



—TREVA LIND

Student Alyson Galow works with Limerick, a yellow lab, for a project for St. George's School's International Baccalaureate program.

## A new prep approach

St. George's uses international curriculum, replacing advanced-placement option

By Treva Lind  
Correspondent

On a lawn near St. George's School, student Alyson Galow works on obedience training with a yellow lab named Limerick.

The 6-month-old puppy accompanies her daily at home and school, as part of Galow fulfilling a community service project to raise and train a guide dog for the blind. Galow, a 17-year-old senior, is juggling that along with a jam-packed academic schedule as one of St. George's students pursuing a diploma through the school's two-year International Baccalaureate program.

This is the second year that St. George's students can graduate with an IB diploma after completing work in the advanced, college-preparatory program that replaced advanced-placement courses at the private school north of Spokane.

Founded in 1955, St. George's is a nonsectarian,

K-12 college-preparatory school located on the site of Louis Davenport's former summer home, a 120-acre property near the Little Spokane River.

In December 2013, St. George's became authorized as an International Baccalaureate World School for its junior and senior high school students, the only school in Spokane with such a designation. Founded in 1968, the Switzerland-based IB is a nonprofit educational foundation offering programs of international education for developing skills needed in a global society. The IB reports being in more than 4,500 schools worldwide as of this month.

"The program is offered here at this school in place of an AP program, so it was a way to pursue a tougher education," says Galow, who explains that her service project is only a component. "You can choose different levels of courses. I was just intrigued by the program in general."

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# IB PROGRAM:

## Most students opt for new curriculum

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Galow says IB diploma candidates choose a mix of standard-level and higher-level courses in six subject areas. The students continue in their chosen six subjects over the two-year period.

Subject areas include English, a foreign language, history, sciences, mathematics, and visual arts or an arts substitute. That substitute can be another math or science course. At the end of the two years, students take IB exams, similar to the AP process, in their subject areas.

Elizabeth Tender, St. George's IB coordinator, says the school has more students deciding to pursue a IB diploma, although the diploma is not required for them to graduate from St. George's. In May, St. George's had 19 students receive an IB diploma in the program's first year. Among an expected graduating class of 34 this year, a total of 24 St. George's students are pursuing an IB diploma, Tender says.

"It's a process, as we roll it into our curriculum, but we've had great success," says Tender. "We had a banner year last year with college acceptance. We think that's at least in part because of the IB program. On the common app, typical now for many universities, one of the first questions they ask is, 'Are you an IB diploma candidate?'"

She adds, "With IB, we explore why you know something. We feel it really prepares kids for college."

In addition to six subject courses and exams, IB candidates complete a

Theory of Knowledge class held twice weekly, a service project with certain criteria, and a 4,000-word senior essay. Pursuing the IB diploma doesn't cost extra money above a student's annual tuition, Tender says.

"It's built into our curriculum," she says. St. George's 2016-17 annual high school tuition is \$19,230.

Tender says IB students get internal assessments for studies from teachers, and a certain amount of assessments sent externally to IB graders. Both kinds of assessments are factored, she adds. Students also receive points as part of the program. A minimum score of 24 points is required to get the IB diploma, out of 45 points in the program, a school fact sheet says. The exams can score up to six points each.

Students receive a few points from the essay, theory class, and project work, titled CAS for creativity, activity, service.

Tender says the IB requires about 240 teaching hours for higher-level courses, and a minimum of 150 teaching hours for standard-level ones over two years.

"All of our students, regardless of getting the diploma, they still are taking the IB courses," she says. Other students can get college credit for the IB exams, but they might decide against pursuing full IB diploma requirements. Seniors receive St. George's diplomas in June, while IB diplomas are presented separately in July.

The IB exams also differ from AP tests, Tender says. For example, students might memorize a formula for an AP math test. IB students are

given the formula in the test, "then they give you problems to solve, and they want to know your process," she adds. "There's more writing even with the math, because they want to know why you know what you know."

Galow's selection of IB subjects included higher-level visual arts, biology, English, and Spanish, along with standard-level courses in math and history.

"The higher-level ones require more work," she says. "In biology, we're learning about phylogenetics. You have to focus and manage your time, but I really appreciate it because it has taught me what a college-level course would be like."

A lifelong Spokane resident who grew up around animals, Galow believes they make a difference in humans' lives. Nonprofit organization Guide Dogs for the Blind fits that well, she says.

"When you hear about people who receive guide dogs, they describe feeling like they can fly; they've gained independence," Galow says.

She received her puppy, Limerick, in June. Guide Dogs for the Blind provides formal training guidelines, while trainers tie into a Spokane club, Puppies of Promise.

"Typically, the training period will last for about a year," she says. "My role is, I receive the puppy at 8 weeks and train in basic obedience and to stay calm in all situations."

She admits it's work amid a busy schedule, but worthwhile. "You have the opportunity to change someone's life. It's all about time management for me, to make sure I set aside enough

time for homework and not get involved with more activities at school than I can manage."

Galow organizes a school blood drive and leads an outdoor program. She now plans lifelong work for Guide Dogs for the Blind.

"There are times Guide Dogs for the Blind has more puppies than they can get people to raise them," Galow adds. "They don't get a chance because not enough people are involved."

Galow recently submitted college applications, and her top choices are University of Portland and Carroll College. She's interested in the formal study of the relationship between humans and animals, combining that with a physical therapy degree for equine-assisted therapy.

Melanie Mildrew, St. George's Creativity Activity Service coordinator, says all St. George's high school students participate in CAS. For some, it can involve debate or soccer team play. The IB standards for CAS stand apart because students lead the effort, Mildrew says, and it requires supervisor evaluation and collaborative work.

Mildrew adds, "Alyson had to get permission to bring the dog on campus as a service dog and come up with solutions. She has to be academically involved while training her dog to be well behaved in a public environment, plus take care of the dog's needs."

For example, Galow kennels the puppy a short time when she goes into the art room, where some students in other classes have dog allergies, she says.

Another IB student has a CAS project launching a club to collect disposable coffee cups for recycled use to start seedlings. She'll donate future vegetables to a food bank. A third student is leading a CAS project that started a gay-lesbian club for creating a safe place, dialogue and support, Mildrew says.

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**Elizabeth Tender**  
St. George's School

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