



MHEAC SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Connecting alums across Europe

Welcome Message

A Word from the European Council Chair

From my beach house in Portugal where I recently had the pleasure of hosting alums living in the area and visiting the Algarve, I am happy to share our latest news from across our European Mount Holyoke alum communities. So many exciting past and upcoming events and initiatives. Read on to discover the highlights.

In our last edition, we featured three MHC European alum authors and their recent publications. This time, we are pleased to present three alums from the Nordics who have kindly shared their stories. Discover how MHC equipped them for their journey, what interesting facts they discovered and personal impressions they developed about the country they now call home.

Where "home" is can evolve over time, and the support we find when moving to a new place can make all the difference. As alums in Europe, we can appreciate what it means to be an international student at MHC. To help cope with some of the challenges in current times, read up on the support being provided.

Contact your local MHEAC country delegate or me at mhc.european@gmail.com with any questions or suggestions for upcoming events to help us further connect alums across Europe.

Beachside greetings,

Catherine Jourdan '95



Chair, European Alum Council

Stay current by following us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), our [website](#), and the [Mount Holyoke European Alum Newsletter](#).

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Spotlight: Celebrating Uncommon Alums in the Nordics

Evelina Poumpalova '97



At Gilleleje Harbor on the northern coast of Zealand island

A Mount Holyoke alum shares her experience living in Denmark. Originally from Bulgaria, she moved to Copenhagen for an MBA and stayed for the hygge, sea, and food... Continue reading [here](#).

Lisa George- Svahn '98



At Zimbabwean embassy for International Women's Day

A Mount Holyoke alum reflects on living in Sweden, where she moved for love and stayed for its social equality... Continue reading [here](#).

Tiffany Tang '97



At Solvorn, in the west of Norway on Sognefjord, near the Tang Farm

A Mount Holyoke alum shares her experience living Norway, where she rekindled her connection to her heritage and teaches theatre... Continue reading [here](#).

Enjoy!

MHEAC supports the MHC Forward Fund and
Mount Holyoke International Students



International students across the United States are facing unprecedented uncertainty and political challenges. More than 20% of Mount Holyoke undergraduates come from outside the U.S., creating a vibrant and truly global campus.

The current challenges threaten not only the students' education but also their sense of safety and belonging. As one student shared with The Boston Globe on May 28, 2025, "Mount Holyoke isn't just where I study. It's where I am safe. Right now, I'm scared to leave the country — but I know this community will fight for me to stay."

This summer, over 120 international students are finding themselves having to live on campus. The cost of housing and meals for each student is approximately \$350 per week, or \$3,500 for the full summer. All these students need a safe place to stay, nourishment and community during a vulnerable time. As international alums, we are proud of this diversity and of the College's commitment to protecting and uplifting its international students. At the recent Mount Holyoke European Alum Council meeting, that included participants from 12 different countries, delegates discussed the topic and voted to donate from the Council funds \$5,000 to the MHC Forward Fund to support international students in need this summer. The European Alum Council hopes this will help make a difference in supporting the cause of MHC as a safe and nurturing place to be for a global community of students.

Mount Holyoke needs us all NOW and here is what you can do:

Visit the College Forged in Dissent [page](#) and share your story to strengthen our ability to defend the mission that shapes global citizens.

If you can consider it, make a gift to the [MHC Forward Fund](#). This fund enables President Danielle Holley and College leadership to respond swiftly and compassionately to students' needs. Your gift to this fund will offset the cost of summer housing, support services and programming for international students as well as offering legal support to international students as needed.

Thank you on behalf of all MHC international students!

Sneak Preview: Global Alum Alliance Website
Coming Soon!



Our online communications team, led by Elizabeth Ta'eed '09 and supported by Silvia Maulini '80 and members of MHEAC and of the Global Alum Alliance, is hard at work to develop the first-ever Mount Holyoke global alum website, created by alums for alums to foster connections within our international network.

