

Winter 2021

the GRYPHON





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35 HOURS OF GIVING

Highlights from the inaugural #MeadowridgeGivingDay



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FOOD FOR GOOD

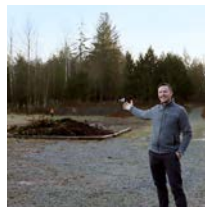
How inquiry sparks action, how action leads to change



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ARTRUISM

How one student is using her talents for good



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REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURAL PROJECT

A small, quarter-acre plot that promises big impact



the GRYPHON

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEADOWRIDGE SCHOOL



ON THE COVER

Could you survive in the wild with only a bucket, shovel, rope, tarp and some tinfoil? During a Week Without Walls outdoor challenge, Grade 11 students learned they could. They learned that with these six items, along with some creative thinking and teamwork, they could build a shelter, light a fire, and even brew some tea from foraged finds.

Mr. James Willms structured this unique activity so that students could draw from their previous, Outdoor, Experiential, Ecological Education (OE3) experiences and

be challenged by new, increasingly difficult tasks. To accomplish each challenge, students needed to work together while making best use of their scarce supplies. Survival packs in hand, students had three challenges to complete: build a dry shelter large enough for four, build a fire, and forage for hemlock tips, licorice root, blackberry leaves and douglas fir to brew tea. The fire-building challenge was especially tricky, since each group was provided their own, unique fire-starter: while one group received matches, others received flint or kindling, dryer lint or pitch wood. The intention, shares Mr. Willms, was "to foster teamwork, and join all the fire building pieces together." The students managed brilliantly.

The pandemic may have kept our Week Without Walls trips closer to home this year – but, with the ingenuity of Mr. Willms and an incredible outdoor campus, much of the learning has stayed the same. There will come a time where we can venture back to Loon Lake or Qualicum Beach or Say Nuth Khaw Yum... but, until then, we'll keep finding ways to bring these adventures back to campus.



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MEADOWRIDGE GIVING DAY

HOUR ONE

Mr. Burke and Ms. Boyd kicked things off by making the first gift and sharing the ways giving has shaped our school and the lives of our students – including the lives of their own two children, Mollie '08 and Thomas '16!



HOUR THREE

A life-changing place sticks with you for... well, for life. Hallie Fraser's daughter graduated two years ago, but that hasn't stopped her from continuing her now 11-year-long monthly gift. In an inspiring video, Hallie shared why giving back to the school has always been a given.



HOUR FOUR

A generous gift from our first, second-generation family. "Lordco Auto Parts is founded on certain values; loyalty, family, and community are essential aspects of how we do business and a driving force behind our belief in giving back locally. As a family, we share the same belief... we have continued to support the School because the values it helps to foster in its students align with our family and our company. With this gift, it is our family's wish that those common values are upheld for future generations."



HOUR SIX

Dedicated, knowledgeable, kind... and generous! Mrs. Nicholson, Mr. Rinn and Ms. Bereza joined Meadowridge Giving Day with some kind words and a generous gift.



HOUR TEN

Kelsey Peng '14 checked in from Ottawa where she's working at the CRA Headquarters. While sharing what she's been up to since Meadowridge (including adopting a cat!) she sent out a fun challenge to her fellow alumni: give your age in dollars!



HIGHLIGHT

After seeing all of the amazing gifts and well wishes made on Giving Day, Mrs. Durno decided to make an additional (and incredible) gift. She announced a generous donation of 14 marimbas, each of them handmade by Mrs. Durno herself and valued at well over \$10,000.



HOUR SIXTEEN

After a long day of celebrating, we were tucked out! Luckily, our **Junior Kindergarten** students reminded us of the importance of sleep during a community-wide nap time.



HOUR TWENTY-THREE

Ms. Metz joined us to share how giving has impacted one of our favourite places in the school... the library! A place where we can meet, read, study, play, learn and much (much!) more, the library has been shaped over time through generous donations to the Annual Fund.

HOUR TWENTY-FIVE

"Meadowridge is like our second family, and we all call it Happy Ridge—" parents **Tripti and Alok** shared kind words and even kinder wishes for the Meadowridge community. Hoping to see the school grow and get even better for all our children, the family made a gift and encouraged others to join them.



HOUR TWENTY-SIX

The Droulis Family shared a simple but powerful message: "We are donating to Meadowridge Giving Day because we believe in the future of our School and all these kids deserve that." The family's words inspired Sean's father, Paul Droulis, to also give to his grandchildren's school. Coquitlam Canadian Tire – the family's business – generously matched the Droulis' already-generous gift!



HOUR TWENTY-SEVEN

Mr. and Mrs. Banack shared the important role sports played in their lives (including how it brought them together some many years ago!). Now, grown up and with kids of their own, the duo not only continues to be involved in sports themselves, but also encourages physical recreation for their own two kids, Ethan (Grade 7) and Adele (Grade 4), and their students too.



HOUR THIRTY-FIVE

We did it! As a school built on generations of giving, we celebrated all 35 years to cap off our 35-hour campaign.

35

#MEADOWRIDGE GIVING DAY

\$152,287

was raised in 35 hours.

Thank You!

\$73,360

Headmaster's Choice

\$44,942

Audacity Campaign

\$13,725

Arts

\$7,510

Academic Enrichment

\$4,915

Library

\$2,385

Student Life

\$1,755

Technology

\$2,445

Financial Aid

\$1,250

Athletics

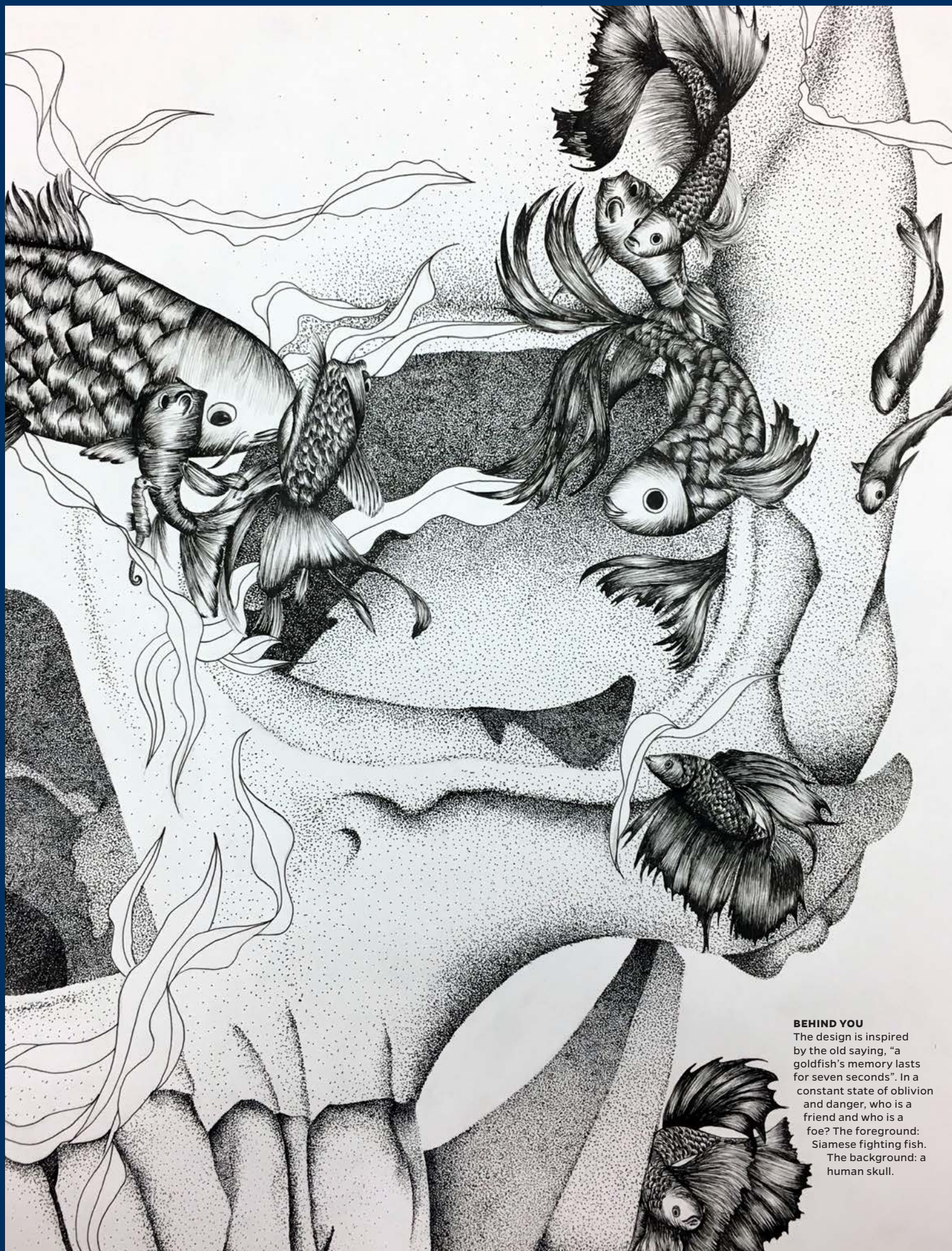




A mysterious email arrived in our inboxes early one day, its subject line reading simply “cool project.” Curiosities piqued, we opened the email, clicked the link, and up popped our browser. The computer hummed for a moment before a beautiful magazine appeared up on our screens. It was stunning. With a masterfully designed, colourful front cover, it looked like a magazine you’d find lined up neatly at the store or on a shelf. Imagine our surprise, then, when we looked just a bit further and saw ‘student-led’ just below it. The magazine was written and designed and edited entirely by students. And that colourful front cover? By one of our own.

