

Spring Months at Clonlara



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Designed by Meghan

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Designed by Meghan

Welcome to the third issue of the Clonlara Chronicles!

Our team worked hard on every part of this issue, from every article to every cover page and design. We hope you enjoy!

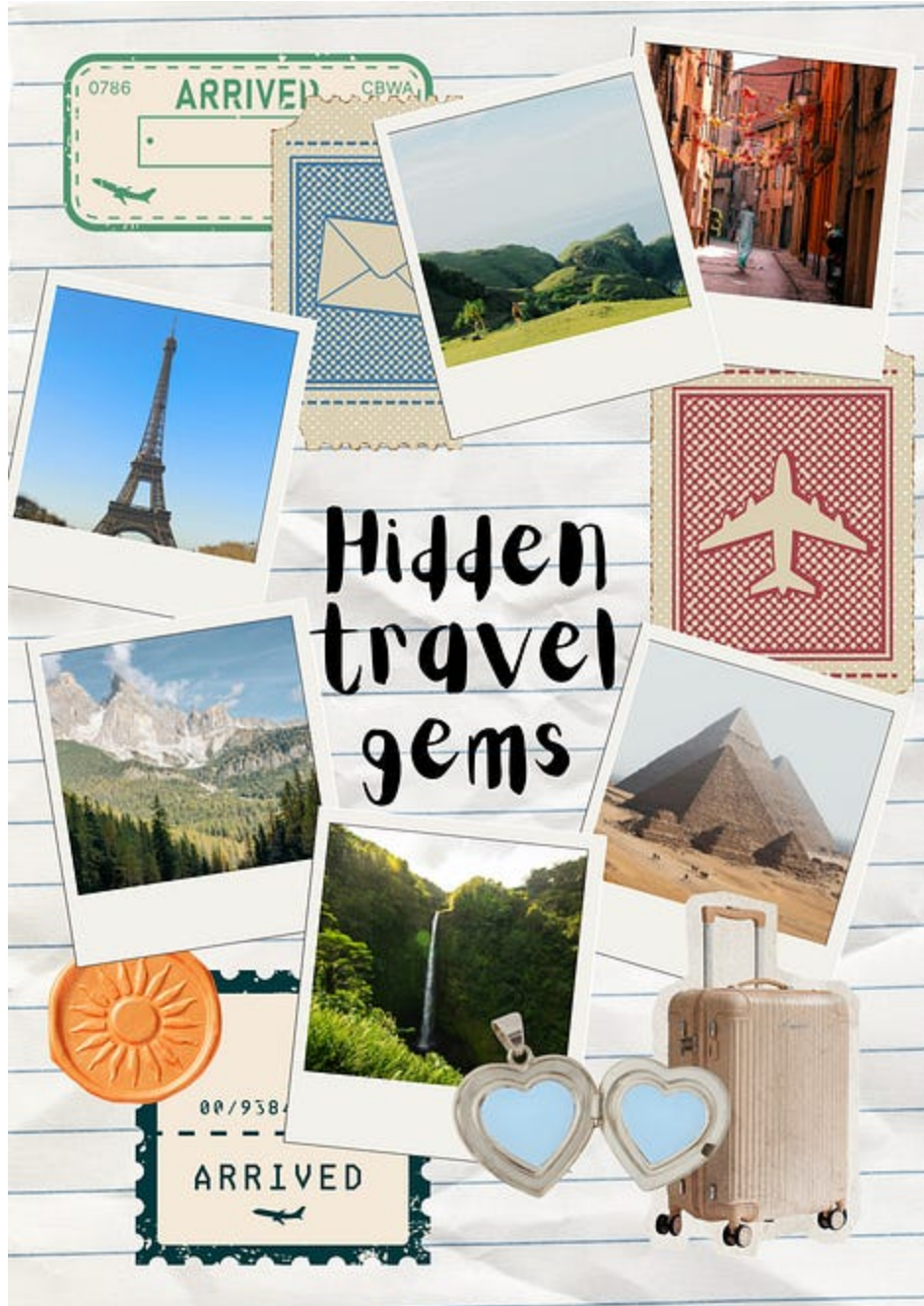
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One of the advantages of having a school with no walls is that you have students scattered all across the globe.

Evidently, when you have that, students end up finding some pretty “off the beaten path” travel destinations, and with summer vacations nearly upon us, we thought we’d put together a collection of some hidden gem travel destinations. Enjoy!

Hidden Travel Gems



Designed by Delilah

Hidden gem locations are incredibly special. In these places, we find unparalleled beauty and adventure, without the crowds and fame. If you're looking for new, quiet location recommendations for a vacation full of exploration, or you'd like to see what travelling students have been up to, then look no further! We put together a list of underrated travel locations that are worth a trip, approved by Clonlara students who have been to them!

1. Vézénobres, Gard, France



Have you ever wondered what walking the streets of a medieval city feels like? Taking a serene walk in the cobbled roads of Vézénobres is like stepping back in time. Visitors in this seemingly undiscovered town can explore miles of medieval architecture turned into useful modern shops. While exploring, visitors are guaranteed to come across an abundance of the unique icons of this town: figs.

Figs are a significant part of Vézénobres' history, first grown there in the second century BC. So, a visit to Maison De La Figue, the Fig Museum, is a must for tourists.

Aside from the stunning town, Vézénobres offers breathtaking natural scenery all around. Visitors can also find delicious local food at a few restaurants. The food of Vézénobres is rich in quality, made from fresh local ingredients. So, of course, a lot of the food uses figs! If you're ever looking for an exciting step into history, we'd highly recommend checking out Vézénobres!

