

# the **GRYPHON**

MEADOWRIDGE SCHOOL WINTER 2024







### **On the Cover**

Elementary Buddies get up to all types of adventure and fun during monthly meetups. Ms. Pallister's Kindergarten and Mr. Diniz's Grade 3 class are one such group, getting together when they can to share a range of experiences. With a focus on leadership for the older students and fostering both learning and fun for all, Elementary Buddies are a unique and collaborative experience offered at Meadowridge School. On this day, Kindergarteners' exploration into the changing seasons was complemented by a buddy walk through the fallen leaves. Ms. Pallister says it was an opportunity "too good to pass up!".



# IN THIS ISSUE

WINTER 2024

**02** Meadowridge  
Fencing at 15

**14** Alumni Feature:  
Sameena Khan '08

**18** Leaving a Lasting Legacy:  
Andy & Cathy Graetz

**20** Where Are They Now  
Class of 2014

**24** Post-Secondary  
Counselling Journey

**26** Nurturing Minds  
Through OE3

**34** Shared Language,  
Common Understanding

**36** People of Meadowridge  
Mr. Darrell Lester

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

Meadowridge School is located on the ancestral and unceded territories of the Katzie, Kwantlen, and Coast Salish Peoples. We value the opportunity to learn, live, play, and share educational experiences on this traditional land. Meadowridge School is committed to building strong meaningful relationships and positive partnerships with all the traditional keepers and stewards of this land.

The Gryphon is a magazine for the Meadowridge School community.

Online, all the time at  
[meadowridge.bc.ca/the-gryphon](https://meadowridge.bc.ca/the-gryphon)

Email us anytime at  
[communications@meadowridge.bc.ca](mailto:communications@meadowridge.bc.ca)

 @Meadowridge

 /MeadowridgeSchool

 /Meadowridge  /Meadowridge-School  @MeadowridgeSchool



© 2024 MEADOWRIDGE SCHOOL  
12224 240th Street Maple Ridge, BC  
V4R 1N1 Canada





MEADOWRIDGE SCHOOL

# Fencing at 15

Established in 2009, the Meadowridge Fencing Club quickly became a student favourite. Now in its fifteenth year, thanks to the commitment of parents, students, teachers, and expert coaches, the club is still going strong as one of the largest clubs in Meadowridge history, and it shows no sign of slowing down.







# From the Head of School



Our community takes immense pride in the extraordinary growth and achievements of the Meadowridge Fencing Club, a true testament to the dedication and passion of everyone involved. I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to the teachers, coaches, parents, and competitors whose commitment and perseverance have propelled our fencing program to remarkable heights.

The journey of our club has been shaped by the collective efforts of our dedicated teachers and coaches. Their tireless efforts in nurturing the talents and skills of our fencers extend beyond practices and competitions. Witnessing the positive impact they've had on the lives of our children is truly heartening. Equally, the parents, through their encouragement, time, and resources, have played an instrumental role in fostering a vibrant and supportive environment for our fencers.

I am also deeply appreciative for the crucial financial support provided for athletics through the Meadowridge Annual Fund. The generosity of our parents has not only supported our fencers, but allowed the club to flourish, providing enriched opportunities for skill development and preparation for international competitions. Donations to the Annual Fund stand as one of the best ways to support enriching experiences for all our children.

A profound sense of appreciation is extended to our founding coach, Gareth Mason, whose vision and dedication laid the foundation for the success of our fencing club. His contagious passion for the sport has inspired both athletes and coaches alike. Special recognition is also due to Connie Chow, the catalyst for the club's success and growth from its inception. Her enduring commitment is truly commendable, and her continued engagement is inspirational. There is no denying the magnitude of her impact on the success of this club.

In celebrating the Meadowridge Fencing Club, I am reminded of the incredible collaborative spirit of our community. Students learn, develop, and succeed individually, before they graduate to become the coaches and mentors for the next generation of aspiring fencers. The drive to learn and succeed is matched by the desire to help and give back, embodying the ethos of our school: learning to live well, with others and for others, in a just community.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "S Banack". The signature is written in a dark color, likely black or dark blue ink.

Mr. Scott Banack



# Club History

A club that started with only one parent and a handful of volunteers has grown to be one of the largest at the school. Now in its fifteenth year, the Meadowridge Fencing Club sees sixty-some-odd students annually and has launched the competitive careers of many.

The club coaches are former Olympians; Canadian, Bulgarian, and Korean National team members; and Fédération Internationale d'Escrime (FIE) hall of famers. When running, the club tournament was one of the largest youth fencing events around. Really, if you want to know what Meadowridge can do, look no further than the Fencing Club. And, if you want to know how, look no further than Mr. Gareth Mason and Ms. Connie Chow.

The Meadowridge Fencing Club would not be what it is today if not for Mr. Gareth Mason. When he first approached the school about starting a club, Mr. Mason was already a board member and dedicated parent. Still, he had the will to do more. A successful and medaled fencer himself, Mr. Mason knew the impact and joy the sport brought to his own life – an experience he hoped to extend to the students at our school. Mr. Mason's idea to start a fencing club had been met with support but also dilemma: with a full roster of teams and clubs already running, volunteers would be needed. The club could go ahead, but only if enough teachers and staff were able to help. Thankfully, Mr. Mason was able to secure four volunteers, and, in September 2009, the Meadowridge Fencing Club launched.

Among the initial volunteers was Ms. Connie Chow. And while the Grade 4 teacher is today synonymous with the club, she didn't know much about fencing back in 2009. Really, her involvement had been pure coincidence. Just weeks before the call for volunteers went out, Ms. Chow's eldest son had expressed an interest in the then unknown-to-her sport. Figuring he would be sure to sign up for the club and that she'd end up at practices anyhow, Ms. Chow volunteered to help. Little did she know that this decision would shape the history of the club.



## Talk like a fencer

### **Attack**

an initial offensive action made by extending the sword arm and continuously threatening the opponent's target

### **Parry**

defensive action to deflect an opponent's attack by opposing forte to opponent's foible

### **Riposte**

an offensive action following a successful parry of an attack

### **Counter Riposte**

a riposte following the successful parry of the opponent's riposte or counter-riposte

### **Counterattack**

the offensive action made while avoiding, or closing the line against, an opponent's attack

### **Lunge**

a method of getting closer to an opponent with acceleration to make an attack while maintaining balance and making it possible for a rapid recovery

### **On Guard Feint**

threatening movement of the blade made with the intention of provoking a parry or similar response

### **Engagement**

when both blades are in contact

### **Disengagement**

turning or ducking to remove the target area from its normal position, resulting in the non-valid target being substituted for the valid target

### **En Garde! Prêts? Allez!**

three command start when fencing, which means: Get in defensive position! Are you Ready? Go!



As one of the more uncommon sports offered at Meadowridge, fencing might seem like an unexpected success. In reality, it had been a hit straightaway. In its first year, the club welcomed a full roster.

The year after, registration doubled. At Meadowridge, the secret to the club's unexpected success is not so secret at all. Mr. Mason and Ms. Chow have dedicated themselves to the club from the get-go. In the early years, Mr. Mason was not only the founder but also organizer, promoter, and sole coach.



the school administration, helped out at practices, and used her connections to find equipment and coaches. Over the years, the pair worked in tandem for many hours and set their sights higher every season.

"We had gone to many tournaments ourselves and our students were becoming more competitive, so we wanted to bring that to our school," Ms. Chow explains of their motivation.

By opening it up to fencers from all over, they also wanted to give back to the community. It would be a significant undertaking, but the pair was up for the challenge. Mr. Mason worked with groups to promote the tournament, hire referees, and meet all the requirements of a sanctioned event. Ms. Chow took on the marketing and promotion and volunteer sign-up. She also designed the tournament medals and t-shirts that, little would she know, would become a "hot commodity" amongst competitors.

After many months of planning, their commitment came down to the last hour. It was Mr. Mason, along with Ms.

Though it was a small club with only a few volunteers, Mr. Mason was adamant about offering all three weapons (a logistical nightmare!) because he knew how important it was for students to try. Ms. Chow, meanwhile, handled just about everything else. She worked with

By year four, the club was fully established with a full roster, in-house equipment, world-class coaches, and strong competitors. Mr. Mason and Ms. Chow had much to celebrate but still had one more aim: a youth open tournament.

Chow's family and Mr. Spurgeon, who painstakingly taped down every single fencing piste over the course of many hours and ensured exact distance between each of them.

### Parent Proposes Fencing Club

Mr. Gareth Mason approaches the school about starting a Fencing Club. After securing the necessary staff and teacher volunteers, the club is given the go-ahead.

*Pictured: Gareth with his wife Carolyn at the inaugural Tournament*



### Club Popularity Increases

In its second year, enrollment doubles.



## 2009

### First Year of Fencing

The Fencing Club launches. In its first year, the fencing club sees 25 students and is overseen by one parent and four teacher and staff volunteers.

Important to Mr. Mason, the club offers all three weapons: sabre, épée, and foil.

