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Independent Day School-Corbett Campus Fosters A Love Of Learning

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A private school with a public purpose where students' gifts are recognized and given the opportunity to soar — these are the themes that are experienced by students at the Independent Day School-Corbett Campus (IDS-CC) in Tampa every day in class.



The Independent Day School was started in 1968 by two women, Marilyn Gatlin and Betty Anderson. The pair wanted to create a school where every child's gifts and talents could be identified and encouraged. Both women studied at the University of South Florida (USF) in the first Gifted Education Master's Degree Program, which helped foster the dream of creating a school centered on appreciating all children's gifts. The number of students tripled in the school's first two years and IDS moved to its current location on Lake Lipsey, less than a mile south of Fletcher Ave. on Orange Grove Dr.

Today, the school has 63 faculty members and 510 students, with a large percentage of those students from the New Tampa area. The school is fully accredited by the Florida Council of Independent Schools, the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools and the Florida Kindergarten Council.

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Gatlin and Anderson wanted a school that focused on children's talents and today the teachers at IDS-CC incorporate a variety of teaching strategies to help every student succeed.

"We have multiple options for reaching students and bringing out their gifts," Dr. Joyce Swarzman, Headmaster at IDS-CC said, "One of the greatest points of pride is that we lift the ceiling so students can soar."

One of the multiple teaching strategies that IDS-CC uses is its own "M.O.R.E. (Multiple Options for Results in Education) Approach." The M.O.R.E. Approach centers on programs that affect all learners in every grade level and in each subject area. M.O.R.E sets out to reach the uniqueness of each and every student.

IDS-CC is an authorized International Baccalaureate School for sixth, seventh and eighth graders participating in the Middle Years Program, which focuses on three main concepts — holistic learning, intercultural awareness and communication. All students in the International Baccalaureate program strive to be inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, open-minded, caring, principled, reflective, balanced and risk-takers. PreK3 (3-year-olds) -fifth graders take part in the Primary Years Program.

General classes that all grade levels learn include music, dance, art, drama, Spanish, technology, physical education, library time, a hands-on science program, as well as core studies. Middle school students have a wider variety of electives from which to choose, including broadcasting, Mandarin Chinese, French, Italian, musical theatre, band and much more. As students with new interests arrive, the school works to develop new programs fitting those interests. Some classes are even taught near the lake in an outdoor classroom while others include walking to Lake Lipsey to monitor its water levels.

Sometimes the learning takes the children away to other countries. Several children studying Spanish opened their homes to students from Madrid, Spain. Then, during spring break, some IDS-CC students traveled to Madrid to live and study. Striving to teach students that live in a global world, teachers have integrated Skype into their curriculum, which allows IDS-CC students to speak with children from other countries including China, Spain and Sweden via video chat.

Well-Rounded Learning



Participating in shows like “The Aristocats” and other arts opportunities help keep students well-rounded at IDS-CC.

The arts are another big point of pride for the school. Whether it is PreK students learning to paint like Michelangelo or Monet, or kindergartners bringing Pilgrims and the Mayflower to life, all ages are encouraged to express themselves through different art forms. In 2011, the entire 28-member Thespian team qualified for, and competed at a state competition. IDS Community School of the Arts is an after-school program open to the public that includes classes in music, theatre, visual arts and dance.

Sports play a big part in many children’s lives and 85 percent of middle school children at IDS-CC play at least one sport. The school participates in the Florida West Coast League and has 26 teams in 11 different sports. In 2010, the soccer team won the Florida West Coast League Championship. Also in 2010, the school opened the Marvin Harvey Basketball School of Excellence. The program combines basketball aptitude with knowledge, research and proven methods. The hoops classes are for elementary and middle school boys and girls and are available to all Bay-area students.

Not all learning at the school takes place in the classroom or on the court. Students find out the importance of having a positive impact on their community, as well as showing appreciation to everyone they meet. The teachers strive to help students become enthusiastic about obtaining new knowledge and believe that a happy child is more open to learning.

“We highly engage into a love of learning and to utilize best practices in education and brain-based information to give our teachers the ability to accomplish great goals for students,” Dr. Swarzman said.

One way that students become more open to knowledge is to see that their teachers never stop learning. Teachers at IDS recently completed a gifted education endorsement from the USF’s College of Education Gifted Program. These Master level classes focused on the many ways students can be gifted, creativity, and problem-solving, to name a few points. Teachers are highly trained and the idea that every

child deserves a teacher of the year is very important.

“Teachers come here to learn how to be better teachers,” director of admissions Dr. Jennifer Morrow says. “That says a lot.”

Both the school and the students have received great honors. IDS-CC is a National Blue Ribbon School and a gifted education endorsed school. In 2011, an impressive 75 percent of the seventh grade class qualified for national Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP) for academically talented students and IDS alumni often go on to become the valedictorians and salutatorians at their respective high schools.

The first day back for IDS students is Wednesday August 24, and the teachers are gearing up to astound the students. Dr. Swarzman says the first day is a time to launch students into a successful year by engaging them from the beginning. Every class has a theme and the students can take part in hands on events. The first day helps to nurture a love of learning from the start.

Admissions for IDS are ongoing based on each class' size and parents interested in the school are encouraged to come and see the campus for themselves. Open houses are held throughout the year and are held during class time so that parents can view the learning as it happens and feel the positive energy flowing throughout the campus.

“The energy here is so positive and creative, there is collaboration and joy. Parents say that kids and teachers are so happy,” Dr. Morrow said about her favorite parts of working at Independent Day School-Corbett Campus, “We want to be here.”

Independent Day School-Corbett Campus is located at 12015 Orange Grove Dr., between W. Busch Blvd. & W. Fletcher Ave. For more info, visit IDSYes.com or call 961-3087.

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