2. Vessalico, Italy (and surrounding areas)



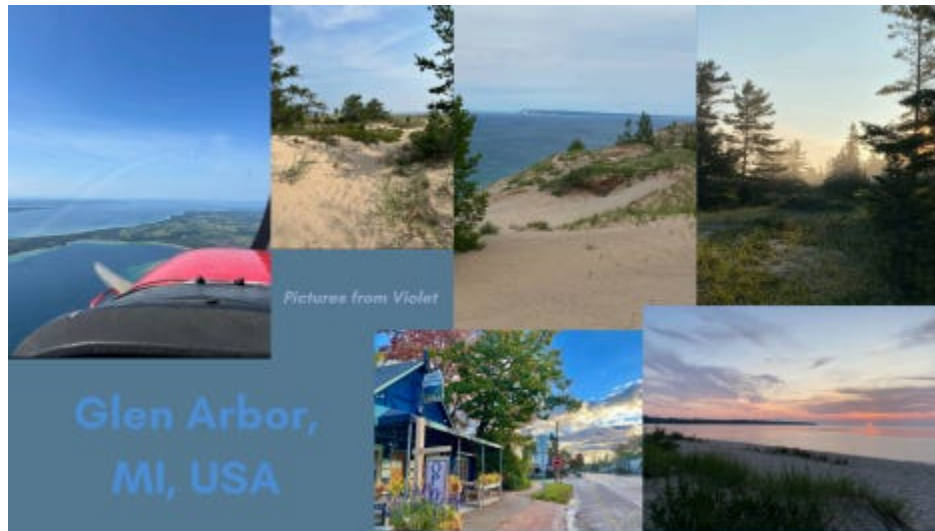
Right off the foot of the Alps in the Liguria region of Italy lie tiny communities like Lenzari and Vessalico.

This area is perfect for tourists desiring small-town charm near the Ligurian Alps, which offer sightseeing, hiking, biking, tours, and exploration. The small town of Vessalico is located on a hill on the Arroscia River, which offers unparalleled views. The narrow roads, beautiful architecture, and small, close-knit Italian community gives visitors a true Italian experience.

Also, Vessalico's local family businesses fully immerse visitors into Italian culture. Many dishes include Aglio di Vessalico as an ingredient, the town's famous, unique garlic.

One Vessalico restaurant recommended by a Clonlara student is Da Maria, owned by a local family and known for its impeccable, authentic Italian cuisine. These areas truly deserve more visitors!

3. Glen Arbor, Michigan, USA



Situated right on Lake Michigan, which is basically an ocean being the fifth biggest lake in the world, Glen Arbor is a cute little coastal town with a unique comforting charm. Tourism here is limited, but I'm honestly not sure why. Glen Arbor has a gorgeous small downtown with everything you could need, including delicious ice cream for warm summer nights, charming log cabin inns, niche clothing and jewelry shops, and restaurants that radiate mouthwatering aromas.

With all of this, a short walk to breathtaking, vibrant freshwater beaches and the dunes on Lake Michigan! Then a few miles to the west, stunning rustic campgrounds and Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park. Glen Arbor is as charming as it gets!

4. Paraguayan Chaco



This destination is for those who love nature and wildlife; there's wilderness, natural beauty, and an incredible amount of unique animal species! This is the Paraguayan Chaco, a sparsely populated area of pure adventure. There are endless opportunities for fun and exploration at this hidden destination.

Chaco offers extensive wildlife, museums, historical sites, indigenous traditions, and so much more. The Paraguayan Chaco is found between the Pilcomayo and Paraguay Rivers, which allows for rich soil and an abundance of diverse animal species. For many visitors, they're guaranteed to discover species that they have never seen before!

Visitors also learn fascinating facts about the area in museums and historical sites that tell stories of the Mennonite colonies, past wars, and wildlife.

The Paraguayan Chaco is for true explorers, and visitors can help support conservation efforts to combat deforestation in the area!

Not many things can beat a good vacation; however, one of the best things, no matter where you are in the world, is a good book. Check out

our team's book recommendations for this issue!

Clonlara Bookshelf

Hi fellow readers! Welcome to a new Clonlara Bookshelf. Our team has handpicked some of our all-time favorite reads. This issue's theme is fantasy and nature. We hope you enjoy our recommendations!



Fantasy:

Sir Callie and the Champions of Helston (series)

By Esme Symes-Smith

This book is about a kid named Callie who wants to be a knight. In their world, there are rules about what boys and girls can do, and Callie does not fit those rules. We chose this modern fantasy book because it teaches inclusivity, friendship, and the importance of being and believing in yourself.

Daughter of the Deep

By Rick Riordan

Daughter of the Deep, written by the famous Rick Riordan, who you might know from the Percy Jackson series, is inspired by Jules Verne's Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas and features a modern-day descendant of Captain Nemo. You won't get bored reading this modern remix of a classic novel!

Keeper of the Lost Cities (series)

By Shannon Messenger

In this popular fantasy series, we follow Sophie, a brave girl who discovers a magical world and faces exciting challenges with her friends. Once you start reading, you'll be transported to a fascinating and magical universe.

The Folk of the Air series (series)

By Holly Black

Once you start reading, you won't be able to stop. This bestselling fantasy series takes place in the magical world of Faerie, where we follow Jude Dart and her twin, two human girls who were adopted into this world when they were little.

Ronja, the Robber's Daughter

By Astrid Lindgren

Ronja the Robber's Daughter is a Swedish book that blends nature and fantasy. Suitable for all ages, it's a fun and enjoyable read.

