



PHOTO BY MELISSA VALLORES

SUZY AMIS CAMERON
MUSE SCHOOL

When director James Cameron's wife, Suzy Amis Cameron, discovered that her preschool daughter, Claire, was learning to count using "really yummy" M&Ms, she was horrified (both from an educational and a dietary standpoint). As a former model who traveled the world, living in Paris for three years, and later as an actress (she met her now-husband on the set of *Titanic*, playing the daughter of the elderly Rose DeWitt Bukater), she became both vegan and an adamant organic eater. Having previously considered homeschooling her children, but caving to concerns about the lack of social interaction, she decided to take action and launch her own kind of school, her way. Amis Cameron's sister, Rebecca Amis, had done the same in Wichita, Kan., opening a small school to fit her own values and priorities. Amis then helped her sister to conceive the progressive educational center, now known as Muse. While they originally planned to teach in the guesthouse of the Camerons' Serra Retreat home in Malibu, the New Roads School offered them a temporary space for rent on their nearby campus. After a year there, they found a permanent home in a bucolic setting on a 22-acre ranch in Topanga Canyon, where the school remains today. It turns out that many parents were like Amis Cameron: also looking for a school like Muse, which encourages passion-based learning and curiosity, and provides instruction about living sustainably. Launched in 2006 with only 11 students, Muse now has an enrollment of more than 130 pupils, from preschool through middle school, with plans to open a high school next fall. Currently, there are eight sister institutions across the globe. To raise money for the nonprofit school (which grants scholarships to more than half of its students), Amis Cameron founded the Red Carpet Green Dress campaign five years ago. Intended to be a one-time contest, the competition, which challenges designers to create gowns made entirely of sustainable materials, is now a worldwide event. This year's winner, Michael Badger (mentored by fashion icon Vivienne Westwood), saw his dress donned by Bond Girl Naomie Harris at the Oscars. "The motto around the Cameron household has been 'Go deep or go home,'" says Amis Cameron. Or in her case, go global. museschool.org