

WINTER 2024

# *the* Gryphon *magazine*



a publication of MEADOWRIDGE SCHOOL



# contents

**2**  
**REGENERATIVE SUSTAINABILITY**  
*An Overview*

**16**  
**HOW MEADOWRIDGE DOES COMMUNITY**  
*Creating a Sense of Belonging*

**22**  
**FROM FLUNK TO FUNK**  
*Alumni Focus: Kurtis Warren '04*

**26**  
**40 YEARS, 40 STORIES, 40 WORDS**  
*A look back at our last 40 years*

**40**  
**PEOPLE OF MEADOWRIDGE**  
*Mrs. Joyce Villadiego*



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 School 12224 240th Street, Maple Ridge, BC V4R 1N1 Canada

 @MeadowridgeSchool

 /MeadowridgeSchool

 /Meadowridge

 /Meadowridge-School

 @MeadowridgeSchool

© 2024 MEADOWRIDGE SCHOOL



AN OVERVIEW OF

# Regenerative Sustainability

*at Meadowridge*





### *From the Head of School*

Regenerative sustainability is a critical pathway for Meadowridge students and an essential response to today's global environmental challenges. Global warming and human impact on our planet represent the single biggest challenge - and the most significant opportunity - our children will encounter. As a school committed to our vision of developing the confidence not only to meet the future but to create it, there is no better moment to live this vision than now. I firmly believe our children will play pivotal roles in developing and implementing creative and ingenious solutions to address these pressing issues.

At Meadowridge, we offer experiential and ecological opportunities that connect students directly with the land that sustains us. From planting gardens and restoring ecosystems to monitoring biodiversity and implementing waste reduction strategies, these hands-on experiences foster a tangible appreciation for nature's delicate balance. By actively engaging in these activities, our students gain a deeper understanding of the intricate systems that govern our environment. This experiential learning not only informs but inspires a sense of responsibility and a commitment to transforming concepts of sustainability and regeneration into lifelong practice.

**I firmly believe our children will play pivotal roles in developing and implementing creative and ingenious solutions to address these pressing issues.**

The importance of this program extends far beyond the individual. A regenerative sustainability program equips students with the skills, knowledge, and mindset to lead meaningful, impactful change in their communities. By appreciating and adopting regenerative practices, they are empowered to advocate for policies, initiatives, and lifestyles that prioritize the health and well-being of our environment. As our children step into leadership roles in businesses, communities, and their vocations, their spheres of influence will grow, amplifying their impact and driving sustainable progress.

Ultimately, regenerative sustainability is not just about protecting and restoring the land. It is about cultivating leaders who will champion its care. At Meadowridge, we are uniquely positioned to answer this call. Our facilities and location provide an exceptional opportunity; our mission and vision compel us to act, and the urgency of the environmental situation demands it. We must embrace this moral obligation for our children, our community, and generations to come.

Scott Banack



## SALMON COME HOME

CURRICULUM

HIGH SCHOOL

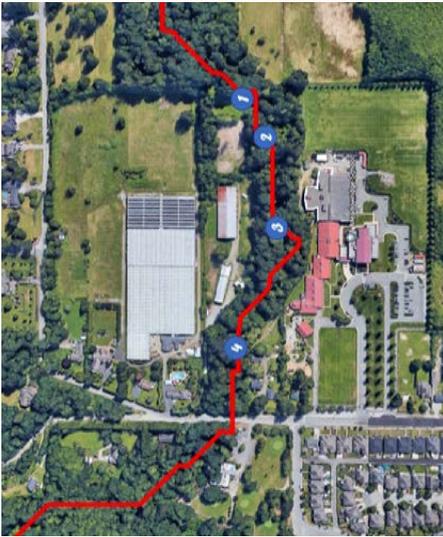
SCIENCE

It's rare for high school science students to step out of the classroom and apply their knowledge to solve real-world challenges. But thanks to Ms. Deepti Rajeev's innovative approach, that's exactly what's happening at Meadowridge School.

The "Salmon Come Home" project is a multidisciplinary inquiry combining physics, chemistry, and biology to address a local issue: why salmon have not returned to Latimer Creek, the on-campus waterway running through the North Forest.

The three-week project begins with students exploring the cultural significance of salmon to Indigenous Peoples and the history of Latimer Creek. With this context, students take on the role of field scientists, investigating environmental factors like water, light, plant species, and soil pH to uncover the reasons for the salmon's absence.

More than just supporting academic learning and preparing students for the Group 4 Project in the Diploma Programme (DP), Ms. Rajeev believes "Salmon Come Home" offers a valuable environmental perspective. "It's the essence of experiential learning," she says, "the kind that fosters understanding and inspires action toward sustainability."



## FOCUS ON GRADE 4: EXPLORING ENERGY & SALMONOIDS

Ms. Connie Chow-Go & Ms. Audrey Lum, Grade 4 Teachers

CURRICULUM

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

### *Salmonoids in the Classroom*

In Grade 4's Sharing the Planet Unit of Inquiry, students dive into learning about our local ecosystems, exploring the connections between living and non-living things.

A highlight of this unit has been a visit to the Alouette River Management Society (ARMS), where they witness firsthand the delicate balance of our local salmon ecosystem. The experience begins with a field trip to the watershed, where students observe mature salmon returning to spawn. They see the fish and their eggs, learning about the salmon lifecycle and what is necessary for these species to thrive.

Back in the classroom, students support the lifecycle they observed by raising salmon eggs and fry. "It's a big deal for the students," said Grade 4 teachers Ms.

Connie Chow-Go and Ms. Audrey Lum. "They take real ownership in keeping the water clean and maintaining their aquarium." As the salmon hatch and grow, students eventually return to the Creek to release their young salmon, coming full circle in their inquiry.

Through these experiences, students also learn how to protect local wildlife, adopting practices like avoiding toxic products in household drains and choosing not to wash cars in driveways. Each small step becomes a meaningful action, and students enthusiastically share these conservation practices with others.



## FOOD REDUCTION CAMPAIGN

FACULTY-LED

FULL SCHOOL

“It’s the essence of experiential learning, the kind that fosters understanding and inspires action toward sustainability.”



Through her work with the ISABC Climate Change Collaborative, Ms. Leona West dug into a project close to her heart—reducing food waste.

Growing up, Ms. West's family instilled in her a deep respect and appreciation for the miracle of food. Beginning at the collaborative and back at the school, Ms. West teamed up with fellow educator Ms. Emily Gish to develop a Food Waste Reduction Plan. The team's priority was to foster genuine, meaningful understanding among students. “You can't just impose solutions,” Ms. West explains. “It has to come from the grassroots.”

