

Olympic Figure Skater Vincent Zhou Opens ICL Academy School Year with Motivational Keynote

"Try things for fun and push boundaries."

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EINPresswire.com/ -- "My family emphasized academics. If I didn't get

good grades, I didn't get to skate," shared Olympian and ICL Champion Mentor Vincent Zhou. Zhou, who graduated from an online high school that gave him the flexibility to train and become one of the world's most technically advanced figure skaters, was the keynote speaker at [ICL Academy's](#) 2024-2025 orientation. "Be scholarly. Think for yourself," he added.

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*Olympic Figure Skater and ICL
Champion Mentor Vincent
Zhou*

The first figure skater in the world to try – and land – a quadruple lutz, Zhou explained how he learned to do this extremely challenging jump, advising ICL Academy students not to shy away from pushing boundaries. "To become great, to become the best of the best, you have to have that spark. I tried the quadruple lutz for fun, and ended up separating myself from the pack. But if I didn't believe I could do that jump, I never would have been able to do it. The hardest battle was already won – not giving up."

Zhou continued, emphasizing that boundary-pushing transfers to anything in life, citing technological innovations as an example. "If most people think one way, then what's really possible is probably a few steps ahead of that. Look at tech startups. I encourage you to be innovators, to be leaders – find the boundary and push it." He reminded the students to keep trying things for fun.

Zhou is one of 33 [champion mentors](#) for [the ICL Foundation](#) and ICL's accredited virtual school for 5th-12th grade, ICL Academy, that caters to high performance individuals (e.g. athletes, actors, recording artists) so they can pursue their primary passion while getting an exceptional



ICL Academy and The ICL Foundation

education.

"I was absolutely blown away watching Mr. Zhou at the Olympics, so having the opportunity to hear him speak about his experiences was one that I was so blessed to have," said ICL Academy student Priyali Kulkarni after Zhou's keynote. "I loved how he was realistic with his future and his goals in regards to his passion, and how he talked about finding an in-between with skating and academic pursuits. The point about having confidence in yourself and pushing the boundaries of what is possible was of utmost relevance to my passion as a filmmaker. His advice is something that I will now make an effort to internalize because I know it'll greatly help reach my personal best as an artist."

"All of our champion mentors volunteer their time and life wisdom to our ICL Fellows because they truly care about education and inspiring the next generation of young leaders and champions," said Kirk Spahn, founder of the ICL Foundation. "They support the school's mission of building the whole person, talking with students about life goals and challenges, and not necessarily just about the sport itself."

The mentors work with the students in a variety of ways, from holding live webinars on topics such as training and teamwork, to giving keynote speeches on the importance of education, to meet-ups with students in person as opportunities arise.



Vincent Zhou addresses ICL Academy students



Figure Skater Vincent Zhou at 2018 Winter Olympics



Vincent Zhou at 2022 World Figure Skating Championships

Several ICL Academy current and former students have been or are aspiring to be Olympic and professional athletes. "Everyone at ICL, from students to champion mentors, observe and model the behaviors of these high performance individuals, dreaming of how they will maximize their potential in their chosen passion or pursuit," said Spahn.

Other ICL champion mentors are titans in their respective fields, and hail from the worlds of business, film and television, journalism, and the performing arts.

About ICL Foundation

The ICL Foundation's mission for over 2 decades has been to inspire, educate and support aspiring youth leaders to make a positive impact on their local and global community. Now in its 23rd year, The ICL Foundation is dedicated to shaping a future where flexible, world-class education becomes economically accessible to all high-achieving students. For students, based on need and merit, the Impact Learning Model™ enables high performing students to emerge as leaders within the global community. This combines elite accredited courses, character and service leadership training, mentorship, mental skills training, and real world application. The ICL foundation includes global icons and world champions as mentors to the ICL Fellows. In addition to Zhou, champion mentors include: Novak Djokovic, Monica Seles, Bode Miller, Nirav Tolia, Clive Davis, Neil Degrasse Tyson, Malcolm Gladwell, Kerri Walsh Jennings, Steve Nash, Bode Miller, and many others.

About ICL Academy

Born out of The ICL Foundation's Impact Learning Model™, ICL Academy offers world-class academics in a year-round accredited online school. In 2015, the first incarnation of ICL Academy was founded by educator Kirk Spahn, and accredited as a grade 5-12 hybrid school in Los Angeles, focused on performing arts students. In 2019, ICL Academy became a fully online school, and expanded to meet the needs of driven students across the country. ICL's vibrant community was built on, and continues to revolve around, the foundation of the 6 P's: Passion, Purpose, Process, Perspective, Perseverance, and Personalization.

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