When Ruochen Y. (Grade 12) started working with Momentum Magazine, she admits it was by happy accident. She was on a last-minute search for a service project (her original project, an Adopt-A-Street project, was no longer possible because of the pandemic) so was looking where she so often does: the IB Diploma

Programme subreddit, r/IBDP. She was only looking for ideas at first, but what she ended up finding was so much more. It was one post in particular that caught her attention. Written by a young woman – a student named Rissa studying in the Philippines – the post asked a simple but enticing question: would anyone be interested in starting a magazine?



BEHIND YOU

The design is inspired by the old saying, "a goldfish's memory lasts for seven seconds". In a constant state of oblivion and danger, who is a friend and who is a foe? The foreground: Siamese fighting fish. The background: a human skull.

In her own words

A look back at some of Ruochen's favorites



◀ BOUND BY FATAL FLAWS

This piece illustrates the practice of eating octopus alive. After reading an article written by VICE, I was deeply affected and wanted to represent the feeling of constraint and unease. Materials: ink, sewn red thread, oil pastels.

Featured in issue one of Momentum Magazine.



◀ FRONT COVER OF MOMENTUM MAGAZINE

The theme for issue one was 'eureka' so it was critical for us to deliver that message to the audience through symbols. My piece consists of flowers and greenery to express a whimsical and child-like vibe.

▶ A DESIGNER'S DISH

The intentions of this piece is to juxtapose two personal experiences: the tradition of eating hot pot on a winter night, and my journey as I explore my passion for fashion design.

This composition represents my plans and ambitions whilst remaining close to familial traditions.



▶ HOME

Inspired by a personal experience, this multimedia piece expresses what it means to leave home and begin a new journey. This piece signifies that no matter where one travels, behind them, is always a home.



Ruochen was the first person to apply.

"I didn't think I'd get the role" she admits, "since I was more focused on illustrations than graphic design." Rissa, however, took one look at her work and thought otherwise; she immediately offered her a position as a lead designer.

This accidental service project has turned out to be a life-changing experience. Written by students for students – for students from all around the world! – Momentum Magazine focuses on timely issues like racism, mental health, productivity and sustainability. As a graphic designer, Ruochen has learned to be adaptable, tackling stories about the Australian Wildfires one day and books by black authors the next. "As a designer I'm very engaged," she explains, "for each piece, the writer and I work together so I can learn how to best express their work artistically. I have to think about how to use art to influence people's understanding."

Ruochen credits this analytical approach to her art classes at Meadowridge. Joining the school back in Grade 1, she still remembers her very first art teacher, her first exhibit, and how it all led her to pursuing art in the Diploma Programme. "Meadowridge has been a place, for me as an artist, to show my work and not be judged and get constructive criticism back," she smiles.

With the inaugural first issue wrapped up, the team is already planning their next. Ruochen is eager to get started, and is looking forward to working with her team of writers and editors and publishers.

"I love meeting new people, making connections, and creating good art... and, by working with people from all around the world, you get to learn all about time zones."

Ruochen continues to work with Momentum Magazine in between post-secondary applications and art portfolio. With plans to study fashion design in university, Ruochen is excited to continue exploring her creativity and talent.



A student since Grade 1, Ruochen credits her analytical approach to her art classes at Meadowridge.

CAS Projects at Meadowridge

Ruochen's CAS project is one example of the many creativity, activity and service based initiatives our students take on during the Diploma Programme. Here's what else our students have on the go this year.



CREATIVITY TO ACTIVISM

Three students designed and sold bookmarks, laptop stickers, and other smalls to raise funds for our local hospitals. Using their creativity to take action, the trio aims to raise at least \$200 through sales from their online shop.



E-WASTE RECYCLING

Two students partnered with FreeGeek to collect and recycle unused electronics from around our school and our homes. The project involved generating lots of awareness to get people involved and onboard.



VANCOUVER CARE PACKAGE PROJECT

A collaboration between Meadowridge students and alumni, the Vancouver Care Package Project generated awareness, raised funds, and equipped residents of the downtown eastside with essentials like healthy snacks and hygiene products.



RIDGE MEADOWS HOSPITAL FUNDRAISER

Three students spearheaded a campaign to raise funds for the Ridge Meadows Hospital Foundation. Together, the trio raised \$4,443.63 and were able to equip frontline healthcare workers with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Food for Good

Food is an essential part of our lives. Food connects us, nourishes us, and brings us joy. It is the fuel for not only our bodies and minds, but also our celebrations, our gatherings, and our traditions.



At Meadowridge, we celebrate over cultural meals, we sit down and we connect over lunches, and we involve students – through gardening, through inquiry and through instruction – in food production and food waste reduction. Over time, students learn to appreciate the role food plays in their lives and the lives of others, as well as the impacts it has on our society, our environment, and our world. This type of inquiry sparks all sorts of action, and people across our community, students and teachers alike, are taking big steps to ensure everyone has access to, and can experience, the goodness of food.

“Hunger isn’t a problem where we don’t have enough food in the world... it’s a logistics problem.”

As one of the 46 students who helped build a wall against hunger, a campaign that collected a whopping 2,260lbs of food, **Ray (Grade 4)** has a special appreciation for the goodness food can bring. And while the campaign was no doubt a highlight of the nine-year-old’s year, it was not an entirely new endeavor: Ray has been working with the food bank in some way for about five years now. Back in Kindergarten, he and his classmates helped by making sandwiches (peanut butter and jelly, as he recalls) and packing snacks for kids in need. “We did that for about two grades,” he nods. Over time, his commitment and acts of service only grew. Ray continued to support the food bank in class while also learning more about it on his own from home. Through books and movies and Ted Talks and documentaries, the curious learner learned everything he could about food scarcity and its effects. He couldn’t understand how, with all the food around him, some people still didn’t have enough to eat and drink. “I just wanted to help,” he remembers. Over the next five years, Ray continued to not only learn more, but also, through involvement with a local public speaking club, learn new ways to *share* all these things he was learning. Now in Grade 4, and with many years of learning and speech competitions behind him, Ray decided it was time to use his talent for good. “My speaking abilities were getting better by the minute, and I wanted to use them to make a difference – a big difference, a little difference, *any* difference! – that would combine my talent with my passion.” Fresh off the Build A Wall Against Hunger

campaign, Ray learned of an upcoming public speaking competition and knew it was time. Inspired by his learning back at Meadowridge, Ray penned a powerful speech he called – what else? – ‘A Wall Against Hunger’ “Hunger isn’t a problem where we don’t have enough food in the world...” he began in a bold statement, “hunger is a *logistics problem*.”

“The idea of food or water scarcity feels nonexistent in Canada.”

