

Spring 2021

the GRYPHON





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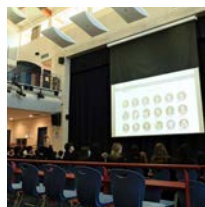
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THE MAGAZINE FOR MEADOWRIDGE SCHOOL



ON THE COVER

What do Nasturtium, Marigold and Cosmos have in common? Our Grade 1 learners can tell you! During a hands-on start to their latest unit of inquiry, students planted these three summer bloomers while learning about their benefits as pollinator-friendly plants. Taking action to support our pollinator population is a perfect provocation to their Sharing the Planet unit of inquiry, a unit that has students learn about scientific and indigenous ways of knowing, local plants and animals, living and non-living

things, and the connections between them. With their garden now planted, our three classes and their teachers will tend to it throughout the spring with guidance from Mr. James Willms. They'll also be examining the garden and play spaces to think of other enhancements that could support even more living things. While watching the garden grow (they're already seeing their seeds sprout!) students will learn to identify and name local plants, examine the relationship between them, and discover ways they can reduce "bossy plants" that are growing too much in one area. Grade 1 teachers share that in addition to these learning opportunities, they're also looking forward to some outdoor noisy reading, where students can plop on a rock, read a book, and watch their mason bee friends hard at work with the important job of pollination.

"This hands-on experience develops students' connection to place and develops an appreciation for the natural world that they will carry forward throughout their life experiences."



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Warm-ups, stretches and semi-circles

An hour-long conversation with Mr. Nathan Horne left us inspired, excited, informed... and still more curious. Learning about the Meadowridge Physical Health Education curriculum only made us want to know more. How, during daily, forty-five minute classes and with a redesigned approach, could our teachers be building students' physical literacy for life? A lofty and ambitious goal, it was one we had to not just hear about, but see to understand. And so, we did. Early one morning, we joined a boisterous and energetic group of Grade 5 students for their daily PHE class. Here's what we learned.

"Do five laps, five jumping jacks, and five burpees."

Mr. Nathan Horne put his students to work straightaway, the gym – echoing with excited chatter just moments before – suddenly quiets down as students get to it. This warmup does the trick. Students return from their last laps with smiling, flushed faces ready to hear what's next. The class huddles around Mr. Horne. In traditional classes, one might expect these students to be in some sort of sports unit – soccer, basketball, or badminton, say – but at Meadowridge, units are divided by movement and skill, not by sport. That's not to say that students can't and won't practice sports during their units, it's just that they're not the only ways to participate and play: by making units movement and skill-based, every student can find ways to get enjoyment, be challenged, and develop their skills... no matter what skill they're at or sport they play. In our earlier conversation, Mr. Horne describes our classes as having "a more holistic approach," an approach that focuses not on skills alone, but also on health, wellbeing and physical activity. Seeing it in practice, it all makes sense. Mr. Horne plans games and activities that will stress a certain movement or skill, which allows students to understand and explore their bodies and movements more closely.





So, what does that look like?

For this group of Grade 5 students, the focus of the day was on throwing and catching. To get students to start thinking about how to improve, practice and hone these important skills, it took only a ball, two cones, and some effective instruction. Mr. Horne begins by picking a student from the crowd to demonstrate. About three metres apart, each of them at their own cone, Mr. Horne and his demonstrator bounce the ball back and forth. The bright neon ball bounces between the two, each of them taking their turns as thrower (offensive) and catcher (defensive). The activity is easily picked up, and soon the gym comes alive with chattering teams of two and tons of bouncing balls. Mr. Horne wanders, watching the pairs. For students who seem more advanced, he offers instruction to increase difficulty. “Move the cones closer,” he offers one team. To another, “closer.” After the first round and some warming up, students are instructed this time to not play with each other, but *against* each other. This shift is by design, requiring different styles and tactics from students as they learn to use their skills and movements for competition, not cooperation. After some time, Mr. Horne switches teams and switches the rules yet again. This time, students must throw the ball from where they catch it. This shift, again, changes the game. New strategies are quickly enacted, as students figure out where and how to best throw the ball defensively.

Movement, then reflection.

After the activity wraps up, students huddle up around Mr. Horne to reflect on what they practiced and learned. Mr. Horne quizzes students on their tactics: in what sports would throwing and catching be used? in this game, how did you get your opponent out of position? what did you learn? After a full class reflection, students break into pairs again for a two-minute, one-on-one reflection.

Spread all around the gym, students read out and answer their own unique cue card.

For one group: what made you smile today?
“When I made the ball bounce too high and they have to go over their heads to catch it!” remarks one student.

“When I caught the ball, because most of the time I didn’t have to go very far,” shares the partner in return.

And another: What are your superpowers?
“My superpower is that I can bounce the ball really high!” says one student.

“Mine was a mix of things,” says the other. “I was good at catching, some throwing, and – I think – doing them at the same time.”

All around the gym, students share, laugh, smile and reflect. Every student, regardless of experience or skill or strength, has something to share.

Mr. Horne’s own reflection.

“The more skills students have – the more movement, the more opportunities provided – the more students have the confidence to try and practice things for themselves. Traditional sports programs are great for kids who are very athletic, and enjoy those traditional sports, but that’s the minority. The majority gets left out. So, I think what we’ve been able to do here is meet the needs of every kid and find something meaningful for them. When students find meaningful physical activities and experiences, that’s when they build physical literacy for life.”



WEATHER OR NOT

Meadowridge School TODAY



Sunny with a high of 16.8 °C

In a place where “muddy buddies” is a common turn of phrase, it won’t surprise you that Mr. Willms remembers just three days when recess was kept inside. Outdoor recess is an important part of our school, and our students learn to come prepared for rain, shine or snow.

“We go outside because it’s good for us,” Outdoor, Experiential, Ecological Education (OE3) Coordinator Mr. James Willms nods, “it’s where we play, learn and explore.” This belief has shaped the culture and curriculum of our school, and it has shaped our students, too. Through education and through experience, students’ awareness, preparedness, and outdoor skills grow steadily over time. Daily outdoor recess and classes and clubs teach students to watch the weather and come prepared, tasks which are now much easier and more visible thanks to a new, on-campus resource – a weather station! With the closest weather station about 12-kilometres away (over by the Pitt Meadows Airport), Mr. Willms wasn’t satisfied with the publicly available local forecasts. “We’re in an entirely different weather system,” he explains, “we’re right next to the mountains and our

winds are different.” With a station installed on campus, forecasts and predictions have become more reliable and accurate, which helps keep our community informed and safe. With hourly updates shared all around the school, temperatures, wind speeds, humidity, pressure and more is available for everyone to see. Of course, in a school like ours this new resource has garnered much attention and our teachers have big plans beyond safety and awareness in the works. With daily and monthly and annual totals collected, whole sets of new data and information will inform unique projects, learning and inquiry. “Is temperature rising or staying the same? Is precipitation condensed or more gradual? Are weather systems becoming more intense?” Mr. Willms rattles off a few examples, but is excited to see what else our students and teachers come up with.



January to April Highs, Lows & Averages

The Meadowridge Weather Station records all the highs, lows and averages unique to our westcoast campus.



Highest Temperature
16.8 °C



Lowest Temperature
-5.2 °C



Highest Wind Speed
35.2 km/hr

NE


Average Wind Speed
3.2 km/hr



Hourly Rain Average
0.3 mm/hr



Highest Daily Rain
12.6 mm/hr



MENTOR MODEL LEAD

One of the first things Mr. Charles Schofield noticed about Meadowridge was its “strong emphasis” on student-led initiatives. As the newly hired Director of Student Life, this was a happy thing to see. Hoping to foster this wonderful and unique quality he first saw, Mr. Schofield has since established even more opportunities for students to mentor, model, and lead.

Student-led clubs did not begin with Mr. Schofield, but they certainly took off under his watch.

“What’s important about student-led clubs is that it lets students have choice,” Mr. Schofield explains.

Running a successful club takes a lot of dedication and organization, and choosing to take this on – on top of everything else students already have on the go! – takes a personal interest and enthusiasm which translates into great learning experiences for both club members and leaders alike. It’s a big undertaking but the rewards are huge. “I’m always looking for mentorship opportunities, to build peer-to-peer connections and create multiple ways for students to know each other” Mr. Schofield explains, “that’s how we foster our caring community.”

Follow the leader, club organizers share their stories...



Business Case Club

Carina L.

When Carina (Grade 11) joined Meadowridge School, she was eager to see what interests she could develop or explore through Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) Clubs. Curious about the world of business, the Business Case Competition Club was of immediate interest. Her excitement at finding this club however, was followed by immediate disappointment. Then in Grade 8, she was too young to sign up. Fast forward to four years later, now in Grade 11 and at last old enough to join, she was met with that same disappointment all over again: the Business Case Club had been cancelled. Carina started looking at other options when an email from the Director of Student

Life, Mr. Charles Schofield, popped up in her inbox.

Would any students be interested in hosting a club?