*Pictured: Early fencing practice*



## 2010

### New Coach Added

Ms. Connie Chow finds and hires Bulgarian Foil Champion Theodora Runtova to coach. This marks the club's second professional coach.

*Pictured above: Coach Runtova at fencing practice in 2023*



"I walked into the gymnasium, and they were all wearing volleyball pads on their knees," Ms. Chow laughs. Even during the tournament, Mr. Mason and Ms. Chow—along with their families and friends—ran everything from the registration and concession to the scoring, medaling, and clean-up. Their efforts paid off, and the tournament was an immediate success. Over 150 student entries came that first year and even more in the years after. Over time, the tournament increased in registration, prestige, and ages (eventually, even opening up to senior fencers towards the end!).

Fifteen years since its launch, the fencing club's greatest achievement, according to Ms. Chow, is the fencers who have grown from the club and given back. Many fencers have gone on to compete nationally, internationally and on varsity teams all over. Even more of them have volunteered as coaches, helping younger students get into the sport. For these fencers-turned-coaches, their motivation stems from their own experience as young participants in the club. "In all these years, I've stayed in not because it's a sport I personally do, but because I know that the kids value it," Ms. Chow concludes.

## BC Fencing Association Presidents' Award *Ms. Connie Chow*

Winner of the 2022/23 BC Fencing Presidents' Award—the highest sport volunteer recognition in BC—it is clear Ms. Connie Chow's dedication and passion are qualities everyone can see.

Nominated by Meadowridge Director of Athletics Mr. Scott Spurgeon, Ms. Chow earned the top spot and was celebrated alongside fellow volunteers from across the province.



## A Full School Support



The Meadowridge Fencing Club has benefited from the involvement of many teachers throughout the years. Ms. Nadine Sugden recently joined in for her thirteenth consecutive year of volunteerism and is one of the longest-standing volunteers on staff!



### **Pandemic Postponement**

After a six-year run, the Meadowridge Youth Open is postponed due to the COVID 19 pandemic.



### **Hopeful Tournament Return**

After a two-year hiatus, the Meadowridge Youth Open hopes to return in future years.

*Pictured left: Meadowridge Fencing student at practice*

**2014**

### **First Tournament**

The first Meadowridge Youth Open is hosted. In its first year, there were over 150 registrations from across the province.

*Pictured above: Competitors at the 2014 Youth Open*

**2021**

**2022**

### **New Coaches Recruited**

Korean National Team member, Jay Kim, and Canadian National Team member, Thomas Greenwood, are recruited as the newest coaches.

*Pictured left: Coach Jay Kim at a practice in 2023*



**2024**



# Fencing and...

## ... applying to university

“Extracurricular activities can play a pivotal role in university applications, offering a holistic view of an applicant beyond their academic achievements. Participation in activities gives the opportunity for students to develop and showcase transferable skills. For example, fencing can showcase a student’s commitment, discipline, and passion. It requires not only physical prowess but also strategic thinking and perseverance. Admissions committees appreciate candidates who demonstrate a balance between academic excellence and a well-rounded personality.

Involvement in extracurriculars like fencing not only highlights an individual’s ability to manage time effectively but also contributes to the diversity of the university community. More importantly, when talking about the extracurricular activities, students can highlight qualities like teamwork, leadership, and sportsmanship, which are invaluable attributes in both academic and real-world settings. Whether it is fencing, Model UN, or performing in the school’s musical, showcasing engagement in extracurricular activities can enhance a university application by presenting a multifaceted and accomplished candidate.”

**From Mrs. Brianna Just, Post-Secondary Counsellor**

## ... friendship



“You build such a tight-knit community. I’m not someone who is very social or talks very much, but fencing helped me get to know more people who have the same interests. At Meadowridge, it’s also a chance to get to know some of the younger students.”

**Angela S., Grade 9**

“Fencing has a unique community. When I was in Toronto, I saw a lot of people from Meadowridge at the tournaments. It’s cool to see people from home so far away, and all because of fencing!”

**Nathan Go ‘19**

## ... sportsmanship

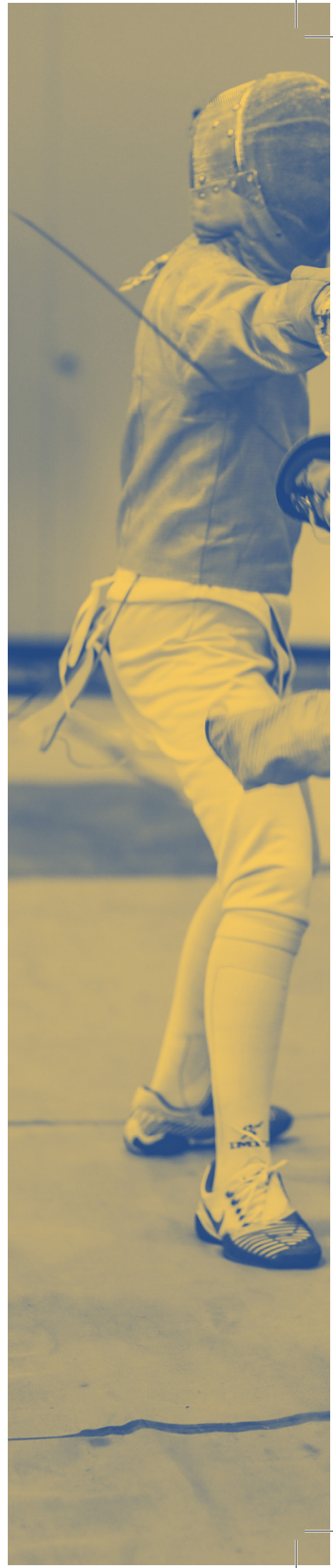
“Sportsmanlike conduct is important in fencing. Before you start a bout, you must salute the player and referee. When you finish, you salute again and shake each other’s hands.” **Angela S., Grade 9**

“Fencing is as much about respect as it is about competition. If you lose, it’s not so much a negative thing as it is respecting your opponent for the work they did.”

**David Guo ‘20**

“Etiquette is an important part of the sport, from salutations and shaking hands to being respectful with your words.”

**Joshua L., Grade 11**







**Meadowridge  
Fencing coach  
Hristo Etropolski**

was a member of the Bulgarian National Fencing Team, has twice competed at the Olympics, and has

earned many medals at international tournaments and world cups. As a coach, his successes only continue. And though his reach is vast and his accolades are many, Hristo's start at the sport began just like any Meadowridge student's – with a curious fascination about this costumed and swords-filled sport.

With time, this initial curiosity grew to become a lifelong passion and an undeniable talent. After a successful career, Hristo transitioned into coaching where he saw fencers win countless world cups and medals, rank internationally, and earn scholarships to prestigious schools. In 2013, he was honoured by the International Fencing Federation (FIE) and inducted into the International Fencing Federation Hall of Fame.

One year after that, he joined Meadowridge School.

Right away, the experienced coach saw four considerable strengths in the still new program: Mr. Gareth Mason, Theodora Runtova, Ms. Connie Chow, and Mr. Scott Spurgeon. "The coaches are important," he shares, "[Ms. Chow and Mr. Spurgeon] make the fencing program feel like one big family. They're the heart of the club."

Over the next eight years, coach Hristo, Ms. Chow, Mr. Spurgeon, and Mr. Mason grew the club in not only membership but also recognition and excellence. Together, the fencing team launched the Meadowridge Youth Open, a tournament that ran six years and grew steadily to become one of the largest tournaments in the lower mainland welcoming fencers from all across the province and even across the border. What's more, the club now welcomes an average of fifty fencers each year, introducing students in Grades 4 through 12 to the unique sport of fencing.

"There have been changes over the years," Hristo now reflects, "but under the right people, what works has stayed the same. It's a well-oiled machine." Ms. Chow and Mr. Spurgeon (after 11 dedicated years, Mr. Gareth Mason retired from his fencing involvement in 2018) have kept "everything that works."



# Reflections & Perspectives

## Nathan Go '19

Growing up, Nathan was into all things athletics. Track and Field, Soccer, Basketball, Cross Country... if there was a team at Meadowridge, you could be sure Nathan was on it. So, when fencing was introduced, the then Grade 5 student didn't think twice about signing up. Of course, as the youngest son to Ms. Connie Chow, he had a little extra motivation to get involved. In any case, he was keen: "I knew whatever I learned in fencing—hand-eye coordination, foot work, technical skills—would translate into and help my other sports," Nathan shares. The alum stayed a member for as long as he was at Meadowridge.

While competition and sport were a huge factor, Nathan also liked the community that the club formed. While fencing at Meadowridge, Nathan remembers tournaments across the country followed by sightseeing with friends. While fencing in university, Nathan remembers seeing classmates from British Columbia in provinces far away.

"It's such a niche sport, so you end up seeing a lot of your old friends," he shares. Of course, with his own special insight, Nathan also knows the work that gets put into running a club of this calibre: "Mr. Mason and my mom [Ms. Connie Chow] were working all the time. Mr. Mason was always there early and stayed late, and my mom and I would often come back to the school late at night to prepare and get things ready. We even have fencing equipment we store at our home," he laughs.

