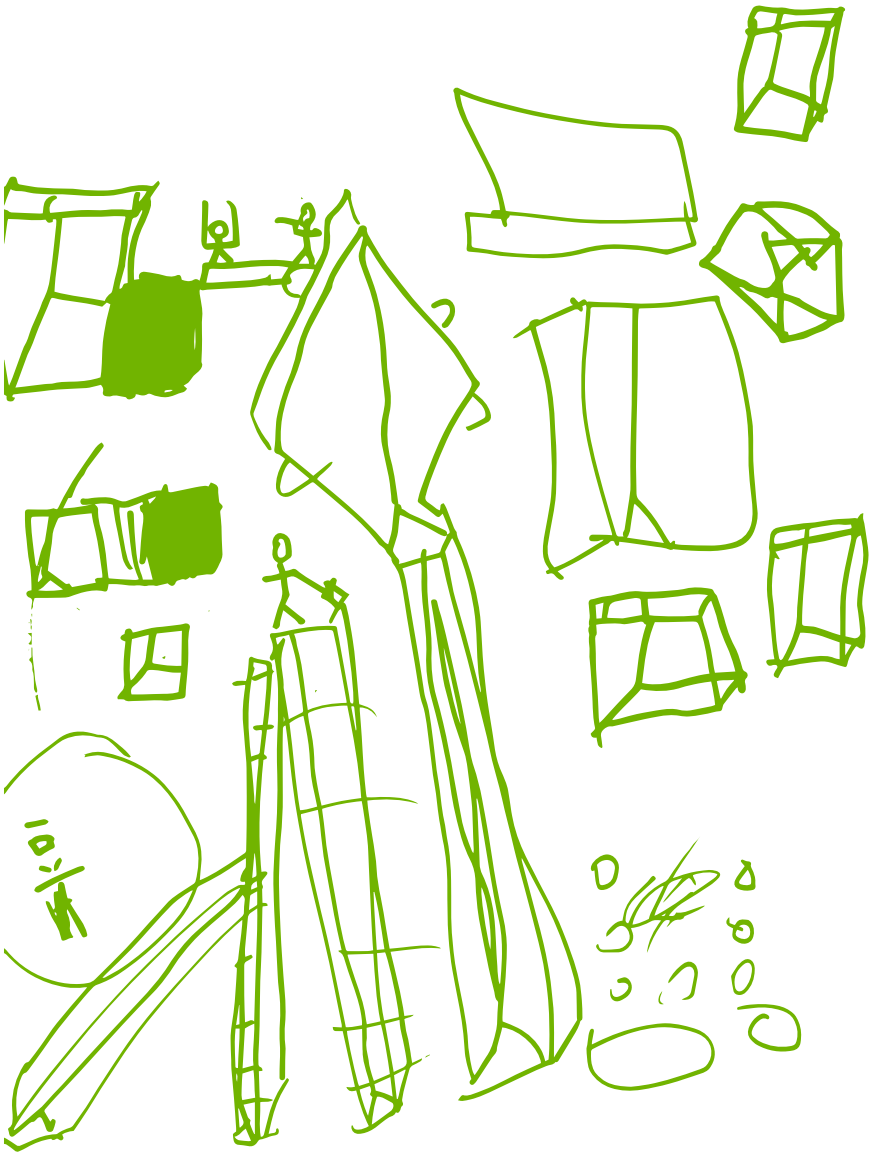
"It makes me feel like a muscle man."