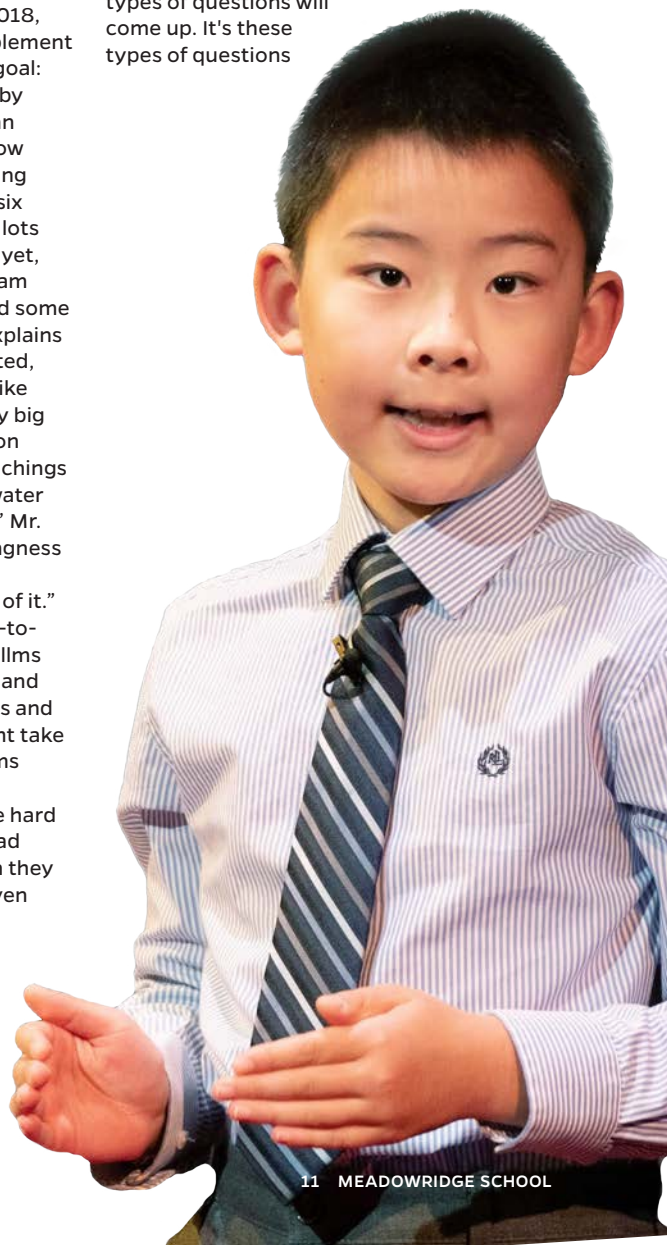
On average and often without realizing it, British Columbians throw away one out of every four bags of groceries that we buy. A brown banana here, a bruised apple there... they add up. Thankfully, so too do the small steps we can take to *reduce* the amount of food we throw away. Established in 2018, the zero-waste taskforce aims to implement these small steps to achieve one big goal: to become a zero-waste school. Led by **Mr. James Willms**, the taskforce began by first determining what food and how much of it we as a school were throwing away, something which required the six teacher team to sift through lots and lots of garbage and waste. Not ideal. And yet, it was during this exercise that the team noticed some patterns and uncovered some key food waste culprits. Mr. Willms explains that students who were, “too distracted, too excited for recess, or who didn’t like their food,” almost always threw away big portions of their meals. This realization informed and inspired Mr. Willms’ teachings and strategies. “The idea of food or water scarcity feels nonexistent in Canada,” Mr. Willms explains about students’ willingness to throw away food, “so it’s hard to generate care when there is so much of it.” To make real to students the not-real-to-them realities of food scarcity, Mr. Willms involves students in food production and shows them the people and processes and operations behind the food they might take for granted and throw away. Mr. Willms smiles, remembering a few classes in particular who learned this lesson the hard way. After months of tending to a salad garden, students were shocked when they had barely enough spinach to feed even

one class. “They suddenly realized what it took to grow all the spinach they saw at the store, and all the spinach at the stores just like it, and then at Costco, too...”. Students marveled, learning not to take that little bit of spinach, or any food, for granted.

“It is important to draw students back and connect them to an actual experience.”

“Can I eat this berry...?” This question might cause great panic for some, but for an expert like **Mr. Willms**, it’s a sign that students are learning and exploring how he hopes. When out in the north forest, seeing its many bushes and trees and weeds and berries, Mr. Willms actually *hopes* these types of questions will come up. It’s these types of questions

Watch Ray’s
award-winning
full speech





which help students see beyond the berry and see the intricacies of the forest instead. That strange berry becomes a salmonberry (safe to eat) or a huckleberry (safe too) or an elderberry (do not eat!). The North Forest, an entire ecosystem, is filled with these living things that we can learn from. During walks through the forest, students learn to identify species, spot mutualistic relationships, and forage. Mr. Willms welcomes all types of questions when foraging, of which he gets all sorts: *what if a bird has touched it? if it has been rained on? what about mushrooms?* (For the record and to be safe, mushrooms are always a no). As knowledge about the forest grows, so too does students respect, appreciation and care for it. Caring for the forest is a big part of foraging, and something fostered and taught often by Mr. Willms. When out in the woods, students are encouraged and reminded to take only what's necessary. "I always draw it back to *what if everyone took that much?*" Mr.

Willms shares of this. "It's important to draw students back and connect them to an actual experience, where they see how the forest would become decimated if we weren't thoughtful and took too much."

"We wanted to help."

For the second year in a row, the Meadowridge Growing Food for the Food Bank Club has worked to plant, harvest and provide the food bank with freshly grown produce. This year, however, it is taking on a new life. Same goodness, same learning, same outcome... only, this time, it is all student-led. Three students, **Riz and Ali (Grade 11)** and **Joel (Grade 9)**, have been working since the summer to plan with the food bank, work with teachers, and round up volunteers. The pandemic, the students share, has also added increased complexity to an already complex plan. With "very limited" growing experience, the team relied heavily on the expertise of Mr. Willms and Mr. Schofield, who shared their time, experience, and talent to get things going. The club leaders then reached out to the Friends In Need Food Bank and Ms. Boyd was quick to get back to them. She helped Riz, Ali and Joel understand the types of foods the food bank would benefit from the most, while Mr. Willms helped them to understand what would be the most feasible to grow. Whatever matched, they grew; "this meant mostly lettuce, beans, scallions, onions, broccoli and mesclun," nods Riz. With sessions happening at lunch, and what the team guesses is about 15 to 20 consistent volunteers, things got moving pretty quick after that. While waiting for their seedlings to grow, the students also cleaned up around campus

by picking up garbage, removing invasive blackberry bushes, and helping with the forest's regrowth. With two donations to the food bank already made, the team feels accomplished, especially since its donations that they themselves planted and tended to and harvested. A full circle. As for the club leaders, they not only have a new understanding about the plant cycle, growing conditions, giving back *and* forest restoration, but also student management: "We now understand where the teachers are coming from when we're not listening," they confess, laughing about the time it takes to get student volunteers organized.

"Everything is made in house as much as possible, which not only reduces packaging, but also preservatives."

None of the education, plans or strategies to become a zero-waste school would be possible without **SAGE Dining** being on board. As the dining service providers to Meadowridge School – that's 662 students to feed plus over 100 staff! – they could contribute to many pounds of pollution and waste. Instead, they support our school goals in significant ways, always working with our teachers and administrators and their own team to create the least amount of waste and pollution as possible. "Everything we do," shares Food Services Director Mr. Kyle Turnbull, "is measured, weighed and tracked." Lots of attention is paid so that the least amount of food possible is thrown away, from keeping an eye on to what students like and don't like, to weighing product ingredients at every stage in production. Mr. Turnbull, for his part, is always "taking notes and changing menu items" to accommodate tastes. SAGE Dining also supports and embraces the zero-waste approach at our school, and is constantly sourcing new packaging providers to keep a fully compostable line-up. They have also, notably, removed all single-serve food items and beverages from the cafeteria. "Everything is made in house as much as possible, which not only reduces packaging, but also preservatives," Mr. Turnbull nods. Keeping the menu in season is also an important part of their approach, ordering locally and in season as often as they can. Right now, with squashes in season, kids have been gobbling up lots of them, including a more popular favourite just served at our Christmas Feast: brown sugar roasted butternut squash. Scrumptious and sustainable? Count us in!



“People take different things away from gardening at different points in their lives, the important thing is to provide the experience.”

Mrs. Stacy Banack admits her first garden was a lesson in “trial and error—” an endeavor that took as many mistakes as it did research and reading. Tough as it was, it was also a lot of fun and hugely rewarding. She liked it. Seeing her then three-year-old son eat a zucchini fresh from that garden only confirmed her growing suspicion... she was on to something. “If you want your kids to eat vegetables,” she shares, “just plant a garden!” Watching her own two children help out in the family garden inspired Mrs. Banack to get her students involved at school too. In class and during clubs, Mrs. Banack has brought her classes to the gardens to teach them a range of lessons, like how to plant different vegetables, winterize a garden, or reach optimal greenhouse soil conditions. This year, Mrs. Banack is hosting the Grade 6 Gardening Club, a group of 14 students who meet once a week to not only dig and plant and tend and harvest, but also – with these skills – serve. Like in the winter, when the group was tasked with pulling all the dead plants and weeds from the gardens (“a dirty thankless job”) and topping up the soil, or with plating tulip and daffodil bulbs for their classmates to enjoy when they bloom in the spring (“a campus beautification”). Now, the club is putting their manpower behind the Growing Food for the Food Bank Club by planting seeds to be later harvested and donated. For Mrs. Banack, these service initiatives benefit the student gardeners just as much as they benefit the community overall. Involving students in the process of growing food helps them to see that interconnectedness, how it is connected to environmental stewardship, our health, and social justice issues. “People take different things away from gardening at different points in their life,” she concludes, “the important thing is to provide the experience.”

