

Fall 2021

the GRYPHON

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEADOWRIDGE SCHOOL

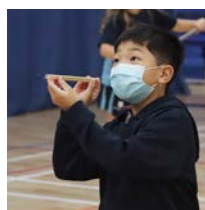




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FULL STEM AHEAD

Ms. Mohoruk's years-long mission to bring robotics to Meadowridge School



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ON THE COVER

Split, space, poke, plant. Huddled around Mr. James Willms, students watched as the OE3 Coordinator demonstrated the four steps of planting garlic. Students learned how to split the bulbs apart, space out spots, poke deep holes and then plant cloves one by one. Once they had these four steps figured out, students got to work and the Regenerative Farm came alive, a flurry of planting and learning and conversation. With gardening gloves available, most students chose to use their bare

hands instead, welcoming the feel of dirt and the cloves on their fingers. As students split the bulbs apart (being extra careful not to peel the cloves!) Mr. Willms wandered about, reminding students of the impact of their work. When ready to pick and be harvested in the summer, the garlic bulbs will be donated to local food banks and delivered to families in need. When Mr. Willms first envisioned the Farm, it was for projects exactly like this one, a space where students could be put in the centre of learning and doing and giving back. And, by using responsible growing methods, doing so to benefit not only local food banks, but also the climate by rebuilding soil organic matter and restoring its biodiversity.

TIPS FOR PLANTING GARLIC AT HOME

- > Separate the cloves and plant each one pointed head up about 1 to 2 inches apart.
- > Don't peel the skin! It is important for growing.
- > Plant your cloves in rich, well-drained soil.
- > Plant four to six weeks before hard frost.



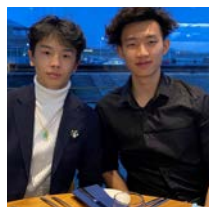
Thank you to the Sidhu Family who donated the 1,200 garlic bulbs to make this all possible!



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CONNECT

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ONE ON ONE





A conversation with the Head and Deputy Head of Meadowridge School.

Here's a curious fact.

In their first years teaching at Meadowridge School, Mr. Banack and Mr. Donaldson both experienced more than slight mishaps. An overcrowded extension cord nearly erupted Mr. Banack's classroom in flames ("no one was hurt!" he assures us) and a soccer injury took Mr. Donaldson to the hospital with a broken leg. Luckily for our school, the pair has had much greater success since then. We sat down with the Head and Deputy Head to talk about teaching, learning, and the future of Meadowridge School.

Q How were your first few months on the job?

Scott Banack (SB): I feel very well supported, fortunate that I can come to work with such great people each day. People are excited to be back, and there's a positive energy around the school. We're seeing assemblies starting back up, parents dropping in, and hosting events once again. The Welcome Back Picnic had such an overwhelming energy and excitement. Seeing this over the last few months has been terrific.

Terry Donaldson (TD): I agree. It's been great to be back with students and see parents again. With the effects of the pandemic beginning to subside, you can start to see the future a little better. It's been busy, too, with our three school evaluations which have been my focus. School events have also been great to see, and we were so glad to welcome parents back to campus for the Welcoming Back Picnic and Curriculum Nights.

SB: Parents were equally as excited to be back. Several came up to me during those curriculum nights and said, "I don't even know what we're talking about today, but I'm just so happy to be here!". [laughing]



Q What has kept you both at Meadowridge for so long?

SB: I've been given lots of opportunities for professional growth, which has been a big factor for me. And, at the risk of sounding corny, I also believe we do really meaningful work. Meadowridge is a place where I'm able to grow, but I'm also fulfilled. I'm in a unique position to know and trust the people I work with. My children both attend the school, and they absolutely love it. No matter what grade they're in or teacher they have, I know they'll have a fantastic experience.

TD: For me, I think it's the inclusive and diverse community. Over the last 21 years, the school has changed significantly and has aligned more and more with my own personal philosophy. The inquiry-based learning and 'process over product' aspect of the school focuses on development of the whole child. That's been

important for me. I believe we should nurture students academically, socially, and physically and we do a great job of that at the school.

SB: I've also appreciated the emphasis of process over the outcome. It's how we do things, and the experiential education and relationship-building with not just each other, but also our environment has been important to me.

TD: Our campus is built for that, and we not only have amazing facilities, but also an amazing community.

SB: Hugh [Hugh Burke, Meadowridge's Headmaster from 2001 to 2021] once said to me "if you can't teach at Meadowridge, you can't teach." It's true. Our school provides the best setting, students and families. Teachers here have every opportunity to flourish.

Q What inspired you to become educators?

SB: Way back in middle school, my volleyball coach was a new teacher. He was—and still is—an outstanding man. He believed in me and encouraged me. I wouldn't have described myself as an athlete back then, but he did.



He encouraged me to become one. I realized early on I wanted to coach and teach and connect with kids too.

TD: I loved working with kids, especially younger kids. I did quite a bit in high school, working with camps of various sorts. My work with special needs students steered my interest towards teaching too. I also had a literature teacher in Grade 12 who inspired me and fed my love of reading. It was all of these things that sort of melded together. I knew I wanted to be a teacher.

Q What inspired your jump from teaching to administration?

SB: I was fortunate that opportunities were made available to me. I realized if I coached, I could inspire 12 kids on a basketball team, but if I became an athletic director, I could support 20 coaches who could help even more kids. My realm of influence grew when I took on more responsibility. I also felt like I could contribute to the bigger picture, long range parts of a school that I also enjoyed.

TD: It was an opportunity and not a conscious decision. In my first administrative position, I realized leadership is fun and exciting in

its own way. With my knowledge about curriculum, teaching, pedagogy, and philosophy, I also felt like I had something valuable to offer. I love working with parents and kids and teachers in that way. For my work to be meaningful, I need to have that educational and student connection.

Q Where do you see Meadowridge five years from now?

SB: I see the school with a completed master plan, and with all the buildings in place. The school will be filled with many students engaging with important problems around sustainability and the environment. The way we interact with each other will become important, and we'll be in a great spot to tackle social justice problems and find solutions.

TD: I see our community using our facilities in better and better ways.



The North Forest and trails have now become so well used, and our new facilities will grow in the same ways. The growth and vibrance will continue to take off. So many things have changed at the school, but our culture and community continue to grow in a cohesive way. As things have changed, we have also grown from being a more “traditional” private school, something that was more common back then, and become more focused on students as individuals.

SB: Despite those changes, we still have important hallmarks that have stayed the same. I still remember my first staff meeting at Meadowridge and the way people reached out and welcomed me. That still happens. At our school, students, teachers, alumni, families, and friends share a genuine connection with one another. People care about each other and want to collaborate. That’s the biggest piece. Connection. We still welcome each student in the morning by name. We keep, and will continue to keep, opportunities like this so we maintain the closeness of our community. We have traditional practices, but also forward-thinking practices. We have high expectations...

TD: ... but we also play in the mud. [laughing]

Q What is unique about our school?