Managed by a dedicated group of alum volunteers, the website will showcase the interests and accomplishments of the growing body of MHC alums who are from or living outside the U.S., and feature events and other offerings to help connect alums across the world.

Visually appealing and easy to navigate, the site will allow visitors to access information about international alum groups, past and future activities and special alum-led initiatives for students. Moreover, dedicated sections will highlight the achievements of our trailblazing siblings, the strength of our professional network... and more! Take a sneak preview at [HOME | MHC Global Alum Alliance](#).

Work is in progress and the official launch of the website is planned for the end of August. Stay tuned!

European Alum Council Survey: Results & Free Book Winners!

We recently surveyed our European alum community to gather your valuable insights on the MHEAC newsletters and how we can improve them to serve your needs. Thanks to all who participated! We're thrilled to share the highlights.

It's clear that a strong majority of you (72%) regularly open and read the newsletter, with many also clicking through to the linked content that leads to our website. Your feedback shows that our current amount of content feels "about right" for most, 45% prefer a blend of concise and more in-depth content, while 36% prefer short, quick reads with links. We have taken this opportunity to optimize the newsletter's format by having both link-driven quick reads and occasional deeper dives, respecting the preferences of 82% of our readers.

When it comes to what you'd like to see more of, your preferences are clear: "Upcoming events across Europe" (71%) and "Focused alum profiles/interviews" (69%) were top requests, closely followed by "Cultural spotlights on alums" (66%). We also learned that while the volume of MHC communications can sometimes feel overwhelming, overall feedback on the newsletter itself was largely positive. For those times when you might not click on feature stories, one of the main reasons cited was a lack of immediate interest in that specific topic. We will continually strive to provide more engaging content to a broader audience, such as exploring themes that highlight our shared MHC background, how it shaped and continues to shape us, and the experiences that connect us as a community.

We appreciate your engagement, and your preferences are invaluable as we continue to issue newsletters that aim to connect and inform our vibrant European alum community!

Huge thanks to all the alums who completed our survey and congratulations to the five alums who were selected as winners. They each received a copy of one of the books written by European alums that were presented in our previous newsletter. We wish them happy reading!

The winners are Natalie '82 (Belgium), Meghan '11 (UK), Bonita '73 (Italy), Elisabeth FF '85 (Germany), and Katherine '94 (Switzerland - not in picture)!



European Award for Graduate Study in Europe



Warm congratulations to Claire Fitzgerald '25 (left), who is the recipient of this year's MHEAC Award for Graduate Studies in Europe! Claire will move to Europe in the summer to pursue a Masters in Sustainable Energy Sciences at Reykjavik University in Iceland. Claire received her monetary award and diploma on campus in a small ceremony during commencement weekend. Attendees included Tzvetomira (Tessie) Laub '05, delivering the diploma on behalf of the European Council, and representatives of the McCulloch Center.

The MHEAC Award for Graduate Studies in Europe, managed in cooperation with the McCulloch Center for Global Initiatives at Mount Holyoke College, annually offers a monetary award to a Mount Holyoke graduating student who wishes to pursue graduate work in Europe. You can read Claire's essay and see the list of previous winners on our website [here](#).

Past & Upcoming Events by Country

**France – Barbara Greer '79 & Méryem Puill
Châtillon '80**



April 2025

A small group of French alums recently gathered at the Philharmonie de Paris for a wonderful performance of the musical *Gypsy*, where our very own Kate Combault '92 performs in the role of Tessa.



May 2025

Wonderful and joyful meeting of alums from all over the world in the Parisian region! Hosted by Meryem, the gathering brought together local alums and

alums who had met through the Sunday M&Cs and the French M&C sessions. It was also a mini reunion for three members of the class of '80, some living in France and some in the US. A fantastic, inspiring, and delicious Sunday lunch!



May 2025

Two local alums met for a charity walk in the Languedoc. A wonderful way to celebrate Mother's Day.



June 2025

Two yellow sphinxes ('91 and '79) met at the Musée Rodin in Meudon, right outside of Paris!

