“Leadership — that is what education is all about…I mean the kind of leader who subtly and visibly affects the lives of all around them and makes a better person of those whose lives they touch. A role model, yet so much more, because of that certain something they give off — that sense of life as an exciting and wonderful thing!”

-M. Crist Fleming, in a speech to faculty and staff in 2007

TASIS welcomed a veteran leader back to Lugano this summer, one who possess what Mrs. Fleming refers to above, and has had a profound effect on her schools.

Lyle Rigg began his TASIS career in 1979 as Assistant Headmaster at then three-year-old TASIS England. In 1982 he moved to Lugano and served as Headmaster for two years before returning to TASIS England in 1984 to serve as Headmaster until 1998. He left to lead the Pennington School in New Jersey from 1998 until his retirement in 2006.

Lyle’s definition of ‘retirement’ is different to most. A year later, he returned to Lugano to serve as interim headmaster until 2008, then to England to serve as interim headmaster from 2009-2010. He is now serving a two-year term as Headmaster of TASIS Lugano. “Recently, when I told an Italian-speaking friend that I was returning to TASIS for a third time she said, non c’è due senza tre, (‘there are never two without three’),” he says. “Rather curious. Was I destined to return to both schools for a third time after I had returned for a second?”

Lyle and his wife, the award-winning children’s author Sharon Creech, are delighted to be back where they spent the first two years of their married life. “We look forward to reconnecting with many friends,” Lyle says. “And there is gelato at Sara Li’s and pizza at both Bellavista and Mary’s. We also look forward to Swiss trains and strolling along the lake promenade in Lugano. And who knows, perhaps Sharon will be inspired to write a third book set in Montagnola!” Of course; non c’è due senza tre.

For Lyle, Mrs. Fleming’s spirit is very much alive on her campuses. “It's like she is watching over us, making certain that we continue to honor her vision. And it's a very nice, reassuring feeling for me,” he says. “TASIS has been such a big part of my life because I believe strongly in Mrs. Fleming’s vision, a vision that is carried on by so many. One of my major goals as headmaster is to ensure that we continue to stress and highlight the things that were so important to Mrs. Fleming: beauty, the development of good character, academic excellence, service, civility, good manners, the arts, compassion, and respect, just to name a few.”

Lyle is looking forward to introducing a new generation of students to Mrs. Fleming. “Because many of our students and teachers have not had the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Fleming, I look forward to finding ways to tell them about this remarkable woman so that she might come to life for them, too.”