Nature:

As for the nature-themed books, we chose four different titles, all set in natural environments and capturing the beauty and wonder of nature:

The children of noisy village

By Astrid Lindgren

This book follows a group of children having fun and adventures in a small village. We chose it because it shows the joy of simple life and friendship in nature.

Heidi

By Johanna Spyri

In this book we follow a young girl who lives with her grandfather in the Swiss mountains and discovers the beauty of nature.

Petronella Applesauce (series)

By Sabine Städing

In this book we follow Petronella, a clever girl, who solves magical problems in a countryside setting. We chose it because it mixes adventure, magic, and the charm of nature.

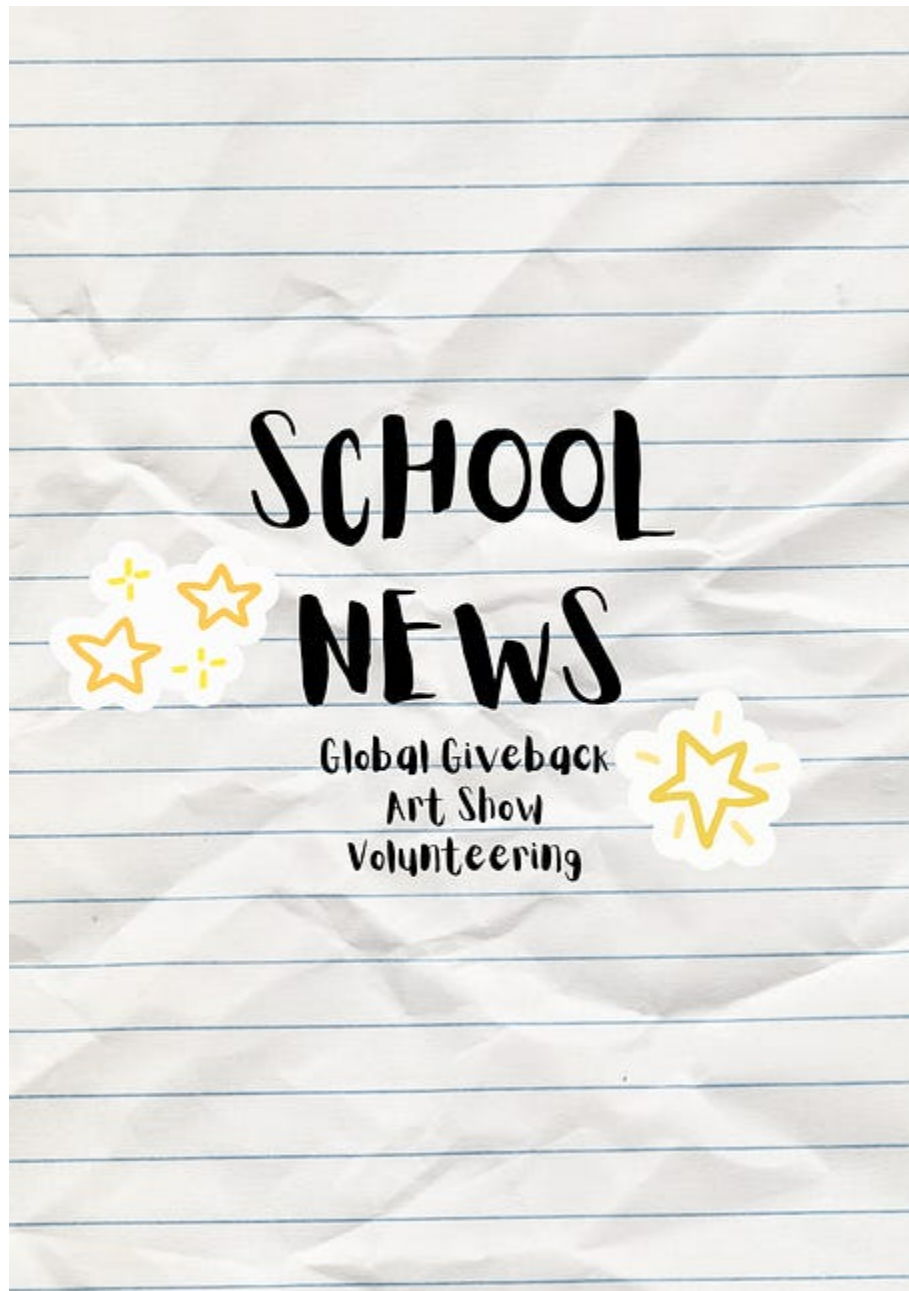
Lord of the Flies

By William Golding

This classic novel follows a group of boys stranded on an island who must survive. It's a strong example of the challenges of survival and the importance of helping each other.

Descriptions by Lucia

School News



Designed by Delilah

Clonlara's has hosted a multitude of fun events this March and April. Things ranging from the sixth annual Global Art Show to the Global

Giveback!

In this section, come learn more about these events. Why they mattered, why it was exciting, and what happened during them.

Let's start with the Global Art Show.

Clonlara's Global Art Show

Global Art Show

Art takes on many forms, enhances our creativity, breaks boundaries and connects us to our world in more than one way. Some of the forms were shown at the 6th annual Clonlara Global Art Show. The event happened on the 14th of March with over 130 people joining the meeting from all around the world, throughout all programs, with over 36 countries participating and students of all ages. There were six different galleries/categories and 3 presentations from students, which I will now briefly describe.