SB: A lot of schools will talk about inquiry-based learning and academic achievement and community. We have those things, but it’s the ways we have them that makes us unique. It’s about process. Inquiry-based learning grows into meaningful knowledge because we engage students’ heads, hearts,

and hands. Students learn and are supported by dedicated teachers, caring parents, and knowledgeable alumni who help them achieve not just academically, but emotionally, socially, and physically. It’s how we learn and care for one another that sets us apart.

TD: It is a bit of an intangible, but I’m reminded about what makes us unique when I meet with people from outside our school. We have many practicum teachers and other visitors and they’ll remind me, *there’s just a feeling here*. You feel it from the moment you walk in the door.

SB: This feeling was once explained to me as the way we talk to people.

TD: Everyone at the school works hard, has fun, and enjoys being here. This nurtures respectful communication and a collaborative and open environment.

Q What are you most looking forward to in the year ahead?

SB: With leaders, teachers and students back together again, there’s a newfound appreciation for the things we have. Field trips are happening again, so are sports, and there is so much excitement. This is a big year of reflection for our school, but also of growth. Our school is entering an exciting time.

TD: Change is exciting for me. We have learned a lot about schooling and education because of the pandemic, and it has opened up opportunities to rethink some of the things we do. For the year ahead, I’m looking forward to getting back to it, but also exploring some of these opportunities. With the accreditations nearly wrapped up, it is a perfect time for this reflection.



MR. SCOTT BANACK

HOMETOWN
Edson, Alberta

HIDDEN TALENT
You’ll be surprised as us. “Ballroom dancing—I danced competitively for about four years. I never won, but I did place in the top five out of 120 couples in an amateur competition.”

BEST ADVICE
Told to him by his father: “You can learn a lot about people by how they act when they think you’re not watching.”

MOST UNUSUAL JOB
Though Mr. Banack has delivered newspapers, worked at a gas plant, and been both a Sandwich Artist™ and short order cook, being a sanitary engineer at a lumber mill takes top billing. What does that mean, exactly? “Sweeping up saw dust for 12 hours a day.”

BIGGEST PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT
“Getting married and becoming a father.”

PREFERRED WAY TO RELAX
“Watching sports, whatever is in season.” Or, when he hopes to get away from the TV for a while, “being at our family cabin by the lake.”

LOCAL RECOMMENDATION
After enjoying the world’s best breakfast sandwich from Big Feast, take a hike at Cliff Park. “My son Ethan sponsors a trail there, so every couple of weeks we take a hike, walk the dog, and pick up litter.”

RECENT READS
Gifted to him by school parents, Mr. Banack’s two most recent reads include *The Road Less Stupid* by Keith J. Cunningham and *Never Lose a Customer Again* by Joey Coleman. A third book, *Education Reimagined* was given to him by the book’s author, Ted Spear. “He is a really level-headed guy who balances high-level moral callings with a very practical approach.”



MR. TERRY DONALDSON

HOMETOWN
Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

HIDDEN TALENT
Trivia and — who would’ve guessed? — triathlons and marathons. “I’ve competed in eight marathons and even qualified for the Boston Marathon in my age bracket.”

BEST ADVICE
Told to him early in his teaching career (and proven to him time and time again), “Don’t give up on kids.”

MOST UNUSUAL JOB
Though the mosquitos, 22-hours of light, remote locations, and monotonous work was bad, the worst thing about Mr. Donaldson’s most unusual job was this: “working as a tree planter paid me more than my first year of teaching.”

BIGGEST PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT
“Sticking to it. After 40 years, I still love and look forward to what I do. I feel more energetic and better educated.”

PREFERRED WAY TO RELAX
Swimming and reading. “Anything set in places from around the world, where there’s a cultural or historical piece that I can learn.”

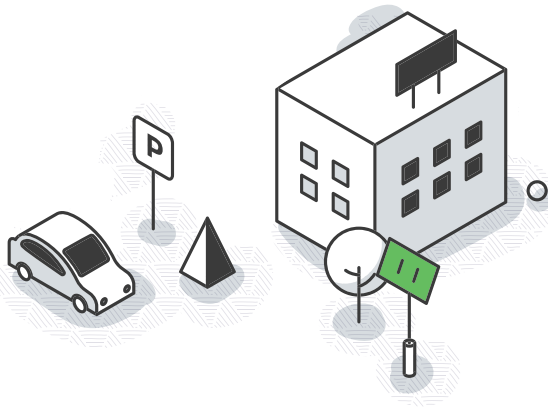
LOCAL RECOMMENDATION
Enjoy the warm water and tall trees of Sasamat Lake in Belcarra.

RECENT READS
Speaking to his love of historical and cultural fiction, Mr. Donaldson’s recent reads include *Mudbound* by Hillary Jordan and *Cry, the Beloved Country* by Alan Paton.

CAS projects are an opportunity for students to develop their leadership skills, collaborate with peers or members of the community, and improve their skills in a chosen area. Each project must be a minimum of one-month and usually combine two of the three strands of Creativity, Activity and Service.

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Rules of the Road: Parking Lot Safety Video

DAPHNE L.
(GRADE 12)



The school parking lot can be a bit chaotic during pick-up and drop-off. Or, as Grade 12 student Daphne puts it, “kind of a nightmare”. Seeing it for herself each morning and afternoon and hearing her mom’s complaints, she was struck with a unique idea for her CAS Project: a parking lot safety video. Equal parts creativity and service, Daphne hoped to use her talent for filmography to keep members of our community safe (and herself and her peers to class on time!). Daphne started exploring film when she was eight years old and now even leads film camps herself. So while filming was no issue, there was one slight obstacle... she doesn’t drive. Daphne took time to learn the ins and outs of driving and navigating the parking lot by speaking to school administration, parents, and students. She learned of their major concerns and used them to form her safety tips and shot list. “My goal was to make the parking lot slightly less chaotic and improve the experience,” she shares.

QUICK TAKES

Best part

Editing the video and using *Adobe Premiere Pro*, which I got just recently but have been too busy with schoolwork to really use.

Worst part.

Filming the video in the hot August sun wearing a wool sweater. Also, deciding to film the video the day before exams.

What I learned.

How to adapt. I needed to work with different people and make sense of the rules. It was something new that I had to practice at.

What’s next.

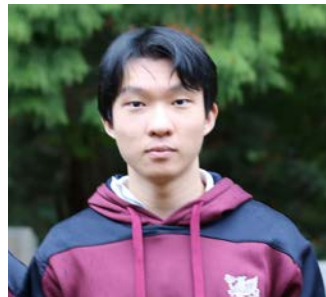
I’m working on films for my university applications and working on a personal short in my spare time. It’s a movie inspired by a Chinese, mythological horror story.