“It was definitely outside of my comfort zone,” Carina laughs about her decision to lead, “but I really wanted to continue that club.” Continuing that club took volunteering to lead it, but also planning an entire curriculum and program. As a Diploma Programme (DP) Business student, Carina was lucky that much of her club’s curriculum could be borrowed from her own coursework. Carina focused each session on a topic covered in class, but made a point of shaping that topic into an interactive and practical activity. “Reading case studies alone can be dry at times,” she shares of this approach, “so I make sure that everyone is engaged by turning the case problems into a debate or something else.” Students work together, work through the content and the case, and come up with recommendations and strategies that they can debate and discuss. Carina encourages her club members to use these important skills not just in class, but also in external competitions. Just recently,

a team of five club members placed third out of 36 teams at the MiniEnterprise Competition. At that same competition, another earned the award for best speaker. “I enjoy every part of it,” Carina smiles when asked of these achievements. “It’s so rewarding to see that what I’m doing is actually helping students to learn and grow.”

Carina's Quick Takes

Most challenging part of club leadership?

Getting the students to feel comfortable enough to share their ideas and their views.

Most rewarding part of running a club?

Every aspect of it – from teachers coming up and asking me about my club, to seeing students learn and grow.

Best advice for inspiring club leaders?

Think about your favourite teachers – what you like, admire and appreciate about them – and borrow their techniques. And don’t be nervous: you’re also a student so it’s okay to make a few mistakes when you’re trying something new!



Dance Club

Priya S. and Maisie L.

Priya and Maisie both joined Meadowridge in middle school – Priya in Grade 9, Maisie in 8 – and from many miles away. So when they met in class, it wasn't long before the pair was chatting and connecting over their shared experiences and interests. They had a ton in common. More than anything, it was one thing in particular which bonded the two. Priya and Maisie "loved" dance. Not only had they both danced with competitive hip-hop companies back home – Priya in the United Kingdom, Maisie in China – they had also both quit when they moved away, choosing to focus on their studies instead. But still, they missed it. With little time outside of school, the pair looked for an opportunity during school instead. The in-school Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) clubs seemed the perfect opportunity, but there was no dance club of any kind to join. The pair approached Mr. Charles Schofield wondering what might be done when he made to the then Grade 9 students a zany proposal: why not start one yourselves?

With over 10 years of competitive dance experience between them, Priya and Maisie were excited to take on the new challenge of a leadership role. "Mr. Schofield was very helpful," they explain about getting things started from there. After filling out lots of forms and proposals and making plans, they were soon hosting their first session with a total of four students enrolled. Each student had their own level of experience, so Priya and Maisie took a one-on-one approach that worked really well. "It was a really fun environment,"

the pair nods. Students slowly built up confidence and were soon performing their choreographed routines not just at school, but also at local talent contests too. "Those were the best parts of hosting a club," Priya and Maisie share, "seeing how much students had grown and seeing all our efforts pay off."

Priya and Maisie's Quick Takes

Most challenging part of club leadership?

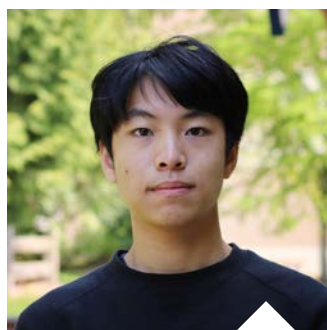
Getting the students comfortable and fluid with the choreography. The commitment was not a problem, but it was tough to get students to be a part of the performances.

Most rewarding part of running a club?

The days leading up to our performances, seeing how much students had grown and learned. It was super gratifying to see how much they had improved. It's a very creative process so it's truly rewarding to see it all come to life.

Best advice for inspiring club leaders?

Have a clear goal and purpose in mind. Plan out a clear, weekly schedule so that will help you stay on task. Also, don't be afraid to take your club outside of school so you can showcase your students' talents. Those opportunities are super important! Not only is it fun, you'll also expand your social network.



Band Club

Joey S., Spark L., Chandler S., and Oliver G.

Four students with a collective 40 years (!) of violin, piano and saxophone playing experience were looking for a way to connect with other musicians at school. A band club seemed the obvious choice, but there was no band club to join. So these four students – Joey and Oliver (Grade 12) and Spark and Chandler (Grade 11) – decided to start their own. "We wanted to spread our passion to other people, inspiring them to join, participate, learn music and perform," they share. They started by talking to other students – lots of them, anyone who they figured was "musically capable—" and, when they generated what they figured was enough interest, they, at last, approached Mr. Charles Schofield. "He was a big help to us," they nod, "he not only enabled our club, but also many others." Mr. Schofield helped the group get their purpose and plans all sorted out and then gave them the go-ahead.

The club opened up to a "steady" seven students each term. This was a fun challenge for the club leaders, who were responsible for finding an ensemble that incorporated whatever musical instruments and experience students brought to the club. "One arrangement is always bound to exist," the club leaders share. Once an arrangement



was figured out, the term was spent practicing and preparing for performances, of which the club did quite a few: assemblies were brought to life by the sounds of the club.

Joey, Spark, Chandler and Oliver's Quick Takes

Most challenging part of club leadership?

Keeping the members committed. We have different requirements for CAS, so that made things really hard. What we wanted was students to participate for all three terms, but that's three creativities so it makes it really hard to choose. On the other hand, it also encourages students to branch out and try something new. A regular orchestra or band can keep their members all year, but we didn't have that luxury.

Most rewarding part of running a club?

Oliver: I only ever play piano solo, and rarely get an opportunity to play with other people. The club gave me that opportunity. Also, it's really rewarding to see things come together during a performance after seeing all the improvements made during practice.

Joey: The improvements made throughout the term. You start with a framework then you get the people and a piece and it's

all over the place for whatever reason. You feel like it's not going to work. Then miraculously you pull through and it feels completely worthwhile.

Chandler: The band was a really good opportunity to practice with other people, and we're glad to have provided that opportunity to other students.

Spark: I play the violin, so there's more opportunity for me to play with other people. But since I'm not completely committed to music, it's hard for me to play with other people and share a musical passion. In a band, I (and our club members) get to play with piano players and other instrument players, which is really good because I like playing with other people.

Best advice for inspiring club leaders?

It seems complicated, but there's no other way to go about it than to just start doing it and figuring things out along the way. That's how it is with organizing anything. Also, we were pretty confident that we'd get a lot of members since music is a broad interest, but if you have a more specialized interest, you should still start a club. You'd be surprised by how many people would be willing to join!



Physics, Philosophy, and Math Club

Roy Zhao '19

Describing Roy's second year as "busy" would be a bit of an understatement. Not only is he continuing his studies full-time from home – Roy's university classes have shifted online during the pandemic – he is also working as a Teaching Assistant, an undergraduate researcher, and a part-time photographer at Meadowridge. Now, the always-

busy, ever-diligent student is about to add another gig to his repertoire: Club Leader. Giving back to Meadowridge and hosting a club had actually been a goal of Roy's for a while. Grateful for the time and knowledge and advice that his many teachers and counsellor provided him, Roy wanted to make that same difference in other students' lives. And so, when he found himself not only back in Maple Ridge, but also working at his old school, Roy knew he, at last, had the chance.

Nothing, no already-busy schedule, could deter him. "All my teachers helped me become who I am and should be, not who they wanted me to be," Roy shares, "and that's what I wanted to achieve in my club." During a busy day of back-to-back photo ops, Roy ran into Mr. Charles Schofield and pitched his idea. Mr. Schofield, of course, agreed straightaway.

Following spring break, Roy will welcome eight students into his Physics, Philosophy, and Math CAS Club.

Roy has already spent hours planning his sessions, hoping to give students a taste of what Physics and Philosophy (Roy is earning a dual degree in both) and Math courses look like in university. "It'll be awesome if they like it," Roy shares, "but even more awesome if they realize they don't – that just means the club helped them figure out what they really want to do!" [laughs]

Roy's Quick Takes

Most challenging part of club leadership?

Well, as a Teacher's Assistant in university, the hardest part is kids who aren't responsible for their own learning. I teach first-year students, and I don't mind if students are slow to get a concept. I'll give as much time as it takes! It's when they say, "can't you just do the calculation for me?" Though I am sure I won't find this problem at Meadowridge.

"Seeing how much students had grown and seeing all our efforts pay off."

"We wanted to spread our passion to other people, inspiring them to join, participate, learn music and perform,"

"It'll be awesome if they like it," Roy shares, "but even more awesome if they realize they don't – that just means the club helped them figure out what they really want to do!"

Most rewarding part of running a club?

You don't really know a subject until you teach it. The questions students can ask is amazing, and because I'm a philosophy major it helps me find connections long after. Plus, I get to inspire younger students with the formulations of our universe! Even if only a few of them find their passion through this club, it will be my highest honour to have been the guidance.

Best advice for inspiring club leaders?

First, do it only because you want to. Interest is the best driving force of any kind. If you don't want to do something, you won't do well at it, and that includes leading a club. Also, if I learned anything from TA-ing, it's that we're all on different paradigms. What I say makes different sense in someone else's sense. Teaching is about synchronizing all these different paradigms.

Roy is now studying at the University of Santa Barbara towards a dual Philosophy and Physics degree. With his studies online during the pandemic, Roy is also working part-time at Meadowridge as the school photographer.