## Nicole Su '20

Though Nicole has graduated from Meadowridge, moved on to university, and competes at the varsity-level, she still remembers her early days in the Meadowridge fencing club. "I remember looking up to the older students and wanting to be just like them," she smiles. Back then, her coaches—students and teachers alike—were people who inspired and trained her.

**“I remember looking up to the older students and wanting to be just like them,”**

Nicole went on to compete with outside clubs and became a competitive force in the fencing world. Later, when the opportunity presented itself for Nicole to step into the role of coach, she agreed straightaway. Nicole wanted to give back and support students just as her own coaches had. During the throngs of the Diploma Programme (DP), Nicole found coaching younger students alongside her friends a time of solace. It was where she could relax and share the sport she loved at the school and with the people she loved.



Nicole Su '20 competing for the University of Toronto





## Joshua L., Grade 11

A competitive fencer outside of school, Joshua brought his experience and talent to the Meadowridge Fencing Club as referee and coach. Though volunteer hours were his initial motivation, Joshua has found true enjoyment that has kept him involved. Crediting his own experiences as a competitor, Joshua works with the younger students on the skills and tactics he knows they'll need."

"Fencing is a very analytical sport — it's like the chess of sports — so I help students understand their opponents' thought processes so that they can make the right decisions," he explains. His experience also helps him know what to look for as a referee. Overseeing such an intricate sport is tough, and Joshua has spent many hours studying and taking on the tests and observations required. Though he has just started, he currently sits at a level one referee with USA Fencing.

Having seen many fencers and clubs, Joshua is proud of the club that has grown at his school: "The Meadowridge fencing club has been around for so long that people know about it just like they would volleyball or soccer," he explains, "where some people are only just now learning about it, Meadowridge students have known about fencing for so long."



## David Guo '20

Like many young students, it was a fascination with swords that got David into fencing. "I just couldn't pass up the opportunity to smack my friends with a sword," he laughs. Fifteen years later, now a member of the University of Toronto's varsity fencing team, this initial fascination has evolved into an undeniable talent.

After discovering fencing at Meadowridge, the young learner got more involved in outside clubs and started attending competitive events. Though it has been many years since then, David still remembers his first tournament. Not because he won, but because he lost... badly.

**"Fencing is like chess boxing... it's very much a combat sport, but it's equal parts mental too."**

"I remember getting dead last and crying, but then looking at the guy who won and saying to myself *I want to win. I want to be that guy.*" From Grade 4 onward, he was committed to getting there. "Fencing is like chess boxing," he explains, "it's very much a combat sport, but it's equal parts mental too." While progressing in his own fencing career, David, like many Meadowridge fencers, gave back and coached younger students too. Joining at first to meet volunteer requirements, David ended up finding enjoyment in coaching. With a heavy academic workload and his own competitive fencing career, it was when he could relax and help others.

Whether on the piste as a competitor or on the sidelines coaching, David keeps up with the sport for the calm it brings him. "Once you get into it, the game just cascades into place," he nods.



## Angela S., Grade 9

When Angela S. sets foot onto the fencing piste, something in her changes. The usually calm, quiet, and “not very social” student turns into a fierce and aggressive competitor. Angela can’t explain what exactly changes, only that she feels open on the piste, “in sync” as she puts it. Whatever the change is, it’s working. Angela is quietly racking up medals and rising in the ranks of the international fencing scene.

Though Angela started fencing back in the third grade, her competitive career is just a few years young. During the pandemic, Angela was nursing an ankle injury and was second-guessing her involvement. “I was having a low moment with fencing,” she admits. That all changed when her coach — miles away, stuck in lockdown too — started pressing her to heal and get back into training. With in-person fencing on pause, he checked in every day and trained her online. By the time the world opened back up and fencing tournaments began, Angela was re-energized and healed. Now, she is going to “literally every competition” she can. Québec, QC one weekend, Vancouver, BC the next.

With so many competitions, Angela’s schedule is tight. Still, the Grade 9 student finds time to give back and nurture the next league of competitors. As a coach to young Meadowridge fencers, Angela trains students to meet the demands of competitive play. “We know what to teach and how to help students think,” Angela explains of her approach.

With many medals, top-five finishes, and a two-year coaching career, Angela’s appreciation for the sport is all about variety. “What I love about fencing is that anything can happen,” she explains. “One-on-one competition makes it so that it’s up to the competitor and the competitor alone.”

## Matheson Go ‘17

Matheson has unique insight into Meadowridge School’s Fencing Club. He was a member for the entirety of his academic career, served as both competitor and coach, and, neatest of all, saw how the club came to be. Eldest son to Ms. Connie Chow-Go, he saw all the extra time, planning, and work that was put into the program over these last 15 years.

“It was never just about showing up on Friday to coach,” he remembers of his mom’s commitment, “it was sourcing gear, planning tournaments, hiring coaches, and all the other behind-the-scenes work.” Matheson even remembers being dragged to countless



out-of-school tournaments when his mom would attend just to cheer on Meadowridge fencers. Matheson eventually got involved too, helping kids into their gear and from the sidelines. Of course, all of this happened while he was also advancing in his own competitive career.

Matheson fenced, coached, and volunteered with the Meadowridge Fencing Club but also competed at both national and international levels. After graduating, he even played on his university varsity fencing team before transferring over to McGill University. Still, with so many accolades and memories, Matheson says seeing the club’s growth is what he is proudest of.

## Noah Wong ‘21

Noah discovered fencing in a Grade 4 PHE Class. Thinking then that it seemed “super cool,” he joined the club shortly after. His initial interest grew with each session, his competitiveness with every year. Noah stayed on as a member through to his graduation, all while competing with an external club as well.

Like most fencers at Meadowridge, the club served as the foundation for more. During an eleven-year run, Noah competed at tournaments across the country and over the border, winning many medals along the way. When not on the road, Noah bonded with his fellow club members.

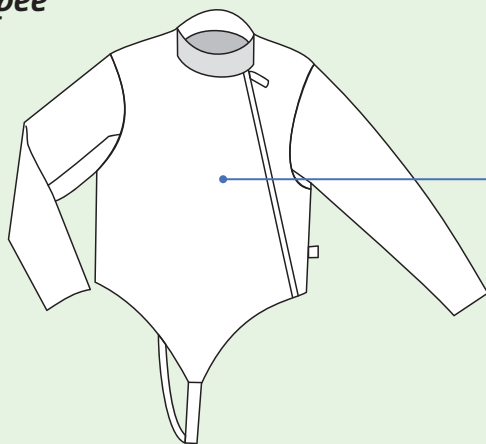
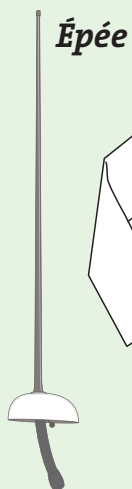
“The community, including the teachers and coaches, was so great,” Noah explains, “it was a great chance to interact with students from other grades and I enjoyed all the people I got to know.” Off the piste, the club members instituted their

own traditions, including a year-end tournament before the winter break that concluded with hot chocolate and catching up. After many good memories and much success, Noah continued his involvement after graduation.

Now in his third year at Western University’s Ivey Business School, Noah is also one of the captains of the varsity fencing team. And though his studies have taken him many miles from home, that special fencing community is never far behind. “I still see Meadowridge fencers at tournaments in Ontario,” Noah smiles, “I think it’s really cool to still see them all the time and so far from home.”



# Fencing Fashion

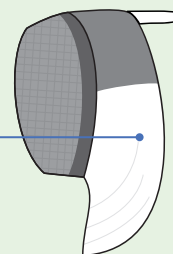


**Jacket**

Protects upper body and neck  
Jackets differ between weapons

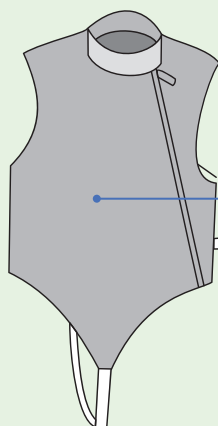
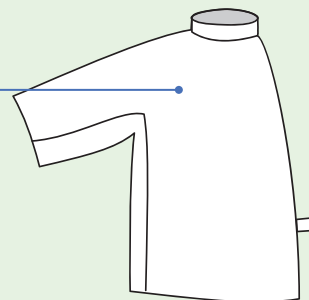
**Mask**

Protects head and neck  
Masks slightly differ between weapons



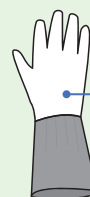
**Plastron**

Protects underarm and chest



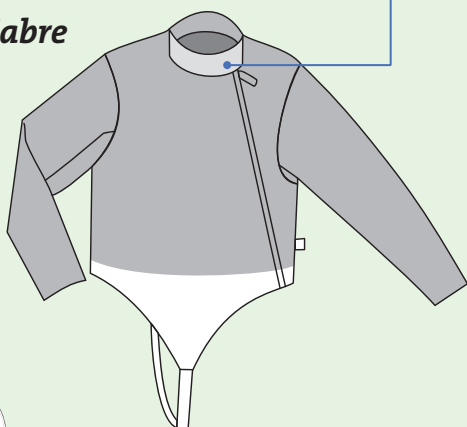
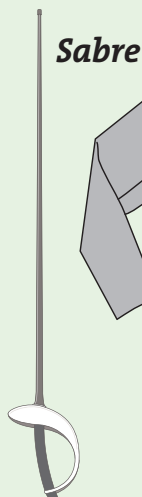
**Lamé**