[View Daphne's
parking lot
safety video.](#)

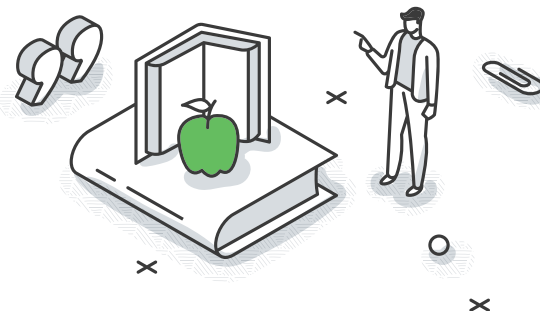
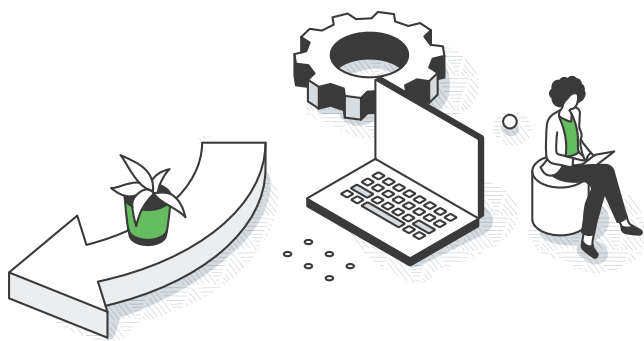
Building Community: Translation Services

LINDA Z.
JASON D.
NICK L.
(GRADE 12)



Linda, Jason, and Nick understand the importance of knowing the place you call home. Having only been in Canada for a collective 13 years – Linda and Nick moved here in Grade 7, Jason in Grade 9 – all three of them have spent lots of time getting to know new places. Doing so not only helped them settle in and appreciate their new homes more fully, but also inspired their CAS Project focus: translating local museum websites and brochures.

Linda, Jason, and Nick remember visiting local museums when they first arrived in Maple Ridge and realizing their parents, and other people just like them, couldn’t read the English materials. They wanted to learn about our history, cultures, and people, but couldn’t. Fluent in both Chinese and English, the group members saw an opportunity to help. Linda, Jason, and Nick started emailing local museums and began working with them to provide translated materials. Though translations can be tough, the group enjoyed finding the meanings of things, choosing the right words, and “playing with language.” Thanks to their efforts, the histories of our local areas can be learned by many more people for years to come. “Learning the history of a place is a basic respect,” the group nods, “and it’s really important in building understanding and connection.”



QUICK TAKES

Best part

Taking the time to find the right word or translate a tricky sentence. Though some sentences can take lots of time, there's nothing more satisfying than figuring out how to translate it at last. It was also great to learn about some of Maple Ridge's unique stories. We had a pirate arrested in Whonnock, and a train robber named Billy Miner.

Worst part.

Finishing a really tricky sentence, then scrolling down and seeing how many more paragraphs of them you have left!

What we learned.

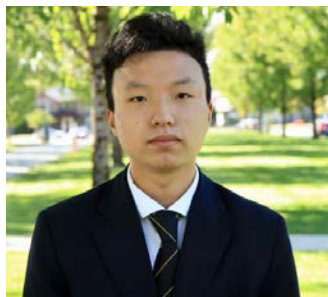
Stepping out of our comfort zones and communicating with people you wouldn't normally talk to. We learned how to talk to strangers, how to submit proposals, and how to refine our language.

What's next.

If the museums need us, we will definitely help. We are already thinking of other helpful things to translate—exhibit labels, for example—and are thinking of making a translated video tour of some of the museums.

The Meadowridge Debate Tournament

AKIRA Y.
PETER Y.
ISABELLA Z.
(GRADE 11)



Peter knew had a good CAS project in mind, but he also knew he needed help to make it happen. It would be, he realized, a large undertaking with lots of planning and organization involved. After Isabella offered to help ("he kind of dragged me in," she laughs) and then Akira, he had not only a plan, but also a talented team to make it happen. Together, the three students would plan Meadowridge School's first ever debate tournament. Peter, Isabella, and Akira each brought their own abilities, but admit it was an entirely collaborative process with everyone helping whenever and wherever was needed. With some help from Peter's debate coach, the three made all the plans, wrote all the schedules, launched registration, and started advertising and outreach. "It was a good team effort" they nod. With the website and registration launched, the team reached out to local academies, other schools, and their peers. With each day, more and more teams signed up. All the while, the team was also hard at work hiring professional judges.

Their efforts paid off, and the team welcomed 60 teams and 35 judges over the two day tournament.

QUICK TAKES

Best part

Seeing all the teams register. One email after the next, seeing participants and judges sign up was very satisfying.

Worst part.

Advertising is the absolute worst. People don't care or listen, and you're expected to grab their attention.

What we learned.

Event management and learning how to plan and get people to actually come. Really, it's about learning to manage people. We learned how to communicate with each other, with teachers, with the school administration, with judges and with other debaters.

What's next.

A spring tournament! That's next. We want to make this a seasonal event. Also, after we graduate, we want this to continue. We don't want this to just die out.

notes

new and noteworthy



Grad tie ceremony

During a livestream ceremony for the whole school to see, Grade 12 students received the highly coveted and much anticipated grad tie, a gryphon-clad neckpiece worn only by our graduating class. With eight lifers in the group of 48, some students have waited as many as 14 years for this day to come.



Welcome Back Picnic

Given the chance (at last!) to spend some time together, the Meadowridge community gathered on campus for a fun family event. With delicious food, ice cream, games, a magician, and a face painter or two, the Welcome Back Picnic kicked off the new school year wonderfully.



Spirit Day

Donning house shirts and face paint and all things orange, green, red, and blue, members of Whonnock, Fraser, Kanaka and Alouette represented their houses while vying for the top score. After an afternoon of competitions involving knowledge, skill, and strength, Alouette came out victorious with 200 points.



Athletics back in action

After a year-and-a-half-long absence from competitive sport, Gryphon athletes were eager to jersey up again. Volleyball and soccer teams took to the fields and courts, while the Sport Performance Enhancement club started back up in the fitness centre.



Terry Fox Run

Students brought it toonies and took to the trails for our annual Terry Fox Run. After stretches and a three-kilometre run around campus, the Meadowridge community helped raise \$1,703 for the Terry Fox Foundation.



National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Every year, we wear orange in remembrance of the Indigenous children who were victims of the residential school system and to honour the survivors' families and communities that were affected. Our community donned orange on this day for awareness, while class activities, conversations and full-school assembly helped to educate and inform.





Kinderbuddies meet

Kinderbuddy duos became instant best friends during their first meet-up with a walk through the forest, some playground fun, and a sandcastle or two.



Senior Girls Volleyball places top ten in the Province

The Senior Girls Volleyball team made their mark on the provincial scene, earning a top ten placement in the 'Single A' GVISA Eastern Division.



Halloween

The elementary costume parade kicked off a day of Halloween fun, including trick-or-treating in the north forest, a pumpkin carving contest, and the always anticipated, much loved Halloween Fun Night.



Meadowridge Debate Tournament

Three Grade 11 students initiated and planned Meadowridge's first ever Debate Tournament. The online event, which took place online over two days, welcomed professional judges and over 60 teams from across British Columbia.



Diwali

Our community enjoyed a Diwali-themed meal by SAGE Dining, decorations made by parent volunteers, and classroom activities for a colourful (and safe!) Diwali Celebration.



Remembrance Day

Remembrance Day brought the Meadowridge community together for the first full school assembly in nearly two years. Performances, speeches and awareness help pay tribute and educate us all about the sacrifices our veterans have and continue to make for us each day.