Their initiative launched during Earth Week last year, featuring a community-wide food waste survey and a Meatless Monday in the cafeteria. With feedback from students, families, and staff, the team was able to adjust their approach and campaigns. Next, they will collect data by measuring the food waste accumulated over a week's lunches. Survey results, student participation, and quantitative data will guide future action plans and awareness efforts.

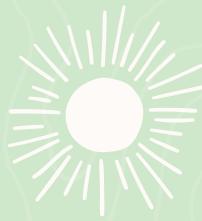
Ms. West is looking forward to engaging students in an impactful way, allowing them to see—and learn—for themselves. “Framing solutions are top-down initiatives, but the solutions themselves are most effective when they are generated and acted upon by the students and broader Meadowridge community.”

### *Inquiry Into Renewable Energy*

Students explore renewable and non-renewable energy during the Grade 4 class's How the World Works Unit of Inquiry. This takes them to the Stave Falls Dam and Powerhouse, where students learn about hydroelectricity.

Back in class, they continue their exploration with hands-on activities, guest speakers, and visits from Science World experts. These experiences teach them about various energy sources, including the complexities of solar energy.

While they learn the importance of renewable energy for a sustainable future, students also explore the challenges associated with these energy forms. This comprehensive understanding of energy's benefits and drawbacks leads to a deep awareness that inspires thoughtful action. “Students learn to recognize all the energy and resources needed to create a product,” explains



Grade 4 teachers Ms. Connie Chow-Go and Ms. Audrey Lum. “They become more mindful, realizing what it takes to make something as simple as a crayon or a food item.”

Class discussions delve into topics of sustainability and human rights. Students are often shocked to see how low Latimer Creek can get during a dry summer—showing firsthand the impact of the climate crisis—or to learn that not everyone in Canada has access to clean water, showing the importance of conservation.

All this learning encourages action. Students work on class projects to creatively design products for sustainability and initiate actions like suggesting the school install a rain barrel to water the gardens in an eco-friendlier way. “Everything we learn is connected,” the teachers share, “and these connections foster deeper understanding and awareness.”



## ALUMNI IN ACTION

### *Merdeka Miles '21*

As a lead author for the Western University Climate Crisis Coalition, Merdeka Miles '21 works with a student-led team that demands divestment and more sustainable practices from their school.

Achieving these aims through advocacy and awareness, Merdeka is uniquely positioned to help. With a dual degree in Physics and Philosophy, she brings scientific, ethical, and environmental perspectives to address the climate crisis. However, Merdeka says her deep passion for environmental activism, fostered at Meadowridge School, truly drives her work.



The alum credits her Grade 3 teacher, Mr. James Willms, now Meadowridge's Director of Environment and Risk, for sparking her early interest in environmentalism. Under his guidance, Merdeka and three of her classmates formed the "Dream Green Action Team," an in-school recycling initiative that used its profits to support the local food bank. "It was a huge turning point for me," she says. What started as a small-scale project became the foundation for her lifelong advocacy. "Looking back, that early experience set the stage for everything I'm doing now."

Today, as she leads efforts within the Climate Crisis Coalition, Merdeka continues to combine her love of science and the arts to make a meaningful impact. "Being the lead author allows me to bring my academic passions together and apply them to something that matters."



## JOUR DE LA TERRE

CURRICULUM

MIDDLE SCHOOL

LANGUAGES

For French teacher Ms. Kerry Stanley, authentic engagement is central to language learning.

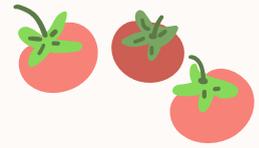
"I always remind my students that French is a living language—it's not just something we use in the classroom," she explains. This philosophy has sparked many dynamic projects, including a recent environmental campaign in which students applied their language skills to promote simple, sustainable habits within the school community.

The initiative grew from her class's study of l'impératif—the verb tense used to give commands, advice, and instructions—coinciding perfectly with Earth Day, or Jour de la Terre.

Students brainstormed helpful reminders, offering phrases like "Don't throw plastic in the trash," "Turn off the lights," and "Use both sides of the paper."

"Climate change is an enormous challenge, but it can feel overwhelming," says Ms. Stanley. "These posters were designed to inspire small, individual actions that could build toward collective change and spark larger conversations."

And they succeeded. Throughout the school, her students' reminders encouraged positive habits. In class, they led to deeper discussions about sustainable practices and individual responsibility.



## CHARTING A NEW WAY FORWARD

CO-CURRICULAR

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

SERVICE

## STUDENT-INITIATED FOOD RECOVERY PROGRAM

HIGH SCHOOL

SERVICE

Katherine L. and Priscilla H. (Grade 10) discovered an unexpected bond over a shared passion: reducing food waste. Their friendship grew as they discussed environmental issues and explored ways to make a difference.

Their interest caught the attention of their teacher, Ms. Cindy Hops, who encouraged them to turn their ideas into action. With her support, the trio began researching and engaging with the school community, uncovering troubling facts about food waste in Canada that they couldn't ignore.

"Shockingly, we have a food waste problem at the same time as great food shortages," the pair explained. "With 22.9% of people experiencing food insecurity and a 78.5% increase in food bank usage over the last two years, it's an issue we couldn't overlook."

Katherine and Priscilla's advocacy gained momentum, leading them to speak at ISABC conferences, in-school assemblies, and to the Regenerative Sustainability Committee. Shortly after, the pair launched the Meadowridge Food Recovery Program. In collaboration with school liaisons and SAGE Dining, the school's dining provider, the program ensures that all unsold cafeteria food is frozen and donated to the Salvation Army. "When the program launched, we felt hopeful and accomplished," the students shared. "It showed us that even as students, we have the power to make a real impact."

Eleanor Z. (Grade 5) is raising awareness about food waste and making a difference through an initiative targeted at her elementary peers.

Inspired by the Food Recovery program led by her Grade 10 schoolmates, Priscilla and Katherine, Eleanor wanted to contribute to the program in her own way. Her idea? Create visual charts to track and communicate the amount of food being wasted. She believes this approach will encourage the Meadowridge community to think twice before discarding their food.

"I want to make a statement," Eleanor shares, excited about using data visualization to design posters highlighting the issue. She plans to kick off the initiative by sharing facts about food waste in Canada and conducting mystery food-waste measurements in the elementary grades over a few weeks. Her goal is to reduce food waste across campus. This initiative reflects Eleanor's passion for leadership. Last year, she participated in a leadership program on campus, which inspired her to take on this project as a first step toward her goal of being on the Junior Gryphon Council next year.