“The people, both the clients and the volunteers, are wonderful and colourful.”

Every Friday morning, Ms. Eva Boyd heads to the fridge, swings it open, and scans the shelves for milk and eggs. A fairly typical morning... only, it's not her fridge she's looking in, nor a family-sized portion she's looking for. Instead, she checks huge, industrial-sized fridges for milk and eggs for dozens of local people and families. As a volunteer at the Friends In Need Food Bank, this is all part (and just the start) of a normal day. After counting over these many crates and cartons of milk and eggs, Ms. Boyd heads into the front room to assembly bags of canned goods and other perishables, a task that keeps her going until her shift's end. It's a busy few hours with lots of lifting and sorting and running around, but Ms. Boyd enjoys every moment of it. “The people, both the clients and the volunteers, are wonderful and colourful,” she smiles. And while it was a member of the Board who asked her to join, it's the mission of the food bank that's made her stay (and what has also kept her volunteering on the frontlines long after her required hours were up!). It is the Friends In Need Food Bank's mission to ensure that no one in our community ever goes hungry, a call which Ms. Boyd believes in as not only a board member, donor, and frontline volunteer, but also as a member of the Meadowridge

community, a community who supports the food bank often and in many ways. “I'm incredibly proud,” Ms. Boyd shares of the school's most recent efforts, a Build A Wall Against Hunger campaign, “it was such a neat and proactive approach.” With that campaign wrapped up, Ms. Boyd has now been working closely with Meadowridge's Growing Food for the Food Bank Club and is helping the student-led team to understand how to make their efforts the most effective.



Learn more about the Friends in Need Food Bank

Regenerative Agricultural Project

Service at Meadowridge School goes beyond donating a cheque here or a can there. Meaningful service puts the student at the centre of learning, includes curricular and community connections, and involves student-initiated thinking, action, learning and reflection.

The Regenerative Garden is a product of our beliefs about service and learning, a resource that will match students' enthusiasm and commitment to make a real and meaningful difference. With a small, quarter-acre plot of land, we hope to make a big difference for not only our learners, but also – with a goal to increase our growing yield by as many as 4,200lbs – our community.

What is regenerative agriculture?

Describes farming and grazing practices that, among other benefits, reverse climate change by rebuilding soil organic matter and restoring degraded soil biodiversity – resulting in both carbon drawdown and improving the water cycle.

NO-DIG APPROACH

Using a no-dig approach, the Regenerative Garden will leave the land undisturbed and preserve its microbial environment.

HARVESTING TO PRESERVE SOIL BIODIVERSITY

At the end of each harvest, plants will be cut off at the stock and the foliage will be left to either decompose or be moved to the composter. This will allow worms, bacteria, fungi and other organisms to nibble it away and convert the dead roots back into nutrients.

PURSUIT OF A CLOSED GROWING SYSTEM

The Regenerative Garden will rely on its own natural biosphere to recycle and protect materials and support crop growth.

THE FUTURE HOME
of the Regenerative
Garden sits just east of
the campground.

 **SEE THE
DESIGN** →

Regenerative Agricultural Project

REGENERATIVE GARDEN DESIGN

RAIN WATER STORAGE TANK

A rainwater tank will collect and store rainwater to irrigate crops during drier weather spells

STORAGE SHED

A storage shed will store garden tools and seeds

COMPOST

Using an onsite composter, we will compost as much as we can and return it back to the growing beds

COVERED CLASSROOM AREA

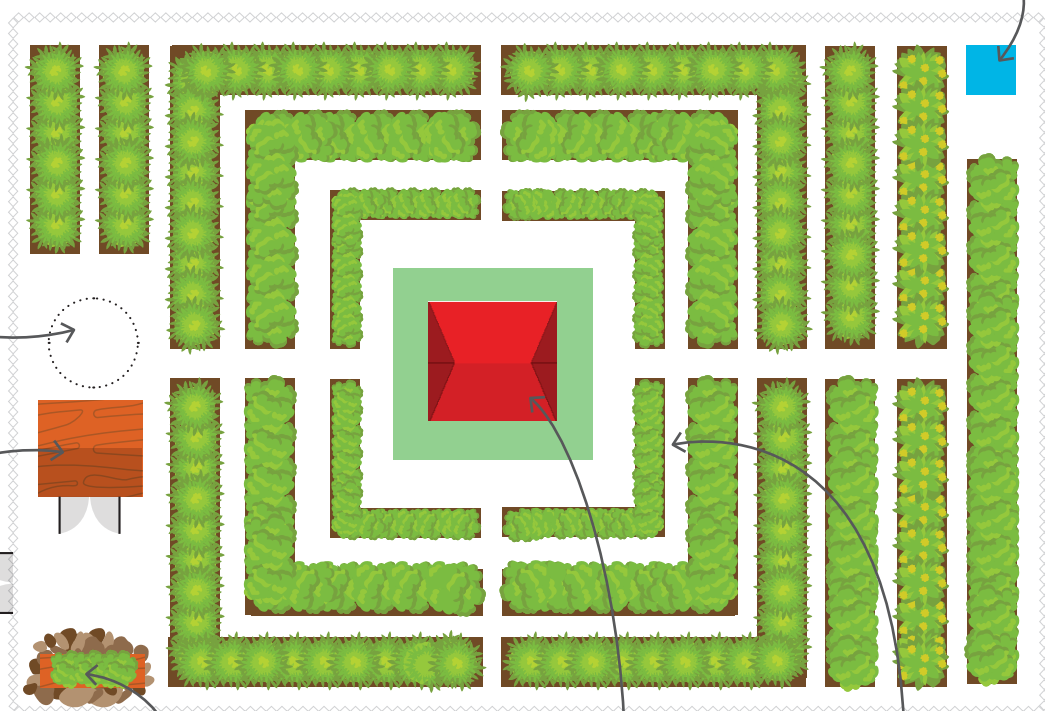
A covered classroom area will provide a sheltered learning space for instruction and demonstrations and house harvest tables

PEST GARDEN

A central pest garden attracts insects that damage crops

IRRIGATION CONTROLLER

Underground irrigation will water the crops, providing a 97% efficiency rate



REGENERATIVE GARDEN CROPS

Cold crops*

Lettuce
Radishes
Spinach
Beans

Green Onions
Blueberries
Raspberries

Fall crops

Potatoes
Carrots
Squash
Pumpkins

* Most cold crops will be propagated in the greenhouse before being planted in the regenerative garden

Watch a time-lapse video setting up our new regenerative garden.



Q What Has Twenty-Twenty Taught You?



DONALD LOCKHART,
High School Teacher

2020 brought many opportunities and challenges – more so than previous years. It was a year which required resilience, creativity, care and flexibility to support our students in new ways of learning. The year provided opportunities for new perspectives and interactions with technology. Despite the exciting and sometimes bewildering learning platforms that helped to support online teaching and learning during the pandemic, it certainly illustrated that teaching is not simply a passive transfer of information between teachers and students. The classroom is an important space that allows for meaningful social interaction and the sharing of ideas that help to stimulate new perspectives for both students and teachers. The year has taught me that sometimes the simple things in life are some of the most cherishing. Communicating with friends and families certainly took on a new significance!



KRISTINE HAMAGUCHI,
Elementary Teacher

2020 has confirmed for me that learning is a social experience and kids learn best when they are together, when they can ask questions, share ideas and get immediate feedback on their thinking; although I am thankful for platforms like Zoom, the computer will never fully replace the in-class experience for teachers and for learners. I have not had a cold, cough or flu for many, many months, so the Covid-19 experience has also taught me that wearing masks and washing hands diligently is a lesson that should last well beyond the end of Covid-19 as we know it. Finally, 2020 has taught me to not take the closeness of family and friends, and the ability to hug each other, for granted.



MARTIN REININK,
High School Teacher

2020, despite its horrors, lead me to see a positive future ahead, if we all try. Think of it, millions of people across Canada, North America, the world, participated in the single largest demonstration of cooperation. Yes, there were governmental rules, and yes, there was widespread fear of the coronavirus, but the whole world worked together to achieve a common goal. How then can we not work together to address climate change, extreme poverty, or injustice? We've proven that the mechanisms and cooperation are there. All we need is the will.



DAN TAO,
High School Teacher

Twenty-twenty has taught me that, while online education is fine for teaching to the test, it is a poor substitute for the actual learning that occurs when there is a strong bond between students and teachers. I enjoy being back in class, where I can see students' faces better – even if it is just the top half! When students are in class, I can tell whether they are with me or not just by looking in their eyes. And, while my lessons are much less predictable, I am much more efficient in meeting the needs of my students. Also, my jokes are a lot funnier in person. Thanks, 2020, for teaching me that I am irreplaceable!