The first one being 3D and mixed media with participants from over 15 countries, this art form consists of combining different materials together to form art. After a short break and engagement from the staff we moved onto drawing with students from 24 countries participating which showed us pieces in graphite, color pencil, and many more. Third was digital art and although there were less participants in this category there were still artworks from 9 countries and showed how technology can broaden our perspective. In Photography and Video we mainly saw parts of nature, including both landscapes and animal, but there were also stop motion pieces, students captured those moments on both digital and film cameras. As the fifth category, Painting was the second biggest category, that showed an extreme amount of variety in technique, composition and art itself. At last we saw performing arts, which took up the most time from all six, but showed us incredible

talents of both the Clonlara students and students from the partner school in Thailand.

After going through all of the categories, we also had 3 presentations from Clonlara students. Starting with Delilah who studies the US off-campus program, was born in Germany and lives in France. She presented her Coffee art and described the process along with a story behind her artwork. The second presenter was Carolina who studies the Portuguese off-campus program. She described an illustration course she took and presented her artwork that focused on animals, then she mentioned her interest and passion for biology. The third and final presenter was 8 year old Roman, who studies the German off-campus program and artwise focuses on realistic drawings using different materials. The Global Art Show has hopefully given people inspiration and I hope that student artwork will continue to thrive in the following years. For anyone interested in viewing the galleries, I will put the website link below.

<https://clonlara.org/pt/2026/03/14/2026-global-art-show>

Written by Thea

Global Giveback

Volunteering at Clonlara

At Clonlara School, volunteering plays an essential role in the formation of the student, not only in the academic context, but also in their personal growth and understanding of how each individual can have a positive impact on society as a whole. During the process, they become aware of the power of community work and often go through a change of mindset in regard to their worldviews.

We, at the Clonlara Chronicles Club, have received a few reports of students telling a bit about their experiences with volunteering and how

it reverberated within each of them. Here are some of the projects they carried out:

Name: Delilah Grace Parslow

Program: American Program

Project: Delilah was able to help the community of a small school in rural Madagascar, alongside her family. They supported teachers and other volunteers in a multitude of activities for students, providing learning and lots of fun. In addition, they were part of a fundraising association called Maisha Africa, which they helped by selling homemade crafts in local markets. All the people involved in this association make it possible for it to continue to grow and to provide food for these students who come from harsh backgrounds. "My favorite part was to see how much joy we could bring to all these people, by just being there and being interested and invested in their story. Seeing that also brought joy to myself."

Name: Lilibet Ida Wachsmuth

Program: German Program

Project: Lilibet worked in the field of equine veterinary medicine, following an old dream of one day becoming a veterinarian. She helped professionals in this area by assisting with examinations, preparing equipment and dealing with the horses. The experience was filled with deep observation of different diagnostics and treatment procedures and wonderful exchanges with the veterinarians, which made learning a light and fruitful process. "This experience helped me grow both personally and professionally. I already knew that I wanted to become a veterinarian, and I have always understood that working with animals requires a calm, patient, and responsible attitude."

Name: Jack Murray

Program: American Off-campus Program

Project: This student founded Clonlara's Student Leadership Club. In the club, participants learned and discussed leadership principles, with the aim of drawing up projects to improve leadership skills. Together, they have developed incredible ways of connection between students from all over the world, creating an exchange of knowledge, cultures and experiences that enrich the learning of each individual. This club works on aspects such as the student's autonomy, responsibility and self-awareness, things that will be carried throughout life.

Name: Ennam Tia (Grace) Hassan

Program: American Off- Campus Program

Project: Ennam created a garden using recycled bottles to plant various species of flowers and herbs. During the process, the student acquired knowledge about planting and harvesting, besides learning to value and prioritize organic products and inspire others to do the same. This project shows the importance of recycling and explores how sustainability can be applied in so many ways in daily life. Also, it is a demonstration of how working with nature is healing and a great stress relief. "It made me feel connected to nature. It sparked my creativity."