Egan

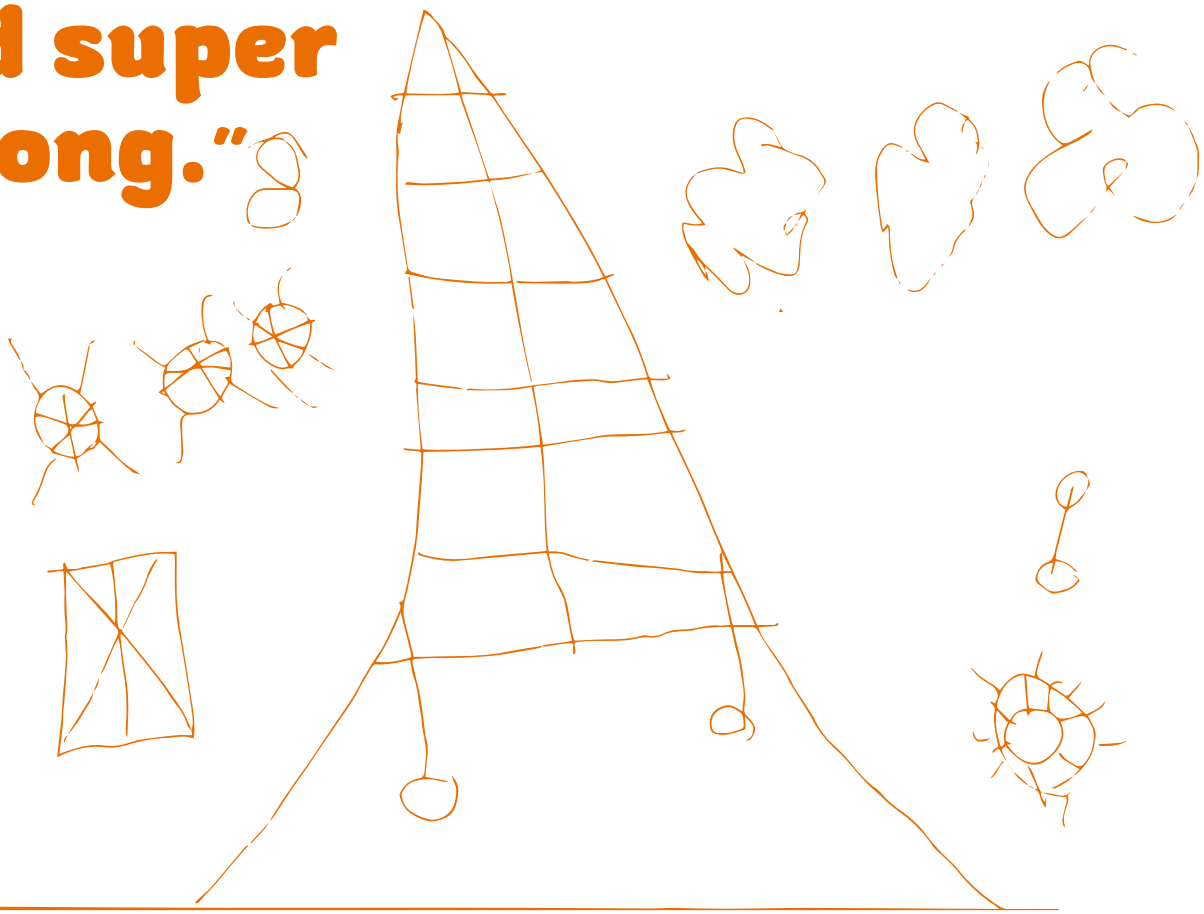
Favorite place:
Bamboo forest

"It makes me feel like I am in a forest."



Favorite place:
Spiderweb

"You can climb to the top. It is 50 feet tall. You feel excited and super strong."



Allison

Favorite place:
Eagle Shop

"There is a shop in the school! You can go there whenever you want and the lady who works there is super nice."