What has twenty-twenty taught you?
Share your answer at
communications@meadowridge.bc.ca



POST-SECONDARY

Does test optional really mean test optional?

A look into current standardized testing policies for US admissions

BY MRS. BRIANNA JUST, POST-SECONDARY COUNSELLOR

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the daily lives of people all over the world, and with the United States being one of the hardest hit countries, it was no surprise when most of the spring and summer SAT test dates were cancelled. As the pandemic continues, the College Board announced last month that more than half of the 334,000 students who were registered for a September test session were unable to write due to pandemic restrictions. The ACT, another college admission standardized test, has encountered similar issues.

Although some test centres are operating, registration is limited and the students who have been successful in securing a seat have often needed to travel two to four hours away.

COVID-19 has created uncertainty – and even more anxiety in an already stressful process – about university admission in the US, including the role of standardized testing.



While the test-optional movement has been making headway over the years, COVID-19 has led to more than 1,450 colleges and universities announcing that they are moving to a test-optional policy, and more are following suit. But despite most American colleges and universities responding in this way, students and families are hesitant to believe that test-optional really means optional.

Do I need to write the SAT or ACT?

The National Association of College Admission Counselling (NACAC) has been working with colleges and universities to “affirm that they will not penalize students for the absence of a standardized test score” and have publicised a list of schools who have pledged to use “a student-centred, holistic approach to admission that will not disadvantage any students without a test score.” Meadowridge School’s Post-Secondary Counselling Department has spent the Fall confirming new admissions

processes through many, many Zoom calls with university admissions officers and are hearing the same message.

In this case, test-optional really does mean *optional*.

Admissions officers are also stating they do not think it is reasonable for students to be travelling hours away, often needing to book a hotel, to write a test. While inequity in standardized testing has long been studied and documented, colleges and universities also recognize that testing during a pandemic may demonstrate a further gap, especially if it involves the need to test in another location.

While some schools have chosen to go test-flexible rather than test-optional, the message remains the same: Colleges do not want students to risk their health and safety or the health and safety of others in order to write a test.

Knowing that “optional means opportunity”, there is a growing list of schools, including California Institute of Technology and University of California, Berkeley, who have gone as far as to say that they are becoming test-blind. Meaning, these colleges will not look at or consider any standardized test scores submitted by an applicant.

While most of the standardized test conversation has been focused on the Class of 2021, many institutions are now expanding their policies for the Class of 2022 based on the pandemic being on-going. Others are making the change permanent.

The Post-Secondary Counsellors at Meadowridge School would like to encourage families to do their research and connect with admissions officers about their school’s changing policies before they dive into standardized test preparation. While it can present another opportunity for a student to showcase their skills, students’ wellness should be the main concern. Additionally, as a student’s IB scores will be the heaviest weighted factor in their application, they may be better served redirecting that energy into the courses they are taking at school. In the world of college admissions where optional means opportunity, this new trend in standardized testing allows students the opportunity to redirect their energy into something already on their plate.



TEST REQUIRED ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐

Standardized test scores are required as an admission requirement.

TEST-FLEXIBLE ☐ ☒ ☒ ☐

An SAT/ACT may not be required if submitting other college level exams (eg. IB)

TEST-OPTIONAL ☐ ☐ ☒ ☒

Students have the power to decide if they would like to pursue standardized testing and if they would like to declare their test score in their application.

TEST-BLIND ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Will not consider standardized test scores in admission.



Post-Secondary Counselling Guidebook – a helpful new resource from our Post-Secondary team!

The Post-Secondary Counselling Department has developed a Guidebook for the entire Meadowridge community. If you have ever wondered how Meadowridge supports each high school student’s journey to post-secondary opportunities, this Guidebook is for you.

Read the Guidebook





POST-SECONDARY

The early decision process

The moment of truth for grade twelve students.

BY TRACY Y, GRADE 12 STUDENT

The post-secondary application process is turbulent to say the least. To many grade 12 students this year, it has already caused a great deal of stress during the early decision process. Early decision can be crucial for students as it is the one school they would certainly attend if admitted, or in Mrs. Just's words: "the applicant's 'one true love'". Applications seem as though the moment of truth for students' whole high school career, the outcome of which would "assess" our educational efforts over the span of 13 years. Personally, however, I saw the essay questions in the applications process as an opportunity, a chance for me to explore more about myself.

During my experience in applying early decision, the first challenge that arose was to choose a school to fully commit to. This process first started in Career Life Connections 11 when an assignment encouraged us to contemplate about the environment we truly wanted to be in. It could be an enormous school with great diversity, or a more intimate environment where students get to know almost



everyone. The choices span internationally and go on indefinitely. In my journey, I had to search within my own mind in order to realize the right fit in the outer world. It was the first time that my own decision held such real influence over the direction of my life. As intimidating as this was, it is also an exciting step towards independence and maturity, a choice that involves less influence from parents and stems more from our own responsibility.

Then comes another mountain to climb – the essays. Besides the common question of why the applicant is applying to each specific institution, most schools also require the applicant to write about something that holds significance in their life in one form or another. Since the essays are how admissions officers get to familiarize themselves with the applicant, the prompts tend to encourage students to reflect upon what makes them unique. While writing my essays and filling in activity lists for different applications, I was able to gather an overview of how I spent my time and evaluate what impacts I have had in and out of school. During this, I realized that it is students who have dedicated lots of time pursuing goals who can draw lessons and stories from their rich experiences. On the other hand, I have also seen growth from certain applicants when they evaluated the overview of their

Throughout the early application experience, I have gotten to know myself better.

pursuits, lamenting to me how they could have spent more time doing service or other activities in their free time. The essays gave an opportunity for students to look at themselves from another perspective and consider their past commitments to learn ways to improve in the future.

Throughout the early application experience, I have gotten to know myself better. As the regular round of applications draw nearer, I will have to ask myself more difficult questions, though I believe that my growth from making previous decisions makes each new question easier, and my path a little clearer. The anxiety of not knowing exactly what major or school used to be my number one topic of stress that I desperately tried to avoid. As I researched and reflected, though, what felt like a burden transformed into a new flow of motivation that added a few more sprays of colour into my life as a student at Meadowridge.

TRACY'S TIPS:

- ☑ Start the writings early, especially the brainstorming process
- ☑ Keep a schedule of all the application deadlines
- ☑ Reach out to counsellors frequently
- ☑ Plan out the essays and seek for feedback from many perspectives, but still trust your own intuition



notes

new and noteworthy



GRAD TIE CEREMONY

During a livestreamed ceremony for the whole school to see, students in our graduating class at last received the highly coveted (and much anticipated) grad tie, a gryphon-clad neckpiece worn only by our Grade 12 students. With 11 lifers in the group of 49, some students have waited for as many as 14 years for this day to come.



HALLOWEEN

Ghosts, superheroes, princesses, and even a dinosaur or two paraded the pathways during north forest trick-or-treating on Halloween. Candy bags full, students headed back to class for some spooky activities and an elementary parade. The day wrapped up with the winners of pumpkin carving contest announced (a contest which drew in over 70 entries and 270 votes!) with Alouette and Whonnock House sharing a 65-point tie for first.

"If I was in line, I would let someone go first."

- JAMES L.



SPIRIT WEEK

To keep our spirits high in an unusual year, Gryphon Council planned a week of engagements like Motivation Monday, Thoughtful Tuesday, One Wish Wednesday, and Throwback Thursday (a day which has us 'Guess the Gryphon' in a mix of adorable baby photos!). The week wrapped up with each cohort getting some time out on the front field for fun and games.



WEEK WITHOUT WALLS

With an on-campus campground and forest, staying at school for this year's Week Without Walls wasn't so bad! Middle and High School students enjoyed a week of engagements over on the north property, working together to learn new skills, tackle challenges, and take part in a range of outdoor pursuits.



ORANGE SHIRT DAY

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



TERRY FOX RUN

Students laced up for a lap around campus during our annual Terry Fox Run. The day was a huge success, raising over \$3,700 for the Terry Fox Foundation and an additional \$700 for Cops for Cancer through a student-initiated 'Guess the Number of Candies' challenge.

SOCIAL JUSTICE CLUB

A conversation about diversity and racism sparked the creation of the Meadowridge Social Justice Club, a place where students could talk about Black Lives Matter and how to create a more anti-racist society. The club was interviewed by the Globe and Mail, where Oliver G. (Grade 12) shared the club's aim was to not avoid, but address tough-to-talk about issues: "We've realized that [avoidance] is the opposite of what we should be doing... we're not letting vulnerable voices speak up."





GIVING DAY

Meadowridge joined the global Giving Tuesday movement, sharing stories and performances to celebrate our students and our school. Every hour for 35 hours straight, we heard from parents, alumni, teachers and staff about why they give. Thirty-five-hours of fundraising... was it even possible? It is at a place like Meadowridge! Together, we raised \$152,287.