For Eleanor, the issue is deeply personal. "Many times, I walk by the bins, and they're full of food," she explains, noting the extra strain placed on the facilities team and the broader environmental impact. To address the problem, she's combining her love for posters and data to create engaging visuals paired with the message: "The best thing to do is finish your food." Eleanor also sees the project as an opportunity to address campus safety. "Some people throw food outside," she says, explaining that this can attract wildlife, including bears and deer. Eleanor hopes to keep the campus clean, safe, and environmentally conscious by encouraging her peers to think sustainably.

With guidance from Ms. Kinneard, Eleanor plans to measure food waste over a month. Classes with the least waste will be rewarded with sustainable, recyclable prizes, such as paper plate awards, celebrating their contributions to reducing waste.

## THE GARDEN CLUB Mrs. Stacy Banack, OE3 Coordinator

CO-CURRICULAR

MIDDLE SCHOOL

OE3

The Garden Club is a year-round commitment to sustainability, food literacy, and environmental stewardship. Hosted during all three terms, the club connects students to the natural world while immersing them in the cycles of growth, care, and renewal.

Through hands-on activities, students learn about regenerative practices and the ethics of reciprocity. Whether harvesting vegetables, saving seeds, or propagating plants, they engage with the environment in meaningful ways that benefit the school, our community, and the planet.

In the fall, students prepare the gardens for winter by planting cover crops, collecting compost materials, and harvesting final crops like potatoes and garlic. "We also try to have some fun by cooking with the food we've harvested and making tea from the flowers and leaves we've grown," shares OE3 Coordinator Mrs. Stacy Banack. Winter focuses on planning and preparation. Students study plant cycles and organize the greenhouse while starting seeds for spring planting. They also design educational posters to share garden insights with the broader school community. During Spring, students plant cool-weather crops for pollinators. Later, they enjoy the bounty of their hard work by making salads with fresh produce from the garden.

"We're committed to not using any artificial fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides. Instead, we utilize organic gardening methods to improve soil health and reduce the likelihood of disease and harmful insects. This includes crop rotation, cover cropping, companion planting, implementing the no dig approach, and applying compost."





## VERMICOMPOSTING in the Garden Club

Last year's launch of the vermicomposting program added a new dimension to the Gardening Club's efforts. Funded through the Annual Fund, two high-capacity worm composters now process food waste from the Elementary School, turning scraps into nutrient-rich worm castings.

"When they are at their peak, they can handle up to 2.5kg of food waste daily!" Mrs. Stacy Banack shares. Students manage the system, learning through trial and error while creating a sustainable food waste collection process. Each term, club members build on the work of the previous group. They monitor compost health, expand the system, and use the harvested castings to enrich greenhouse seedlings. By participating in every step of the process, students see firsthand how small changes can make a big environmental impact.



## *Richard Laurie '17*

Through family adventures and school trips, Richard Laurie '17 grew up exploring the trails, lakes, parks, and forests of Maple Ridge. These experiences inspired his passion for the environment, shaping his academic and professional paths.

After graduating from Meadowridge School, Richard pursued a degree at the University of Toronto, majoring in Environmental Studies with minors in Forest Conservation and Environmental Ethics. Following his undergraduate studies, he began working as a Forest Conservation Officer Urban Forester, focusing on restoration projects, invasive species removal, and reforestation efforts.



With encouragement from a professor and a growing commitment to his field, Richard decided to pursue a master's degree. He is now working towards his Master of Forest Conservation at the University of Toronto.

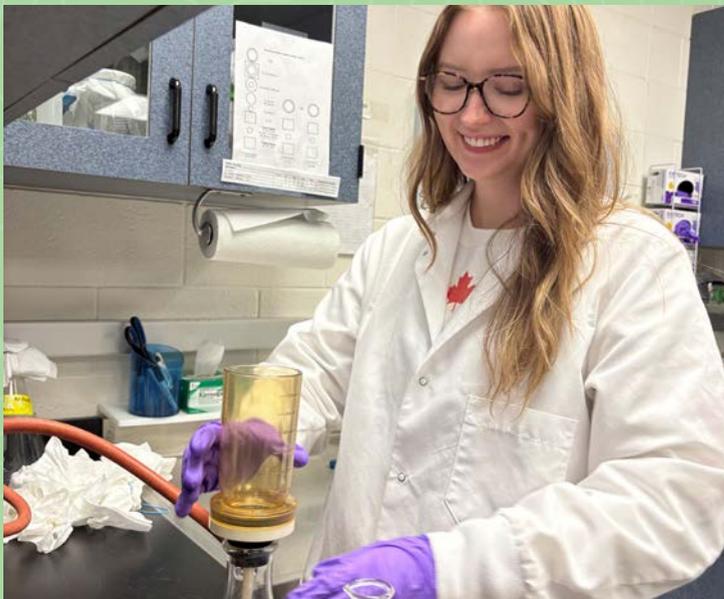
Throughout his academic and professional career, Richard often reflects on his early explorations back home, using these experiences to inform his work. Having witnessed the effects of pine beetle infestations and the devastation of forest fires, he combines personal insight with academic expertise. "By spending time outdoors and engaging with the natural world, you appreciate the interconnectedness of all living and non-living things," he explains.

## ALUMNI IN ACTION

### Olivia Maddigan '17

As a Physical Scientist with the Great Lakes Surveillance Program, part of Environment and Climate Change Canada, Olivia Maddigan '17 contributes to a 50-year federal initiative focused on monitoring the water quality and health of Canada's Great Lakes.

This vital program includes data analysis, reporting, lab work, and fieldwork—notably, an annual science cruises aboard a Canadian Coast Guard vessel. Olivia and her team collect and assess samples from multiple depths, both nearshore and offshore, at all hours of the day and night.



Olivia thrives on every aspect of her work, whether in the lab or out in the field. She shares that she enjoys how it blends science with creativity while addressing crucial environmental and safety concerns. “Our data is publicly available open source, so it informs all kinds of research,” she explains.

Reflecting on her journey into environmental science, Olivia credits her thirteen years at Meadowridge for sparking her passion. “The school always emphasized nature and sustainability, and the campus fostered my appreciation for the natural world,” she says. From camping on Week Without Walls (WWOW) trips to researching Brady's Beach during the Group 4 Pearson College Trip to walks in the North Forest, Olivia's Meadowridge experience profoundly shaped her love for the outdoors, inquiry, and hands-on learning. “Meadowridge influenced my choices and career so much.”