Head's Report

Each year, the Head of School publishes an annual review of the school. With information about everything from the arts and athletics to university acceptances and outdoor pursuits, the report is released to provide parents with a transparent look at our school.

Have something new and noteworthy you would like to share?

Share your update at communications@meadowridge.bc.ca



We all play

“What if a group of people told you that you couldn’t celebrate Diwali, or Christmas, or Chinese New Year?”

Ms. Chelsea Hamaguchi watched as her students struggled to understand this difficult question and reminded them, hard as it was to

believe, that this is precisely what happened to Indigenous Peoples not too long ago. With National Truth and Reconciliation Day approaching, the Physical Health educator wanted her students to understand the significance and importance of the day. This tough question sparked more questions and conversations and activities that would help students learn about Indigenous Peoples’ cultures and traditions and histories. Ms.

Hamaguchi then found traditional Indigenous Games that would only tie into the PHE curriculum but also promote Indigenous Ways of Knowing. The ‘stealing rocks’ game, similar to capture the flag, showed students that games are often inspired from or similar to those from other cultures. The ‘hunting’ game, meanwhile, showed them the importance of hunting and Indigenous ways of living.

“As an educator, I have the opportunity to make a difference in how our students view the world and the people who live in our community, students will grow up having a greater understanding and appreciation for the people we see in or community today.”

MS. HAMAGUCHI



Try Indigenous-inspired games at home

All games adapted from HIGH Five*

Stick and Ring

EASTERN WOODLAND NATIVES

“This hand game helps children develop hand-eye coordination and accuracy.”

Ages: 4+ years

Participants: 2 participants

Equipment: A ring and a stick

Instructions:

Participants stand apart from one another; one holds a ring, the other a stick.

The ring holder tosses the ring in the air, while the stick holder tries to fly through the centre of it.

After a few rounds, participants switch sides.

Foot tag

INUIT

“Giving children opportunities to practice balance, coordination and speed were very important in Inuit communities as these skills built smart and agile hunters who would bring home food for the community.”

Ages: 6+ years

Participants: 2 participants

Equipment: None

Instructions:

One person is designated as “it”.

The person who is “it” uses his or her own foot to tag the foot of their opponents.

Once the other person is tagged, the players switch roles.

One Foot High Kick

INUIT

“The game was played by all to develop skills to deal with the different types of land conditions the Inuit people had to face during their hunting seasons. Hunters had to be quiet, fast, and agile to have successful hunts to provide for their families.”

Ages: 10+ years

Participants: 2+ participants and a judge

Equipment: Something to serve as a target for kickers

Instructions:

Participants are given three attempts to kick the target.

A small target is suspended at various heights from a support.

Participants take turns attempted to kick the target while walking, running, or standing still. The target is gradually raised, until only one can still touch it. That athlete is considered the winner.

Full STEM ahead

Back in 2017, we met with Ms. Carrie Mohoruk to talk about a small club she had just started. In its first year, it had built up a steady membership of about 60 students. Unexpectedly well received, Ms. Mohoruk was in the great-but-busy position of keeping up. As the club's main recruiter, manager, teacher, mentor, designer, and fundraiser, Ms. Mohoruk found herself a Diploma Programme (DP) Chemistry teacher by day and a Robotics Club Leader in the mornings, during lunchtime, and at night.

Five years later, not much has changed.

"As long as students are learning and benefiting from Robotics, I'll keep it up," Ms. Mohoruk smiles. With a nearly doubled club membership and seven teams, she has more than kept things up. Students are learning and benefitting just as she hoped. After that first year, Ms. Mohoruk continued to recruit students and promote and advance the club. A unique part of Robotics—the reason why she chose First Lego League to begin with—is that everyone, not just coders, designers, or builders, can get involved. In FTC, there are opportunities for students of all kinds and any talents or interest. Teams are compiled of coders, designers, and builders, yes, but they also have promoters, artists, managers, and fundraisers. "Each team is basically a start-up engineering company," Ms. Mohoruk nods. With room for everyone, the club is as much about collaboration, teamwork and problem-solving as it is about STEM and robotics. Ms. Mohoruk has now become an expert recruiter, keeping an eye out for students with special talents that they themselves might not even yet know.

This year, Ms. Mohoruk has 90 FTC students enrolled.

"It's my mission to have every student at least experience robotics in some way," she shares. With that, the teacher-turned-robotics-coach is not only leading her own middle and high school clubs, but also

working to start clubs down in the elementary school too. Two of her FTC teams now mentor younger teams, while Ms. Mohoruk herself is working with teachers to launch elementary clubs. Beyond the walls of Meadowridge, a group of her students also spent the summer mentoring a robotics team from The Gambia, Africa. "None of this is required," Ms. Mohoruk shares, "students decide how much they want to mentor, fundraise, or promote—it's all about ownership." Mentorship not only helps promote learning and awareness, but also earns the mentoring teams grants. This grant money goes into the team's budget which they can use for a variety of things, including buying the extensive equipment needed for creative and effective robot builds. It is a complete educational experience.

With so many teams and mentorships happening, Ms. Mohoruk's time is now spent "putting out fires" and "giving students a nudge." She supports students with what they need, but also gives them the freedom to grapple with problems, solve them, and (sometimes) fail. With so many elements involved, Ms. Mohoruk wanders from group to group, solving coding problems with one, filling out fundraising requests with the next, and then helping out newer, younger teams with team communications and management. It's nonstop and all encompassing.

As our conversation with Ms. Mohoruk winds down, a Grade 9 student wanders into her classroom holding a big piece of metal.

"We want to cut it here," he asks, pointing to the centre. Ms. Mohoruk gets up, checks it out, and heads off to problem-solve with the team. It's 4:00pm on Friday and robotics has only just begun.

Five years later and not much has changed.



MEADOWRIDGE ROBOTICS CHEAT SHEET

What is FIRST? It stands for 'For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology', and it is one of the largest student robotics programs in the world. FIRST® leagues guide youth through STEM learning and exploration starting from an early age. Through involvement in the First Lego League Lego-based Explore and Challenge teams in the PYP and MYP, to the more complex metal-based First Tech Challenge in high school, students will understand the basics of STEM and apply their skills in exciting competitions while building habits of learning, confidence, and teamwork skills along the way.

- First Lego League (FLL) Explore Grades 2 to 3 (4 kits)
- First Lego League (FLL) Challenge Grades 5 to 8 (15 kits)
- First Tech Challenge (FTC) Grades 9 to 12 (7 kits)



ROBOTICS AT MEADOWRIDGE

2016-17

FLL Robotics
3 teams
16 FLL members

2017-18

2 FLL teams
16 FLL members

2018-19

4 FLL teams
19 FLL members

FTC Robotics
opens
2 FTC teams
20 FTC members

Robotics
mentorship begins

2019-20

6 FLL teams
36 FLL members
2 teams qualify for
provincials
4 FTC teams
50 FTC members

2020-21

Robotics is
cancelled due to
the pandemic

2021-22

Robotics reopens
Eight FLL teams
48 members
Seven FTC teams
88 members

MEADOWRIDGE SCHOOL

PATRIENCE

UP WITH VICTORIA HORNE '14

WILSON



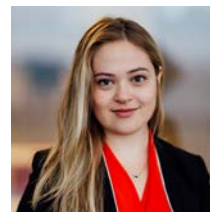


Victoria Horne '14 is unflappable, answering every interview question quickly and stumped by not even the toughest ones. “Have you faced any major life challenges?” “Where do you see yourself in five years?” Victoria answers these questions confidently and after just a moment’s pause.

