

## NEWSLETTER

### **“The Art of Living Abroad - secrets for a happy and successful life” for courageous people on the move**

**August Issue (5)**  
“Make your choice”



**Tips for internationally mobile people who wish to maximise their success, happiness and work/life balance while living abroad**

#### **WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS NEWSLETTER**

1. A WORD FROM JEANNE
- 2. FEATURE ARTICLE – FINDING THE BEST SCHOOL ABROAD**
3. YOUR 10 MINUTE ASSIGNMENT TOOLBOX EXERCISE
4. BOOK TIP AND WHAT TO EXPECT IN OUR OCTOBER 2008 ISSUE
5. WHAT'S NEW AT HEINZER CONSULTING
6. ABOUT JEANNE

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This newsletter goes to subscribed readers only! **If you have not subscribed yet, please type “Newsletter please” in the subject line and e-mail me back.** The number of our newsletter subscribers grows daily which shows us the interest and relevance of this topic in today's globalised world. Please note that this is a bi-monthly issue. Our next issue will be published in October.

**Please pass this newsletter on to anybody you know around you who could benefit from it: colleagues at work, friends who are preparing for a life on the move, parents you know who just moved.** Thanks for keeping this issue unaltered.



#### **1. A WORD FROM JEANNE**

**Welcome back after a great and relaxing summer break!** It is now time to slowly get ready to get into our end of the year rhythm. Your newly gained energy will help you to start work again, to get your child ready for school or to finally change your career, ask for the promotion you always wanted etc. But wait just a minute: don't jump back into the fast lane straight away. Your relaxation effect will last longer if you take it easy and give yourself a week

to "cool off" and prepare mentally for the second half of the year. On my return from vacation, I decided to "hang out" for a whole week and rather than put pressure on myself to unpack the luggage and get the house in order. I went into my office and decided not to take the laptop back home. I checked my e-mail every other day instead of on a daily basis. And I decided to invite friends over before school starts. These are people that I never had the time to see and will certainly not find the time to have over once we all jump into our end of the year activities. I was so proud, I cannot tell you. We all felt the benefits. Not getting into the "busy mode" right away certainly prolongs your relaxation after your holidays and helps you to bridge the gap until you go on vacation again. By the way, have you planned your next holidays? Just knowing when you have your next break will keep you relaxed. I promise.

What else can you? I recently decided to finally look into hiring household support or an Au Pair. I came across a woman's comment "that taking an Au Pair on board had finally given the couple the freedom they wanted and that they felt for the very first time that they did not build their schedule around somebody but the other way round." What a strong reason to change your mind.

In addition, I start taking "Alexander Technique lessons" to finally get rid of my permanent back pain. According to Wikipedia "...some regard the Alexander Technique as a first-hand experience of the reality of body/mind unity. Proponents believe that its practice results in improved awareness and descriptive ability, as well as improved ease of movement, improved balance, stamina and less muscular tension. Additionally, those who practice it often report that Alexander Technique gives them an enhanced ability to clarify their thinking, gain objectivity about themselves and free themselves from unintentional self-imposed limitations." Enough reasons for me to dedicate one hour per week to go on my personal voyage of discovery to develop and grow and release the pain in my back. In what areas of your life would you like to improve your success and happiness in the second half of 2008?

We all have so many choices, especially when we live a life on the move. Choices can be a burden because they force us to define what we really want in order to make our best choice. In the "Assignment toolbox" you will find another brief exercise on how to make your best choice when making a crucial decision.

**Choosing the right school is another important choice to make.** As a **special contribution in this issue** we have an article written by **Liz Perelstein, the managing director from "School Choice International"**. I met Liz on the "Families in Global Transition Conference" in Houston (Texas) last year. Until then I had no idea that this great organisation even existed. Liz has a lot of tips to share with you when making your best choice in terms of schooling.

**This newsletter is both for you the International Manager, i.e. the one who is being sent abroad as well as for your Accompanying Partner (male or female).** We all need additional support, information and care when we move to a new location. We also face an increased responsibility for our lives and those of the people around us.

Have an excellent start into the second half of 2008!

Warm regards,

Jeanne  
Founder and President

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## 2. FEATURE ARTICLE – Making your best school choice

by our **GUEST AUTHOR LIZ PERELSTEIN, President of SCHOOL CHOICE INTERNATIONAL**

**For families moving abroad, finding the right schools can be the most important, and often the most stressful, aspect of relocation.** This is the case whether a child is performing well or poorly; whether parents focus on the academic or the social adjustment; or whether their concerns center on the changes today or anticipate that a difficult transition will take place on repatriation.

The juxtaposition of a new school with a different culture, combined with the intermingling of parental egos with their children's performance, makes this a complex process that requires time, thought, and effort.