## CAMPUS BIRDS

as identified by the High School MECO Club

### Chickadee

*Parus atricapillus*



- Year-round
- They have around 15 different songs.
- Eats peanuts, sunflower seeds, and suet.

### Brown Creeper

*Certhia americana*



- Year-round
- Song bird
- Eats spiders, insects, suet, and some seeds.

### Hummingbird

*Trochilidae*



- Year-round
- They can fly backwards.
- Heartbeat is around 1200 bpm.
- Eats small insects, insect eggs, and spiders.

### American Robin

*Turdus migratorius*



- Year-round
- One of the first birds to lay eggs in the spring
- They have blue eggs
- Eats insects (beetles), worms, fruits, and seeds



## HIGH SCHOOL MECO CLUB

CO-CURRICULAR

HIGH SCHOOL

SERVICE

When Ms. Amanda Mack joined Meadowridge School this year, she was struck by something that most people might overlook: "I needed to know how the school earned Platinum with EcoSchools!" the DP Biology Teacher says.

Naturally, once she got settled, she was keen to start a Meadowridge Eco Club (MECO) of her own. Together, she and a group of four dedicated students meet to help the school reach its environmental goals through the EcoSchools program. For Ms. Mack, student choice was essential.

"As students who live within the community, I wanted to see what they saw as opportunities and wanted to change," she says. "I also wanted them to be passionate about whatever they picked."

With students at the helm, protecting campus birds and their ecosystem became a clear focus. So, the group set out to identify the birds that call our campus home.

Aiming to raise awareness and protect local species, they next focused on supporting these birds' habitats. After discovering which birds call Meadowridge home, the club learned about their preferred trees, food sources, and migratory patterns—essential information for better protecting our on-campus wildlife. Next, the club will raise awareness by organizing a Middle School scavenger hunt, during which students will discover and learn about the birds and the ecosystem to which they belong.

In the meantime, they're also planning a recycling campaign to promote waste reduction and proper sorting practices.



www.shad.ca

## SHAD Canada Summer Program

This summer, seven Meadowridge students participated in the SHAD program, spending time at university campuses across Canada.

The program offered an immersive experience in university-level STEAM, entrepreneurship, and mentorship. This year's theme centered on sustainability, and our students brought their unique Meadowridge perspective to the projects they developed. Here's a glimpse of their innovative projects.

**BIOGAS BUDDY** is an anaerobic digester to convert food waste into methane, which could be used to power school cafeterias. The system relies on methanogenic archaea to break down food waste and produce biogas.

**Emi S. (Grade 11)**

**HYDROGEN FROM ALUMINUM** is a theoretical machine that converts aluminum into hydrogen using lye. This process could help rural Canadians, who are less connected to green energy grids and more reliant on canned goods, by providing a sustainable energy source.

**Jaime L. (Grade 11)**

**ECOQUEST** is a self-improvement app focused on environmental sustainability. Users complete daily eco-friendly tasks, inspired by Duolingo's engaging style. A dynamic ranking system keeps users motivated by rewarding consistency and progress with higher ranks.

**Richard C. (Grade 11)**

**SOLAR VANTAGE SOLUTIONS** is an innovative solar panel clip that eliminates the need for traditional rails in installation. This reduces both installation time and overall costs, making solar energy more affordable for Canadians.

**Ainsley M. (Grade 12)**

**POND2PUMP** is a sustainability initiative operating in the Athabasca Oil Sands. By converting algae grown in tailings ponds into renewable energy, we aim to reduce the impacts of climate change while benefiting the citizens of Alberta.

**Veer G. (Grade 12)**

## EXPLORING

# Sustainable Farming *at Meadowridge*

## What it is?

Mr. James Willms designed the Regenerative Farm to promote sustainability and reciprocity through innovative techniques such as no-dig construction, carbon capture, composting, and a closed-loop system.

Hands-on learning is central to its design, with students actively involved in every aspect of the farm, from laying the cardboard foundation to ongoing tasks like farming, propagation, and harvesting.

Now in its fourth year, the Regenerative Farm has become an integral part of the Meadowridge Campus, embodying the Outdoor, Experiential, Ecological (OE3) Program and expanding its impact into the community.

The farm regularly donates fresh produce to the Maple Ridge Friends in Need Food Bank, helping those in need while deepening students' connection to the community through volunteerism and the land through meaningful engagement.

## Key Concepts

### REGENERATIVE LAND MANAGEMENT

Regenerative land management is a set of principles and practices that reverse current trends of soil, water and air quality degradation by enhancing the soil ecosystem and restoring its biology.

### NO-DIG GARDENING

No-dig gardening is growing plants without disturbing the soil through traditional tilling or digging. Instead, gardeners layer organic materials like compost, mulch, and manure on top of the ground, which breaks down naturally, enriching the soil and promoting healthy plant growth.

### CARBON CAPTURE

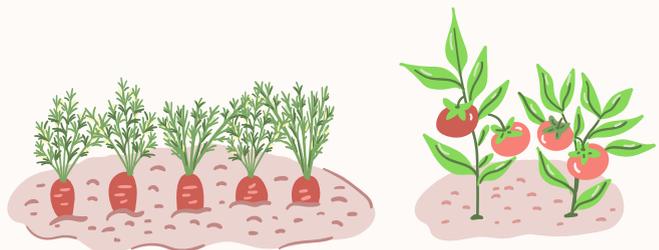
Carbon capture gardening is a sustainable approach that sequesters carbon from the atmosphere into the soil. Using specific practices helps mitigate climate change while improving soil health.

### REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

Regenerative agriculture describes farming and grazing practices that, among other benefits, reverse climate change by rebuilding soil organic matter and restoring degraded soil biodiversity. This results in both carbon drawdown and an improved water cycle.

### CLOSED LOOP

Closed-loop gardening is a sustainable practice that minimizes waste and uses natural processes to create a self-sustaining system. In this approach, the outputs of one part of the garden are reused as inputs for another, creating a continuous cycle of resources.



# REGENERATIVE FARM TIMELINE

## DECEMBER 2020

Mr. James Willms proposes the Regenerative Agriculture Project. The project aims to transform a quarter-acre section of land on the north side of campus—previously occupied by a covered riding ring—into an edible crop garden. It will enhance on-campus food production and offer service opportunities for students.



## JANUARY 2021

The Regenerative Farm begins with a school-wide cardboard drive. Students bring in a cardboard box each to serve as the farm's foundation in a no-dig approach.

## FEBRUARY 2021

Thirty yards of wood chips are brought in to cover the cardboard and provide a foundation for raised growing rows. Wood is donated from Gallant Enterprises, a mill located in the UBC Research Forest.