Name: Helena Santiago

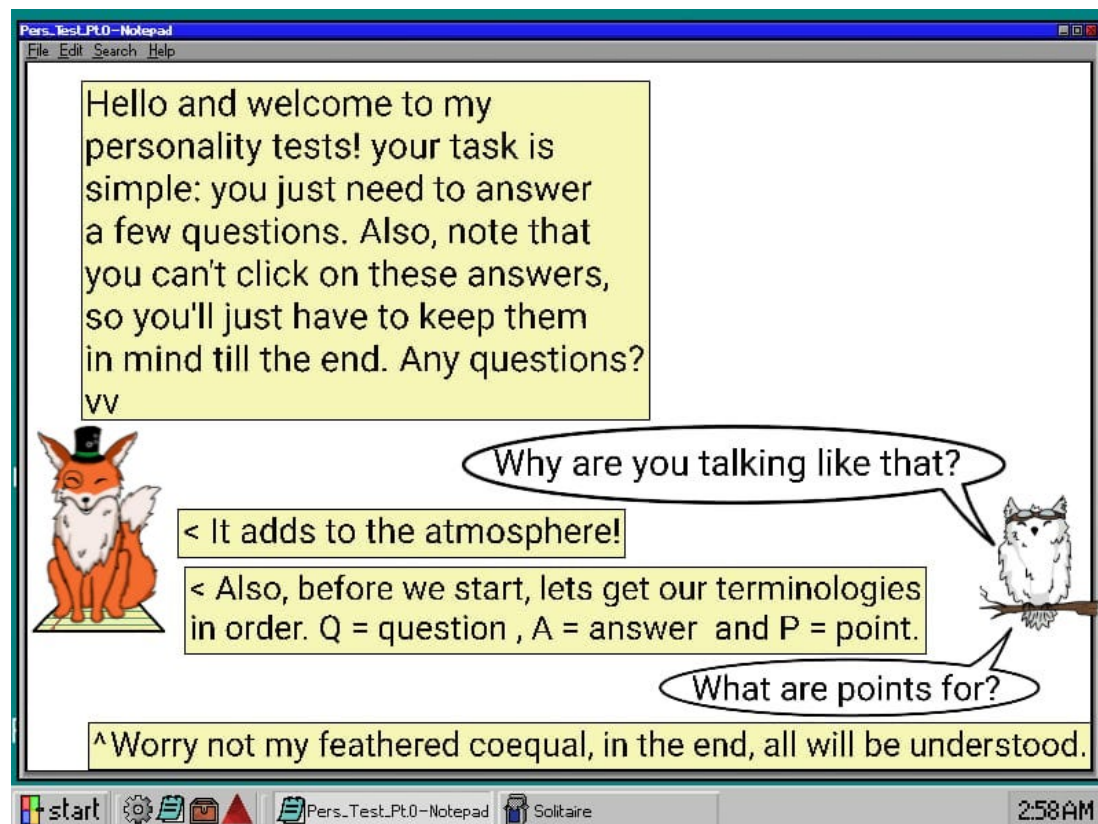
Program: Brazilian Program

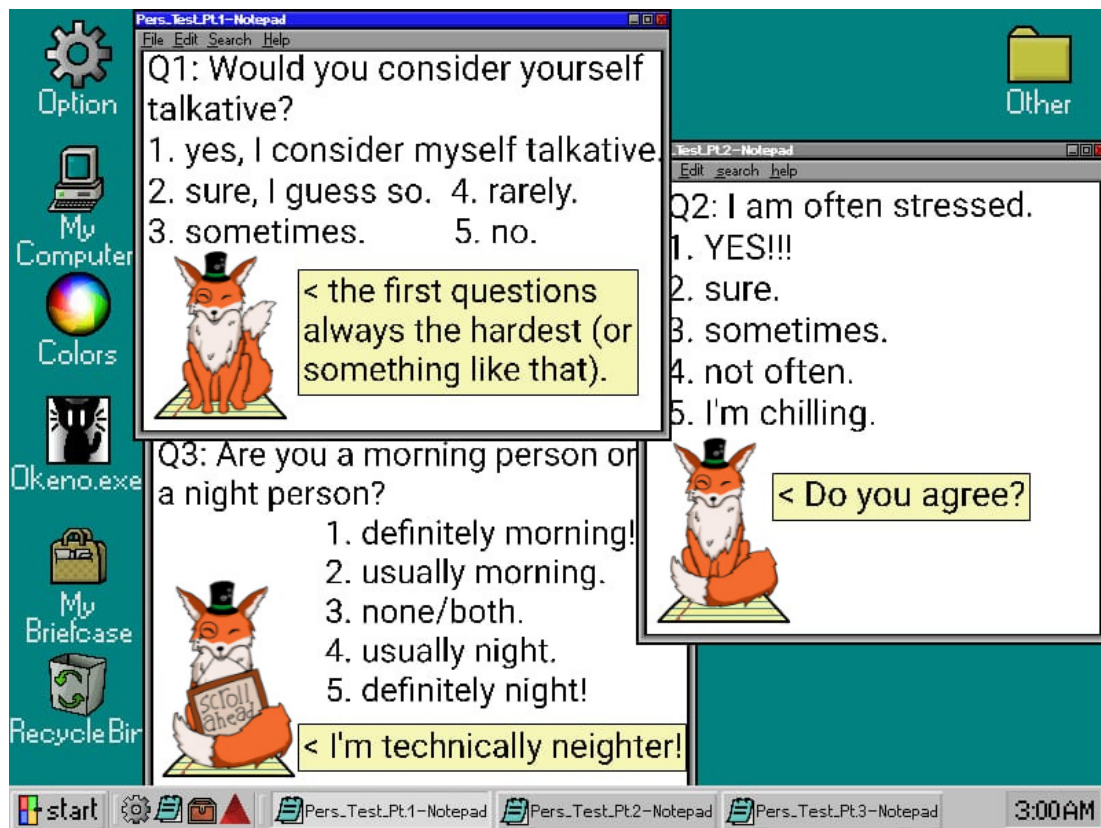
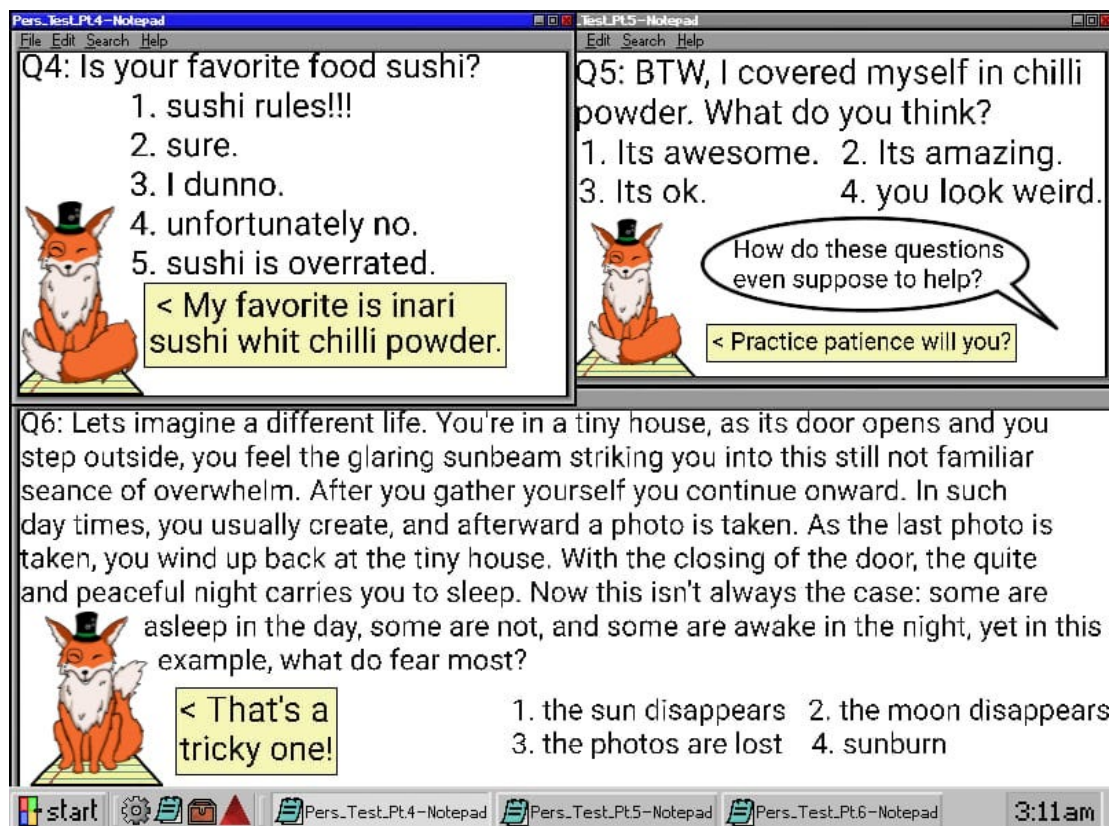
Project: She founded the school's Female Writers Club, where students learned about the biography and work of some amazing female writers, such as Emily Dickinson, Chimamanda Adichie and Clarice Lispector. They immersed themselves in research about literature and feminism and even exchanged reading recommendations. They understood the importance of celebrating these wonderful women, not only for their legacy and their works, but also for their struggles and the courage