CROSS COUNTRY CHALLENGE

Run, log, repeat: Meadowridge got moving during the Gryphon Cross Country challenge, running trails on and off campus and recording their distances and times. With 234 runs recorded, 403-kilometres ran, and over 46 hours of physical activity throughout it all, the challenge was a huge hit.



TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

A tradition that couldn't be stopped! With both singing and assemblies out this holiday season, Mr. Schofield sprang to action to keep the Twelve Days of Christmas performance alive. Filming each class one by one and cutting it all together, he made sure we could all celebrate and enjoy our decades-long, school-wide tradition together online.



WALL AGAINST HUNGER

Grade 4 students had an ambitious goal, and they knew it would take the entire elementary school to help them achieve it. During a weeks-long campaign, students delivered speeches and wrote letters and plastered posters around the school, all with one big call to action for their peers: let's build a wall against hunger! Inspired by our Grade 4 classes, the elementary school stepped up in a big way. Together, they collected and donated a whopping 53 boxes and 11 totes full of food – a total of 2,260lbs of canned goods and drinks and other non-perishables for the Friends In Need Food Bank!



OPERATION SHOEBOX

When school began, so too did the efforts of the Operation Shoebox Team, a group of Grade 8 students who hoped to make a difference in the lives of children across the world on Christmas. Together and through a series of initiatives, the group collected over 900 items and was able to drop off 60 shoeboxes to Operation Christmas Child before the start of winter break.

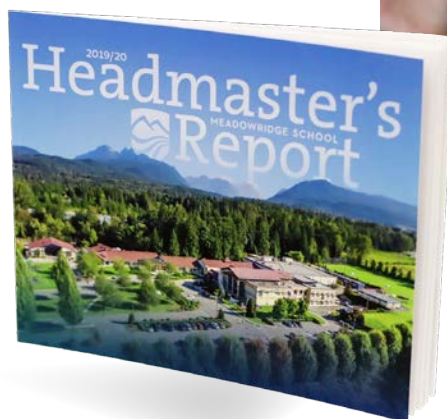
DIWALI CELEBRATION

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



POSTCARDS FOR PEACE

Last year, 60 senior care home residents received a note of appreciation from our students. This year, with the Postcards for Peace initiative at the reins of Middle School Teacher Ms. Leona West, we reached even more: some 350 students wrote notes and cards for our veterans in the days leading up to Remembrance Day.



HEADMASTER'S REPORT

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

UNIVERSITY

is what you make of it

Devyani McLaren '17 shares how research, volunteerism, learning and new experiences have helped shape an unforgettable undergraduate career.

On first read of her resume, it would be easy to mistake Devyani McLaren '17 for a seasoned medical professional.

After graduating from the academically rigorous Diploma Programme (DP), she was accepted into the competitive Science One Program at the University of British Columbia. She went on to work with robots for brain behavior research, train children with physical disabilities how to swim, teach children with learning disabilities how to code and use computers, and serve as co-president and treasurer of her university's neuroscience club. What's more, she's also brought home Silver and Gold in water polo at the Junior Olympics. And, perhaps best of all, she's even met Michelle Obama.

Devyani's experiences and achievements are impressive, but don't be fooled. She's no veteran. In fact, this Meadowridge graduate is still a year's shy from her university graduation.

We last talked three years ago, what has gone on since then? Well, I did the Science ONE Program at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in my first year, which is, essentially, an accelerated science program. You go through the program with about 70 or so other students and have dedicated teachers and spaces for Chemistry, Biology, and Physics classes. It was quite a challenge. Now, I'm in my last year and will be graduating as a Cognitive Systems major.



What was your experience in the Science ONE program like? What really stands out are the two projects that you complete. The first, you choose a really dense, academic article that you can barely understand and try your best to understand it. Then, you have to “translate” it in the simplest way for all to understand. The second project, you do your own research. It’s not a super big, publishable project, but you have to work on your own through the scientific process. I did something with physics – which makes no sense because I’m not a physicist! – but it was neat. I visualized how soundwaves interact with a concave surface. Anyways, these two projects built in a world of research right into the program.

You also go on two trips. One at the beginning to build comradery, just like at Meadowridge. We went to Banfield, which is funny because I had already gone there on a trip with Meadowridge. Then on another, to Loon Lake, which had us all present our research in a miniature, conference-style meeting. Again, I had been to Loon Lake with Meadowridge. You can see how the Science ONE program has Meadowridge vibes, right?

A quick Google search shows that you’ve been pretty involved in volunteer work.

I volunteer with two really cool organizations. One of them, UBC Splash Kids, is as an aquatics instructor providing swim lessons to children with special needs. I get to work with the most amazing kids and we have so much fun. It combines my two loves – swimming and science – and I love it so much that I’m in my third term helping. The other organization is the C.O.D.E Initiative, which is a foundation teaching kids on the autism spectrum how to code and use computers. Actually, I’m in my third year with them as well.

And you’ve also been volunteering with the UBC Neuroscience Club. How did that come about?

I found out about the club during orientation day, before classes had started, and decided to sign up. I love puzzles, and that’s basically what we do in the club. We read articles, break them down, and it’s all related to the discipline that I love. At first, I was playing water polo and in the Science One program, so I only had time to serve as a volunteer, but once I got through my first year, I became treasurer and then was elected to co-president. It’s a relatively new club, and it’s allowed me to

find like-minded students who are all living the same life as me; we give each other tips and tricks and what courses to avoid. It was, and is, a really welcoming environment.

What types of things have you done with the club?

We’re all about promoting neuroscience, especially through events, since we found it wasn’t as prominent at the school as we would have liked. We actually started a petition to get a neuroscience major at the university. We took that petition to UBC’s President and faculty and we showed them the interest. And guess what? A new major will be coming in two years! We even get to work with faculty to help create the major. It’s really exciting.

On top of all this, you’re also working through your undergraduate degree and conducting research!

Yes, I started working, doing research in a brain behavior lab at UBC. Essentially – we do so much stuff! – but essentially, it’s research into motor rehabilitation for stroke patients. We do a lot with neuroimaging, robotics, and transcranial magnetic stimulation. I mostly work with the robot. I’ve learned so much about myself through this, and I now understand what the world of academics is really like.

Of all the majors, you chose Cognitive Systems. And, of all the disciplines, you chose Computer Science. How do these interact? I was somewhat strategic in choosing my major because artificial intelligence is everywhere. Human integration with machines is, in my mind, an up-and-coming field and will be implemented by the time I become a doctor. When I become a doctor, I’m sure I’ll be working with robotics in some facet. It’s an



Devyani smiles for the camera in a UBC Neuroscience Club photo. The pre-med hopeful has served as Treasurer and now serves as the Club’s Co-President.





◀ After scoring front-row tickets to her book tour, Devyani was able to meet Michelle Obama, a moment she describes as “amazing.”

interesting discipline... no one has heard of it, but it's related to everything! COGS is multi- and interdisciplinary. Psychology, linguistics, computer science, philosophy, and neuroscience... it's when you combine these systems that you get a cognitive system. You're describing how agents act in an environment. I know this makes no sense! [laughs]

Got it! Okay, what else has filled your already-filled schedule during university?

It feels like I'm always in school, but I guess that's the life of a pre-med person! I do Iyengar Yoga three times per week, which is great and important for my physical and mental health. I'm home right now because of the pandemic now so I've been able to keep up with piano – I know everyone says they love music, but I love music. Every genre, from 1500's classical right up to death metal. My apartment, when I'm not home and actually on campuses, in the city and is on the top floor and I have a beautiful view of the UBC campus



▲ Devyani poses at Loon Lake during a first year Science One trip which encourages collaboration and comradery amongst the incoming class.

and the ocean. I paddle board whenever I can. My friends and I also usually host Sunday family dinners, where we can eat and relax and talk about the week, but, during the pandemic, we've resorted to weekly Zoom calls. Since I am home, however, I've been able to watch our new puppy, Yogi, grow up. We have two puppies now, Yogi and Sheru, and I love bike riding and hiking with them.

Any notable experiences outside of all the research and volunteerism and learning?

I got to meet Michelle Obama! It was when she released *Becoming* and did a book tour. I had read the book front to back and thought she was just amazing. I got front row tickets to her stop in Vancouver and got to meet and speak with her for a couple of minutes. It's amazing because she's a celebrity, in a

sense, but was so familiar. In the first five seconds, I felt very welcomed and respected by her, and I thought that was such an interesting skill and energy to have. I would like to emulate that as much as possible.

Bringing you a few years back, can we talk a bit about your time at Meadowridge?

