Twenty years ago, two talented teens, one from the village of Bourbonnais, IL, 60 miles south of the Chicago Loop, and one from Dow, an unincorporated community downstate, came to IMSA.

FAST FORWARD.

After time on the East and West Coasts, Jessica and Sam moved to Chicago in 2007. Married in 2003, and now the proud parents of Maggie, 4, and Jack, 2, they both are successful executives, making their mark and paying it forward.

MAKING THEIR MARK

As director of sustainable supply for McDonald’s USA, Jessica leads company efforts to partner with its suppliers to raise the bar of ethical and environmental sustainability across the entire food industry. Jessica says these efforts are the right thing to do but also good for business - supporting long-term supply, efficiency and brand trust.

A serial “entrepreneur,” Sam has successfully launched, grown and sold companies in the consumer Internet sector. He is co-founder and CEO of OkCupid and recently took on a new role at Match.com, as CEO of the entire global personals business at IAC/Match, overseeing over 30 brands in the US as well as the leading dating business in Europe (Meetic) and presences in Latin America and Asia. A driving force in the growing Chicagoland innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem, Sam’s leadership of Excelerate Labs enables promising digital entrepreneurs to get their start.

PAYING IT FORWARD

Jessica and Sam credit IMSA as key to their development as learners and leaders. In appreciation, in 2011-12 they made a substantial donation to the IMSA Fund for Advancement of Education to support three areas:

IMSA/IMSA Fund greatest need. Unrestricted funds support needs which vary year to year depending on program plans and the availability (or not) of other funding sources. Jessica says, “Not-for-profits need unrestricted gifts that allow them the flexibility to fill needs that maintain everyday excellence in addition to support that would fund special projects.”

IMSA TALENT Endowed Fund. Total Applied Learning for Entrepreneurs provides learning experiences to stimulate and encourage STEM entrepreneurial projects by IMSA students and other TALENTed Illinois students. Sam says, “I am thrilled that IMSA TALENT staff and students have literally moved into 1871, Chicago’s digital start up hub – very cool.”

www.1871.com

Eric McLaren Endowed Fund for Integrative Learning and Ethical Leadership. This will support needs such as student inquiry, research and service learning projects, student leadership development, training and interdisciplinary curriculum. In tribute to Eric and Kim (Vitek) McLaren, Jessica and Sam wrote: “We are so fortunate to have benefited from ‘the IMSA way,’ so thankful you have been there to help make it what it is, and so honored to play a small part in recognizing your leadership and inspiration.”

As the endowed funds grow through gifts from other donors, the amount of annual support they provide will grow, creating a permanent source of funding for future needs.

As volunteers and donors, Jessica and Sam encourage other alumni to actively support IMSA by making the IMSA Fund a philanthropic priority. Sam adds, “I look forward to being an IMSA Great Minds Program speaker on February 25, 2013, at 1871 and hope to see my fellow alumni there!”

On the Yagans’ generosity, IMSA President Dr. Glenn W. “Max” McGee said, “Jessica and Sam have stepped up for IMSA and Illinois in significant ways, helping us continue to make the case for support with legislators and other donor prospects. Their gifts of ‘time, talent and treasure’ mitigate challenges in these economic times and position IMSA for a vibrant long-term future.”