A conductive jacket indicating the on-target area for the weapon.  
Only required in Foil and Sabre



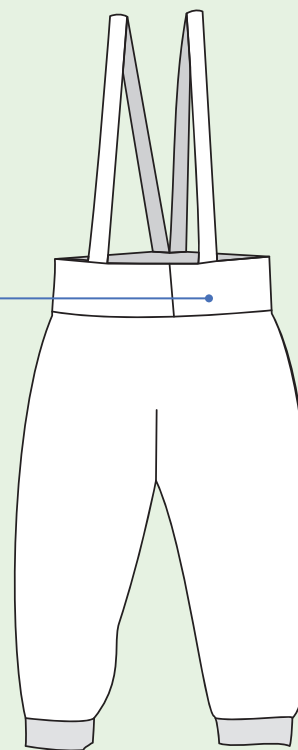
**Glove**

Thick protective glove  
Lower portion is required to cover at least half of the forearm



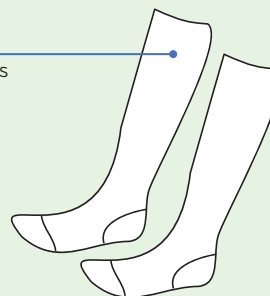
**Knickers**

Protective pants with suspenders, which ensure they stay in place during movement



**Socks**

Protect legs



**Shoes**

Protect feet and provides stability





# Sameena Khan '08

Sameena takes an unusual approach to business. Since opening Rukhsana's Wellness & Heavenly Retreat, she and her parents have weighed most decisions against one simple standard: *does it work for us?*

While the family of course worries about guest satisfaction, operations, advertising, and budgets, they balance these very real worries with a very sensible approach. If they believe in what they are doing and enjoy doing it, they'll do it well and the people will come. As for those other parts of the business? That's where Sameena comes in. She is a one-stop, non-stop business owner and operator. Human resources, marketing, bookkeeping, payroll, guest services, sous chef, yoga and Shirodhara practitioner wrapped into one.

For being so involved, hospitality management was never part of her plan. Looking back, Sameena had never been sure what she wanted to do when she grew up.









At Meadowridge, Sameena discovered and explored many interests. But these interests never seemed to amount to one obvious thing. She played on lots of sports teams, took part in many clubs (notably, fly-fishing with Mr. Noble), and travelled abroad to both Mexico and Japan. A social kid, she also served as the Gryphon Council's Activities Gryphon.

Still, Sameena admits she was “never academic” and was always unsure what she wanted to study or do. Even *where* she would study was a last-minute decision. After her post-secondary counsellor Mr. Al Graveson and then-Headmaster Mr. Hugh Burke had helped her meet the prerequisites of a certain school, Sameena changed directions right after her admissions had been secured. “I walked into Mr. Graveson’s office and said, *I’m going to [The University of] Guelph!*” she laughs, “and he was like, *what?!*”. Even Guelph, it turns out, was not it. Sameena went for just one semester before deciding to change directions and come home.

Sameena put her plans on hold and gave herself time to figure things out. While helping out with administrative tasks at her father’s business, she also started work as a traffic controller, a role that led her to lead operations at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Whistler, BC. It was after these few years of work and some unforgettable experiences that Sameena had figured out what she wanted to do. Choosing to practice law, Sameena enrolled in a criminology program and started anew.

Of course, just as her path seemed secure, Sameena’s parents were making plans that would change things up all over again. It was just after Sameena earned her degree that her parents announced they had purchased a property in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. Her parents, both business owners—her mom an aesthetician, her father an industrial caterer—had found a property that would let their combined talents and her mother’s love of Ayurveda come to life. They were going to open a wellness bed and breakfast retreat.

Sameena of course took the chance to travel to her parents’ newly purchased property, but never intended to get involved. “I’ll admit, I thought it was all voodoo,” she explains of Ayurveda back then, “I was not into the practice.”

But after her parents asked her to help with a bit of marketing, she started doing some research to help her write. The more she looked into it, the more she learned. The more she learned, the more interested she became. After attending a Meditation & Yoga retreat with her mom, she was sure. After a couple years of remote work, Sameena packed up her life and moved to Mexico to make the retreat her full-time career.

Now, Sameena can’t imagine life any other way.

With the family contracting out very few things, Sameena and her parents see to all parts of the bed and breakfast retreat. Offering only what they believe in and what they can best provide, the family aligns all parts of the business with their teachings and values. At Rukhsana’s, the food is vegetarian and vegan, the surroundings natural and lush, and the practices holistic and grounded in Ayurveda. Guests can expect to centre themselves through meditation, diet, experience, and rest. Of course, their approach is to never force guests into any one thing. Guests are given the space to discover things on their own, finding what works (or what doesn’t) for themselves. This accessible approach has garnered lots of attention and attracted people from all around the world.





“We don’t pretend to be enlightened; we are still human,” Sameena nods. “We simply talk, share, and follow teachings.” It’s an approach that works. By the third night, regardless of guests’ knowledge or experiences going in, Sameena can see the transformations.

Overseeing all of this, Sameena’s days are as fulfilling as they are diverse. “I love my job,” she brims. Outside of work, Sameena has found a positive work-life balance that she could never have imagined. She has made friends and found a community in her new home. Together, they enjoy going to the gym and finding new outdoor places to explore. Admittedly, Sameena’s Spanish is still a “work in progress,” but she gets by, especially with the help of a handy verb conjugation list she has kept from her Grade 10 Spanish Class.

Upon reflection, this laminated list is like all parts of her Meadowridge experience. Wherever she goes, Sameena takes with her the confidence and values she learned during her time at the school.

“If it wasn’t for Meadowridge, I wouldn’t have gone to university at all,” she reflects. “It had a huge impact on me. I still have friends from Meadowridge that I talk to every day, I carry the mannerisms with me that I learned, and I have so many fond memories from my time.”

## What is Ayurveda?

*From Rukhsana’s Wellness & Heavenly Retreat*

Ayurveda is the traditional medicine of India and the oldest recorded holistic healing system, developed more than 5,000 years ago.

The word Ayurveda is derived from two Sanskrit words: “ayus” meaning life and “veda” meaning knowledge or science. Ayurveda focuses on tools, insights, and information for living a balanced and healthy lifestyle while preventing illness.



**PICTURED** PG 15: Sameena with her mother at the Rukhsana’s Wellness & Heavenly Retreat; PG 16: View of the water at the Retreat; PG 17: from left to right, Entrance to the Retreat, Sameena with her family at graduation, and Sameena on a hike in Mexico

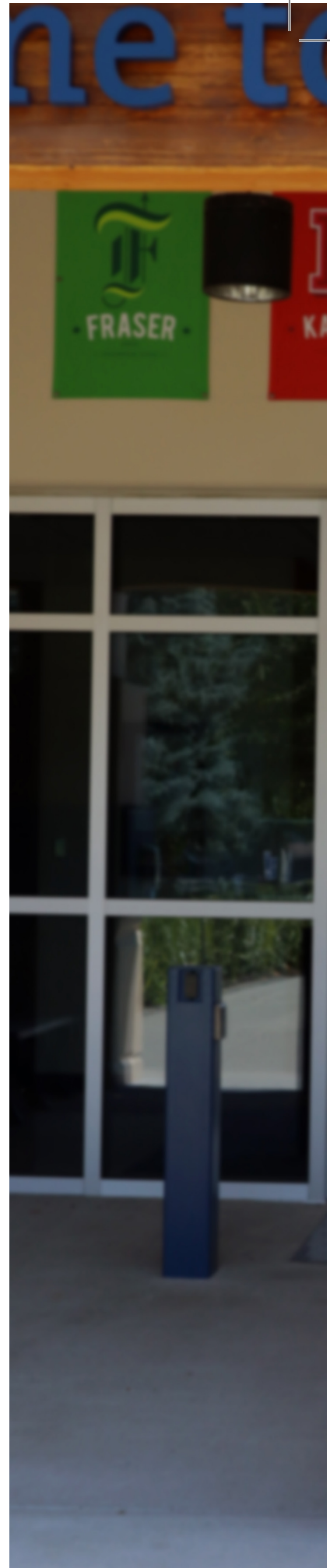
# *Leaving a Lasting Legacy*

Cathy and Andy Graetz, long-time members and supporters of the Meadowridge community, are leaving a lasting legacy that will touch the lives of future generations of students.

Their decision to make a planned gift to Meadowridge reflects not only their deep connection to the school, but also their unwavering commitment to education and the betterment of young lives.

Cathy's journey at Meadowridge, spanning close to 30 years as a teacher has been one filled with job satisfaction and countless heartwarming moments. Over the years, she has also witnessed the school's remarkable growth and transformation, both in terms of physical footprint and academic programming.