Students propagate seeds for the farm's first crop in the greenhouse.

## MARCH 2021

Raised growing rows are constructed and filled with soil from Davison Farms in Maple Ridge.



## APRIL 2021

Students plant the first crops, including sunflower, mustard, and crimson clover cover crops, as well as kale, strawberries, and apple trees.



## SEPTEMBER 2021

The farm's first yield generates 46 pounds of fresh produce donated to the local food bank.

## MARCH 2022

A compost shed is constructed to support the farm's closed-loop system.

## SEPTEMBER 2023

With the compost shed and a growing vermicomposting program, compost made from farm and campus materials supports a quarter of the farm's growth.

## JULY 2024

In its third year, the farm produces 800 pounds of fresh, no-spray produce, all donated to the local food bank.



## Supporting Reciprocity

The Regenerative Farm was designed with service in mind.

While produce has always been donated to the local food bank, a recent program update now involves students directly volunteering there, allowing them to witness the real-world impact of their efforts.

Last year, every Middle School student contributed over 100 hours of service at the Friends In Need Food Bank, alongside the donation of nearly 800 pounds of produce.

Beyond service, students are gaining a deeper understanding of sustainability and their role in practicing it. Through lessons on the 'Honourable Harvest,' an Indigenous philosophy, students learn to take only what is needed, leave some for others, minimize harm, and always give thanks for what has been taken.



*the Honourable Harvest*

A practice both ancient and urgent, applies to every exchange between people and the Earth. It is not written down, but if it were, it would look something like this:  
— Kimmerer 183 —

- Ask permission of the ones whose lives you seek.  
Listen & abide by the answer.
- Never take the first plant you see.  
Never take the last.
- Harvest in a way that minimizes damage.
- Never take more than half.
- Take only what you need and leave some for others.
- Use everything that you take.
- Share it with others.
- Be grateful.
- Reciprocate the gifts.
- Sustain the ones who sustain you,  
and the Earth will last forever.

From the book *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer

MEADOWRIDGE SCHOOL

## Sustainability in Action



**2019/20**

### *Sourced Compostable Packaging for the Cafeteria*

SAGE Dining sourced compostable packaging for all items sold in the cafeteria. At the same time, the Zero Waste Task Force worked with the community to educate them about following proper recycling streams for all types of materials. We also paired up with Revolution Resource Recovery to compost our organics which allows us to use compostable packaging and liners.

# Carbon Assessment

Aligned with our commitment to sustainable practices—a priority in our latest Strategic Plan—we conducted a carbon assessment to establish a baseline of our current footprint.

This assessment evaluated the environmental impact across all areas, from daily operations and educational initiatives to direct and indirect emissions. With our carbon emissions inventory calculate, we can now adjust day-to-day operations to achieve emissions reductions.

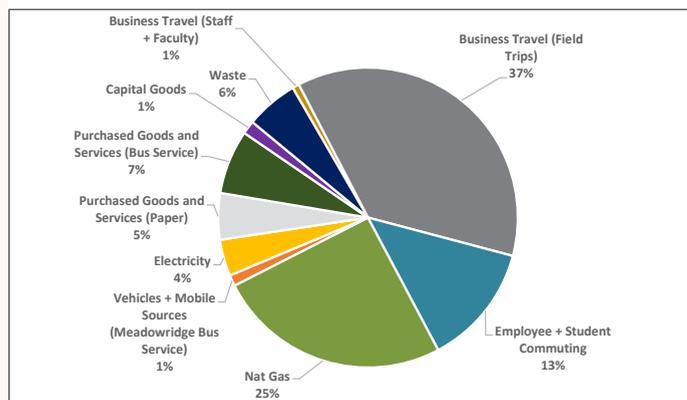
## WHAT IS A CARBON ASSESSMENT?

A carbon assessment involves the identification of an organization’s activities that result in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions sources and the measurement of the GHGs (CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, HFCs, PFCs, SF<sub>6</sub>,NF<sub>3</sub>) released into the atmosphere.

Each greenhouse gas has a different global warming potential, which is a measure of its ability to trap heat in the atmosphere compared to carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).

A carbon assessment measures the collective impact of these greenhouse gases by quantifying the amount of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) resulting from the activity being measured.

Scope	Emissions Source	Total tCO <sub>2</sub> e	% of Total
Scope 1	Nat Gas	222.40	25%
	Vehicles + Mobile Sources (Meadowridge Bus Service)	10.44	1%
Scope 2	Electricity	34.58	4%
	Purchased Goods and Services (Paper)	44.08	5%
Scope 3	Purchased Goods and Services (Lynch Bus Service)	60.76	7%
	Capital Goods (Laptops and Televisions)	12.68	1%
	Waste (Waste, Organics, Recycling)	49.75	6%
	Business Travel (Staff)	6.42	1%
	Business Travel (Field Trip Travel)	323.27	37%
	Student + Staff Commuting	115.28	13%
<b>Total</b>		<b>879.67</b>	<b>100%</b>



## 2020/21

### *Restoration of the North Forest Continues*

Students in the North Forest Restoration Club identified areas of high-impact and created planting plans to bolster the high-impact areas. Students planted over 230 trees and plants, including Oregon Grape, Salal, Sitka Spruce, and Red Elderberry.

## 2020/21

### *Regenerative Farm is Established*

The Regenerative Agriculture Project begins with a community cardboard drive and extensive hands-on involvement from students. After laying the groundwork in the winter and planting the first crops in the spring, the inaugural year yielded 46 pounds of fresh produce, all donated to the local food bank.

# how Meadowridge does Community



At Meadowridge School, community is something we build together every day. It starts the moment new students walk through the door. Instead of just throwing them into the mix, we organize events, sort them into houses, and find ways to connect everyone, no matter their grade or background.

Connections are made and sustained year-round, from cultural celebrations and spirit days to school dances and buddy programs. Teachers and staff keep it going, too. They get to know students outside the classroom through sports teams, school trips, clubs, and service. Even our families get involved, attending school events, supporting school initiatives, and hosting celebrations. And behind it all, our school leaders make sure everyone has a voice and a place. We pride ourselves on being a school where every student is noticed and known. At Meadowridge School, community is not accidental, but it's also not complicated: from daily interactions and events to celebrations, we each find a place of belonging.

## *Buddy Programs: Connecting across the continuum*

Happening during the Community Block, the **Middle School Buddies Program** pairs up Middle School and Elementary School advisories. Every student from each class is designated a buddy who they will meet with throughout the year. Through a range of activities like **crafts and reading to playing outside**, the students build a strong connection. For Middle School students, mentorship and care are nurtured. For our Elementary School students, a sense of belonging and safety.