Intercultural Club

Merry Han '20

As a self-described "extroverted" student, Merry knew she wanted to lead a club. And, as a self-described, extroverted student at Meadowridge School, she knew what that club would be: an intercultural club. "[Our school] has students coming from different countries from around the world... to understand each other's values and traditions is a vital concept," Merry explains of her choice. With a club and role in mind, Merry began by doing what she does best – by talking to people. She spoke with



a bunch of her classmates to see who would be interested in such a club and what they would be interested in learning about. After many days of polling and planning, Merry had her club mapped out. The Intercultural Club was struck, meeting every CAS block to make cultural crafts, cook cultural cuisines, and watch movies from all around the world. A second-generation immigrant herself, Merry was always interested in learning about her own family's traditions and culture. So, she taught club members how to make Chinese staples like dumplings and snacks. "I think experiences like these really helped everyone to bond even though we all came from different cultural backgrounds," she concludes.

Enrolled in the International Relations program at the University of Toronto, Merry is now not only making good use of the cultural knowledge she developed during the club, but also her leadership skills!

Merry's Quick Takes

Most challenging part of club leadership?

The hardest part of running a club would be brainstorming what we did each class. I really wanted to focus on the important aspect of each culture, and it was very challenging to come up with ideas that could involve every student. Many activities wouldn't be realistic to do in a classroom or in a

short amount of time, so I used the same ideas but simplified the procedures or materials needed for the activity. As I was planning the different classes, I also tried to come up with ideas that students would be excited about in order to build teamwork within a group of enthusiastic students.

What was the more rewarding part of club leadership?

For me the most rewarding aspect of being a leader is seeing students who are younger than me appreciate the work I have put into.

What advice do you have for aspiring club leaders?

For all future leaders, I would advise everyone to be a good listener, to actively engage with the students and to be patient with them. I think the most important part of this experience is to be a good team player rather than solely a leader to make everyone feel comfortable around you and build strong relationships.

Merry is now studying International Relations at the University of Toronto while also working as a Personal Styling Assistant at Nordstrom.

MR. SCHOFIELD'S TIPS FOR STARTING A CLUB

Ready to take the lead?

> Have a clear purpose for the club with a measurable outcome.

Measurable outcomes can include presenting at an assembly, competing in a tournament or competition, or sharing works in our communications channels. Each club will have different opportunities, so be creative in your approach!

> Plan for learning, but also for fun and excitement.

Think about the styles of teaching that work well for you – what approaches do you enjoy? do you not enjoy? what has worked well in your own experiences?

> Ask yourself what's missing from clubs.

No club is too unique. Meadowridge is a place where we are encouraged to take risks; you'd be surprised to see the interest in even the most unusual of clubs!

> Speak with Mr. Schofield.

He is happy to answer any questions you have and help make your club happen.

> Students in Grades 11 and 12 may choose to make their club a CAS Project.

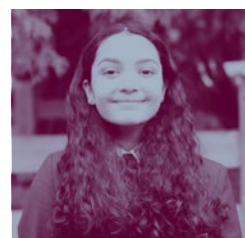
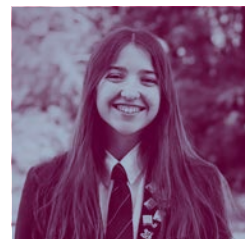
If so, be sure to fill out the CAS Project Proposal Form and get approval from Ms. Higginson before the start of the term. Scan this QR code!



FUN FACT:

Mr. Schofield himself started his own student-led club back in high school! Enrolled at a school with a successful boys' rugby team, he and a group of friends decided to strike their own girls' league after their friends who watched their games shared they wished there was an opportunity for them to play. Mr. Schofield and his five friends each coached a team, and the term ended with a six-team tournament. The girls' rugby team is still active today and has grown a lot since Mr. Schofield and his friends' graduation!





CHALLENGE, REWARDS AND LEARNING:

The MYP Personal Project

The personal project encourages students to practice and strengthen their approaches to learning (ATL) skills, consolidate prior and subject-specific learning, and develop an area of personal interest. The personal project provides an excellent opportunity for students to produce a truly personal and often creative product and to demonstrate a consolidation of their learning in the MYP. The project offers many opportunities for differentiation of learning and expression according to students' individual needs. The personal nature of the project is important; the project should revolve around a challenge that motivates and interests the individual student.

What does that all mean? **Let our students tell you.**





AKIRA Y.

HOW CAN I AUTOMATE EFFICIENT TRADES ON CRYPTOCURRENCY EXCHANGES?

Why did you choose your topic?

For the past two years (at least) I have been interested in the stock market, particularly day trading. I had practiced day trading before and was interested in trading by the minute. In the summer before Grade 10, I had also begun programming, at which time I also began to learn about blockchain. My exposure to blockchain led me to start thinking about cryptocurrencies. This, combined with my previous dabbling in the stock market, is how I came up with the idea of coding a cryptocurrency trading bot.

There were, however, other project ideas that I was also thinking about, notably a stock trading bot. I chose cryptocurrencies over a stock trading bot because of its novelty, but also because I wanted to do something less documented. There is much less writing online about cryptocurrencies, and much less cryptocurrency trading bots, which only made me more interested.

Walk me through the process: how did you get started? Did things change along the way? What was the overall experience like?

I started off by finding cryptocurrency APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) that I could use to interact with a cryptocurrency exchange. I decided on using Binance's platform for its low fees, larger variety of cryptocurrencies and better documentation. Instead of starting to create a bot right away, I began

by learning how to use the Binance API and learning about how such a cryptocurrency exchange functions. This meant writing short scripts to return the server time, get my account details, find information about each cryptocurrency and to buy and sell cryptocurrencies. Up until this point I was using Binance's testnet, a simulation, but I was eventually forced to use the real exchange because too few people were using the testnet

to accurately reflect the real exchange. With this information, I interviewed an engineer working at a cryptocurrency exchange for advice and created two versions of a bot. Unfortunately, the final product was unable to make a profit on the real exchange, so instead I tested the bot for a few hours in a simple simulation I integrated into my program without trading fees. Even though the profit it made was fake, the knowledge I gained was real, and I have a much better understanding of the world of cryptocurrencies now.

What are some of the more interesting discoveries you made while working on your project?

Something I completely neglected the entire project - which I should not have done - is choosing which pairs to trade using my bot. I thought the trading strategy I was using would work equally well with all pairs, but I was sorely mistaken. After testing my bot for a few hours there was a large, very large, difference in profit between different currencies. Now I know that choosing the right pairs is equally as important as everything else, if not more so.

What was the highlight of your personal project?

When I was analyzing the results I gathered after testing my bot for seven hours. After graphing my profit over time I saw how it compounded, and I partially understood why none of my initial simulations were profitable. When testing, I would let it run for just a few seconds. I also didn't have any method of compounding my profit.

This point is when I felt that my bot might actually be profitable in the future.

What's next? Where does your project go from here?

I will continue working on my code, hopefully improving it to the point where it turns a profit in real life. I've already begun by adjusting the programs I already have to work in the real exchange and started testing it. Even though I may never find a way to make a profit in reality, I still enjoy learning about cryptocurrencies and working on the bot will help me further improve my programming skills.



GRACE Y.

HOW CAN I DEVELOP SKILLS FOR DESIGNING AND CREATING A MOTORIZED GO-KART?

Why did you choose your topic?

I really like motorsports. I got into go-karting back at my old school in Texas, and wanted to build my own go-kart for a really long time. Last spring, my friend was giving away her old wooden bedframe so I took it home figuring I could use it to eventually build my go-kart. Then, when the personal project came around, I had the opportunity to finally just do it.

Walk me through the process: how did you get started? Did things change along the way? What was the overall experience like?

I started with a basic initial idea. Then I did a bit more research into steering systems and go-kart mechanics, things like sprockets and chains. Using computer-aided design, I then built up the framework and drill holes and analyzed its structural integrity and points of stress. Computer-

aided design is very similar to SketchUp but a bit more advanced; I learned it back in the fourth grade. I learned about mechanics at my old school too. One of my friend's brothers was a mechanical engineer and he had a whole workshop at home. My friend and I would always be fiddling around in his shop, and we even took apart cars. We took apart his 1969 Shelby Mustang and her brother had to put it back together again. [laughs] Before I started building my go-kart, I set my budget at \$500, but the price of hardware in Canada is so expensive. Some of the bolts alone are almost \$100! Engines and

live-assembly welding materials are also super expensive, as was shipping. My mother kind of gave me a loan to cover this. I'll have to do chores around the house.

What are some of the more interesting discoveries you made while working on your project?

I think the best, most interesting discovery I made was that if you put your engine in the back it does increase traction, but what research

doesn't tell you is the amount of oversteering that it causes. You'll be drifting all the time!

Also, it might look hard to build a go-kart but it's not too bad. That's where the kits come in. The hardest part is fiddling around with the brakes and the sprocket systems.

What was the highlight of your personal project?

The first time I got to turn on the engine. Actually, the first engine that I ordered arrived broken. So finally driving down my neighbourhood slope and turning it around it was quite fun. My go-kart was pretty practical. I didn't install a seat or a harness. That's extra weight. In engineering that's not good. I didn't want it - it's all about functionality!