During our Zoom, her focus breaks really only once, when Oliver, her family’s eleven-year-old Bernese Mountain Dog, scratches, barks, and demands attention. Victoria laughs, apologizes, and settles him down. Seconds later, she is back to finishing her thought. It is a striking resolve, but one that should come as no surprise. The young alumna has worked non-stop since graduating back in 2014. In seven years, Victoria has earned a commerce degree, completed an international exchange, established herself in the field of marketing and e-commerce and travelled as much as she’s been able to.

Despite her talent and success at it, marketing was not always part of the plan. Before graduating, Victoria was not only struggling with what to study between business and architecture, but also *where* to study it. “I decided on the literal last day,” she confesses. It had actually been her post-secondary counsellor Mr. Graveson who helped her make up her mind. “He convinced me Queen’s University would suit me better,” she nods “and I’m so glad I took his advice.”

Once there, Victoria immersed herself in clubs and the school culture. She led the planning of student leadership conferences, joined clubs and other committees, and got highly involved with the on-campus student magazine, *Muse*. By her third year, she was ready to take her studies abroad. Victoria applied, and was accepted, to take an exchange in Hong Kong. “That was a highlight for sure,” she smiles.



HOMETOWN

Coquitlam, BC

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Commerce,
Queen's University,
Kingston, ON

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Marketing,
TEALEAVES

E-commerce Specialist,
Lululemon Athletica



After earning her degree (and taking a life-changing, seven-week backpacking trip with her best friend from university throughout Asia) Victoria returned to British Columbia and sought work in the fields of Operations and Marketing. She wanted a challenge and found it in a tea company that was looking to expand its direct-to-consumer sales. At TEALEAVES, Victoria led a small team to handle everything from packaging and social media to online sales and design. She and her team were especially challenged when the pandemic halted the company's wholesale business. With hotels shut down and restaurants closed, consumer sales became a priority. "We were growing so much; we doubled the company's direct-to-consumer sales in a year." After three years and with great success, Victoria was ready to find a new challenge. So she waited patiently to find the right fit for her next move. The right fit, it turns out, was at lululemon.

"My new position lets me be specialized and focused instead of broad, wearing all hats," Victoria explains. As an E-commerce Specialist, Victoria manages an area of the online operations of the Vancouver-based lifestyle brand. Though she's only been there for four months, she has already made an impact, including, just recently, contributing to the launch of the Team Canada Olympic and Paralympic partnership. For the next four Olympic and Paralympic games, lululemon will be the official outfitter. "That's been really exciting," she nods. Victoria is also benefiting from the experience of her coworkers who are further on in their careers and happy to provide mentorship and advice. Victoria, meanwhile, hopes to do the same for undergraduates and the newly graduated.

As a member of the first Diploma Programme (DP) cohort, Victoria is especially passionate about helping future Meadowridge graduates and giving back to our community.

"My graduating class was really close," she shares, "and the teachers were always really engaging and passionate about what they taught."

Meadowridge School, she believes, prepared her for university and her career.

As the interview comes to a close, Oliver now quietly sitting beside her, we ask that last, hard-to-answer question: "where do you see yourself in five years?". Victoria pauses, thinks, and smiles. In addition to growing in her current position, taking on more leadership roles and potentially working abroad, the ever-busy alumna has plans to start—what else? —an online business. She's not sure yet what that will look like, but time will tell.

Always busy, always moving, always looking ahead.



From left to right:

› One of Victoria's favourite travel destinations: Seoul, South Korea. › Alumni Dinner, a get together with Meadowridge Alumni that attended Queen's University. › Taking in the scenic videos on a boat ride with friends in Hong Kong in Victoria Harbour. › Queen's University, Queen's Commerce Leadership Summit. › Committee photo from Queen's Commerce Leadership Summit. › First page of story features Victoria in Sydney Australia during a backpacking trip.



Victoria's TIPS FOR SUCCESS

01

START EARLY

"It's never too early to put yourself out there. Offer to help local businesses or ask family friends if they know of any opportunities for you to practice or at least try what you're interested in as a career. When I was in high school, I worked at the design firm of a family friend and learned so much from the experience."



02

READ AS MUCH AS YOU CAN

(and then read even more)

"Whatever you're interested in as a career, there's going to be all sorts of books, audiobooks and podcasts related to that field. I recommend *Mindset* by Carol Dweck and *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie. If you're interested in marketing, I'd recommend the podcast *Total Retail Talks*."



03

INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE

"If you have a high school job, start investing a little bit. It pays off when you're older, but also builds strong personal finance habits and self-management skills."



04

TAKE RISKS



"Don't be scared to try something new in university. It doesn't have to be as big as

moving away; it could be smaller, easier to manage changes. Before my job at TEALEAVES, I never thought I'd like manufacturing but ended up enjoying it. When I did my exchange in university, it wasn't an easy, straight road. It took some time to adjust to. At the end of the day, however, it was the best decision for me. When you face a challenge, you'll remember the good from it, not the bad."

Risky business: preparing + staying safe

Risk is a part of life. Natural disasters can strike at any time, so too can accidents, power outages, and pandemics. These things can happen whether we're at work, or at school, or at home. Risk is an unavoidable part of life. And while we can't stop it altogether, we can prevent it from happening and be prepared for when it does. At Meadowridge School, we make great efforts to do just that. From first aid and wilderness training to emergency preparedness and animal safety, we sat down with some of the key health and safety team members to learn about just some of the ways we're keeping our community safe.



+ FIRST AID AND WILDERNESS TRAINING



First aid training is offered to all teachers and staff members. Available courses range from the one-day Emergency First Aid course to the multi-day Wilderness First Aid course.

“The courses are applicable to everyday life at school,” Mr. Willms explains, “but also for our field trips on campus and to more remote locations.”

Training helps teachers and staff members to anticipate and support a first-aid situation and is specific to a classroom setting. Teachers are encouraged to think not only about the injured student, but also their entire class. If they are tending to

Meadowridge employee first aid and wilderness training

- 1 Wilderness First Responder
- 1 Advanced Wilderness First Aid
- 10 Wilderness and Remote First Aid
- 9 Emergency First Aid
- 4 Occupational First Aid, Level II

a student, who is watching their class? How can they make sure no one else becomes injured? These real-world problems help teachers to plan and anticipate all the things that could go wrong and prevent them from happening in the first place.

