

Hugh and Nora Spurgin's Bridgeport International Academy Graduates 22 Students

Peter van Geldern
May 30, 2013



The 2013 graduating class of Bridgeport International University

Bridgeport International Academy (BIA) held its 14th commencement ceremony on May 30, 2013. Dr. Thomas Ward, a Dean and Vice President at the University of Bridgeport, encouraged the 22 graduates to seek a life of honor, rather than a life of glory, as they pursue their careers. Mrs. Nora Spurgin, the Principal, advised the students to pay attention to six major areas as they enter a period of making many life-time decisions. These areas are: “know who you are and make goals accordingly, live a healthy lifestyle, use money wisely and start a savings account, nurture and care for your relationships with others, define a purpose in life, and find a faith in which to anchor your life.”



Dr. Hugh Spurgin spoke to the graduating class

This diverse class of excellent and exceptionally talented students from around the world received acceptances from many fine American universities. Hudson Swarts will attend Cornell University; other students were accepted at Drew University, Duquesne University, Fairfield University, New York

University, Penn State University, the University of Connecticut, the University of Alabama, the University of Florida, the University of Massachusetts, the University of North Dakota, and SUNY Stony Brook and Binghamton University. Some of the graduates received scholarships to study at the University of Bridgeport, and Shannah van Geldern, who was the valedictorian, will attend Barrytown College. We congratulate each of these wonderful students and know that they will bring their leadership skills to the world at large. These graduates included thirteen second- and third- generation students. Of the 12 international students, many of them are second-generation Unificationists, and three are from China.



Valedictorian Shannah van Geldern (left) and her band mate, Carolyn Bonini (right), graduated with some flair and performed during the commencement.

The Academy is a diverse high-school community in which minds and hearts meet in academic, creative, and character-building pursuits. BIA offers a well-rounded college preparatory curriculum for grades 9-12 where qualified students may take courses at the University of Bridgeport in a dual-credit system, while still in high school. The Academy has an agreement with the university that allows its students and staff to use all of the university's facilities, including the cafeteria, library, theaters, gymnasium, soccer field, recreation center, classrooms, social room and auditoriums. Among the foreign languages offered are Korean, Japanese, Chinese and Spanish.

BIA's multi-talented students have graced the stage in outstanding productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Sound of Music*, *The Wiz*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *Twin Desperados*, which was performed in April. Under the direction of Peter van Geldern, the digital arts studio was a popular venue for students interested in the digital, visual and fine arts. The studio, which received some funding from MSG Varsity, sports many video cameras, a green screen, television studio and editing equipment that serves not only the school itself, but also the local church community. Students have produced more than one hundred videos for a local television channel.

Since 1997, fourteen classes consisting of 235 students have graduated from BIA. For further information about the Academy, contact Dr. and Mrs. Spurgin:

Hugh and Nora Spurgin
Bridgeport International Academy
285 Lafayette Street, Suite 200
Bridgeport, CT 06604
[www. bridgeportacademy.org](http://www.bridgeportacademy.org)