Every one of our Grade 12 and Kindergarten students participate in the long-standing **Kinderbuddy Program**. Each year, a Grade 12 and a Kindergarten student are matched up and spend the year getting to know each other through events, meet-ups, and meaningful activities. Kindergarten students get to watch as their Grade 12 buddy crosses the stage at the end of year, and sometimes, their own Grade 12 buddy comes back to Meadowridge to watch them graduate 13 years later.





## Ms. Bereza on Community

The word community comes up regularly when speaking about Meadowridge. Students say this is their second home, a place where they feel safe and supported, free to be themselves, a place to belong. The need to belong is a fundamental human desire. I am sure that we can all remember a time when we were in a situation where we didn't feel like we belonged, where we might have felt like an outsider. Conversely, the times when we have felt a part of a community, a piece of something bigger than ourselves, are the times that bring back wonderful memories.

I was hired at Meadowridge in 2005, and I clearly remember my first day of school with the students. I arrived to see the principals outside saying good morning and shaking the hand of every single student. This had such an impression on me. Every person in the community was valued, regardless of whether they were a Junior Kindergarten student or the Head of School. This practice continued until we had to cancel it due to COVID; however, the importance of having it return never left my mind.

**This year we are so excited to have brought back our individual greetings of each student.** You will see members of the leadership team outside, rain or shine, greeting the students as they arrive. This individual moment with each student, sends a clear message of their importance and value to our community. Students greet us with handshakes, high fives, fist pumps, or a simple look in the eyes and a hello. They choose what they are comfortable with, but the outcome is the same. These hellos lead to relationships, which lead to the strong and valuable community that we all value.

Deputy Head of School

## COMMUNITY BLOCKS: DEDICATED TIME TO CONNECT

Each week, the **High School Community Block** brings students together to connect and catch up. This dedicated time varies in format—some weeks its **assemblies**, others **advisory** or **study sessions**. When assemblies are held, different advisory groups take turns leading, hosting, and planning, promoting leadership and engagement for all students.

Each week, the **Middle School Community Block** hosts an assembly, a **social**, a **buddy meet-up**, or an **advisory**. Members of the **Junior Council** host **assemblies**, which build community by celebrating student successes and showcasing happenings around the school. The council also hosts socials, which bring students together in a shared game or activity.

The **Elementary School Community Block** hosts assemblies, **buddy meet-ups**, **house activities**, and time for **service in action**. Happening weekly, the block brings together students across the Elementary School to work together, make connections, and strengthen each student's sense of community. More than that, it also lets Elementary Teachers form relationships with students outside of their class.



## INTEGRATED INTO THE CURRICULUM

Once a week, **advisory in the Middle School** is dedicated to a new program called **Every Monday Matters**. The national curriculum develops students' social-emotional skills, which helps students treat themselves and others well. The program kicked off with a lesson in giving compliments. Students practiced in class, then ventured out into the school to compliment a staff member.

The **Middle School Explorations Program** is an example of community-building on campus and beyond. Students across the Middle School engage in **meaningful service** that benefits the local food bank.

One of the **core pillars of the Primary Years Programme** (PYP) is the **Learning Community**, a principle woven throughout the Elementary School experience. This pillar emphasizes the rich, shared learning that happens with and from others. Whether on **field trips** with experts, during **family activities**, or in class with **guest speakers**, students are intentionally provided opportunities to learn alongside others.



# Purpose-Built Spaces for Connection

While events and learning are important, so too are spaces. Across the school, you'll find spaces designed for community building. Whether it's the buddy bench in the [Elementary Playground](#)—where students can sit if they need a friend—or the [Middle School Atrium](#) where comfortable seating and game boards encourage conversation and connection.

## CONNECTING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

The **September Week Without Walls** is dedicated to community-building, providing new and returning students and teachers with a unique opportunity to connect beyond the classroom at the start of the year. Through camping, hiking, paddling, and exploration, they form lasting relationships strengthened by shared experiences and accomplishments. At the end of the year, the **June Week Without Walls** trips strengthen these friendships through curricular explorations and shared adventures.

The **House System** connects our entire community through a shared sense of identity and purpose. Throughout the year, house challenges, spirit days, and activities connect students across the continuum and invite staff and parents alike to don green, orange, red, or blue and get involved too.

**Student-led clubs** nurture community and student collaboration. For our student organizers, the clubs are a chance to practice mentorship and leadership while building relationships with and being positive role models for club members. Through their involvement as members, many students are inspired to become leaders themselves in later years.

The **Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) program** brings together students across the Middle School and High School with one shared passion or interest. As club members, students learn alongside peers from all grades, and together they form a tight bond while exploring 3D rendering, debate, robotics, or any of the many other clubs offered. With many clubs hosted by students themselves, members also learn from peers from all grades.

The **After School Care Program** is a community of its own, where students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3 get together to explore and form friendships. With co-curricular and athletic offerings for our older Elementary students, the After School Care Program is meant to provide the same experience for our younger learners. Each week has a new theme, sparking friendships as students dive into activities together.

## FOR THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY

Our community thrives through a **year filled with holidays, assemblies, and gatherings** that bring together students, families, and friends. These special occasions are chances to connect, share, and celebrate.

From catching up after summer at the annual Welcome Back Picnic to honouring cultural holidays like Lunar New Year, Nowruz, and Diwali and celebrating the 12 days of Christmas at our holiday assembly—these moments nurture the close-knit community we cherish.



## EVENTS FOR STUDENTS BY STUDENTS

The **Senior Gryphon Council** hosts events and plans initiatives that increase school spirit and build connections. While the Council is itself a community, its work is felt across the community overall, from **lunchtime socials** and **open gym sessions** to **school dances**.

## SHARED JOURNEYS, SENSE OF COMMUNITY

At a school like Meadowridge, a surprising place where **community is nurtured is on the buses**. Through these shared journeys, students form friendships with peers of all ages, along with the bus drivers who help foster a sense of belonging each day.





## Mr. Donaldson on Community

Meadowridge is proud of our focus on community with students, faculty, staff and families all playing a critical role. Our community is not just individuals learning and working alongside others. We are a collective of unique individuals who come together in a supportive environment that fosters our growth, learning, and development as life-long learners.

At Meadowridge, we aim to develop a sense of belonging for all by getting to know, care for, and support others. Belonging is not just a destination, but rather a continuous effort to include diverse and unique identities in equitable ways so that each person can thrive and grow. Belonging is the feeling where individuals don't just fit in, but rather add their uniqueness to the community.