And because outdoor education is such a big part of our school's culture, we involve not only teachers and staff members, but also students too. Trip safety and planning sessions and clubs are offered to students in Grades 8 to 12. A Duke of Edinburgh club is hosted for students aiming to achieve the award and supports them to plan their routes and adventures safely. Students learn basic first aid and are equipped with top-of-the-line gear and safety devices for their trips. “Shelter-building, cooking, and fire-building are all taught, but the best safety skills students will learn are how to have the right gear, a route plan, and the ability to make good decisions,” Mr. Willms nods.

Duke of Edinburgh first aid and wilderness training

- Reading a map
- Route planning
- Compass skills
- Personal first aid
- Using SOS devices
- Contingency planning
- Creating a gear list
- Food and nutrition
- Water purification
- Fire building
- Cooking and stove safety

+ EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANNING



Throughout the year, our school community takes part in natural disaster emergency simulations, including earthquake and fire drills. The Health and Safety Committee, aided by a consultant, also assessed all our processes and physical equipment in the case of such an event.

“They looked at our emergency protocols, our emergency inventories, and highlighted areas to improve,” Mr. Willms explains.

After receiving an in-depth report, the team decided to add to our emergency preparedness equipment, ensuring we have enough food, water, safety supplies and shelter for our entire school population for up to five days.

More than physical supplies, the Committee also assessed personnel, the “key players” who can be counted on in the event of an emergency. During a recent workshop, these members of our community met to work through different scenarios. Led by Ridge Wilderness, the group was challenged to come up with a plan and react to new, theoretical scenarios.

Emergency preparedness supplies

- Radios
- Hand crank radios
- Solar charged lights
- Tarps
- Rope
- First aid tents
- Portable generator
- Cooking pots
- Cooking stoves
- Batteries and headlamps
- Tents
- Light posts





+ ANIMAL SAFETY

The North Campus is a natural setting, home to insects, frogs, bats, birds, bears and deer. In any natural setting, at school or at home, we run the risk of an animal encounter.

To prepare our community, we practice wilderness preparedness in training sessions and in class. For the lower mainland, that means bear and cougar awareness training especially. “That’s a constant thread” Mr. Willms explains. Students benefit from in-class sessions with the OE3 coordinator, who helps them learn how to interact with bears safely. On-campus safety equipment has also been purchased, and Mr. Willms teaches students how to use bear spray, bear bangers, and other safety equipment.

+ COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Mr. Willms’ passion for the outdoors extends to safety in the outdoors. Preparedness, he believes, is what will promote comfort and encourage more time outdoors.

“Children’s safety is always our first and foremost priority before anything else we do,” he explains, “and we have people and protocols in place to give children the greatest care possible.”

To ensure more people are not only prepared to act in an emergency but also to help, the school encourages more people to get informed and learn.



“The school intentionally encourages students to get outside and explore the natural world that we share and depend upon. Just like core academic subjects prepare students to be successful at university and in their future careers, the OE3 program thoughtfully prepares students to be safe in their wilderness adventures. It is paramount that students, as our future leaders, know the land they inhabit so that they can intrinsically care for it. In the wise words of Robin Wall Kimmerer, ‘to be native to a place we must learn to speak its language.’”

MR. JAMES WILLMS

+ OE3 COMMUNITY INTEREST SURVEY



In order for us as humans to intrinsically care about the natural world that we all share and depend upon, we ought to take time to connect with it, experience it, tend to it, and enjoy it. The OE3 Program is designed for this, intentionally experiential and hands-on. To provide parents with the same experiences as their children, Mr. Willms is looking to host parent wilderness first aid and outdoor workshops right here on campus. Want to learn about hiking or camping? Do you have your own workshop suggestion to share? Let Mr. Willms know what you want to learn about and go play outside!



Q

What is your best, go-to ice breaker story?



MR. DREW WHEELER,
Teacher

Something you might not know about me is that I am serious about my hobbies. From photography to coding to woodworking, I am inspired by my passions and grateful for the constant growth and learning that accompany them. In my early teaching years, I worked in Mongolia and Japan. During my time teaching and travelling overseas, I developed an interest in photography. After returning to Canada, alongside my teaching, I became a school photographer and had my own family photography business. Some years into my teaching I became passionate about coding and coding education. As one of the best ways to learn about something is to actually do it, I decided to pursue this interest by becoming a web developer. I worked for a short time creating apps for the restaurant business, before returning to the classroom with my newfound skills. Most recently, I have developed a new interest in woodworking. I have acquired a garage full of wood and hand tools, and I have recently completed a workbench as my first official project. I am not really sure what I plan to create next, but one thing that I do know is that I will continually feel inspired and fulfilled by the adventure of learning a new craft.



MS. WENQING CHEN,
*Post-Secondary Counsellor
and Community Relations
Manager*

I break the ice by sharing with people the different celebrities I've met. The story I choose to tell depends on the person or the conversation. I met Arnold Schwarzenegger when I was volunteering on a cleanup at the Great Wall of China, Queen Elizabeth II, and her mother when I visited Edinburgh, and Velibor "Bora" Milutinović, head coach of the Chinese national men's soccer team, when I was on a plane.



MS. MARCI KING,
Teacher

When I was 18 months old, my family was preparing to move across the country and the movers were busy packing up our belongings. The movers removed the kerosene from a lamp my parents had, and absentmindedly left the oil in a cup on the kitchen counter. My older brother, who was 5 years old at the time, thought it was a cup of juice and lovingly gave me it to drink! I drank a few mouthfuls before anyone caught on to what I was doing, and I was immediately rushed to the hospital. Thankfully, I was okay, but my mom told me that my diapers reeked of kerosene for weeks afterward!



MRS. ALLISON FONTANA,
Human Resources

I've been a WWE fan since I was a kid, and still am today. My mom bought me tickets to the WWE Summer Jam for my [11th] birthday, and also secured tickets to Bret "The Hitman" Hart's book signing for my birthday again a few years back. (I have the picture to prove it!) Two years ago, I also crossed paths with Jake the Snake and was very excited. My dad and brother had WWE on the TV all the time when I was growing up and I guess it grew on me and stuck!

Q

What is your best, go-to ice breaker story? Share your answer at communications@meadowridge.bc.ca





“

ONE YEAR LATER”

”

REFLECTIONS FROM THE CLASS OF 2020

Six graduates from the Class of 2020
catch us up on their first years away.

(spoiler: everyone is really over online learning)



1

Grace Xie '20

Western University,
Social Science Honours
Specialization in Psychology
(BA)

I wanted to run away from screens after a full year of online classes – I spent way too much time watching asynchronous classes (at 2x the speed)! I really enjoyed my elective classes, especially media and communications.

Meadowridge definitely prepared me for handling the university workload and thinking critically, creatively, and introspectively.



When I'm not in classes, I have enjoyed talking with new people and making friends. I've also made a point of reconnecting with old friends. I've been pretty involved in extracurriculars and competitions at Western, including a United Nation Case Competition. My teammates and I made it into the final round, one of the top 8 finalists out of 17 teams. I believe we were the only first-year team too so that was exciting! Now that I'm in my second year (and back to in-person classes) I'm working at our campus Employment Resource Centre as a Career Profile Advisor. I go through student-submitted resumes, cover letters, CVs, LinkedIn profiles and give feedback. This is so that I can get myself more involved at school. In between work and classes, I hope to take the Wine & Spirit Education Trust course to learn about spirits and wine!