What's next? Where does your project go from here?

I just got a replacement engine. I plan to install the replacement engine over spring break and then, hopefully - fingers crossed - I can take it to a couple tuning sessions when the tracks reopen. I also plan

to replace the breaks and spend a few more months tinkering with it. It's fun to build.



JASON L.

HOW CAN I LEARN TO USE 3D MODELLING AND RENDERING SOFTWARE TO DESIGN AND CREATE REALISTIC RENDERS?

Why did you choose your topic?

I learned how to use Computer Assisted Design (or, CAD) software to model objects and mockups a few years ago. This was helpful to learn because it has plenty of uses, from checking to see whether a design is feasible before building to designing an idea. The only problem with CAD software is that it is only meant for modelling. I wanted to be more creative, so when I was introduced to the world of rendering, I was intrigued. I used Blender, a software that has modelling capabilities and the ability to add texture, lighting and more. It has more advanced aspects like virtual effects too. I chose to learn to use Blender because there is so much that can be done, such as concept renders, architectural designs, and photo recreation. For me, it was in my interest to take this next step from CAD.

Walk me through the process: how did you get started? Did things change along the way? What was the overall experience like?

I had no knowledge of Blender when I got started, so my first step was to research what I actually needed to learn. The way Blender works is that you model 3D objects, apply textures to them, add lighting, and then you set up a software camera to capture the scene as an image. I realized there was so much to learn: setting the

layout, applying texture, mapping the textures, setting up lighting, reflections... and those are just a fraction of the work needed. I took

notes on everything I could need and spent a lot of time practicing. I used lots of guides and tutorials during that stage and I am surprised I had enough time! After learning and practicing, I went about creating my own renders. This was challenging because there were so many steps, and I had to use critical thinking to create objects and use techniques that I did not research prior. I created four renders, and each one took hours

to complete. The process remained relatively stagnant because each render had the fundamental steps of modelling, texturing, rendering. The overall process was demanding to complete in the time I had.

What are some of the more interesting discoveries you made while working on your project?

An interesting but unfortunate discovery I made while creating my product was that the steps to creating the renders were progressive – so, if I made a mistake in the beginning, the rest of the steps would also be imperfect, and it was almost impossible to fix. Fixing one thing affected everything else, so the only way to really go forward was to restart. This happened to me a few times, luckily in the earlier stages, and I quickly learned. This was advanced software and everything was as realistic as possible, which left very little room for error.

What was the highlight of your personal project?

A highlight of my project was seeing the finished renders I made. Although not perfect, each render took me hours to make, with many other hours dedicated to learning, so watching each render be successfully processed to an image was satisfying. Each step I took, an object I modelled, a light I added, a value I changed, all did not appear much the moment I did them, but at the end, the cumulative result was a highlight.

What's next? Where does your project go from here?

There are so many other fields of Blender I could explore, like animation, virtual effects, rigging, compositing, motion tracking, even game creation. I started as a beginner, which is why I chose to begin with still renders because they are the foundation of learning skills that could transfer to all the other fields. I can see myself going into the other fields and definitely will use what I learned in the future.



KAYLYN B.

HOW TO DEVELOP AND UTILIZE WATERCOLOR TECHNIQUES TO CREATE THREE REALISTIC PORTRAITS?

Why did you choose your topic?

I've done art my whole life. I started really young with my mom, and I started at school when I joined Meadowridge in Junior Kindergarten. I love drawing, but I wanted to use the Personal Project to explore a new and different artform. So, I chose watercolour paint.

Walk me through the process: how did you get started? Did things change along the way? What was the overall experience like?

I started by doing some research into watercolour. I had just four months to learn how to paint and actually paint my portraits, so it wasn't a lot of time to learn a new skill. I was originally going to paint four portraits, but I changed that to three. I'm very glad I did that! I started with a plan, but it was tough to follow. Painting one week, analyzing it the next... it was hard to follow a timeline with so

many portraits to paint. Anyways, I decided to paint the same portrait but in three different styles – one abstract, one with watercolour pencils, and one with watercolour paints – and then write an analysis for each.

It was very tedious doing everything, and I feel like I managed my time pretty well considering. I created lots of checklists and mapped out everything I wanted to do. I started cramming in a lot of homework towards December, which is when I

started to follow my plan more closely. I usually don't follow plans well, it's not something I normally do, but it worked out well for me. I feel like I learned a lot of valuable skills for the Diploma Programme.

What are some of the more interesting discoveries you made while working on your project?

It was interesting to see how I could use my previous skills and knowledge with drawing

and apply them to painting – I knew how shadows worked already, for instance. I also drew all my paintings as drawings first, so I could pick out the different aspects I liked and apply them in my painting. It was interesting to see how my skills could advance! Usually, I try to match things exactly so. My abstract painting was the hardest to do because I'm a bit of a perfectionist. I don't always enjoy seeing my art because I just see mistakes. I learned to enjoy seeing the progress of things.

What was the highlight of your personal project?

I was going to say this for my video, but my advisory teacher said not to... printing out my report! Seeing my report put together and complete was rewarding since it represented months of work and in-depth learning and I got to see all the progress that I made.

What's next? Where does your project go from here?

I'm going to keep drawing. I also want to start doing oil paintings and acrylics and continue to explore watercolour.



RAYAN R.

HOW CAN PRION DISEASES, PROPAGATED THROUGH THE MISFOLDING OF THE PRION PROTEIN, BE TARGETED USING ANTIBODIES, ENZYMES, AND ANTIGEN-LINKING MOLECULES, AND HOW CAN MOLECULAR VISUALISATION SOFTWARE HELP TO BUILD THESE MOLECULES?

Why did you choose your topic?

My Grade 8 immunization unit with Ms. Bolyard introduced me to prions, and I became curious about what they were and why they didn't work. Prions are, essentially, proteins smaller than any pathogen that fold the wrong way and cause everything to go haywire. I couldn't believe how something so small – so tiny! – could mess up your brain's machinery. It was intriguing. So I did more research, forgot about it for a year or two, and then took part in the Breakthrough Science Challenge. While I didn't focus my research on prions for the challenge, it made me realize that I wished I had. So when the personal project came up, I figured perfect!

Walk me through the process: how did you get started? Did things change along the way? What was the overall experience like?

I knew this project would be a challenge going in. It was a very extensive research process with many steps. I had to first understand how PRCP (Lysosomal Pro-X carboxypeptidase) is manufactured, why it misfolds, and why the brain can't handle it. There were lots of pieces to put together! The research took me much longer than anticipated, and the research was very volatile. Like, the difference between different experiments and results would shift my research dramatically.

I didn't know anyone in the field, so I started reaching out to biomolecular engineers and authors of research papers. I was surprised when one researcher responded! I interviewed him and it was incredibly helpful.

What are some of the more interesting discoveries you made while working on your project?

I wouldn't call it a "discovery" – more like, woah! this is really cool – but I was fascinated by how sudden and how random the disease was. It can really just occur in anyone, anywhere. It doesn't rely on genes. I loved the research. I was halfway through making my product and writing my paper when I found some new research. I was like why didn't I find this earlier? You never know what you can find. And that's why I couldn't quantify how much research I did. I loved the topic and enjoyed it, which is why the number of hours would be scary. I don't think I'd be able to say. [laughs]

What was the highlight of your personal project?

I think one of the highpoints was definitely – actually, well, I have two – but the interview was definitely one. The interview with the researcher gave me a new outlook on my project and I felt reenergized. The other highpoint was when I got my first model done and I had to review it over and over again. It was then that I had my foundation and could engage with the design process much more consistently.

What's next? Where does your project go from here?

That's right; I'm not done with this. I actually want to try and synthesize the protein in real life; I want to make it. That would involve bacteria cultures, genetic technology... I was planning on





starting it over spring break. I don't know how pleased my parents will be with bacterial cultures in the house [laughs] but as long as I can keep them away from my younger siblings, right?

could choose a more creative or a more research-based project. I thought I'd rather do something fun.

Walk me through the process: how did you get started? Did things

change along the way?

What was the overall experience like?

What I wanted to do was actually way more ambitious. Looking back, like, how did I think I could ever do that? [laughs] I thought I'd produce an EP with three or four songs and distribute them on Spotify. That was much more of a challenge than I thought it would be. So, I wrote four songs, but decided to only produce and distribute one.

When I started, I didn't want to write super generic songs about love or breakups. I mean those are fine – you do you! – but that's not what I wanted to do. I had four songs. They're all kind of dark. I wrote a song about a drug dealer seeing the effects of the drugs he sells. That was a cool song. I also wrote a song about an abusive relationship, about a toxic relationship with your parents, and a song about loss. I ended up producing the song about an abusive relationship, which was tough.

The experience overall was great. Having prior knowledge from Mr. Noble's class was good. We actually had to write and perform our own songs last year, and I remember hearing mine after and think I wasn't that good – that made me want to improve!

What are some of the more interesting discoveries you made while working on your project?