Our focus with students is on building relationships so that meaningful conversations about identities can happen. Our pastoral care of students in all divisions centres around students as individuals. Our pedagogical practices, too, include differentiating so that each student has an opportunity to be successful. Student life programs, including co-curriculars, clubs, athletics, local and international trips, are designed and implemented so that all students can find places and spaces to enhance feelings of belonging. Our faculty and staff are critical to ensuring that students have an emotional attachment to their school. To do this valuable work, they, too, need to feel that Meadowridge is a place of belonging for them. We work to be a place which is a "home away from home" for faculty and staff. Many have their own children enrolled in our school, which enhances that feeling of belonging.

Parents and families are key members of our community as well. We are committed to finding ways to ensure that Meadowridge is much more than a place where their children go to school. Social and cultural events are held so that whole families feel a sense of belonging. Our open-door policy results in seeing parents meeting friends in our theatre, volunteering throughout the school, and learning alongside their children. The cognitive, social, and emotional well-being of all our community members is very important and we are diligent in our efforts to create a belonging space for all.

*Lenny Donaldson*

Director of Strategic Programs

# FROM FLUNK TO FUNK





*Kurtis  
Warren  
'04 on  
finding  
success  
his way*

Kurtis Warren '04 is an entrepreneur, investor, and part-time developer. Despite his many successes, he hesitates to be celebrated, saying he has never felt like the quintessential Meadowridge graduate. We beg to differ.

While some graduates enroll in the standard, four-year undergraduate degree, others take a more meandering path.

Kurtis is one such graduate, someone who has established himself through a mix of experience, smart decision-making, and an insatiable curiosity.



### **Finding His Place at Meadowridge**

Kurtis's journey to Meadowridge began with a bit of conflict. "I had been getting into trouble at my old school, and my parents thought a smaller community might help—especially going into Grade 9," he recalls. Starting fresh was daunting. "It felt like I was beginning my social journey from scratch," he says. But those fears quickly faded.

Surrounded by supportive teachers and a close-knit group of friends, Kurtis found his place.

Meadowridge's small community encouraged him to explore new activities. Kurtis, who had never been involved in co-curriculars before, joined volleyball and musical theatre, participating in school productions and plays. "It was hard to fall through the cracks here—people knew you and wanted you to succeed," he reflects. Whether making rap videos in drama class or diving into physics, Kurtis found the support he needed to grow.

### **Twists, Turns, and Lessons Learned**

As graduation approached, Kurtis received several university offers. "I was the public-school kid turned private school student who managed to turn things around," he laughs. He enrolled in Computer Science at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), excited for some independence without straying too far from home.

However, university life wasn't as smooth as he expected. Without structure and with what he now sees as a bad bout of self-doubt, Kurtis began skipping classes and missing deadlines, eventually dropping out and returning home. But his love of learning never waned. Determined, Kurtis landed a job as an IT technician, working across British Columbia and Alberta. After three years, he took on a leadership role as Head of IT at a financing company. He later transitioned to tech sales, where he discovered a passion for strategy and management.

It was during his time at a tech start-up, with the encouragement of an old Meadowridge classmate, that Kurtis truly hit his stride. Over seven years, he worked his way up the ladder, embracing new challenges and constantly learning.

**“I’m using the cafe as place to bring the Bitcoin community together to share ideas and cultivate change, which is important to me because I believe Bitcoin will create more freedom and prosperity in the world by overturning structural inequities.”**



Visit FUNK Coffee Bar in Vancouver at 1025 Dunsmuir St.

### From Tech to Coffee—and Beyond

Then, an unexpected opportunity came his way. A friend invited Kurtis to become a partner in a new venture—a hybrid brewery and coffee roaster. Though hesitant at first, Kurtis accepted, keeping his day job while signing on as a silent partner. A few years later, he committed fully to the business, helping to market their coffee and build the brand from the ground up.

"We made amazing coffee, but no one knew about it," Kurtis remembers. Ever the problem solver, he dove headfirst into marketing, tackling everything from branding and packaging to wholesale and retail expansion. He secured the company's first wholesale client and soon opened their flagship café, FUNK Coffee Bar, in downtown Vancouver's Coal Harbour.

The café, known for its thriving community calendar, TikTok-famous photobooth, and unique blend of House of Funk coffee and craft beer, has quickly become a neighbourhood favourite. "We modelled ourselves after 19th-century coffee houses, places where people gathered, collaborated, and made connections," Kurtis explains.

Kurtis remains involved in all aspects of the business, from strategy to hands-on work. Whether launching a new happy hour program, managing the café's tech needs, or even stepping in to serve customers, Kurtis thrives on the dynamic nature of his role. "It's perfect for me—I've got a short attention span," he laughs.

### A Life of Balance and Curiosity

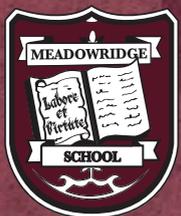
Outside of work, Kurtis is an active member of the Bitcoin community—an interest that has him currently developing an investment app—and finds balance in life through meditation, climbing, and travel, including an upcoming African safari with his mother. He also enjoys quiet moments at home with his girlfriend and their dog.