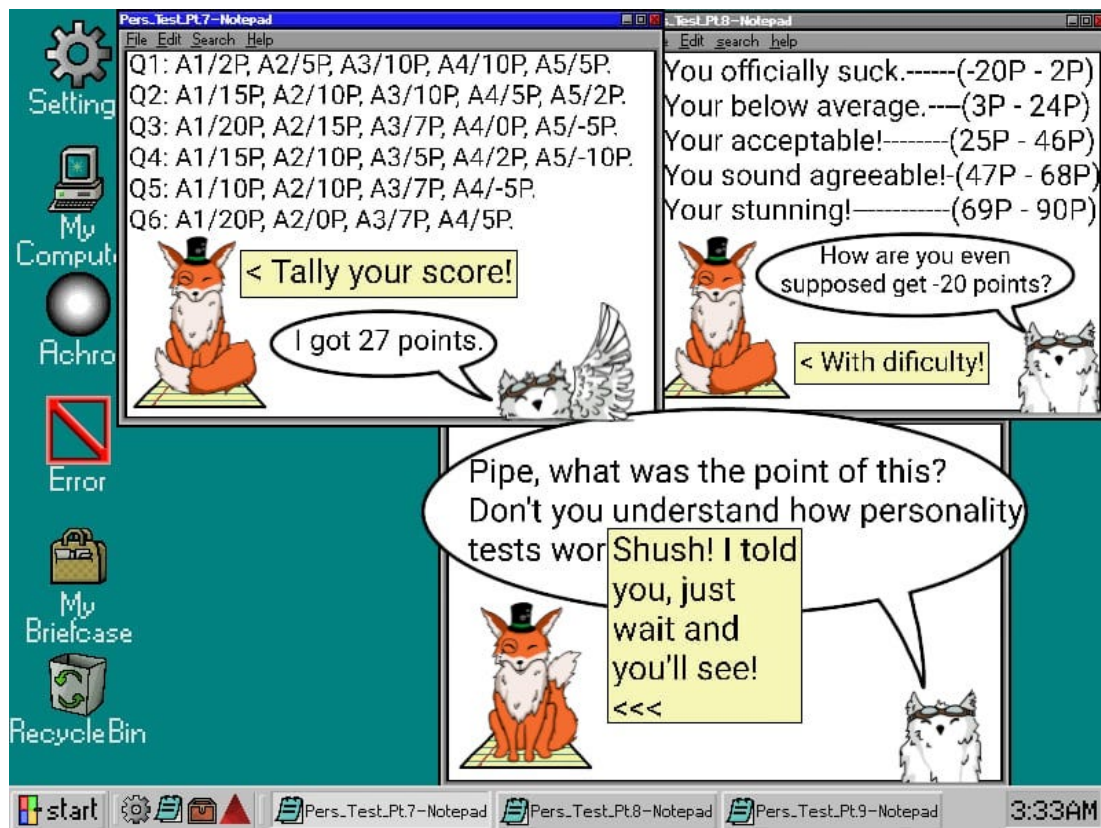
they had to defy patterns and cross barriers imposed by patriarchal and sexist societies. "I learned that the power of storytelling is within each of us, that all it takes are people who are willing to learn and listen so that knowledge spreads, and so that these warrior women are never forgotten."

In addition to personal development, these students made a great difference in the communities around them, from acting on animal welfare to sharing knowledge and inspiring others to reflect on certain aspects. Although the projects were born from completely different ambitions and motivations, there is something they all have in common: they show that even the smallest contribution is able to have a meaningful impact on society, and all it takes, as quoted above, is people who are willing - willing to help, willing to learn, and willing to turn the world into somewhere better.

Comic







Designed by Ákos

Holidays + Celebrations

We've highlighted some special holidays and celebrations that members of our Global Learning Community celebrate! Learn more about them down below!