I think the biggest surprise, for me, was how much confidence I got out

of my project. I thought I was good at music – that's why I picked this project to begin with – but I feel so much more confident now after practicing my songwriting and using the music software.

I also realized I tend to catastrophize a little. Whenever something went wrong and I couldn't troubleshoot it within the first 20 minutes I'd lose it a little. I learned I need to overcome that and centre myself a little, maybe not go from zero to one hundred. I'm still learning, but I've been practicing some grounding techniques and self-management. Like, okay, it's going to be okay...

What was the highlight of your personal project?

I think it goes back to the confidence thing, that moment of realization like, holy I'm at a way higher confidence now than going in! There were moments during my research that I was so excited. I liked feeling excitement and passion about the things I was learning and doing.

What's next? Where does your project go from here?

I'm definitely going to keep songwriting. It's become a bit of a pattern for me, something therapeutic I can do. I sit down with my guitar or my ukulele and just mess around until I find something nice. Production-wise, there's a lot more I want to learn. I have a loose goal of actually getting an EP and putting it up on Spotify.

SARAYU N.

HOW CAN I LEARN TO PRODUCE A COLLECTION OF SONGS THAT SHOWCASE A VARIETY OF TECHNIQUES, INSTRUMENTS, AND VOCALS?

Why did you choose your topic?

I started singing when I was really young, so music has been a part of my life for – well – for all my life. I've been at Meadowridge since Junior Kindergarten so I was exposed to music when I was really young. From music classes to even café nights... I was young and had no inhibitions so I said yes to café nights because it wouldn't matter if I was good because no one would care. [laughs] My older brother is also big into music, so it's something we always talk about when he calls. My dad is also big into music; he has a diverse playlist that we always listen to in the car. I started by singing, but later got into playing the guitar and the ukulele. This project let me explore even more musical avenues. When I had to pick my topic, I figured I

notes

new and noteworthy



This or that?

To kick off the new year, Mr. Spurgeon hosted a 30-Day 'This or That' Gryphon Challenge. Brave participants tackled an entire month of daily physical activity with their choice between two challenges: this (push-ups) or that (jumping jacks), this (burpees) or that (front kicks), this (lunges) or that (planks) – the over 40 participants had a full 30 days of challenges to choose from!



The circus comes to campus

A new circus unit taught students in Grades 8 through 10 some unique skills and tricks, including learning to juggle diablo sticks, poi, and juggling balls. This new unit let students get in some physical activity while also practicing physical distancing too.



NIAAA Certified

Mr. Scott Spurgeon earned certification with the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA), becoming one of the first in an elite, international group. "To earn this distinction, Scott has demonstrated the highest level of knowledge and expertise in the field of international interscholastic athletic administration," wrote the NIAAA in a press release.



Regenerative garden gets going

With fencing installed to keep the deer away, cardboard was needed next to keep weeds at bay over in the newly built Regenerative Garden. And with a quarter-acre plot to fill, we needed a lot! OE3 Coordinator Mr. James Willms asked families to bring in all their cardboard boxes from home and soon, box by box, the plot was filled.



Fencing season begins

En garde! With a few extra safeguards in place, students in Grade 4 and 5 (Grades 6 and 7 will be happening in the spring) could still enjoy the sport of fencing this year. During its now twelve-year run at Meadowridge, the Fencing Program has built steadily over time and has introduced hundreds of students to the unique, strategic, and fast-moving sport.

Xīn Nián Kuài Lè!

Lunar New Year celebrations went virtual this year, with all the usual makings of the day – performances, an assembly, classroom activities, and cultural cuisine – happening online for all to enjoy. Students tuned in safely from class to hear the history behind Lunar New Year, watch student performances, and learn how to make their own lanterns. SAGE Dining also took part, offering a delicious Kung Pao lunch!





Supporting athletes on campus, across the world

When the Meadowridge Child Haven Dinner – an annual, student-initiated event in support of Child Haven International – was cancelled in the wake of the pandemic, students had to find new ways to support the important cause. The Student Athletic Advisory Committee decided to host a fundraiser, asking for small donations from anyone who chose to register for our free Spring Break Basketball Camps. Over \$800 was raised to help purchase sports equipment for Child Haven schools in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.



Readathon

Students dressed in their comfiest, coziest pyjamas for a day devoted to reading. Students enjoyed read alouds at the campfire, a story walk in the forest, and literacy activities and reading time in their classrooms.



A heartfelt, Chartwell thanks

Over the holidays, Meadowridge students' artwork made its way to the Chartwell Willow Retirement Community. We were so pleased to hear kind words and see some heartfelt photos in return!



Lego for our four-legged friends

Meadowridge students Andrew and Annora spearheaded a service initiative in support of local animal shelters. Called Lego the Charity, the brother and sister aimed to raise \$800 by collecting Lego pieces to organize into sets and sell. During a Lego Drive hosted at the school, Meadowridge's students, teachers, parents and even an alumnus or two donated over 40 kgs.

JUNO songwriting workshop

Students in Kindergarten and Grades 1 and 2 had the opportunity to work with Juno Award-winning musician Meaghen Smith in a songwriting workshop. Each grade will perform their own unique songs at the upcoming Spring Showcase. Be on the lookout for Kindergarten's song about candy, Grade 1's song about animals in the snow, and Grade 2's song about togetherness called Our World.



Be safe, be kind, be you

Students left their blazers at home and donned bright pink shirts to school instead. The day was shaped by the Pink Shirt motto: be safe, be kind, be you. Meadowridge students were also reminded of the Day's history through a beautifully illustrated, animated, and produced video by Grade 8 student Keni L.



100 days of school

Our grandmas and grandpas dressed in their best to celebrate and take part in fun, 100-themed activities like singing songs, sorting collections and counting.

Have something new and noteworthy you would like to share?

Share your update at communications@meadowridge.bc.ca

A background image of a graduate in a cap and gown, viewed from behind, with a blue and green color overlay.

POST-SECONDARY

The Effects of the Pandemic on US University Admissions for the Class of 2021

While there has been much in the news lately about smaller or less recognizable US institutions being hit hard financially from the pandemic – a consequence of fewer applications and lost revenue sources from things like athletics and housing – selective institutions have experienced the opposite.

This year has led to a record-breaking increase in applications at the more selective institutions, with an average increase of 17%. However, many schools that typically attract Meadowridge students have reported an even higher increase: Emory University 19%, Brown University 26%, UCLA 28%, Johns Hopkins University 30%, University of Pennsylvania 34%, Harvard University 42%. Some schools noted even higher increases, such as Colgate University – a small, highly selective liberal arts college – who saw 103% increase in applications this year.

What has caused this increase?

In October, I wrote a post about how the pandemic has led most US institutions to go “test-optional”, meaning they were no longer requiring standardized tests for admissions. This change in policy reflected a need to prioritize health and safety while also understanding the limitations that COVID-19 imposed on students globally.

The change to standardized test requirements is the driving factor in what we are seeing now. Firstly, for students who did not want to write a standardized test, this has opened the door to options they wouldn't have had in other years. Additionally, even those students who did write a test and had scores, all of a sudden had a choice to send them or not, deciding strategically based on how competitive they were (test-optional). Some schools, like the University of California, have gone test-free or test-blind,

meaning they won't even consider scores that have been sent. The change to standardized testing requirements has eliminated a filter that may have prevented students from applying in the past. This year, more students applied, thinking that they had a better chance of being admitted.

It is important to note that admission to some schools and programs are more predictable than others... this is why the Post-Secondary Counsellors work with students to build a balanced list, and this year is no different.

This is certainly what drove up application numbers in the early application rounds. But in December, as schools were reporting significant increases to their early applicant pools, this also caused more anxiety in students, triggering them to submit more applications than perhaps they normally would have in the regular round.

While these have been identified as the two main factors for this increase, two more remain. With the pandemic having financial implications on many families, more students are in need of financial aid this year. With aid being a more complicated,

unpredictable factor in admissions, students in this situation often apply to more schools than students who are full pay. And finally, with President Joe Biden winning the election, international students are generally more at ease about pursuing an education in the US.

All of these factors together have created the perfect storm for this year's applicants to the US. Schools and programs that were already highly selective are now considered – if even possible – to be even more so.

How else has admissions been affected?

With application numbers increasing by so much this year, counsellors are reported seeing more deferrals from the early round in the US than in previous years. Additionally, many schools had to push their decision release dates to accommodate reviewing all of the additional applications. Most notably, the Ivy League delayed their decision date by a week. Counsellors have also reported a high use of waitlists.

What are we seeing elsewhere?

While applications are up overall in the UK, despite Brexit, applications to health-related careers are of particular note. The pandemic has clearly drawn an interest and inspired students, with direct-entry medical applications increasing this year by 21% and nursing applications rising by almost a third.

This trend can also be seen in Canada, with Ontario reporting

a 73% increase in applications to undergraduate nursing programs. As many schools and programs throughout Canada are rolling, it is too early to say what other implications the pandemic may have for this year's cohort beyond a slower application review process.