What truly inspired Cathy and Andy to make a planned gift was the tangible impact their contribution will have on the scholarship recipients. Cathy credits her own success to the foresight of her parents, neither of whom had graduated high school, but who selflessly ensured she had a quality education which in turn opened the doors to a world-class university education.







“Helping someone who, for financial reasons, would otherwise not be able to attend Meadowridge also aligns with the Mission of the school to live well with others and for others in a just community,” Cathy explains.

Cathy and Andy have chosen to create The Graetz Family Scholarship through a testamentary bequest that is included in Andy’s will. They recognize the value of leaving a legacy that extends beyond their lifetime. As Andy explains, “This bequest ensures that our gift has a positive impact for many years to come.” Emphasizing the importance of their commitment to education, Andy also acknowledges the current favourable tax laws in Canada, particularly regarding legacy bequests of qualifying securities.

In addition, this Planned Gift paves the way for other individuals to follow in their footsteps, thereby supporting the school’s financial stability, growth, and long-term impact on students.

But their gift is about more than just financial support; it’s about inspiring future generations to pay it forward. They hope that the students who benefit from their gift will remember the difference it made in their lives and, in turn, find ways to contribute positively to their communities.

Planned gifts were a new concept for Meadowridge, but the school’s flexibility, commitment to growth and appreciation of the long-term benefits of such gifts impressed Cathy and Andy. For those considering making a planned gift to a charitable organization, Cathy and Andy offer valuable advice. They recommend researching how efficiently the donated funds will be used and emphasize the importance of picking an organization close to one’s heart and life. Supporting local charities may also have a more immediate and personal impact.

In closing, Cathy and Andy express their gratitude to the Meadowridge community. The school has been Cathy’s second family, a place where she found purpose, fulfillment, and enduring friendships. Andy has offered to share his views with interested families on the benefits of a legacy bequest. Their story serves as a powerful testament to the enduring impact of education and the potential to create lasting change in the lives of students, both present and future.

Class of 2014

# where are they now?

It's been ten years since the Class of 2014—Meadowridge's first-ever Diploma Programme (DP) cohort—graduated from the school. From Meadowridge, the group of 42 graduates headed off to universities around the world and into programs of all types, from Engineering and Business to Medicine and Visual Arts.

We caught up with the class to hear about where life has taken them over the last decade. Where are they now? Follow along to learn the academic, professional, and personal successes of our inaugural DP graduates.



**Hazy Atthari** <sup>(1)</sup> attended Queen's University, where he began a degree in Kinesiology before graduating with a specialty in Global Development Studies. Hazy now works at Peekage, a marketing start-up specializing in digital product sampling and consumer insights. Hazy is also the co-founder of a sales agency where he provides sales consulting services to start-ups. While residing in Toronto, ON Hazy maintains close ties with his Meadowridge friends and looks forward to moving back to BC soon. In his free time, Hazy keeps up with his sports and enjoys participating in social events and supporting his friends and families with their endeavours.

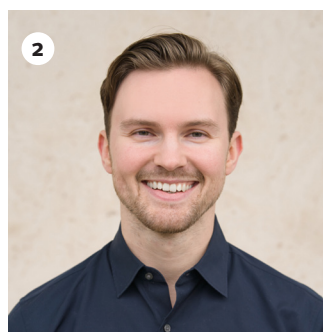
**Chris Awram** <sup>(2)</sup> completed his BBA with a concentration in Management Information Systems at the SFU Beedie School of Business. His program included an exchange semester abroad in Paris, France where he studied at ESCP Europe. Currently, Chris is working on the North American team of a global digital consulting group, Collaboration Betters the World (CBTW). Chris enjoys learning about exciting business problems and working with his team to find solutions. Recently, Chris returned from a six-week trip to Europe to visit a few of his company's European offices, including France, Belgium, Austria, and Germany. In his spare time, Chris enjoys playing soccer, hiking, and running. Chris has been doing 5K and 10K races. Most recently, he participated in CIBC's Run for the Cure, where he raised over \$3,000 for cancer research.

**Malone Chen** <sup>(3)</sup> studied BA Graphic Communication Design at Central Saint Martins in London, UK. He is currently working in his own design studio in London. Malone enjoys working on new projects every few weeks, which he finds exciting and fun. Most recently, Malone worked on a project with Nike, one of his dream clients. In his spare time, Malone enjoys cooking and exercising. He still plays badminton occasionally, after developing a love for the sport on the Meadowridge badminton team.

**Nicole Conrol, née Duncan** <sup>(4)</sup> received her bachelor's degree in Business with a concentration in Project Management from Douglas College, during which she was able to take courses in Paris as well as travel Europe. Nicole now works in Events and Community Engagement at the Greater Vancouver Food Bank. She lives with her husband in a home in East Vancouver.

**Shaquille Dhanji** <sup>(5)</sup> completed a two-year marketing diploma from BCIT after spending a year in Thailand, where he worked on a waterpark project 'Cartoon Network Amazone' and interned at a digital marketing agency and found a love for marketing. He is currently working as the head of marketing at Creation.Space, and runs Creation Academy on the side, a consultancy that teaches others how to run side businesses more easily and effectively by leveraging AI. Shaquille is also developing a video meme app called 'VEME' and potentially two other apps as well. He is also writing a book which is set to be launched digitally next year. In his spare time, Shaquille enjoys reading, gaming, running, music and beatbox events, getting together with family, and visiting restaurants.

**Kimberly Dyer** <sup>(6)</sup> received her Diploma in Dance Performance from George Brown College. Following graduation, she worked as a mentorship student with Ballet Jörgen, where she had the opportunity to dance professionally across Canada. Now back in BC, Kimberly continues to work as a performer, dance teacher, and visual arts teacher while pursuing a BA in History at the University of Victoria.





**David Gouws** <sup>(7)</sup> studied Commerce at Queen’s University and started his career as a Marketing Specialist in Toronto, ON. After four years in a variety of roles he co-founded a startup advisory firm with fellow Meadowridge alum, Hazyzy Atthari ‘14. He returned to school in the fall of 2022 to study law at Dalhousie University and will be returning to Toronto this summer to work at a leading national law firm. He loves staying active, cooking for his partner and friends, and hiking and surfing on both coasts of Canada.

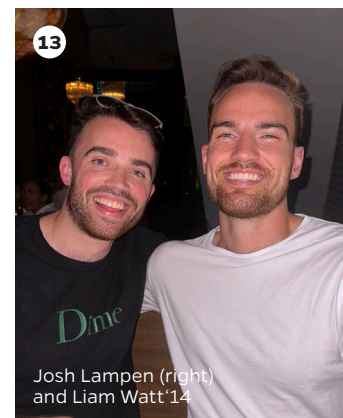
**Davina Gounden** <sup>(8)</sup> graduated from Simon Fraser University, where she studied Communications and Business Administration. After graduating, Davina made the move to Toronto, ON. She now works as a Communications Advisor for the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority, a regulatory body that plays a crucial role in enforcing circular economy laws across Ontario. Beyond her professional pursuits, Davina loves exploring new cultures and savouring diverse cuisines. She frequently embarks on travel adventures with fellow Class of 2014 alum and fiancé, Isaiah Hasham.

**Emma Graveson** <sup>(9)</sup> received her BA Classics and History of Science and Technology Degree with a focus on Ancient Greek Philosophy and Ancient and Medieval Science from the University of King’s College, Halifax, followed by her master’s degree in Western Esotericism at the University of Amsterdam. Emma now works and studies as a Funeral Director Apprentice in Vancouver and is looking forward to finally getting out of school in June. In her spare time, she enjoys acting, directing, and stage managing with local theatres, continuing to pursue her passion for theatre that she enjoyed during her time at Meadowridge.

**Connor Gunnell** and **Tianna Stewart** <sup>(10)</sup> recently celebrated 11 wonderful years together! Since graduating from Meadowridge, they’ve gone on to complete their undergraduate degrees, travelled throughout Europe, and got their dog Maggie. Connor is now a privacy professional, and Tianna is an associate at a wealth management firm. They look forward to celebrating their wedding in 2024.

**Isaiah Hasham** <sup>(11)</sup> graduated from Queen’s University with a B.Sc. in Chemistry and is currently completing a JD/MBA at the University of Toronto. After graduation, he will work as an associate at Sidley Austin LLP in New York. He and his fiancée Davina Gounden ‘14 live together in Toronto, ON. Together, they like to take advantage of the city’s incredible food, concerts, and major league sports.

**Victoria Horne** <sup>(12)</sup> studied Commerce with a focus on Marketing at the Smith School of Business at Queen’s University. Currently residing in Olympic Village, Victoria spends her days working in eCommerce at Lululemon. Victoria is growing her own consulting business where she offers digital consulting and creates websites for small businesses. She is also rekindling her passions for art and painting by offering pet portraits for friends and family. In her spare time, Victoria can be found cooking with her partner, Kean, and travelling. Victoria has pursued every opportunity to travel from backpacking through Asia and Australia to food-touring through Italy, and is looking forward to a trip to Japan later this spring.





