



Dear Urban Alum,

In our first months at Urban, my husband, Igor Zagatsky ('95), and I had the chance to take a long bike ride together. It was in the days of the All School Trip to Pt. Reyes and students could bike out or take the bus. Igor and I chose to bike along with a dozen or so other students. We immediately saw our similarities—older, heavier bikes and hardier physiques than the other kids—when we met at the back of the pack. The teachers pulled behind us in the sag wagon, but never forced us in. They let us try as hard as we could and prove to ourselves that of which we were capable. We biked 100 miles?! The accomplishment buoyed our self-esteem through a first year in which we both felt different from the norm.

But the learning didn't stop there. Upon our return to campus, my mom pulled up in our family's wood-paneled Chevrolet Caprice station wagon ... I was ready to die, but when my mom offered Igor a lift, he gladly accepted. Bikes in the back, we drove out to 37th Avenue and this Berkeley girl got to see the Richmond District and learn about its community of Russian émigrés. I had no idea then that the shy boy sitting in the bench seat would one day be my husband, but I was beginning to see the depth and beauty of The Urban School's approach to education: by offering me new experiences, Urban was broadening my frame of reference so I could better understand myself and how I fit into the world.

At Urban, I would make friends who lived in Pacific Heights and friends who lived in projects, and discover that these externalities aren't everything, that we have a common thread of humanity. We all have to do our homework and struggle and face our limits, and we all have the potential to share our gifts with those around us. I'm so grateful for those lessons. The gift of community that Urban gave me still stands in my heart and the bonds I have with Urban friends are forever. They strengthen year by year because they're not based on status; they are based on the values of lifelong learning and compassion.

Today, I serve on Urban's Alumni Council and Igor is the school's director of information services. While the building may have morphed, we can assure you that the soul of the place has not. We hope you will consider sharing your gifts, financial and otherwise, with Urban today so the school can continue doing what it does best: bringing together diverse students from all over the Bay Area and unlocking their potential for self-knowledge, learning and love of community.

I hope you will consider a gift of any amount to Urban's 2013-14 Alumni Annual Fund. Your participation would mean so much to all of us.

Sincerely,

Kate Jessup ('95) and Igor Zagatsky ('95)
True Blue Society Donors: 10+ Year Circle

P.S. Kate and I are making a gift to Urban this year as we do every year. We hope you'll join us in this tradition.—Igor ('95).
To make a gift online, please visit www.urbanschool.org/give.