### **GETTING OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT**

When you learn that you are relocating, think about what is important to you and your child regarding schooling. This does NOT mean thinking about which schools you want your child to go to. Rather, ask yourselves the following questions:

**1. Do you think of education as schooling or as something larger than schooling?** If the latter, what aspects of the overseas experience will contribute to your child's education?

**2. Do your answers to 1. have any impact on the school you might be seeking?** I.e. do you want to make sure you have sufficient holidays to travel as a family, or are you seeking a school that uses its city or country as a laboratory in which students can have hands-on experiences that reinforce concepts they learn in the classroom?

**3. What kind of learner is your child?** What are his strengths and/or weaknesses academically?

**4. What kind of school environment/teacher (s) has she thrived and/or struggled with in the past?**

**5. What kind of friends has he/she enjoyed being with?**

**6. What kinds of logistics govern your school choice?** How far are you willing to commute, do you have your children in two or three different schools, does your spouse travel regularly?

**7. Does your child have any special needs, including giftedness?** If so, what resources can you garner to provide you with information specific to her needs in the new country?

**8. Consider all possible options** – public/private, local, national and international. Don't narrow your options by approaching the situation with preconceived notions.

**9. Separate your child from yourself.** Learn all you can from your colleagues and friends, but recognize that your child is an individual, and no solution that works for one child will necessarily work for another.

### **DO YOUR RESEARCH**

**Once you have asked the right questions and put yourself in the information gathering frame of mind, it is time to do your research.**

**1. Use varied source materials,** including books, the internet, schools, friends and colleagues as well as specialists who do not have a vested interest.

**2. Ask a lot of questions** and get as much information as you can. At all times, remember that you are interviewing the schools as much as they are interviewing you. You are looking for a match, and if you

have to worry about screening information, the school you are considering probably is not a good fit for your child.

**3. There is no substitute for a visit.** As time undoubtedly will be limited, you may want to eliminate some schools where there may not be spaces or that seem unsuitable, but make sure to visit a range of schools including those you think you want to see as well as those that seem somewhat less obvious.

### **WHEN YOU VISIT KEEP IN MIND THE FOLLOWING**

**1. Don't be fooled by scores.** Numbers do not tell the whole story. Statistics can be manipulated to make any sense. Test scores often reflect teaching to the test rather than teaching critical thinking skills. Test material may not challenge the top learners.

**2. Facilities matter more to parents than they do to children.** Think about what your children really need to have a successful educational experience. In most cases, relationships with teachers and the peer group make a much greater difference.

**3. Children in transition have difficulties.** What are the support systems when things break down? Is the school proactive along these lines? What kind of communication is built in between faculty and parents?

**4. Families who have never moved and are not planning to move have very different needs than children in transition.** Focus on the needs of YOUR child.

### **THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

**1. Don't put all your eggs in one basket** – apply to a sufficient number of schools.

**2. Make sure you submit all supporting materials.** Unless your application is complete, you will not take your place in the queue.

**3. Understand your contractual, financial and ethical obligations** in terms of accepting a spot and moving to a different school if a wait list place becomes available.

**4. Be open minded** – sometimes a school that you don't think you want is the one in which your child will thrive.

### **Liz's special tip for your ideal school choice:**

**Recognize the opportunity inherent in change.** Change is intrinsically difficult for everyone. But children who experience the process of transition learn adaptation techniques for the future far more easily than do their peers. You are raising them to live in a global society, so understanding the process of making new friends, saying hello and goodbye, meeting different kinds of people and overcoming the adversity that is an inevitable part of moving will give them tools for success in life.

### **Jeanne's story and tips for making your best school choice:**

Choosing the right school for your child is certainly the number one challenge when it comes to relocating. The happier your child is in his/her new school, the more freedom you have as parents and the faster you get your old life back.

My daughter Lea is only six years old and I can say that we went through very challenging moments these past two years of her school life. In the Netherlands we signed her up for the German school as we had found a house only a few minutes away. It did not work out. I really felt that I had to take a decision to either integrate fully into the Dutch culture or back into the German culture after almost 20 years away

from Germany. We changed her to a Dutch/International School where she learned both English and Dutch. We were very happy.

A year later we moved to the United States. With nobody to provide us with tips on which school to choose (the International School was no option as we were living in New Jersey) and a company who felt that a public school (as it was English speaking) was good enough for us for the next few years, we signed Lea up for a Public School (state-funded).

What a change this was from an International School environment. The children at the school came from all kinds of socio-economic levels and backgrounds. We felt overwhelmed by the degree of diversity that we encountered. Was this the right environment for the next three to five years before reintegrating Lea into another International School? No, we quickly decided we had to change and went through the application process, which started much earlier than we had anticipated. With huge relief, we now look forward to this September, when she will start in an excellent private school. Our family will still have the chance to experience what the American School Life is all about, but in what feels like a much safer environment.