**Jayden Johnston** studied at the University of Victoria, pursuing history, business, computer sciences, and kinesiology. He now works at Johnston Meier Insurance as a Commercial Producer, with his own book of growing businesses. Jayden enjoys learning about new businesses and fields of work while helping people and understanding their needs. Looking to fill in his father's footsteps, Jayden looks forward to growing his portfolio and moving up within Johnston Meier.

**Josh Lampen** (13) studied Commerce at the Smith School of Business at Queen's University, before transitioning to working in consulting. He is currently a Software Engineer at Together, an educational technology startup backed by Y Combinator. In his free time, Josh also contributes to his own company as Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer. The company builds AI solutions for the trucking industry. After working as a resident DJ during his time at Queen's University, Josh continues to explore his love for music; he has recently started to relearn the piano, with the goal of producing his own music.



**Helena Parewyck** (14) completed her bachelor's degree in Industrial Design from Emily Carr University before pursuing further education at BCIT, where she completed the fast-track Interior Design program. Currently, Helena works for a high-end residential Interior Design firm in North Vancouver, with projects spanning from new construction to renovations. Helena values the diversity of projects, creativity, problem-solving opportunities, and collaboration with clients, architects, and builders. She finds great satisfaction in witnessing projects evolve from concept to completion, knowing she has contributed to the transformation of spaces that hold a special place in people's lives. Helena and her husband are eagerly anticipating the arrival of their first child, embarking on an exciting new chapter in their lives.

**Kelsey Peng** (15) obtained an Honours Bachelor of Commerce, specializing in Accounting at the University of Ottawa. She works for the Canada Revenue Agency where she helps prepare annual financial statements, contributing to the Public Accounts of Canada. Kelsey moved back to Vancouver during the pandemic and now works remotely, with the rest of her team based in Ottawa, ON. In her spare time, Kelsey has taken up crocheting and has made gifts for friends and family, a few décor pieces, and a handful of clothing items.

**Kate Richardson** (16) earned her Bachelor of Arts and Science with Honours from Quest University, where she also played on the varsity soccer team. Currently residing in Vancouver, she is completing her Ph.D. in Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of British Columbia. Her thesis explores novel functions of an enzyme and examines their implications in skin health and disease. When not at the lab bench, Kate is involved in various initiatives fostering inclusivity and educational opportunities for youth. In this capacity, she works as the coordinator for an Indigenous student summer research program and as an instructor for a high school student education program, both at UBC. She was also the recent Co-Chair of the Trainee Committee for her facility. In her spare time, she loves to see family and friends, travel, and spend time outdoors.

**Emily Super** (17) completed her undergraduate at SFU, her Masters in London, UK and is currently completing her law degree in Ireland. Emily's lasting interest in creative industries, fashion in particular, has led to a continued exploration of different career paths. Emily runs Grit in the Glamour, a consultancy for fashion brands looking to better their sustainable practice and level up their marketing. In her spare time, Emily still enjoys horseback riding and travelling.

**Liam Watt** (18) studied mining engineering, specializing in mineral processing at Queen's University before making a pivot into finance post-graduation. Liam now lives in Toronto, ON and works in Corporate Development at Hudbay Minerals, evaluating M&A opportunities in the copper mining space. Liam is weighing up a potential move to London with his girlfriend Taisa, and the pair hope to one day own an English Bulldog. In his spare time, Liam is an avid concert attendee, enjoys playing sports with his fellow alumni, travelling, and spending Friday evenings at the cinema.

**Move ahead two spaces**



You were awarded a scholarship

Later in the year, the post-secondary team helps students manage their offers and decisions before moving to transitional support.

Students get full access to booking one-on-one appointments for support, family meetings by request, practice Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) for medical school, and general interview support.



You've received university offers!

**Move ahead one space**

Work with your Counsellor to set-up a mock interview



Students are offered various workshops and information sessions on scholarships, interviews, and more.

# Post-Secondary Counselling Journey

At Meadowridge, students start working with post-secondary counsellors early and often.

During one-on-one meetings, information sessions, and collaborative talks with teachers, students increase their self-awareness, discover their passions, and define their post-secondary goals. The post-secondary program is structured so students define their priorities, acquire research skills, and learn to make important decisions while in an environment of teamwork and support. Come graduation, our goal is for students to choose universities where they will be creative, active contributors who thrive and excel.

Starting in Grade 9, students can seek support from anyone on the post-secondary counselling team at any point.

**Start your journey here**

**Grade 9**

Counsellors visit advisory classes in preparation for the Canadian Universities Event (CUE) and for the Career Roundtable.

You asked questions during the classroom visit

**Move ahead two spaces**



Attend the Applying to US Schools Info Session



**Roll Again!**

Grade 9 to 12 students are invited to attend a series of information sessions about applying to universities around the world.



Students participate in weekly counselling classes where they are guided through different application platforms and can complete them with general support from post-secondary counsellors.

## Grade 12

In Grade 11, students participate in weekly Term 2 and 3 counselling classes where they can assess their profile, understand degree options, research programs and institutions, develop a prospective application list, learn about the application process, and explore and evaluate the concept of "best fit".

Wrote your SAT at Meadowridge  
**You aced it!**  
**Move ahead one space**



Meet University Reps from your top schools  
**Roll Again!**

Refined your prospective application list



Students can take their SAT exams at Meadowridge.

Grade 11 and 12 students attend a field trip to the VAIS US University Fair.

## Grade 10

Classroom Visit  
**Jump ahead three spaces**



At the beginning of Grade 10, Counsellors visit students in Career Life Exploration to introduce the program and available resources.

Each Grade 11 family has a Junior Interview with their assigned counsellor.

With guidance and support from their Counsellor, students begin working on supplemental essays.

Started your essay early!  
**Climb the ladder**

**Say Hello**  
 You meet your Post-Secondary Counsellor



Students are assigned a Post-Secondary Counsellor who will stick with them through to graduation.

## Grade 11

Attended your family Junior Interview  
**Jump ahead three spaces**



Booked a meeting with your Counsellor to work on your essay  
**Move ahead one space**



Students get full access to booking one-on-one meetings for support.

Learn about resources available to you  
**Move ahead one space**



Counsellors visit Advisory classes in preparation for CUE Event, Career Roundtable, and DP Course Selection.

Course selection speed dating was a success!



**Move ahead one space**

Students are prepared for DP Course Selection through a series of activities hosted by the post-secondary team, including Course Selection Speed Dating with Grade 12 students and Teacher Talks.

Optional information sessions offered include the registering for pSAT exams and understanding pSAT scores.

# Nurturing minds through OE3

*Outdoor Ecological Experiential Education*

At the heart of the Meadowridge ethos lies an innovative approach to education.

The Outdoor Experiential Ecological Education Program (OE3) nurtures not just academic aptitude but also a profound understanding and appreciation of our ecological interconnectedness. With the guiding principles of cultivating empathy for the land, exploring wild places with wonder, and developing an ethic of reciprocity, students foster a profound connection to the environment and a deep appreciation for the delicate balance of nature and a sense of responsibility towards its preservation.

Through a blend of hands-on experiences, wilderness immersion, and systemic learning, the OE3 Program ignites students' ecological intelligence. With opportunities to garden, camp, hike, paddle, forage, and meditate in pristine natural settings, the OE3 program is a transformative educational journey. Opportunities are also purposefully complementary and tied to the curriculum and units of inquiry. Spanning from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12, the OE3 program shapes and moulds learners into environmentally conscious, intellectually agile, and empathetically engaged individuals.

From immersive sensory connections in the North Forest to thoughtful agricultural initiatives and geographical explorations, students have ventured beyond the confines of traditional learning, embracing hands-on experiences that transcend the classroom. Through meaningful and diverse OE3 opportunities, students not only cultivate a deep-rooted understanding of ecological systems and geographical landscapes but also a profound kinship with nature. These experiences echo beyond the present, instilling within our students a lasting appreciation for the environment and a profound sense of responsibility toward nurturing and preserving our natural world. With each activity and exploration, students have become stewards of sustainability, embodying the ethos of interconnectedness, curiosity, and a passion for ecological intelligence that will guide them toward a future of conscientious global citizenship.







# Kindergarten

## ***Cultivating Nature's Bounty: Saving Marigold Seeds***

To observe the connectedness between plants and seasons, students headed outside and all over campus. On a tour of the gardens, students learned about companion plants and saw first-hand how marigolds helped vegetable crops, tomatoes especially, by attracting pollinators and repelling pesky bugs. As the seasons changed and the marigolds died, the class headed back out to collect the seeds. Storing them in plant pouches that they decorated themselves, students then tucked the seeds away for the spring planting season.

## ***Sowing the Promise of Spring: Planting Daffodil Bulbs***

Together with their Grade 12 buddies, kinderbuddies planted and watered daffodil bulbs.



## ***Delving into Forest Tales: Squirrel Investigations***

Students went off to the campground for some fresh air and story time. After listening to Give Freely of Yourself and Bring Light to the World by Richard Wagamese, the class dug into a game of Nutty Squirrel to learn about how mother squirrels teach their young to find food.