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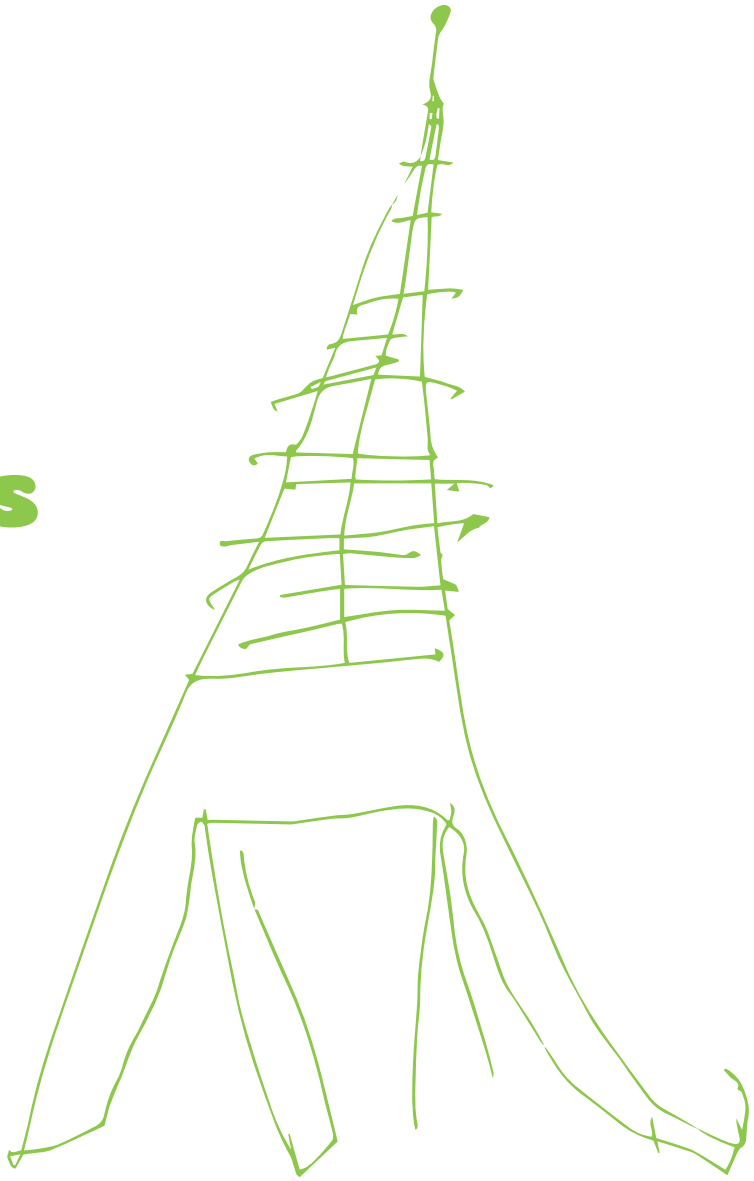
Matthew

Favorite place:
Spiderweb

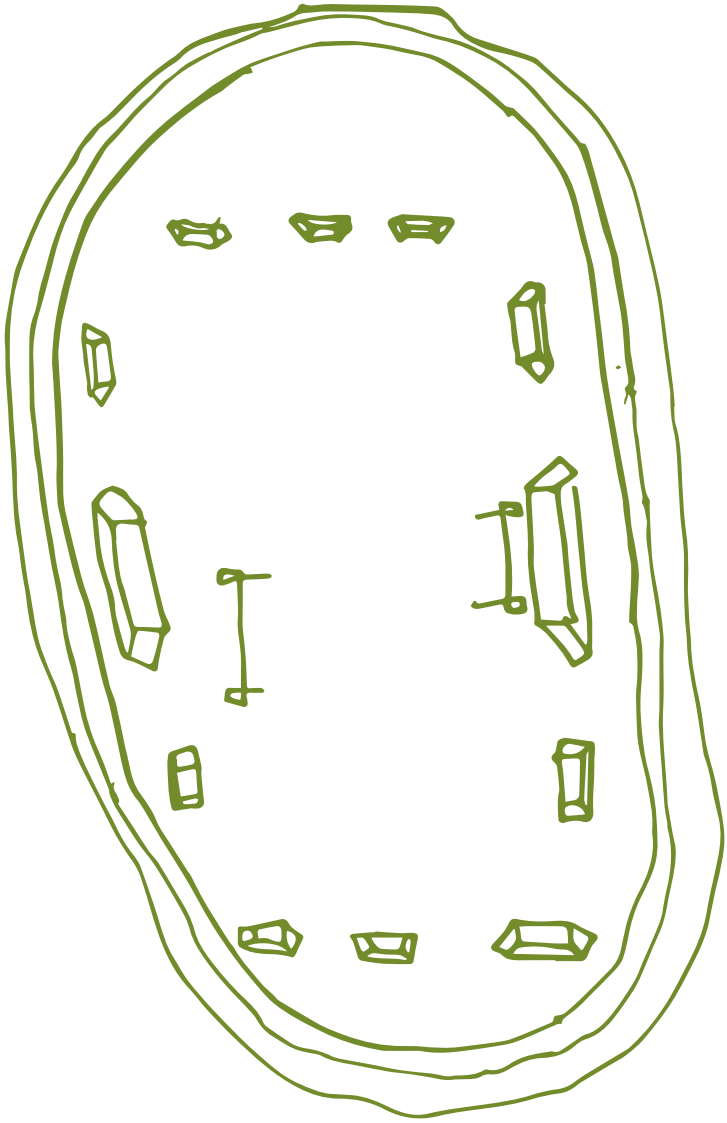
"We have a gigantic spiderweb. I think it's as high as the Eiffel Tower."