### **Jeanne's tips:**

- ✓ **Take a quick decision when you see that the school is not the right place**
- ✓ **Ask yourself: which environment do I as a mother feel comfortable in?**
  - What kind of parents are you looking for: more stay at home mums or professional mums, a mix of different nationalities or a clear majority of local families
  - How does the school integrate new children and new families from abroad? Will they assign a host family to you (ideally from a foreign country) that knows the school and can answer all your questions, even before you arrive?

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### **3. YOUR ASSIGNMENT TOOLBOX**

#### **TOOL 4 "Make your choice" - 10 minute exercise**

**A wise coach** gave me this tip a few months ago when I felt overwhelmed with all the choices I had to make in my new life abroad. She said: "Anything you need to decide on, just sit down and write down 5 reasons for it and 5 against it that come to mind." I now use it regularly, especially when I have to take quick decisions and do not have a lot of time. It really works and I realize that the simplest tools can sometimes be the most efficient (because we actually remember them).

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### **4. HOT SUMMER BOOK TIP//WHAT TO EXPECT IN OUR "SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2008 ISSUE"**

#### **David Miskimin and Jack Stewart "The Coaching Parent"**

Written for parents, step-parents, guardians, carers and grandparents this book presents you with proven techniques for relating to and helping the children in your care dramatically improve their life chances. A book for parents of children from pre-school to teenage years, it contains "coaching flash cards" to copy and use with your children.

"The Coaching Parent isn't just a simple system that works; it causes you to lift your game and reach new levels of relationships with your children." (Nikki and Mike, parents with two children)

"The Coaching Parent is a really innovative approach which allows parents and children to deal with difficult situations in a constructive and positive way." (Don McLaverty, father with two children)

## Edith Harding-Esch and Philip Riley "The Bilingual Family, A Handbook for Parents"

This is the second edition of the best-selling book that has provided practical advice to thousands of parents who want their children to grow up bilingual. It gives parents the information and advice they need to make informed decisions about what language "policy" to adopt with their children.

### FEATURE ARTICLE IN OUR SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER ISSUE:

#### "Staying anchored while abroad"

As internationally mobile people seek to succeed in their new environment it is not always easy to remember birthdays, anniversaries and other major events of loved ones back home. But taking steps to stay anchored to your home community while away is crucial in the long term. Even as we become absorbed into our new culture, cherished friends and family are growing and dealing with change in their lives back home. They need to know they still have a place in your life in order for them to keep a place for you in theirs during your assignment and on your return. For an expat, having to tend relationships with many people in multiple communities back home (family, town, schools, clubs, etc.), as well as needing to create a community and succeed in a foreign work environment, poses a challenge of time and logistics. This article will address successful strategies and pitfalls to avoid.

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## 5. WHAT'S NEW

Jeanne still runs [www.heinzerconsulting.com](http://www.heinzerconsulting.com) The Art of Living Abroad Center, and decided to take some time off to write her "book within", a self coaching guide for Accompanying Partners to allow them to live their best life abroad. She also hopes to be a speaker at the next "Families in Global Transition Conference" in Houston/Texas in 2009 together with her Associate Partner from Germany.

If you would like a **partner who can help you achieve more personal happiness and professional success and a great work/life balance while living your life on the move** please contact Jeanne at [jeanneheinzer@live.com](mailto:jeanneheinzer@live.com) for an informal and FREE discussion of your current challenges. Jeanne can coach you herself or can put you in touch with the right coach no matter where you live.

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## JEANNE'S BACKGROUND

Jeanne A. Heinzer is a trained Coach and Expat Expert who supports internationally mobile people to live their best life abroad. In her former career she was a Manager and Communications Specialist before providing cross-cultural training for international managers and their partners all over Europe.

Jeanne supports Accompanying Partners to see a new assignment as a big opportunity rather than a threat. She enables them to take an informed decision from the moment the assignment is being offered and to address all their worries and concerns before and throughout their assignment. As a result her customers feel a huge relief and the firm confirmation "that they can make it" no matter where they live. They feel encouraged and know exactly what their next steps are to live a happy and successful life in their new destination.

Jeanne uses solutions focussed Coaching as well as NLP (neuro linguistic programming) to guide them to new insights and ways of looking at an assignment and to turn existing challenges into powerful opportunities while living abroad.

**Jeanne offers the following for courageous people on the move:**

- O Pre-Assignment Coaching for Individuals/Couples "Is this assignment really for me/us?"
- O Life Coaching for "First Timers", i.e. for people preparing for their first assignment abroad
- O Life Coaching for "Multiple Country Changers"
- O Life Coaching for Accompanying Partners "What's in it for me and how can I make the best out of this new life abroad?"

Please contact Jeanne for an informal and FREE half an hour discussion of your current challenges and dreams to experience your life to the fullest.

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