## Grade 2

### **Live Lesson in Science**

Huddled around the campfire, students enjoyed a live lesson in science. Supporting their Unit of Inquiry 'How the World Works', students saw physical and chemical changes first-hand. First up, physical changes were observed as the class saw the wood go from stump to kindling through force. Chemical changes were seen next, first from the light of the match and next from the marshmallow as it puffed up over the fire.

## Grade 4

### **Fire as Energy**

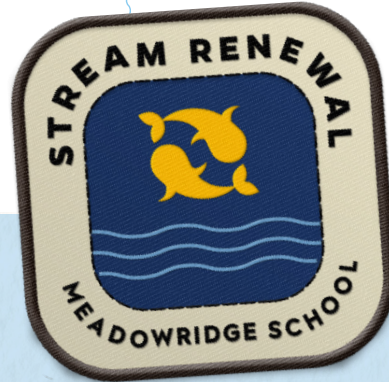
As part of their 'How the World Works' Unit of Inquiry, students headed to the campground to learn about the diverse forms of energy. Using fire starter kits, students both created and observed different types of energy, from thermal, light, and chemical, to potential and kinetic.



## Grades 5 to 8

### **Adopt-a-Stream**

In both Grade 5 and in Grade 6 to 8 Explorations, students got to work restoring Latimer Creek as part of the Adopt-a-Stream initiative. Using loopers, students eradicated invasive plants like Himalayan blackberries and English Ivy to make way for the resurgence of native flora along the creek's banks.



*“It’s never a dull moment when you are a part of the OE3 program!”*



# Grade 5

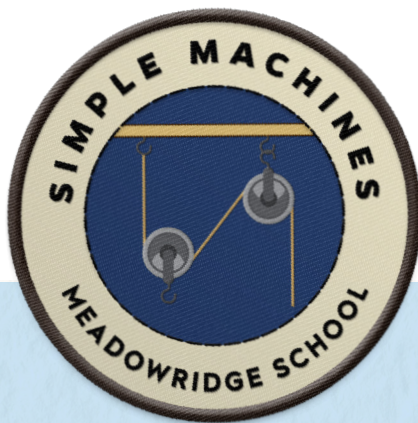
## Simple Machines Challenge

Innovation and environmental stewardship were combined during an exploration of simple machines and ecological restoration.

As part of their 'How the World Works' Unit of Inquiry, students harnessed the power of simple machines to create a fire.

Using a wheel and axle (a wheelbarrow), inclined plane (smooth angled road) and wedge (a wood splitter), students built and lit a fire while assessing the use of simple machines in their task.

Their challenge was using this array of machines to gather, assemble, and use these raw materials to not only build fires but also new knowledge.



“This term I could be doing creek restoration with elementary students, working in the greenhouse with middle schoolers, and hiking trails with high school students - all in the same week! It’s incredibly gratifying when students express excitement for striking a match to light a fire or eating a roasted marshmallow for the first time. I’m very grateful that I can help provide these meaningful experiences.” **MRS. STACY BANACK, OE3 COORDINATOR**



# Grades 6 to 8

## *Middle School Explorations*

### **Harvesting Vegetables for the Food Bank**

Students harvested potatoes, squash, tomatoes, and onions from the regenerative farm and delivered their bounty to the Friends in Need food bank in Maple Ridge, extending a helping hand to those in need within their community.



### **Regenerating the Garden**

With the changing seasons, the focus shifted to nurturing the earth. Students prepared the garden beds for the impending winter by replenishing the soil, composting plants that are at the end of their lifecycle and planting a cover crop to safeguard the garden's fertility.

### **Marigold Seed Preservation**

With sustainability in mind, students embarked on a mission to preserve marigold seeds. Not only did they learn the art of seed preservation, but they also ventured into the realm of entrepreneurship, planning to sell these seeds at the Middle School Farmer's Market in June. Taking the initiative a step further, students adorned these seed packets with QR codes that will link to self-made videos that will explain the intricacies of planting the seeds, displaying their proficiency in storyboarding, filming, and editing.



### **Decorating the North Forest**

Amidst the holiday season, a spirit of sustainable festivity abounded as students embraced an eco-friendly tree decorating challenge. With a commitment to using natural, repurposed, or biodegradable materials, classes adorned trees across campus, eliciting both holiday cheer and an ethos of sustainability.





## Grade 7

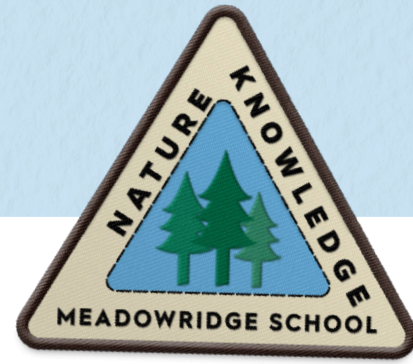
### **Exploring Plant Growth**

In the Gunning Greenhouse, students explored plant growth and factors, including water, light, soil type, and fertilizer. Over several weeks, these young scientists planted beans or peas, and then monitored and analyzed growth patterns in the controlled greenhouse environment. This immersive experience not only enriched their understanding of ecological systems but also honed their scientific inquiry skills, fostering a deeper appreciation for the intricate relationships governing plant life.



### **Connecting Literature with the North Forest**

In Language & Literature, thoughtful teaching and the North Forest helped bring Tuck Everlasting to life. In the novel, students learned about the special Ash tree and its magical powers. In the forest, students learned about the very real magic of the Douglas Fir. Students learned how to identify a Douglas Fir—looking at everything from bark and needles to cones on the forest floor—and about its traditional properties. After this fireside lesson and using their new knowledge, students were sent off into the forest to find one of the two Douglas Firs. The hands-on lesson concluded around the fire once again, this time enjoying some tea brewed with the needles while going over what they learned.



## Grade 8

### **Meet-a-Tree Activity**

During an exploration of sensory engagement, students embraced the Blindfolded Meet-a-Tree activity. Embracing the unknown, a blindfolded student was led to a tree by a non-blindfolded student, who helped them explore it through touch, scent, and sound, helping forge an intimate bond with nature. After removing their blindfold, students sought out and rediscovered their tree once more with a newfound awareness.



### **North Forest Scavenger Hunt**

During an Autumn Scavenger Hunt, students explored the forest floor and gathered treasures that adorned the ground, including tree boughs, cones, ferns, and moss. This hands-on excursion was not just a collection of natural specimens; it was an educational endeavour to understand plant species' names and properties, and foster a deeper appreciation for the intricate biodiversity of the forest.



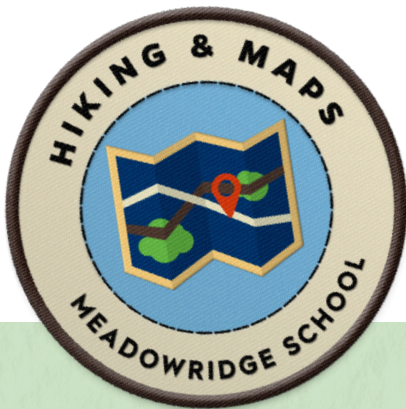
# Grade 9

## **Unlocking Geographic Heritage**

During a hike through Minnehada Park, students immersed themselves in the wonders of the western cordillera, an activity that tied into the Individuals and Societies curriculum.

Combining geographical exploration, map reading, and orienteering, students learned to navigate the intricate terrains of the park. Mixing curricular learning with outdoor enthusiasm, students delved into the geography of the region.

Through map reading and orienteering, students honed their navigational know-how while decoding nature's trails and terrains while embracing the physicality of the hike. Students connected classroom teachings to the palpable, real-world geography that envelops their lives, fostering a deeper understanding of the land they call home.



“Our OE3 program is facilitating meaningful experiences for the upcoming generation of leaders (our students) to intrinsically connect with the natural world that we share and depend on. These connections are driving innovation, wellbeing and hope for a future where all living things can thrive.”

**MR. JAMES WILLMS, DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND RISK**





## Grades 6 to 10 *CAS Garden Club*

In the CAS Garden Club, a mix of agricultural and eco-conscious endeavours has unfurled alongside the bounty of nature's harvest. As the season ended, students reaped a rich, final fall harvest teeming with tomatoes, potatoes, kale, and onions. Fueling their culinary creativity, they delved into a flavourful adventure, cooking up delectable roast potatoes infused with the savoury essence of garlic freshly plucked from their garden beds.



As the chill of winter approached, students then embarked on the vital task of safeguarding the gardens. Topping up the soil, composting dead plants, and sowing a protective cover crop, the club ensured the earth's vitality would endure through the frosty months ahead. An innovative endeavour took root as they unveiled plans for a high-capacity worm composter, an eco-friendly solution destined to transform elementary school lunch waste into fertile compost, fostering a cycle of sustainability within the school community.

Elevating their commitment to sustainable agriculture, club members meticulously saved and preserved seeds from a diverse array of plants—lettuce, radishes, and marigolds—for a verdant springtime revival. Students also embraced the messiness and dirtiness of pressing and drying flowers, while fully embracing the process.