I miss Meadowridge, and it's the teachers and staff who I miss the most. I felt very... I felt like my knowledge and curiosity were nurtured by the teachers. I had Ms. Hops in Grade 6 Science and I still remember being so excited when I asked a question. That probably jumpstarted my interest in Science, actually. I felt like every teacher was like that. That's something, when people ask me about Meadowridge, that I always say: it's a place where you feel safe, respected, nurtured, and free to express yourself. Is the Mission still the same? I can still quote it. [laughs]

Mr. Burke was a big part of my time at Meadowridge. From Grade 10 onward, I was there on a merit scholarship. I was super grateful for that. Otherwise, I would have had to go somewhere else, but instead got to stick with my teachers and friends.

Another thing is the IB, and Chemistry specifically. I remember in my first year in the Science ONE Program, doing experiments and thinking, *'I already did this!'* Our Chemistry labs at Meadowridge are the same as in university. We had access to more materials, even. I miss Mrs. Mohoruk, too. Oh! And Mr. Diniz. Grade 5 was actually probably the inception for everything that I'm doing. We were studying human systems and I got assigned the cardiovascular system and did not like it, but I remember hearing another group's presentation on neuroscience and thinking *'wow, that's cool.'*

And now you study neuroscience in your major! Okay, as an (obviously successful) university student, what advice would you give to students back at Meadowridge?

I'll give the most general advice ever, but it's true: the university experience is what you make it. This applies to life, but also university for sure. No matter where you're going, no matter the school, university is such a big place with so many opportunities. Make the most of it. Make it for yourself.



A FRESH PERSP

Roy Zhao '19 was a photographer and a historian, loved physics and learning, and had a knack for explaining difficult concepts, a skill he made good use of as a tutor at the school. Combined, it was these things which motivated and inspired him, but these things combined didn't exactly add up to any one career path or university degree. Then, just a year's shy from graduation, one weird thing - a driving test - would spark a chain reaction to solve Roy's dilemma. A driving test made him miss class, a missed class left him a bit behind, and being a bit behind led him straight to Dr. Dale Stevenson's lab. Stopping by only to see what he had missed in class, he found himself instead engaged in a two-hour-long conversation, a back-and-forth exchange about physics and philosophy and everything in between. And that, Roy laughs, "is just Dr. Stevenson." He walked out that day with a plan.

Roy is now working towards a dual degree in Physics and Philosophy at UC Santa Barbara.

LECTIVE



December 2019 - Roy taking photos in
Summer Palace, Beijing.

Going back a bit, how did you first find yourself studying at Meadowridge in the first place? I moved to Canada from China when I was 14 and enrolled at Meadowridge when I was in Grade 10. Right away, the school was something else. I remember on my first day people coming up to me and saying, “Hi! What’s your name?” It was not a hard transition. Meadowridge has felt like home ever since. It became the most important part of my life; it shaped my view of the world and how I see things. It was during my three years at Meadowridge that I started to organize my own personal philosophy.

Tell us about this conversation you had with Dr. Stevenson. Dr. Stevenson goes off track – a lot – but it always becomes relevant somehow. We’ll talk about something interesting which will lead to some physical concept, some concept adjacent to philosophy or physics or quantum mechanics or theory of knowledge... Anyways, after that two-hour-long conversation that day he helped me make a connection I hadn’t before, which is that I could combine my interests in physics and philosophy. Since that conversation, I’d pop into his lab from time to time just to talk about physics and philosophy, as well as have regular conversations with Mrs. Mohoruk and Mrs. Just. Looking back, it was probably, without exaggeration, a life-changing point for me.

I had always known I’d want to study in the States, so from there I started looking at schools with that program combination. Because of Meadowridge, I was looking for a small school with a strong Physics program. That’s when I found UC Santa Barbara.

What was your first year like? Well, [laughs] I showed up on a Sunday, and there was *nobody* at school, so I went to the beach and hung around the Physics building. The next day, though, things came alive. It’s been good. UCSB is a really warm school, a place where people smile at you in the morning. I’m a photographer, so I’ve enjoyed going to the beach and watching sunsets and taking pictures.

How did this passion for photography come about? It was entirely by accident. When I was 12 and living in China, my dad – my parents are quite odd – but my dad, he insisted that I take time off from school to travel with him. He also insisted that I skip the entire final exam when I was 14 so we could go on a trip to Tibet – that was another, life-changing experience of mine! Anyways, in China, you just don’t do that. But that’s my dad. That’s his education, his philosophy. So, I took off from school and we spent a week exploring southern China together. My dad, for whatever reason, got a professional camera for the trip and I had no idea how to use it, but it just so happened that one of my dad’s friends was a professional photographer. During that trip, he started to teach me. He taught me about apertures and shutter speeds and taught me tricks to capture waterfalls. That’s how it all started, and I’ve since been published in the Chinese National Geographic.

Your dad sounds like an interesting man! He is. He played soccer professionally, but I always preferred basketball. What I *did* inherit from him, though, was his intuition and insight.

Which is likely how you found yourself studying both Physics and Philosophy... what has that been like? Physics people are probably the most unique group of all majors. That’s probably biased, but I’m going to stand by it. Physics people are nerdier – like, I have a TA who never wears shoes! – while other students dress a bit flashier. But that’s the thing about Physics; it brings together people who have a natural curiosity. Me? I’m somewhere in the middle.

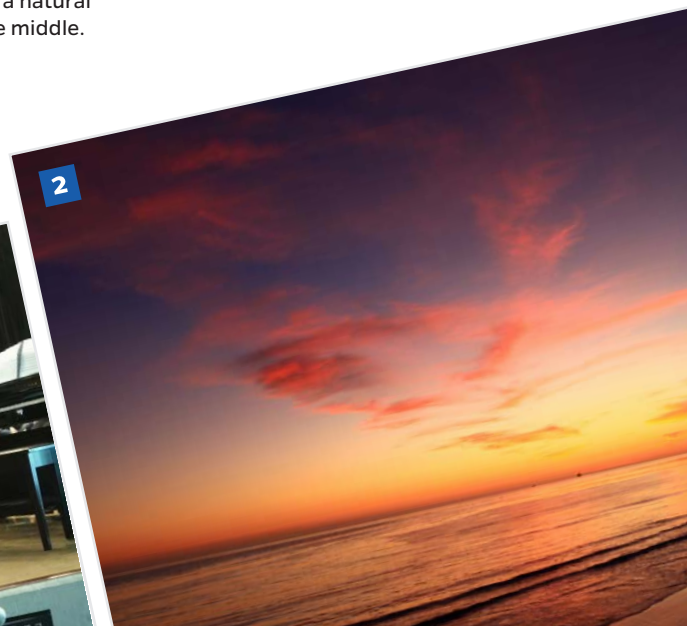
You’re also conducting research, is that right? Oh, the story about me finding research is pretty interesting actually. Before the first semester, I took part in a workshop, basically a “Physics Program Hacks” course, which tells you how to take best advantage of your time in the program. In it, they really push you to try finding research, so I decided to try a position once I got settled at school. I took a lot of time selecting just a few professors and sending them my cover letter and my resume. I had zero responses. It was actually Mrs. Just who helped me. I was talking to her one day, complaining about how hard of a time I was having, and the next day I had an email from her with a full list of all the research happening at UCSB. Mrs. Just is so kind.

Then what happened? I emailed a professor from that list who was studying astrophysics and cosmology research with NASA. He also didn’t respond... but! I was in the physics building the next day, handing in an assignment, and thought ‘*why not go knock on his door?*’ So I did, and I was so nervous. I remember going in and basically saying “I emailed you 24 hours ago and haven’t heard back, but I want to do research with you!” He had a meeting in ten minutes, but still took the time to talk with me. It was actually my Physics IA, a study into Spectroscopy, that caught his eye. My other IA’s helped quite a bit, too, and I got the position!

But then, of course, the pandemic happened. That’s right. I got the position on March 5, the first meeting was March 7, and that was, of course, the day UCSB decided to move entirely online. Everyone was freaking out and trying to book their tickets back home. My research meeting was at one o’clock and I was on a flight back home to Canada by eight that evening. I’m taking online classes, so learning is still happening, but my research position is on hold for now. I haven’t even touched the spectrometer yet!

PHOTOS:

1. November 2017 – Roy poses on stage during a rehearsal for the Senior Production, *The Theory of Relativity*, in which he played both guitar and bass. **2.** January 2020 – As part of his daily routine in Santa Barbara, Roy heads to the beach to watch the sunset and take photos. **3.** April 2019 – Roy poses with his friends in one of his favourite places in the school: Dr. Stevenson’s lab. The photo was snapped on their last day of classes before graduation. **4.** May 2019 – Roy poses with his family on graduation day. **5.** February 2020 – Roy and friend Cole White-Robinson ’19, who came to visit Roy in Santa Barbara.



What's it been like, living back at home?