2

Chloe Bissell '20

Western University, MIT
(Media, Information and
Technoculture Honours
Specialization) / Ivey
HBA (Honours Business
Administration)

My first year was great! I loved my courses and met some incredible people who have now become my housemates and some of my closest friends. Meadowridge prepared me well, and the workload at university is pretty much the same. In fact, the Extended Essay (EE) is still the longest essay I've ever had to write!

During my first year, a class I particularly enjoyed was film studies. I took it to fulfill a language requirement, but it ended up being my favourite class and may have even changed my whole planned career path.

Outside of classes, I participated in a few clubs and worked over the summer (if anyone saw me at the Maple Ridge Value Village over the summer, just know that I was an *excellent* cashier). With the upcoming year and with classes going back to in-person, I plan to join more clubs, take more film classes, and go to as many sporting events as possible. My friends and I found a perfect house in between campus and downtown London, with a Starbucks and McDonald's right down the street – it feels very much like Meadowridge in that respect!

3

Alexander Dmitriev '20

McMaster University, Bachelor
of Health Sciences (BHSc)
Honours

With my classes fully online, my first year was different and difficult but still very enjoyable. I love my program and the McMaster community as a whole. The campus is beautiful and not too huge – it's actually possible to walk around and not be totally exhausted before arriving to your next class – and the gym is really nice. Meadowridge definitely helped with my study habits, and the time management skills I picked up at school have come in handy in university for sure. I really enjoyed my Cellular and Molecular Biology class, which let me study the mechanisms I learned in IB Biology more in-depth.

Outside of classes, I am doing research with the McMaster Department of Medicine in Geriatrics and am a licensed EMR (the base level of ambulance paramedic) back in BC.

Though I am currently studying in Ontario, I have some jobs lined up in EMS for the summer when I return home! I'm also learning to cook.

4

Denise Zhu '20

University of British Columbia,
Major in Behavioural
Neuroscience, Minor in Health
and Society

I am definitely more excited to learn and explore campus after a full year of online classes. While I hope to never do a class over Zoom again, I was really lucky to be in the Science One program last year. Our group was really close-knit which made online classes much less lonely. Meadowridge prepared me well for university, not just academically but also in my confidence to find opportunities and explore my interests. I've spent a lot of time this past year getting involved with research, specifically in the field of sexual and reproductive health.

I initially got involved as a research assistant last year but have been conducting more research (I just submitted a peer-reviewed manuscript I co-authored over the summer!) and just joined a program that provides sexual health education to secondary school students across Vancouver.

I'm very excited to get started on that. Without Meadowridge, I wouldn't have had the confidence or soft skills to take on these new experiences and push myself further into these interests. Other than school – I recently dissected a sheep's brain in my neuroscience class! – I've learned to cook for myself and got into yoga, though I'm definitely not great at either of these things.

5

Mitchell Hui '20

Hull-York Medical School,
(MBBS) / Medicine

My first year was enjoyable. It was a challenge to stay motivated while being locked down (including having to self-isolate twice when my floormates had COVID) but I kept focused and worked towards my goals. Meadowridge prepared me well for medical school.

The heavy workload of the Diploma Programme taught me study habits, time management and managing lots of homework and deadlines. Really, it wasn't the knowledge that prepared me but the habits, discipline, and mental aspects of the IB programme that helped me most.

My favourite class has been anatomy, as I got to look at a variety of specimens including brains, lungs, and hearts! Adjusting to England in general was exciting, adventurous, and a positive experience. I started running to stay healthy (learning about medicine naturally pushes you to be healthier). I have also been a fencer for about eight years now, and continue to fence with a team at the University of York. On top of everything, I am also a representative of the surgical society – that is one of the specialties that I am leaning towards – so I'll be busy organizing and hosting events for that later this year!

6

Tim Tan '20

University of St. Andrews,
A990 Canadian Medical
Program

My first year was a good experience despite the whole pandemic situation. I was able to make lots of friends online and could still hang out with friends in small groups. While most of my classes were online, I did have a few in-person classes and labs.

I really love the way my school integrates practical learning with lectures—for instance, we'll learn about a specific body part at the start of the week and then dissect it later that week.

Medical school has been more work than I expected, but Meadowridge prepared me with how to handle these stressful situations and work through them. Outside of homework and classes, I've picked up golf and play at different courses every weekend with my friends. I'm also on the medical school basketball team and make a point to fit in workouts. During a visit back home over the summer, I also completed an internship with BC Children's hospital that I hope to continue this year.





It's important to follow this phrase so we can set a good example, and we help little kids be better people.

When they grow up, they won't be mean when they're an adult if they see us being kind. If I see something that's not right or I don't approve of, I'll stop them. If I see anything like bullying, I'll tell them to stop.

JUSTIN AND ISABELLA,
GRADE 5

WHAT DOES “LEARNING TO LIVE WELL, WITH OTHERS, AND FOR OTHERS IN A JUST COMMUNITY” MEAN TO YOU?

Meadowridge School is a diverse community, uniting people of different ages from many places to live well, with others and for others, in a just community. This got Grade 11 student Isabella wondering, what does our Mission mean to the many people around the school? Ever the inquirer, she decided to find out.



CAMBRIA,
GRADE 3

It's important to follow the mission statement so I can be a good person. When I see someone who's hurt, I help them. I play with people who are not included, and I help them when they're being bullied.

It's important to be a good person and make everybody feel included.

MS. WALKER,
GRADE 1 TEACHER

“

We have the mission statement painted on the wall and we refer to it as much as we can. The first unit I teach to students is about problem solving and the importance of working with other people.

I want to help my students understand how to communicate within different communities, and how the IB learner profiles can be applied in any environment.

I have been learning to live well, with others, and for others, in a just community through taking advantage of opportunities, trying my best in class, asking questions, and respectfully learning.

“ I have learned to see my peers not as competition but as individuals whom I can collaborate with in order to reach my goals.

It is important to follow this mission statement as it allows for you to be a balanced and respectful Meadowridge citizen.

ARYANA,
GRADE 11

“

Following this statement lets me come to school and know most of the people here are my friends.

I think being open minded, being able to observe how others feel before giving an opinion, and making sure what I say is mindful is important in keeping friendships alive.

MAYA AND HAILEY,
GRADE 8



About the author

Isabella has attended Meadowridge School for 13 years. With hopes of pursuing law in post-secondary, she has discovered the importance of journalism and mass communications in “telling the full story”. Through this project, Isabella hopes to not only explore storytelling but also bring together students and teachers with the commonalities that connect them and the differences that make them unique. As for what the Meadowridge Mission means to her, the learner says this:

“ Living our Mission statement from a young age is what makes Meadowridge such a unique place to be educated; no matter what age, gender, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity you are, the school’s compassionate environment will make you feel accepted.