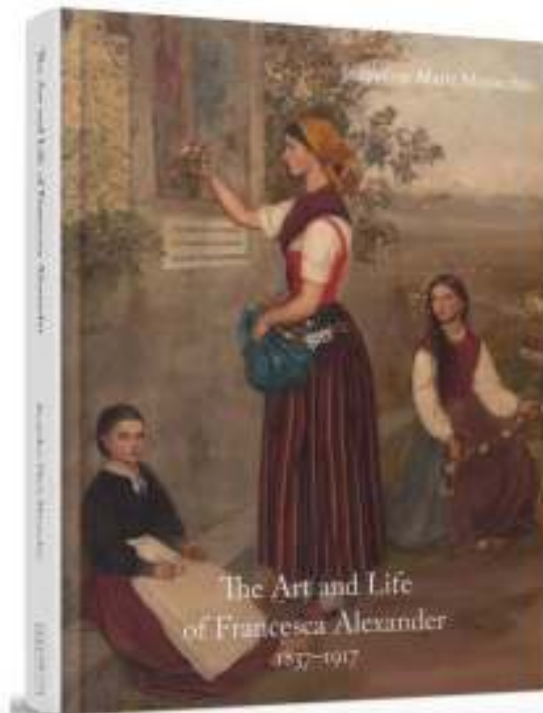
Germany – Catherine Jourdan '95



May 2025

Local alums got together in Munich to visit the latest exhibition at the Kunstshalle.

Great Britain - Virginia Ross '66



March 2025 in London

Rachel Elwes '89 hosted a launch of *The Art and Life of Francesca Alexander 1837–1917* by Jacqueline Musacchio (Wellesley '89) in Ben Elwes Fine Art in Mayfair, London. Jacki Musacchio attended to sign books and present her work.



May 2025 in London

Passyunk Avenue, next to the American Embassy and known for its cheesesteaks, gave Laurel Lunchers a taste of its home city, Philadelphia. Nine alums and two petite future Mohos celebrated the annual event in what Passyunk claims is a slice of Americana and a true American dive bar.





June 2025 in London

In London, local alums met up with fellow Chinese alum Sylvia Xue Bai '07 at a beautiful group exhibition she has curated, celebrating the launch of the London branch of her international art advisory brand OnceOnceOnce. The cosy and inspiring Salon, set in the elegant ambiance of Gégend Gallery and Teahouse, allowed participants to discover the stories behind the works on display and to get a glimpse of Sylvia's exciting new venture.



June 2025 in London

Anne-Gabrielle Boucher '13, a Fine Art Foundation student, graduated from the Art Academy in London. Her work was featured in this year's Art Academy Graduation Show, which was recently held in London and to which club members were invited.



July 2025 in London

Alums, their families, and friends threw an “indoor” picnic in Regents Park. Fun was had by all, in spite of the inclement weather!



Upcoming Events!

Upcoming attractions include regular events such as Mountain Day and the club's AGM, as well as pop-up happenings.

Iberian Peninsula - Elizabeth Ta'eed '09



April 2025

Great international alums meeting in the wine city of Estremoz in Portugal! Alums who met during the recent Symposium in Munich got together to renew their friendship and celebrate a birthday. It was a fun and special gathering, filled with joy and laughter.



May 2025

Spring greetings from Portugal PT, where local alum Tiffany and Spanish alum Belen met up in Porto very recently. Another friendship born at a European Alum Symposium!



August 2025

Catherine Jourdan '95 hosted a beach and poolside event at her house in the Algarve with friends and family, including her 15-year-old daughter, Elena, who gave a reading from her recently published book, *My Journey Through My Dog's Eyes*.

Ireland – Barbara Schmidt '69



Bowled over - Women Cricketers Through the Ages



Upcoming Event!

Date: Monday, 18th August

Time: 15:00 - 17:30 pm

Location: Phoenix Cricket Club, Phoenix Park, Dublin.