It's been good. I'm taking online classes, but I also have a lot of time to take photos and read books. I have a whole shelf of books to get to. I love spending my time alone so I can think and reflect. It's also been nice to be near Meadowridge again, and I've already visited the school three times. Actually, I stopped by on my first night back in Canada. My mom was driving me home from the airport, and I turned to her and asked her to stop by the school. It was ten or eleven at night, and I knew nobody would be there, but I had to see Meadowridge before we went home.

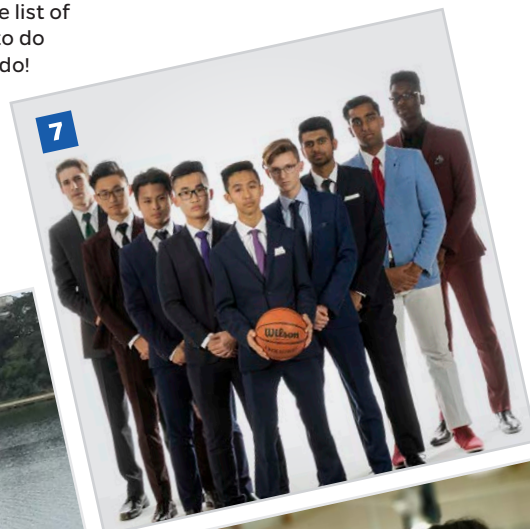
What is it about Meadowridge that you love so much?

Meadowridge inspired me to be who I always want to be, and for that, I am forever grateful. You just can't find the people at Meadowridge elsewhere. I knew I could always talk to Dr. Stevenson, or Mrs. Just, or Ms. Higginson, or Mrs. Mohoruk. Not just about school, but about anything. I can confidently say that they were the best teachers I will ever meet in my life. I remember talking to Dr. Stevenson one day, and he just popped up and said "Roy, you are going to get a PhD." I said "Okay!" and that's what I'm still planning on doing. I still get emails from Dr. Stevenson regularly, and Meadowridge students will Snapchat me, saying, "Dr. Stevenson is talking about you again." [laughs]

Any big plans for what's next? It's still a few years away, but I do still want to get my PhD. I don't think I would resist a position teaching. Actually, at Meadowridge one of my CAS projects was hosting a Math Study Club for middle school students. I'm really good at explaining things. One of the quotes that always sticks with me is, "if you cannot explain the hardest concept in the simplest terms, you don't understand." That's something I always keep in mind. I hope I can one day become an inspirer like Dr. Stevenson, Mrs. Mohoruk, Mrs. Just, and Ms. Bereza... you know, the entire list of people. I would be more than happy to do for students what they did – and still do! – for me. I want to inspire others not just in academics, but also to pursue their passions and dreams. It would be a great pleasure if I could also do that one day.

PHOTOS:

6. January 2020 – Titled 'Purple Sunset,' one of Roy's favourite photos from his daily visits to catch the sunset at the beach. **7.** October 2019 – All the students who played basketball during their time at Meadowridge posed for a photo during the Class of 2019 graduation photo shoot. Roy can be spotted second from the left. **8.** May 2019 – Roy poses for a photo with Mrs. Mohoruk on his graduation day.







Finding out who your kinderbuddy is?

The best way to start the holidays.

Since hugs and high-fives aren't possible nowadays, our kinderbuddy team wasn't sure if this year's program would be possible. They had their work cut out for them but were determined to make it happen. And in December, they did. Just in time for the holidays, each Kindergarten student was delivered a special surprise: a handwritten letter from their Grade 12 buddy!

People of Meadowridge

Avio Diniz

Where you'll find him... teaching in Grade 5, coaching Grade 5 soccer and basketball, serving as the PYP Math Coordinator, chairing the Meadowridge Indigenous Education Committee, and leading the ISABC Indigenous Education Learning Group. Here since... 2007

What is Indigenous Learning?

Indigenous Learning is educating oneself about Indigenous Peoples Ways of Knowing, about their worldviews, histories, systems, beliefs and perspectives and, more importantly, connection to the land. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report concluded that the school curriculum be updated to include more First Nations knowledge and learning so that past injustices like the residential school system, discrimination, and prejudices do not repeat again. Recently, the BC Government implemented legislation on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) as a call to action to improve the rights of Indigenous People and improve the BC school curriculum to teach Indigenous education and culture and the revitalization of Indigenous Languages.

How did you become involved?

Well, my initial call to action was when one of my students – this was four years ago – asked me why we weren't focusing and learning about Indigenous Peoples history in the classroom. This question became one of my driving inquiries, which made me rethink and reflect on my practices and pedagogy. I discovered I had limited knowledge about the Indigenous Ways of Knowing that were out there, so I set out to educate not only myself, but also my students, families, and our school. It was then that I discovered other teachers at Meadowridge who expressed a similar need and who also wanted to get involved. A few interested teachers got together to form our committee and we started to investigate the small steps we could take as a school to implement Indigenous Learning across the Continuum.

What does Indigenous Learning look like at our school?

As a Continuum school, Indigenous Learning continues to evolve and looks differently at each grade level. Grade-level learning engagements and activities are guided and focused by the Indigenous Ways of Knowing and First Peoples Principles of Learning; all of which encourage open-mindedness (perspective) and balance (self-awareness). Students learn through circle sharing, storytelling, guest speakers and Elders, picture books, FNESC resources and hand-on activities both in the classroom and in the North Forest.

In Junior Kindergarten, students focus on using elements in nature to better understand how stories work and our connection to the land. In Kindergarten, students learn and are connected to the signs that nature gives us each season, which we as humans are constantly adapting to. In Grade 1, students explore Indigenous Ways of Knowing by learning about objects in the sky, First Nations stories and Indigenous art. In Grade 2, when learning about where people settle in Canada, students are introduced to many different stories of Indigenous Peoples and their connection to the land on which they live. In Grade 3, students explore oral history and stories of specific landforms and have used story boxes and writing activities to represent their learning. In Grade 4, students learn about First Nations history and develop an appreciation for the art, culture, and knowledge of First Peoples. In my Grade 5 class, we start by introducing the First People's Principles of Learning, we learn about First Nations Governance, Creation stories, and we use a lot of books and stories from the library to help our learning. We also invite elders and knowledge keepers into our class to share their stories and ways of knowing.

At Meadowridge School, we wish to educate children on different Indigenous systems and perspectives and open their hearts and minds to Indigenous Ways of Knowing. As the Chair of the Meadowridge Indigenous Education Committee, I support teachers across the Continuum to do this as well as host initiatives like Orange Shirt Day and the National Indigenous People's Day Assembly. By experiencing these ways of thinking and being and knowing, students can continue to be open-minded, empathetic, and just.

What are small steps we can all take to explore Indigenous Ways of Knowing?

Respond to the Call to Action. First, acknowledge all Indigenous People and your biases and perspectives toward them. Second, opening your heart, mind and spirit to learning. Third, educate yourself. When I started learning about Indigenous People and Indigenous Knowledge, I watched documentaries, read books, attended workshops, talked with Indigenous People, asked lots of questions, and searched for information from every source. Remember that the information and stories we have learned growing up in school are only one history... there are other histories. Like everything in life, you might not understand it all at first and may not feel comfortable, but those internal tensions where your biases are challenged are a good starting point to spur learning and knowledge building.

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

Mother Teresa. I actually met her when I was very young, and she blessed me. I think that divine blessing still flows in me today. I feel like I was touched by an “angel” – that’s probably why I’m such a goody-goody! I would definitely have loved to meet her because of her compassion, affection, and selflessness toward all peoples, whether rich or poor, housed or homeless, healthy or sick. She gave up everything she had to serve others.

Favourite Meadowridge memory?

When my class surprised me with a “Welcome to Canada” party when I became a Canadian Citizen – this was over ten years ago! They had a Canadian flag, a cake, and everything was decorated in red and white... balloons and all else. It was awesome. I also have fond memories of going to camp with the kids in the spring.

Spring or fall?

Fall. The hue of the autumn colours, the crisp morning air... it makes me think of my family and being cozy under a warm blanket. I think it’s the fresh air combined with cooler temperatures and sweet smells that come with fall, which make me think about campfires, roasting marshmallows, and sipping a warm drink.

Favourite meal?

Goat biryani. My mom makes it the best. Every Sunday as a tradition she would make this big pot full of biryani. It would pretty much take her all morning. She’d cook everything separately – the rice, the meat, the vegetables – and layer it afterwards. Rice at the bottom, ghee, then onions... I still salivate thinking about it. The best part of the day, however, was spending time with my family while we enjoyed the meal, shared stories, and laughed together.

Best way to spend the day?

Spending the day with my family and friends, maybe at my house in Goa, India or at the farm in Alberta. We would play card games, chat, share stories, and make merry around a roaring campfire.

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MEADOWRIDGE
SCHOOL

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