It is important to note that admission to some schools and programs are more predictable than others. It is not uncommon for even the strongest applicants to be declined by highly selective institutions. This is why the Post-Secondary Counsellors work with students to build a balanced list, and this year is no different. By doing so, we are confident that our students will always have options to choose from in determining which higher-education institution will be the best fit for them.



About the author

Brianna Just is in her fifth year working at Meadowridge School and is currently the Head of the Post-Secondary Counselling Department. She holds professional memberships with the National Association of College Admissions Counseling (NACAC), International Association of College Admissions Counseling (IACAC), Canadian Independent School Counsellors (CISC), and British Columbia's Academic Advisors Consortium (AAC). Additionally, she has also completed University of California, Los Angeles' College Counseling Certificate program.

A roadmap to university

University-bound students face big and daunting decisions. And while the Diploma Programme ultimately provides greater opportunities and choice, it can seem (at the time) to only expedite the need for these big and daunting decisions to be made.

To prepare students for whatever decision or choice comes their way, the Meadowridge Post-Secondary team has designed an in-depth, personalized approach to help students find their fit.



With diploma programme course selection happening in Grade 10, students have to think about their long-term post-secondary goals early on and with each course choice. Fortunately, students don't have to go it alone: our post-secondary counsellors support students early on and in every way. At the start of Grade 10, students begin with a research project. Students look into universities and programs from all around the world. It's not about finding the closest university, or the most popular, or the one a distant cousin attended. It's about finding the right fit, and the right fit is different for every student. So, students conduct an in-depth study beyond the basics, beyond things like namesake or location or program. They consider every detail.



The roadmap to university has many stops along the way.

With the research project complete, students then work backwards, listing what courses they'd need to

take and what grades they'd need to earn to get into each university and program they shortlisted. This ensures that when they are in the bustle of the DP, students have a destination to drive them and a roadmap to reference.

Students then take part in information sessions, one-on-one family meetings, and individual advisories. Through these many sessions and meetings, students get to know their counsellor, and their counsellor them, forming a relationship with the person who will support, encourage, and push them for the next two years.

After that, there are teacher talks. Students hear from each teacher about their courses and learn about unit structures, assessment information, and the differences between Higher Level (HL) and Standard Level (SL) courses.

Finally, each Grade 10 student will take part in course selection 'speed dating', an activity that pairs up peers for 'real talk'. Students meet with students in Grades 11 and 12 to find out what the DP is really like. They can ask anything, and they'll get an honest answer.

Through these many sessions, course selection becomes far less big and daunting.

What's course selection 'speed dating' really like?

Curious about what course selection speed dating really looks like, we – just like our university-bound students are asked to do! – reached out to lots of people to find out. We spoke with Ms. Cathy White, the Diploma Programme Coordinator; Ms. Natalie Jacus, the Post-Secondary Counsellor; and even siblings, sets of students who took part in these sessions as inquirers (Grade 10 students) and as advisors (Grade 11 and 12 students). In true speed dating fashion, their answers were honest, candid and real. What's speed dating like?

Here's what our panel had to say.

Mrs. Cathy White
Diploma Programme
Coordinator

Course selection speed dating is great because...

Students get to hear from their peers and from a more relatable perspective. During the sessions, students can ask questions that they might not ask adults. Strategies for doing well, the hardest parts of the course, how much homework is assigned... these are just some of the questions that come up. For our younger students,

this helps to humanize the Diploma Programme (DP). There's this rumour that the DP is so hard, so hearing from actual DP students about their experiences – that the programme and courses are tough, yes, but manageable – helps students realize they can do it too. It normalizes things like setbacks and taking risks. Course selection helps our older students too because it lets them reflect on how far they've come. As the DP Coordinator, I also enjoy the sessions because they allow me to "see" inside the classrooms that I might not always have the time to. I hear about what the students enjoy, their interpretations from a course novel, or what kinds of exercises they do in one class. I can't be in every class, so seeing and hearing from the students is cool.





Ms. Natalie Jacus

Post-Secondary Counsellor

Course selection 'speed dating' is great because...

The Diploma Programme is not an easy thing to navigate by any means, especially with post-secondary requirements factored in. It can be scary in Grade 10, especially when students aren't sure what they want to do after school – and they're only in Grade 10, so they shouldn't! – but the DP asks students to make big decisions early on. Choosing the right courses with university requirements in mind can be an overwhelming process for some students. As the post-secondary counsellor, I can handle the logistics. I like speed dating because it lets students speak with other students about learning more of the practical, small parts of the process. It also

makes real the things students have to keep in mind during the course selection process. We hear older students saying things like, "I took physics and chemistry because I want to go into Engineering—" and that makes what we tell the Grade 10 students quite real. Applying to university is a big Tetris game, and there are lots of pieces to put together!

Nancy Z.

Grade 10 student

Course selection 'speed dating' is great because...

My sister tends to undermine workloads, so I wanted to ask the Grade 11 students about what the Diploma Programme (DP) workload is actually like. Speed dating was tough to do over Zoom, but worthwhile. I actually wish it were – and think it should be – offered

during a longer session. The Grade 11 students were especially helpful since they're midway through the Programme and can tell you more about homework, workloads, and what to expect during the first term. Grade 12 students offer more high-level insight like the differences between Higher Level (HL) and Standard Level (SL) classes. Because I was able to ask my sister a lot of my questions even before the sessions, I was able to finetune and get really specific information. Annie is really good at debunking stuff, so she shares a lot of information with me and my friends. It was really helpful to know beforehand. The sessions are helpful for exactly that... the little things. You get real, relevant insight into the years ahead.

Annie Z.

Grade 12 student

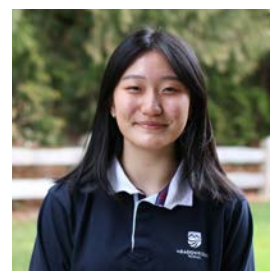
Course selection 'speed dating' is great because...

I think I was able to debunk some misconceptions, for sure. I was chosen to speak about the Extended Essay, probably because I actually blocked out the time and followed the deadlines. My advice was to follow the deadlines, obviously, but also pick something that you are really interested in. It is a long, arduous process but it won't feel that way if you pick something you care about. Don't pick something just because you think it'll benefit your university applications! Speed dating is helpful because the students have actually gone, or are going through, it. Teachers, I think – well, they love their subjects – so it's hard to get real information.



Mrs. Cathy White
Diploma Programme Coordinator

Ms. Natalie Jacus
Post-Secondary Counsellor



Nancy Z.
Grade 10 Student



All the teachers are going to say their class is the best. Students have more insight into the whole spectrum, more than just one or two teacher perspectives.

Stella S.

Grade 10 student

Course selection 'speed dating' is great because...

Course selection speed dating helped me understand the Diploma Programme much better. The students I talked to were realistic and shared honest opinions about all the classes I had questions about. With an older sister at home, I was also able to have very honest conversations with her and talk about her own experiences and opinions. I didn't necessarily ask different questions because of this, but I was able to compare my

sister's experiences and opinions with that of others to get a more well-rounded point of view. The thing I was most curious about going into speed dating was whether I should take geography or history. I had mixed feelings towards these two classes but had a much clearer understanding of both classes after the sessions. I got clarity on certain classes which was very helpful, and I left the event having a strong feeling about the courses I wanted to enroll in my diploma programme years.

Carrera S.

Grade 11 student

Course selection 'speed dating' is great because...

When I participated in speed dating in Grade 10, I felt like I was aimlessly listening to course descriptions and asking basic

questions since I didn't know if I actually needed the course or not. Now, being in the reverse role of answering questions and providing advice, I have a different appreciation for the event. I am able to add what I felt was lacking in my experience and answer questions in a way I feel would have provided total clarity of the course. I feel that speed dating is a beneficial activity, however it is intimidating to choose courses that may limit your university options and hinder you in Grades 11 and 12. Honesty is crucial during the speed dating process, which is why it is important to listen to all perspectives. As an older sibling, for instance, I am able to answer my sister's questions with a full background of her strengths and weaknesses and make more insightful suggestions based on her interests.

Annie Z.
Grade 12 Student



Stella S.
Grade 10 Student

Carrera S.
Grade 11 Student



A STAND AGAINST ONLINE PSEUDOSCIENCE

Jasmine Mah '09 woke up one morning to a barrage of emails, interview requests from the likes of CTV News, the CBC, and other radio, television and news media outlets.

Soon after, phone calls started pouring in and Jasmine's scheduled appearances started stacking up. "It was crazy," the twenty-something scientist admits. For the next four days, she did the rounds, speaking to reporters and sharing with audiences what went in to creating the thing they were all so curious about. As a web content developer, Jasmine has created many calculators, but none had gained the viral, overnight success quite like the COVID-19 Vaccine Queue Calculator for Canada.