Celebrating Women's Cricket at Phoenix Cricket Club
Monday, 18 August, 15:00 - 17:30 pm - as part of Irish Heritage Week, in Phoenix
Cricket Club, Phoenix Park, Dublin.

Organized by Barbara Schmidt '69, this event brings together two of her passions, MHC and cricket. Barbara was on the first women's team in Phoenix in 1975 and she was the first woman to be President of a cricket club in Ireland in 1990.

Friends, partners and children are welcome. Tea and biscuits will be served. The event is free of charge and open to the public, but participants have to book through Eventbrite.

Please book early!

[Click here to book](#)

Latvia - Indra E. Priede '92



May 2025

Amazing meeting in Latvia, where our local alum rep welcomed a fellow Indian alum who recently moved to Riga. MHC siblings always manage to find each other!

The Netherlands – Silvia Maulini '80



May 2025

Special gathering in The Netherlands to welcome a visiting alum from California! Local alums and three Junior Year Abroad students got together for brunch in what used to be an old church in the center of Utrecht: an amazing setting for an amazing group of MHC siblings of all generations.



June 2025

"Vintage alums" ('57, '64 and '80) got together for a lovely lunch right outside of Amsterdam to celebrate 30 odd years of MHC friendship. A great reunion of former MHEAC chairs and symposium organizers!

Sweden – Nisha Nilsson '91



Summer 2025

Lovely summer afternoon in Uppsala with MoHos in Sweden: Anneliese, Elisabeth, Alex, Alice and Nisha. Lunch at Alex's new house was filled with lively discussions and sharing stories of intercultural experiences. This was followed

by a visit to the Gamla Uppsala Museum, where they peeked into a few tents recreating scenes from life during the Viking period at the Vendeltidsfestivalen.



June 2025 - MHC alum visitors in Stockholm se!

Our alums are connecting across Europe! In the top-left, Lullit '92 shares a morning "fika" (coffee break) and connects with fellow alums during her Nordic travels from Madison, Wisconsin. The bottom-left photo captures Italian 'FF '88 Lucrezia visiting from Milano, Italy. Finally, the image on the right shows local alums Pepe and Nisha who share a lunch catch-up with Amna '99, visiting from Boston.

Switzerland - Maya Mauroof '22



July 2025

Despite the bad weather, alums in Geneva had a wonderful time (re)connecting with each other and with current students in Switzerland. What was planned as a lakeside picnic turned into a cozy indoor brunch with homemade dishes and a spirited round of Mount Holyoke-themed trivia. Congrats to Lauren '24 who took home the trivia prize by answering tough questions about MHC!

Ongoing Virtual Events



The well-established **Sunday evening virtual M&Cs** continue to be very popular with alums from all over the world. If you wish to connect and chat with other MHC alums from all generations please feel free to join every Sunday evening at 8:00 PM (CET) 7:00 (GMT) at <https://mtholyoke.zoom.us/j/99698796120>.

The link to the sessions is also pinned in our [Mount Holyoke European Alum Facebook](#) group page each Sunday morning, together with a yummy cookie recipe, courtesy of Corinne Morgan '13.

Join Us for French!



Parlez-vous Français?

Are you eager to practice your French and connect with Francophile alums from all over the world? Remember to join Méryem Puill-Châtillon '80 every other Thursday at 6:30 pm CET for an hour of French conversation and fun. This bi-monthly event is open to all levels.

Bienvenue à toutes!

Check the [MHEAC Facebook](#) or email mhceurope@gmail.com page for the date of the next meeting! À bientôt.

Zoom link: <https://mtholyoke.zoom.us/j/92564224779> - no code required!

If you did not receive this newsletter as an email directly to your email box, and you want to keep up with the latest from the Mount Holyoke Alum Community of Europe...

[Sign up!](#)

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and our website: [Mount Holyoke European Alums](#).

*For more information, please contact the
Mount Holyoke European Alum Council at:
mhceuropean@gmail.com.*

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