Observing Ramadan in the UAE.

Ramadan is the **ninth month of the Islamic calendar** and a holy period for Muslims. During this month, Muslims fast **from dawn to sunset**, avoiding food and drink while focusing on **prayer, self-discipline, and charity**.

Ramadan can be thought of in two phases within the same month. The first twenty days focus on fasting, building discipline, and strengthening daily acts of worship such as prayer, charity, and self-control. The final ten days are especially significant because they contain **Laylat al-Qadr** (the “Night of Power”), the night believed to be when the first verses of the Qur’an were revealed. Since its exact date is unknown, Muslims increase their prayers and devotion during these last ten nights, seeking its immense spiritual blessings.

The fast is broken each evening with **Iftar**, and the month ends with the celebration of **Eid al-Fitr**. 🌙

As of right now, I am in the last 10 Nights of Ramadan (if you’re reading this from March 15th - 20th), I am devoting myself to gathering immense spiritual blessings, like fasting, praying, and actively doing ‘Ibadaa’ (which means worship in *Arabic*)

But for the last 25 days, I have been fasting at home with my family. And seeking Islamic knowledge, I went to my friend’s house to learn about Ramadan on a deeper level. Our Islamic teacher (also my friend’s mom) taught us about the importance **Taqwa (God-consciousness)** and avoiding **Ghaflah (heedlessness)**.

Taqwa is the awareness of God in one’s life, guiding a person to do what is right and avoid what is wrong. It is like having a constant sense of responsibility toward God in thoughts and actions. The opposite, **Ghaflah**, is heedlessness or forgetting God, where a person becomes so absorbed in daily life that they ignore spiritual guidance and lose sight of what truly matters.

P.S: (if you're interested) Ramadan ends at either March 19th or 20th and then we have a holiday called **Eid al-Fitr**, which typically spans in 3 days.

Written by Bareerah

Easter

If you ever plan on celebrating Easter in Romania, I will share with you a few of my favorite Easter traditions.

One tradition is the painting of **red eggs** on Holy Thursday (*oua rosii - Romanian*). The reason why we paint the eggs red is to symbolize the blood of Jesus that He shed on the cross. On Easter Sunday, we gather with our family, and we crack the eggs to celebrate Jesus's resurrection, by saying 'Christ Is Risen' (*Hristos a inviat*). One person holds the egg and says, 'Christ Is Risen', and the other replies with 'Indeed He is Risen' (*Adevarat a Inviat*). Then they knock the eggs against each other; the one whose egg cracks first loses, and the egg that remains intact wins.

An interesting fact about egg painting would be that in some regions of Romania, but mostly in Bucovina, the painting of eggs became a real art that has been spread from generation to generation. Using special tools, they create spectacular geometric designs and patterns.



Credit: The village - <https://www.revista-satul.ro/en/painting-eggs-in-romania-traditions/>

Another important part of Easter in Romania is the traditional Easter food.

The dishes include the boiled-painted eggs, roast lamb (each year I feel sorry for the lamb, and I do not personally eat it), soup, and also "*drob*" which is a specific Easter recipe that has as its main ingredients lamb organs. And of course, we cannot miss the most popular dishes, "*sarmale*" - cabbage rolls filled with meat, and "*boeuf salad*". For dessert, the traditional "*pasca*" (a pie with sweet cheese) and "*cozonac*", a sweet bread, are usually filled with walnuts.

Of course, we also get presents for Easter! Kids usually receive something small, like a book or a chocolate bunny.

You can see the colored eggs and the candle that we keep lit for a few days, with the Holy Light from Jerusalem, which we take during the Easter night service from church. The light is brought by plane earlier in

the day, from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, in Jerusalem, and distributed to all the churches countrywide.

In conclusion, Easter in Romania has many interesting traditions, and I am glad to share them with you!

Written by Irina

National Women's Day



Every year on March 8th, the world pauses to recognize International Women's Day, but truly, one day barely scratches the surface.

Being a woman is one of the most layered, complex, and remarkable experiences a person can have. From the strength it takes to navigate everyday life, to the loud, undeniable impact women have had throughout history, there is so much worth celebrating.

Think about the women in your own life. A mother who somehow manages everything at once. A teacher who stayed after class just to make sure you understood. A friend who showed up without being

asked. That kind of strength isn't loud or flashy. It's just consistent, and it's everywhere.

Throughout history, women have broken into spaces they were told weren't for them, and they did it not just for themselves, but for every girl who came after. Scientists, artists, athletes, leaders. Women have always found a way to leave their mark, even when the odds were stacked against them.

Womanhood isn't a single story. It looks different for everyone who lives it. But there's something powerful about a shared experience. The resilience, the compassion, the ability to carry a lot and still keep going.

So whether you're a woman, you were raised by one, or you simply care about the people around you, March 8th is a good reminder to appreciate that. Not just for a day. But it's a great place to start.

Written by Alexandra

Finally, before concluding this issue, we did a spotlight on the History of Clonlara, and how it grew into what we know today, and a special spotlight interview on the founder herself, Pat Montgomery.

History of Clonlara + Pat Montgomery Interview



Clonlara's history began in 1962, when Pat Montgomery had the idea to open a new type of school. She didn't want her children to attend a traditional public or religious school; she wanted a school that would allow them to explore and learn freely, based on their unique interests and personalities. Pat and Jim Montgomery set out to develop a system of education that was centered around each child's individual learning, growth, and curiosity.