As a web content developer at Omni Calculator, Jasmine is one of the many experts who creates handy, online tools to help people solve everyday dilemmas and big-picture quandaries. Want to know how much smog goes into your lungs each year or how much CO₂ your christmas tree creates? There's a calculator for that! With over 1,574 free calculators (and counting) Jasmine herself has created and co-created quite a few. As the resident horticulture expert – Jasmine has her Bachelor of Environmental Studies and a Masters in Environmental Science – she has published tools like the water-soluble fertilizer calculator, the parts per million to molarity calculator, and the mean median mode calculator. Priding itself as the "always reliable calculator company," Omni hires many university students and graduates, and each expert produces calculators relevant to their field and general knowledge. This ensures that, when

you type in your numbers and figures and whatever else, you can be sure that the calculation is correct. "It's fun," Jasmine explains of her unconventional work, "it requires you to be constantly researching and reading up on each topic." New calculations are requested and required all the time, just like Jasmine's latest, now semi-famous induction.

To create the COVID-19 vaccine predictor, Jasmine and her colleague Steven Wooding were tasked with searching and reading through many press releases and government reports. The formula includes many factors, all reflective of the most recent guidelines and policies established by the Government of Canada. Using the calculator, Canadians across the country can input factors such as their age, line of work, and living situation, and in mere moments, a vaccine estimate will appear on their screens. For many, this will provide some relief and a bit of certainty during these uncertain times. And to ensure the tool continues to do just that, Jasmine's work is far from over. With new guidelines, reports and announcements released frequently, Jasmine must continue to monitor the situation for any key updates. "I will keep updating the calculator as more information comes out," Jasmine nods. In the meantime, she has been keeping up with the media requests (radio has been her favourite!) and providing good scientific resources some well-deserved airtime for a change.



REFLECTIONS OF A LIFER

You're a lifer! What was it like going to the same school for most of your elementary, middle and high school career?

It's kind of a funny question for me since I can't really compare experiences with what it would be like to go to a different school. I loved my teachers though, and definitely felt that our relatively small class sizes (there were about 40 students in my grade until I graduated) helped us get to know our classmates and teachers really well. I did feel like this environment helped ensure no one got left behind in class. There was this strange experience of "moving up" in the hallway as I got older, starting from the kindergarten classroom all the way to the end of the high school hallway. We started with cubbies and coat hooks, then small lockers, and I remember it was a really big deal when we started getting to use the "big" lockers - like that was the ultimate final symbol of advancement.

Probably one side effect of knowing the teachers well was that the teachers were very open about letting me use different tools for learning, and I also felt comfortable asking them questions. When I was in high school, I heard that the middle school art class was making ocarinas (Zelda fans know why this was so important), and Ms. Laurie let me participate at lunchtime so I could also make an ocarina and fire it in the kiln with her students, under the condition that I was careful not to make clay 'bubbles' and blow up the kiln. It

was pretty special. In grade 12, I took Philosophy class with Mr. Burke, the headmaster. That was intimidating but I found out he was pretty cool, and at the end of the semester, he served us good cheese which felt like a very grown-up activity.

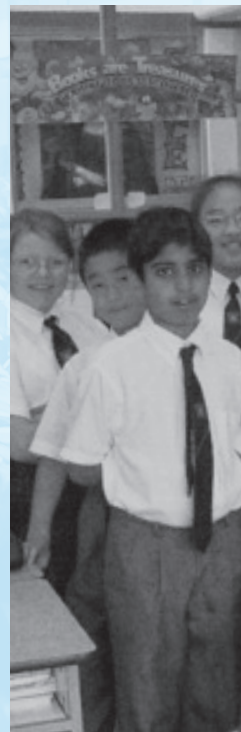
What was your best memory during your time at Meadowridge?

I don't think I can pick just one! I remember going to every Mad Science Lab demo that Ms. Hops did, and the watching this monstrous expanding goop experiment which never got old. We had to chant "rise, rise!" as goop overflowed out of the beaker. I can't even remember if I was ever able to join the club, but watching the demos was very memorable. All of the teachers gave a lot of effort towards the students. I think the field trips were one of the best parts of school, especially the outdoorsy ones. I remember going to Strathcona, doing the high ropes course, sharing ghost stories, canoeing, and taking turns washing dishes after everyone ate spaghetti for dinner. There were tons of unique learning opportunities, and I think it was Mrs. Graetz who told us about this essay contest to go up to the Arctic for 11 days. I was one of the winners and got to see the northern lights and meet the people of the Arctic town, Resolute Bay, which was really unforgettable. There were also a lot of fun events, one of which was the "Renaissance Faire." Dressing up in old timer clothes was great, but best of all

was the earworm recorder tune Mr. Noble taught us, which we played on loop for the entire afternoon. I can still play it.

What was your hardest lesson during your time at Meadowridge?

Given my intense love of field trips, one hard lesson was learned when we went to Castle Fun Park (yes, we got to go to an arcade for a field trip...). I had the peculiar record of being the shortest student in every grade from K to 12, but normally wasn't a major hindrance for everyday life. On this day I was especially looking forward to go-kart racing - but as it turned out, I was the one and only student who wasn't tall enough to ride. I remember looking up at the wooden man with the red "minimum height" line in agony and despair. One merciful teacher allowed me to ride with her as a passenger, but to my need-for-speed young mind, riding was not the same as driving. In the end, it wasn't so much not being able to drive that hurt the most - the hard lesson was that I could not pretend that height "didn't matter;" the truth is that differences sometimes do matter. I had to learn that it's okay to

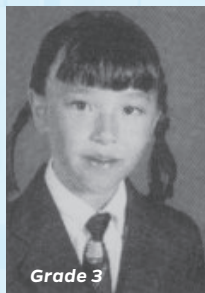




Grade 1



Grade 2



Grade 3

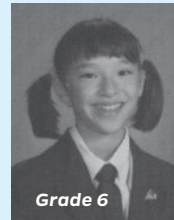


Grad 2009

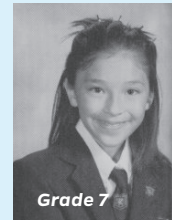
Jasmine
in Kindergarten!



Grade 4



Grade 6



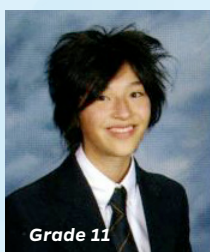
Grade 7

"I remember going to Strathcona, doing the high ropes course, sharing ghost stories, canoeing, and taking turns washing dishes after everyone ate spaghetti for dinner. There were tons of unique learning opportunities."

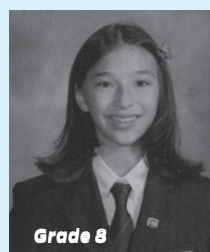
Jasmine
in Grade 5!



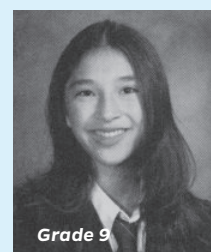
Grade 10



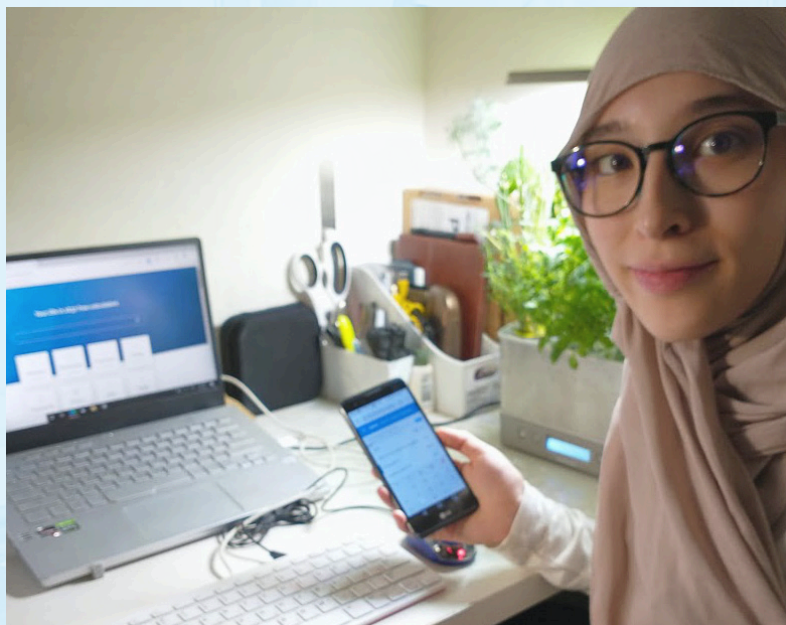
Grade 11



Grade 8



Grade 9



be different, but the world isn't always built for you. I ended up with an injury down the line due to my insistence that differences don't matter, a hard lesson learned. I learned not be afraid to look your own differences and challenges in the eye, and embrace those differences. Not only will you be happier, but when you work with your differences instead of ignoring them, you will be able to make smarter and wiser decisions in life. And when you acknowledge that the world is imperfect, you can take opportunities to make it better.

Describe the school back then, what was it like? What did you like about it?

When I was in middle school, we had an amazing computer lab with those classic iMacs with candy-blue and pink translucent covers – the ones that look ideal for turning into fish tanks. We would play with the retro paint program kid-pix and the Oregon Trail, the various math games and typing speed tests. I suppose that's the 'good old days' before there was actual work to be done on computers, I think the kids nowadays would be way more advanced at a younger age. Before the new playground was built, I

had a favorite tree with large sweeping branches you could sit on without climbing. The new playground was safer, but I still remember the tree.