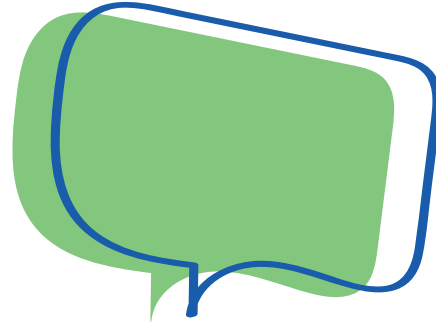
Members' creativity flourished as they created Christmas wreaths from foraged forest treasures, celebrating the season with sustainable flair.

With many opportunities throughout all seasons, the CAS Garden Club has not only nurtured gardens but also cultivated a profound ethos of environmental responsibility and sustainable practices within the school ecosystem.





# Shared Language, Common Understanding



A Sensible Approach to Ethical AI

The release of ChatGPT-3.5 and DALL-E took generative AI from the stuff of science fiction to that of the everyday.

All of a sudden, AI was everywhere – including our discourse. As the use and access of AI grew, so too did concerns about it: How do we ensure privacy? Avoid misuse and misconduct? Lessen its bias?

It's these very questions that Meadowridge School began to consider this past summer. Recognizing its potential impact, the Educational Technology Committee, a 15-person team made up of teachers, staff, and administrators, launched an inquiry into AI in schools early on. Led by Coordinator of Educational Technology Ms. Christina Reis, the team has worked to support students and teachers with this significant new technology.

Knowing that changes were inevitable, Ms. Reis explains that the inquiry has been a “dynamic process”. While reading over many policies and speaking with even more leaders and teachers, some obvious first steps emerged. The committee understood an

academic framework was needed, something that would support students and teachers to ensure ethical use.

Of course, the committee knew whatever they offered would need to be amenable and easy to adjust. As Ms. Reis puts it, “usable, meaningful, and a start.”

The resulting Integration of AI guidelines provides the Meadowridge community with a common vernacular for its use. Teachers can use the guidelines to frame assignments, while

students can use them to ensure ethical use in their submissions. Along with the release, Ms. Reis has been busy finding professional development opportunities and offering information sessions that can further support our community.

To date, she has spoken at many departmental meetings, hosted a parent information session, led a full school professional development workshop, and has had even more one-on-one conversations. In her many interactions with people across the

continuum and our school, Ms. Reis is sure that, in this time of change, being open-minded and knowledgeable is an important first step.



Ahead of the Grade 5 Exhibition, Ms. Reis catches up with teachers to prepare.



# When should I Integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Classroom...

With the evolving advances of technology and AI integration, here are some recommendations for ethical integrations of AI uses in the classroom ●

*If AI is not mentioned, it is presumed NO AI is permitted on any portion of the task.*

↑

## References

Academic integrity policy. Appendix 6: Guidance on the use of artificial intelligence tools. International Baccalaureate (2023). <https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/new-structure/programmes/shared-resources/pdfs/academic-integrity-policy-en.pdf> (p.59-61). Accessed October 8, 2023.

AI Tools for the Classroom: Guidelines. (2023). St. George's School 2023-24.

Anders, B. A. (2023). How Students Can Use AI Without Violating Academic IntegrityLinks to an external site. [Infographic].

Dennis, Michelle (2023). AI Use at Haileybury.

Faculty of Education: Learning Design Views. AI Corner. University of British Columbia. <https://learningdesignviews.educ.ubc.ca/ai-corner/>. Accessed November 20, 2023.

University of British Columbia. (2024). Prompt Engineering. Canvas.

## AI Use Encouraged

Content needs to be checked for accuracy and bias.

***Students may use AI as directed but sources must be properly cited and prompts noted.***

- Check AI-Generated Content
- AI Sources Cited

## Limited AI Use Permitted

Text needs to be written by student, evidence of prompts and process must be discussed, recorded, and submitted.

***Students may use AI for feedback, revision, or structure.***

- Process of Task Submitted
- AI Sources Cited

## No AI Tools Permitted

No use of AI is permitted at any stage.

***Computer-based tasks designed to assess core skills.***

- AI-Detection on Submission
- Browser Process Recorded

***Task is designed to assess core skills. Students will complete task without technology in testing conditions.***

- Handwritten
- Timed Assessment

## Parlez-vous AI?

As a French Teacher, immersion and engagement are central to Mme. Gish's approach. The Elementary and High School teacher is always on the lookout for French resources for her classroom and, if something she wants doesn't exist, she'll translate and create it for herself. Most recently, it was the Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) guidelines that Ms. Christina Reis had drafted and circulated to staff. Finding it helpful for her own understanding, Mme. Gish wanted a French version for her class. To help her better understand the technology, she even used AI during the translation process to explore its different uses and prompts. Since wrapping the project up, she and her students have had many discussions about the poster and AI use in her class.





## Mr. Darrell Lester

Grade 8 & 9 Design Teacher, Design Department Head

**Joined Meadowridge in 2009**

### Why did you become a teacher?

Teaching runs in my family. My grandfather was a headmaster, my mother and sister were teachers, my wife's grandfather was a headmaster... there are a lot of us! Even though my dad was a carpenter, his calm and patient nature would have made him an excellent teacher.

### What does a typical day look like for you?

I have about five classes a day and spend time in between prepping for projects and making sure things are in order—there is a lot to be done behind the scenes! From ordering materials to charging robots, I stay busy and there are always projects to be marked. Outside of class, I also coach volleyball and host a weekly maker club.

### What are the best parts of your job?

I love my job! My favourite part is seeing the “aha” moment when a student grasps or solves something they've been struggling with. That's the best part of every teacher's job. I enjoy seeing students tackle challenging projects and the hands-on aspect of Design. Unlike many things nowadays, Design is a tactile course; students get to create things they see and feel.

### What's your favourite Meadowridge tradition?

Week Without Walls is one of my favourites, but I also love how everyone at Meadowridge—students, teachers, parents—works so well together. Everyone works towards the same goal, ensuring that students are happy, educated, and cared for. I enjoy that.



## More about Mr. Lester

### Grew Up In

Lobatse, Botswana and Florida, South Africa

### Educational Background

*Bosmansdam Primary School*

*Capricorn High School*

*Johannesburg College of Education/*

*Wits University*

Physical Education & Biology

*University of South Africa*

Diploma in Computer Science & Physics

### Work Experience

Teacher, Edenglen High School

Teacher, Monta Vista Primary School

Teacher, Boston Primary School

Franchise Owner & Operate, FutureKids

Teacher, Meadowridge School

### Languages

English, Afrikaans

### Fun Fact

Mr. Lester's Grandfather kept orphaned animal cubs on the land he grew up on in Botswana. These animals included leopards, jackal, antelope, pythons, and lions.



### What would surprise us about the Design curriculum?

The best part is that it has students doing something physical and not just virtual. From silversmithing bracelets to woodworking puzzles and even rocket engines for personal projects, students learn practical skills. Also, a lot of what we do in Design involves thinking and analysis; design thinking is a big part of our program.

### One person you would like to sit down with.

I'd like to spend one more day with my dad. He never got to come to Canada, and he would be so amazed by the building methods and the hardware shops—they don't have Home Depot in South Africa! I would have loved for him to see buildings made out of wood as opposed to bricks and mortar and how houses are put together and done differently. He was always curious like that.

### Favourite Meadowridge memory.

One year in volleyball, there was a student who had not managed to serve the ball anywhere near the net. Then, halfway through grade 8, I got her to serve during a match. Before this, we'd sub her out so she wouldn't have to serve. She finally agreed to try. Well, she got up, served, and got it right over. Everyone watching was so excited. The students and even parents knew what a big deal it was! We all jumped up, shouted and cheered. The other team was surprised and lost the point.

### Spring or fall?

I love any changing season. In South Africa, it might get a little colder or rain a little more, but there's no massive change in season. Here, there are seasons. In the Spring, the bulbs come out. In the fall, there are leaves. The weather is just awesome.

### Favourite meal?

I like food a lot. My wife is a great cook, so we're a good match! My favourite food is ice cream. We used to take a group of students each year to EPCOT Center in Florida and, by the third day, students knew to follow me because I had all the ice cream vendors mapped out.

### Best way to spend the day?

I love sports. I play tennis and volleyball and enjoy fishing from a kayak at sea. I also always have some project on the go at home. When one project stops, I start another. I'm always doing, building, or fixing. Always. Right now, I'm learning how to string badminton rackets. I do my own tennis rackets, but I'm now trying to learn badminton rackets so I can teach students at Meadowridge. I'm also learning how to replace fascia boards. Basically, if you want to torture me, make me sit still.

# GOOLF

## Tournament & Family Brunch

MEADOWRIDGE SCHOOL

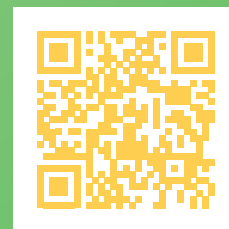
Presented by



# 20 24

# Saturday, June 8

Swaneset Bay Resort  
and Country Club



[meadowridge.bc.ca/golf](http://meadowridge.bc.ca/golf)