While developing her vision for the new school, Pat Montgomery was inspired by the Summerhill School in Suffolk, England, founded by A.S. Neill. Explaining the philosophy of the Summerhill School, Neill stated, "We set out to make a school in which we should allow children freedom to be themselves." When Montgomery met with Neill and

revealed her plans to create a school like Summerhill, Neill told her, "There's only one Summerhill. Don't be a disciple of anyone—start the school that is inside you." So Montgomery set out to create Clonlara.

Montgomery also admired the works of Jean Piaget, a Swiss Psychologist. Piaget was known for his work in understanding child development. One of Piaget's books, *The Psychology of the Child*, states, "Children should be able to do their own experimenting and their own research. Teachers, of course, can guide them by providing appropriate materials, but the essential thing is that in order for a child to understand something, he must construct it himself, he must reinvent it." Clonlara was built on the principle, based on psychology, that children should learn through their own curiosity and exploration. So, then opened the Clonlara Campus program, "The school inside you."

Clonlara grew, opening what would become the Off-Campus Program in 1979, and beginning to serve high school-aged students in 1982. While teaching at Clonlara, Pat Montgomery obtained a PhD, becoming one of the very few people in the world with a PhD who supported homeschooling. In the 80's, Montgomery filed a lawsuit against the Michigan State Board of Education, claiming that state education officials were enforcing public school regulations against homeschooling parents, and thereby attempting to enforce laws that did not exist. For instance, the state was attempting to enforce the 180-day school year policy for homeschooled students. Clonlara won the lawsuit, and the State Board of Education appealed, then appealed again after Clonlara won a second time. Finally, in 1993, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled in Clonlara's favor. This was a victory for homeschooling families across the country. Pat Montgomery and Clonlara won rights for homeschoolers in Michigan, opening doors and contributing to the movement for homeschool rights.

After the legal victory in 1993, Clonlara continued to expand, forming affiliations around the world and beginning the Spanish, German, Hungarian, Portuguese, French, Brazilian, and Latin American Programs

throughout the past two decades. As we approach the 60th anniversary of Clonlara next year, we should reflect on the immense differences our school has made, and its contributions to a revolution in education. Clonlara implements a highly personalized learning approach that allows students to follow their curiosity, and has fought to give opportunities to homeschoolers and online school students around the world.

Written by Violet

“Do whatever your heart and your mind put before you.” - Pat’s advice for whatever your future holds.

Pat Montgomery is the founder of Clonlara School and the very embodiment of Clonlara. At the start of our interview, I asked her about her hobbies; she likes to read, watch the people who walk by her house and do puzzles. She also keeps up with current events very well.

Her mornings usually look the same.

“That’s what it’s like to become elderly, you just repeat the same things, because it’s comfortable, safe and steady.”

First things first, she always starts her day with a coffee. After, she prepares for the day ahead.

Then I asked about her family and Clonlara, which she spoke about very passionately.

Her proudest achievements are marrying her husband, Jim Montgomery, who sadly passed away, and having her two children, Chandra and Chai.

Her inspiration to create Clonlara stemmed from her reluctance to send her daughter to the nearby school.

She couldn't imagine her children having to go to public school.

"School is not a healthy place for children. The people in schools are geared toward what is good for adults rather than they are for children." She taught in many public schools over the years, and she knew she wanted something different for her children.

Pat & Jim got to thinking, but there were no resources or alternatives available, so they got creative.

"We'll just have to start our own." And that's what they did.

Pat is a very grateful person - "I say my thanksgiving prayers for meeting and marrying Jim, having our children and starting the school. Those things are very precious to me."

The meaning of the name Clonlara is very special to Pat - she chose the name to honour her father.

Her father lived three miles from a village called Clonlara in Ireland. From his home, he went three miles every day to Clonlara school, and she wanted to thank him for giving her the money to start the school.

That's why she chose that name. "My parents are both Irish and from Ireland. It seemed right."

Every once in a while, it comes to her mind how big Clonlara has gotten. "I still can't fully appreciate that. How did that happen?"

She is often asked if she thought all this could come about.

"You just play the hand you're given. You don't know what you're starting; it's all in faith. We are not in charge; God is in charge, and that is very rewarding because then it doesn't depend on me, you see. Cause if it depended on me, we'd be in trouble."

Pat and Jim's first step, while trying to establish Clonlara, was to find a building to make it all happen. A mile from where she now lives were properties owned by Mr George Campbell.

His family owned a lot of properties in Ann Arbour at the time.

Pat and Jim visited Mr. Campbell and told them what they were planning to do. He wished them good luck, and they purchased one of his five properties. He had four more properties next to the one they purchased, which is a big chunk of ground - over an acre.

The school grew. To maintain the school, they needed the other four properties too.

Buying the other four properties cost 600\$, which was a lot back then. They did not know if they had that amount of money.

"Don't tell my lawyer," Mr Campbell said, since he already sold the properties cheaper than his lawyer would like. Pat and Jim were glad it wasn't more.

Lastly, something she would like every Clonlara student to know is the following:

"That they are special. That they are a gift to this world. And that is the truth. It's not just a fancy statement that sounds good. It's the truth. They have something to give to the world. The world will respond in kind as well and make sure that they have what they need one way or another. That's what I would like them to know."

Written By Lara

In Conclusion

On behalf of our team, thank you for reading this issue! We can't wait to see you in again in June!

See our contributors below:

- *Jack - Editor-in-Chief + Co-founder of the paper*
- *Lilibet - Head of Design + Co-founder of the paper*
- *Skye - Content Strategy Manager + Designer + Co-founder of the paper*
- *Violet - Lead Journalist*
- *Ada - Writer*
- *Ákos - Writer + Designer*
- *Alexandra - Designer*
- *Carolina - Writer*
- *Delilah - Designer*
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- *Lara - Writer*
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