Chris

Favorite place:
Soccer Field

"When I'm on the soccer field I feel big, happy, warm and joyful."

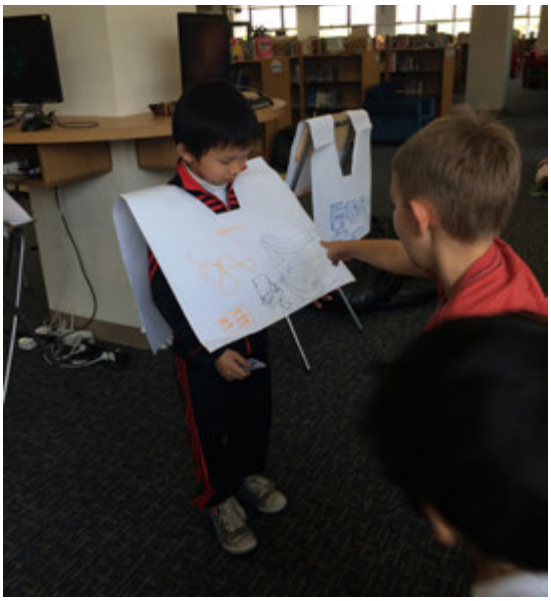


James

Favorite place: Spiderweb

"This place is **my favorite place.**"

Finding Our Students' Voices



Team Building

Getting to know each other was an important goal of the first group session. During sharing time, children used illustrations on paper vests to learn about each other's favorite things and passions. Through this experience, children also learned about the importance of images in a brochure.

Giving Children Decision-Making Power

Children learned about the power of words and images by drawing sketches and writing statements about their favorite place at school. As a follow up, they used a school map to locate and plan their photo taking session. Giving the students the power of choice created a sense of ownership over their learning and work.

Fieldwork: Learning from Experts

After giving the children the opportunity to take their own photos, the need of consultation with experts on brochure design was discussed and agreed among the team. Volunteers from SAS's Communications Office spent time with the students and enriched their understanding of the important elements in a school brochure.

Final Product

During the last meeting all the data, including photos, drawings, sketches, and children's quotes were given to the Communications Office at SAS. Children also had the opportunity to brainstorm and chose the name of the brochure.

Acknowledgements and Conclusions

Capturing the essence of a school was an empowering team project that allowed a group of eleven students and two preschool teachers to understand that learning is about communicating passion, collaboration, and celebrating team work achievements. A special thanks goes to the School Administration and the Communications Office at Shanghai American School who embraced and supported this project from the beginning to the end. We are grateful for the opportunity to work and learn alongside a group of passionate children and knowledgeable professionals.

Lola Alvarez and Ruth Gandara—Preschool Teachers, 2015-2016

Shanghai American School inspires in all students:
上海美国学校激励并培养所有的学生:

- *A **lifelong passion** for learning*
  终身学习的热情
- *A commitment to act with **integrity** and **compassion***
  诚信与仁爱的信念
- *The courage to **live their dreams**.*
  追求梦想的勇气。

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An International Community

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