As I entered high school, there was a major renovation in the senior end to increase the number of classrooms, and we got our first kitchen/cafeteria and a new stage next to the cafeteria area. A highlight was being able to get fries at lunch, and the stage was great for the Open Mic events. If my memory serves me right, there was this odd period when the back field (there was a 'front field' and a 'back field') inexplicably turned into a swamp and we used the front field while it was being fixed. But most of all I remember the great teachers and my classmates, that was the constant through all the changes.

Do you remember any distinct “aha moment” learning experiences from your time as a student?

I don't remember a particular “aha moment” so much as a continuous stream of learning. I do remember we were meant to be getting “aha moments” every day in Physics class with Mr. Wells every time we learned a new concept. Once I asked

Mr. Noble how he does so much (when he taught about half of my classes in my senior year plus tons of extracurriculars) and he said you can't always be a perfectionist.

What is an interesting/funny/weird thing people might be surprised to know about the school back then?

Back in the early days of the computer, Mr. Niwa managed the internet at school. Once, I was in his Information Technology class where we made a basic website, which was useful, but the most interesting thing in the class was when some of the more computer savvy students figured out how to use the “net send” command in Command Prompt. Using this command, you could send spontaneous messages to any other computer user in the system and it would trigger a pop-up with your message which covered whatever they were doing. It made for a few hilarious class disruptions. I don't think you'd be able to do this today, as Mr. Niwa had secured the network and blocked this ability soon after it was discovered.

Q

What weird, new hobby did you pick up during the pandemic?



STEPHANIE KINNEARD,
Elementary Teacher

Six years ago, I took my first sewing class. It was this same day, six years ago, that I discovered a new passion. Though from the beginning, I loved to explore the world of making while trying my hand at a few quilts and garments, it wasn't always easy to find time for my new hobby. Then, I became a mom, and found it even harder to carve out time to sew. My little guy turned one right at the beginning of the pandemic. Over the past year, I have found myself regularly looking for creative ways to keep my young toddler entertained at home. This created a perfect opportunity for me to put my sewing skills to new use by sewing interactive toys for him. From dinosaur tails and firetrucks to fishing games and puzzle balls, I am always on the hunt for my next sewing project. Most recently, I finished a Snakes and Ladders board game blanket over Spring Break for his second birthday. Though of course, I wish that we were able to spend more time as a family, safely enjoying the local libraries, gyms and leisure centers, for now, I am grateful for my ability to sew fun toys for my son, while engaging in a hobby that I love.



DAN TAO,
High School Teacher

As a non-dog person, I agreed to adopt a puppy only if my partner agreed to go vegan for a week. He did it, and soon Coco for Cocoapuffs joined our family. She was a sweet little chocolate furball. Neither of us had had a dog before, so we devoured books and watched endless YouTube videos hoping to learn all the tricks to raising a well-behaved dog. No matter our efforts, things did not go as expected. Each day she seemed to only grow bigger, stronger, and crazier. Even her obedience teacher does not know what to do with her. So, one day after she chewed off a corner of our wall, I took to Instagram to vent my frustrations. It felt strangely satisfying and people seemed to think it was funny. Since then, I have made it my hobby to find humour in every crazy thing she does and share it online.



HELEN QIU,
Admissions Coordinator

I started listening to a philosophy podcast (it's called Philosophize This!) during the pandemic. I guess I started it because the pandemic made me wonder how I could live the happiest and most fulfilling life possible as an individual amidst so many limitations as a human being. That being said, I certainly didn't want to become a weirdo when I first started this and I did get lost every now and then in the convoluted terminologies the philosophers use, but it does have some positive effect on me, especially how I perceive the world. I now see hardships as inevitable in life. In fact, according to the existentialism German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, overcoming insurmountable difficulties is the only way a person can become an "overman" – a self-achieving person capable of experiencing great things others may not have the luck to experience – that's my personal understanding of it, correct me if I am wrong.



NATALIE BLOMLY,
Director of Admissions

Have you ever opened your linen hall closet and looked at those unruly folded sheets and quickly closed the door?! For far too long I have procrastinated cleaning the mess up and thought "oh another day". Well, that day finally came during the pandemic while having time on my hands I decided I could no longer make excuses. I sat down in front of the closet on the carpet and opened up my laptop. I sat and watched YouTube after YouTube video of people saying how easy it is to fold fitted sheets. Clearly, they don't know me.

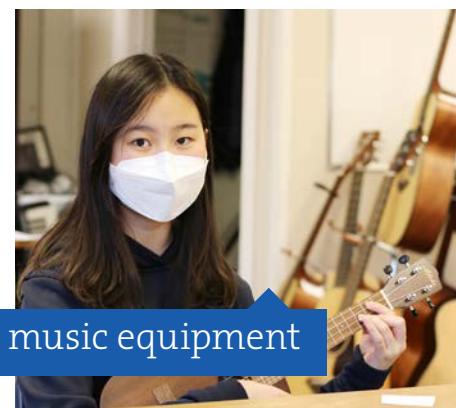
Sheet after sheet these people folded twin, queen and king size fitted sheets like ninjas. They had perfect, uncreased, corner tucked sheets that you could have put a ribbon on and sold. Four hours later, I was pleased to see my closet not only tidied up but sheets all colour and size coded and folded like they could be on display at Bed Bath and Beyond. Marie Kondo would be proud!

Q

What weird new hobby did you pick up during the pandemic?
Share your answer at

communications@meadowridge.bc.ca

pickleball rackets



music equipment



library book trucks



frisbee golf course



math balance scales

science lab equipment



lounge furniture



greenhouse planters



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People of Meadowridge

Danielle Christensen

Where you'll find her... Working alongside the Advancement Team as the Director of Advancement, liaising with the Parent Guild, serving on the Student Awards and Recognition Committee and coaching Track and Field athletes **Here since...** 2018.

What does your day as the Director of Advancement look like?

I look at how the school can raise money through fundraising efforts. This involves meeting with many families (past and present) and talking about how their philanthropic goals match the strategic priorities of the school. It's building relationships, it's getting people excited about the future plans of the school, it's showing appreciation and thanks to our many donors and volunteers, it's reporting on our successes and our funds, it's being innovative and creative with the ways we communicate with our families and it's about leading by positive example for others.

Okay, but actually: why do we need fundraising?

Tuition only covers about 80% of our operating costs. We also only get a certain percentage of government funding per student, therefore we need to make up the difference through fundraising dollars. All the classroom, program, and school enhancements as well as all the building expansion costs need to be covered somehow, fundraising helps us do that.

What are the best parts of your job?

Getting to know our extraordinary families and building meaningful friendships with them. I hear stories and backgrounds of all kinds and I absolutely love that part. The other best part of my job is seeing the students happy and in action. When I look at them, I feel proud knowing that all the money we raised was to make their futures brighter.

What are the hardest parts of your job?

When someone decides to donate in memory of a family member. I often hear the backstory of the person who has passed and the real deep explanation about why the family is choosing to donate. These situations usually bring a lot of tears. While it is extremely inspirational in what the family is doing, it can also be a very emotional and heavy process to go through for everyone involved. It's an absolute honour to help facilitate these types of gifts and they often bond the family and I in a very special way but they can be tough.

What are some things coming up that you're most excited about?

Uh, did you hear we're expanding? How can I not be excited about the future growth of this school?! A new Great Hall, a Fine Arts Building, a Gymnasium, a Student Service & Academic Centre, a new library doubled in size, and more classrooms!

How did you end up in such a unique career?

Today, people always say, “I could never do your job and ask for money”. 20 years ago, I probably would have thought the same thing. I moved to Calgary (from Edmonton) to join the Canadian National Bobsleigh team and shortly after realized how expensive everything was becoming, so I took a position at the Alberta Children’s Hospital Foundation as their Database Assistant. Little did I know that working with their software, Raiser’s Edge (fundraising software), would ultimately put me on a path to where I am today as a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE). After the Foundation, I stayed in the non-profit sector, getting a job at the University of Calgary, where I stayed for 13 years – exploring and learning nearly every avenue of Development and Alumni Relations. I fell in love with this type of work and never looked back.

What would surprise us about you?

I love all sports and I am super competitive. However, I also wear my heart on my sleeve. Even shows like The Bachelor can make me cry!

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

Oh, this one is really hard to answer. Can I have a dinner party so there can be more than one person? Barack Obama, Usain Bolt, Marilyn Munroe, Brad Pitt, Princess Diana, Elon Musk, Daniel Levy, Gerry Dee and Oprah.

“The next best part of my job is seeing the students happy and in action. When I look at them, I feel proud knowing that all the money we raised was to make their futures brighter.”

Favourite Meadowridge memory?

Torturing my Advancement team members with team building games and activities outside on the front field. There were so many ridiculous things I made them do but it made for a lot of laughs and it definitely brought us closer together.

Spring or fall?

Summer. Always Summer. I don’t need seasons, just summer.

Favourite meal?

Does ice-cream count? I love ice-cream, and sugar, and desserts...and ice-cream. If that is not a real meal, I also love pizza.

Best way to spend the day?

At the beach with my family. And then finish off the day with more ice-cream!





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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