ISABELLA,
GRADE 11



Lifelong learning

Catch up with Poppy Welsh '16

HOMETOWN

Mission, BC

EDUCATION

MBBS Programme,
University of Central
Lancashire,
Preston, UK

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Health Care Assistant,
Royal Blackburn
Hospital


University of Central Lancashire
MEDICAL STUDENT

Where has life taken you since graduating from Meadowridge School?

After graduating in 2016 I had a gap year where I worked as a ski instructor while travelling in New Zealand and Australia. The following year, I started my MBBS programme at The University of Central Lancashire in Preston, UK. This is a five-year medicine programme, and I am currently in my final year. I was the course representative for two years, as well as the vice-chair of the Radiology Society. Throughout the pandemic I have also been working part-time as a Health Care Assistant in Royal Blackburn Hospital. I have also been involved in both the University and Preston Grasshoppers Rugby clubs.

Back when you were a recent graduate, did you know where life would take you?

I had an interest in working in healthcare and wanted to be a doctor from a young age. I always had a passion in caring for people, and an interest in human sciences. Going to the UK to study was something I was really interested in, after immigrating to Canada from England at a young age I always wanted to go back and experience my heritage as well as be close to my family here.

Medical school is demanding. How do you keep balanced?

Joining a rugby team has been really important for me in managing my stress and the demanding nature of medical school. It allowed me to find a good 'work-life balance'. Not only is it a physical outlet through exercise, but I have also met so many wonderful people and made some amazing friends. Having regular training and gym sessions, as well as games, keeps me active and organized, allowing me to make the most of my study time.

You've recently been selected for the prestigious HLA scholarship. Talk to us about the application process and where it takes you.

The Healthcare Leadership Academy is a year-long scholarship which provides funding to a course for the teaching and development

of leadership skills, as well as support in developing a personal project. I applied to the HLA as I have always had an interest in Leadership and wanted to further develop these skills. I also have a project idea that I am passionate about, surrounding the curriculum of LGBTQIA+ patients in medical education. The application process initially involved submitting a personal statement, project idea, and a personal introduction video. After the initial selection process, I participated in an interview with the head of the programme. When I found out I was accepted to the HLA programme I was thrilled with the achievement and excited to get started.

Going back a few years, what are some of your fonder memories of Meadowridge School. What will you always remember?

The memories I will always remember from my time at Meadowridge are those spent after school hours with my extra-curriculars. Participating in sport was always a big part of my school experience, especially being a part of and Captaining the Senior Girls Basketball team. Additionally, being a cast and support member of the shows and musicals put on at the school over the years, most memorably my involvement in my final senior show 'American Idiot'.

What advice do you have for students interested in studying medicine?

Medicine is an interesting and rewarding career, filled with lifelong learning. Although it can be quite competitive and demanding, it will be worth it in the long run. Most importantly, always stay true to yourself and the interests you have. Having passions and being unique is the best way to stay true to yourself and remain happy with your journey.

What's next?

I am currently in my final year at medical school. After graduating I will stay in the UK to complete two years as a junior doctor in the medical foundation programme. I am hoping to continue to play rugby alongside my busy schedule as a junior doctor in the NHS.



Top: Playing Rugby for UCLAN

Middle: Poppy, pictured second row from bottom, with the cast and crew of *American Idiot*

Bottom: 2016 Meadowridge School Graduation portrait

Q

People of Meadowridge

MS. JODI DERKSON

Where you'll find her... working with our community to promote and encourage Social Emotional Learning. **Here since...** 2021.

Ms. Jodi Derkson was twelve years old when she had an unsettling realization. She was selfish. She didn't want to insult her friends, gossip about them, or say the wrong things, but she did, and it kept getting her into trouble. Realizing this, the then-middle schooler set out on a lifelong mission to become a better person. From that moment on, Ms. Derkson has worked to grow, self-reflect, and improve. She carried this goal with her through middle school then high school, into university and then her teaching career. It changed her life. Working as a teacher, Ms. Derkson realized that she was interested in cultivating this goal in her students too. "I became really interested in who my students were as people," she shares, "I wanted to know what they thought about, what made them tick, what they were doing for their own self-improvement." As a drama teacher, self-exploration and improvement were easily incorporated into her curriculum. Ms. Derkson's class became a place where students felt safe to explore and express their feelings. It became a place where students could laugh and cry and share and even vent when they needed to. Ms. Derkson enjoyed this part of her work so much that it became the focus of her master's. But after earning her degree, she found herself losing momentum. She needed a change. After an impromptu career change selling retractable awnings down in Florida ("It was my family business," she confesses, "and I loved it!"), she came back to British Columbia and got back into education. This time, however, she focused her attentions on her true passion: social emotional learning.

Ms. Derkson became the Director of Human Rights for Fighting Antisemitism Together (FAST). At the same time, she started her own business teaching everyone from students and teachers to corporate professionals about anti-racism and human rights. "Things just grew and grew and grew from there," she nods. She loved what she was doing but felt that familiar tug to support when she heard about a local teen's suicide. Determined to help, Ms. Derkson started hosting anti-bullying workshops for teenagers. These anti-bullying workshops led to mindfulness training workshops which led to workshops about managing everything from anxiety and addiction to depression. Ms. Derkson kept learning as much as she could so she could *help* as many people as she could.

Now, as Meadowridge School's Social Emotional Counselor, Ms. Derkson brings her years of education and experience and training to support our community. "My job is to assist teachers and create a schoolwide program," she shares, "and educate." Ms. Derkson works with teachers and students and even parents to build understanding, share resources and learn techniques.

What would surprise us about you?

I used to sell retractable awnings... and I actually loved it! My family is still in the business if anyone is ever looking for shades. [laughing]

One person you would like to sit down with, living or dead?

Nelson Mandela. He was incarcerated for so long, yet still fostered mindfulness and integrity and never lost hope. He wasn't angry or violent, but the opposite instead. For him to become a leader is the most inspiring thing.

Favourite Meadowridge memory?

Before I even started, I met a couple of students outside. It was the summertime, and I shared with them who I was and what I would be doing in the fall. The students were so open and excited, and I felt so welcomed and valued. It was very affirming.

Spring or fall?

Spring. The buds become flowers, the air fills with aromas, and I love walking my dog in the warm spring sun. It reminds me of what is to come and fills me with awe.

Favourite meal?

Not that I always eat it, but I do love pasta. I'm gluten free now, but I have not met many pastas that I did not love.

Best way to spend a day?

A nice dog walk, maybe in the woods, and then a paddle board. After that, getting on my e-bike and meeting friends for a patio dinner with lots of laughs and connection.

Best way to spend the day?

I quite enjoy going to Granville Market. We used to even take the boat there. I would head down and enjoy a falafel and then browse the art galleries and craft shops. I bought a tiny ceramic bowl from a shop there that I love – it was expensive, but also so unique. I love it.



“Before I even started, I met a couple of students outside. It was the summertime, and I shared with them who I was and what I would be doing in the fall. The students were so open and excited, and I felt so welcomed and valued. It was very affirming.”





MEADOWRIDGE
SCHOOL

Learning to live well, with others and for others, in a just community.

MEADOWRIDGE SCHOOL is located on the South West Coast of Canada in beautiful Maple Ridge, British Columbia
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