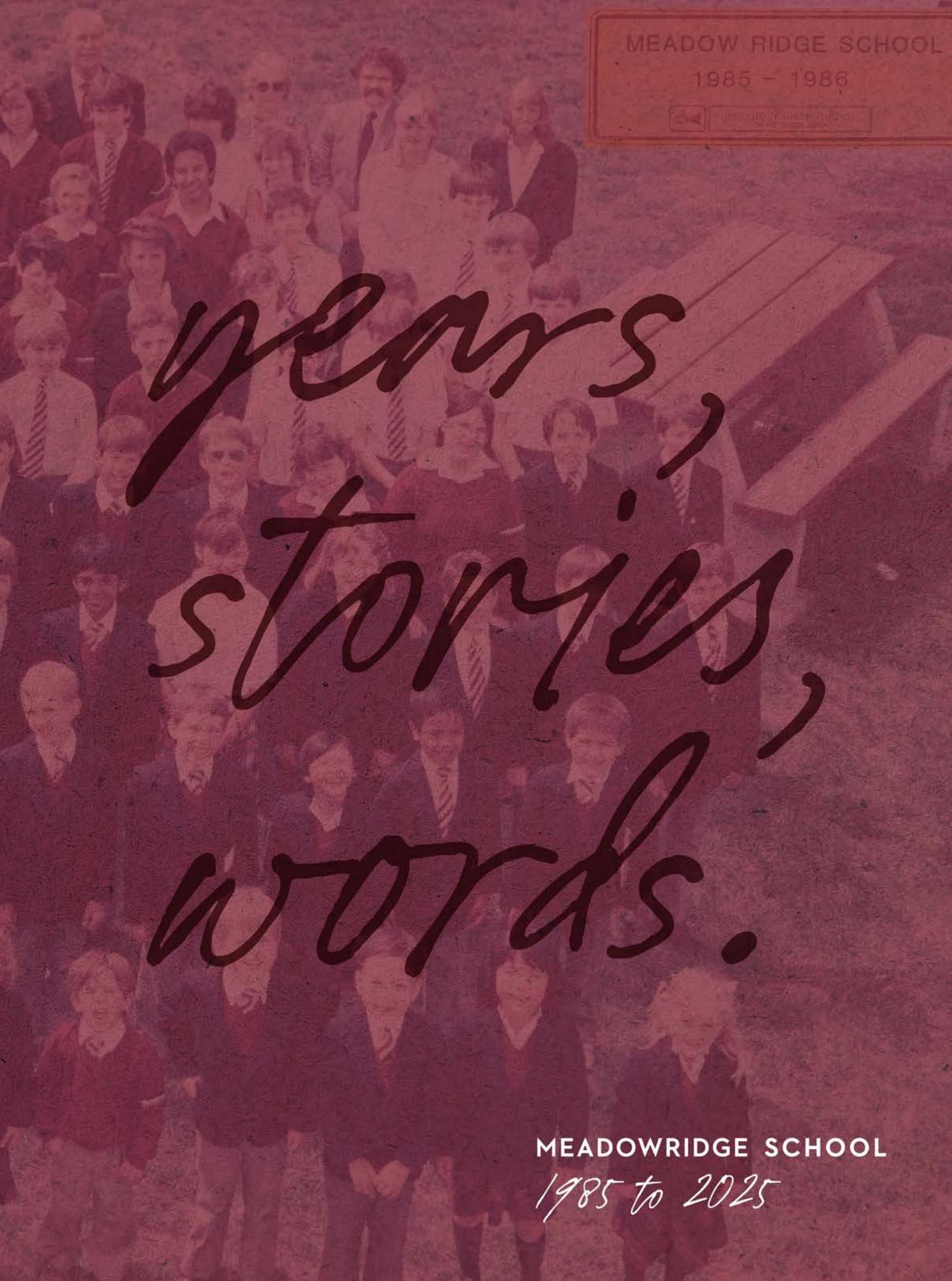
Determined, well-rounded, wise, and willing to learn, Kurtis may not have the conventional story of every student, but he is undoubtedly a quintessential Meadowridge graduate.





# 40





MEADOW RIDGE SCHOOL

1985 - 1986

*years,  
stories,  
words.*

MEADOWRIDGE SCHOOL

*1985 to 2025*

As we celebrate Meadowridge School's 40th anniversary, we honour the memories, milestones, and moments that have shaped our community. In this special collection, we've gathered 40 unique stories—each told in about 40 words—highlighting our rich history and enduring spirit.





*Mr. Scott Banack*

**Head of School, Grade 8 & Grade 11 Parent**

For 40 years, Meadowridge School has flourished thanks to our visionary founders, dedicated educators, supportive families, and inspiring students. From humble beginnings, we have grown into a thriving community, united by our mission: Learning to live well, with others and for others, in a just community.

*Manny B.*

**Grade 11 Student**

As a student at Meadowridge for seven years, I cannot help but be grateful for the help I have received from teachers. The school provides many unique opportunities and resources for students to thrive in academics and extracurriculars.

*Steve Just '05*

**Alum, Board Member**

When I joined Meadowridge in 1998, I could not have imagined the impact the community would have on me. As an alum, I'm grateful to now give back, serving as a board member, donor, and coach. As Meadowridge grows, the community will always remain important.

*Mrs. Marie Clement '00*

**Alum, Teacher since 2007**

I forgot to stand up to greet Mr. Graveson when he came in the door. I didn't bring my agenda to any of my classes, and my glasses broke at lunch, so I spent the afternoon holding my lens in with three pieces of tape. After all that went wrong, I still had wonderful friends, supportive teachers, and a great community ever since.

*Ms. Julie Bournival*

**Staff Member since 2003, Alumni Parent '16**

In my 21 years here, opening the theatre was a turning point. Before then, students ate in hallways, classrooms, and atriums. Theatre productions shared the gym, limiting practice and game time. This new space transformed the school's atmosphere, creating a vibrant gathering hub and reshaping how our communities across the continuum connect and flow together.

*Mr. David Noble*

**Teacher since 1994**

A core memory... Garrett and Mitchell Hookey gamely shovelling a foot of snow from the front of the school to the gate because our Headmaster, Graham Hookey, couldn't bear to shorten our North-American-leading 195 teaching day year by calling a snow day.

*Amelia & Adam S.*

**Grade 9 & Grade 7 Siblings**

Meadowridge has profoundly impacted our lives, primarily through overnight trips. These moments, from silly games to late-night talks, make us feel closer like one family. Looking back, it's incredible how far the school has come, growing closer and creating unforgettable experiences.



“It isn’t easy to choose a single standout memory after 20+ years at Meadowridge. What I have enjoyed the most are some of the amazing people I have had the opportunity to meet and work with.”

*Mr. Hugh Burke***Headmaster from 2001 to 2021, Alumni Parent '16 & '08**

How do we create a school where our children learn? Learning by doing... playing alone and together, cooperating and competing, imagining, creating, remembering, experimenting, questioning, singing, planting. Sharing their understanding... learning to think, to write, to act, to speak in many languages, to represent the world in words, numbers, music, and images... learning, each and all, to seek truth, to care for themselves and for our world, and to know gratitude. We create Meadowridge.

*Kayleigh F.***Grade 11 Student**

As a new student in Grade 11, Meadowridge's welcoming community stood out to me. I specifically remember the Loon Lake trips and how they allowed me to get to know my peers while doing memorable activities. Spirit day is always a unique experience, competing against formidable opponents we usually call our friends. Overall, in the short time I've attended Meadowridge, I've seen growth and efforts to improve the school for its students, for example, through the fine arts centre.

*Dr. Danie Gowns***Alumni Parent '11, '14 & '21, Board Member**

Reflecting on Meadowridge's journey, a pivotal moment stands out: joining the Board in 2004, where I witnessed its transformation under Mr. Burke's leadership. With dedicated leadership and community support, the school overcame financial challenges, expanded its vision, and flourished, achieving remarkable growth.

*Dr. Aurora & Dr. Cristian Ghenu***Grade 4 Parents**

Meadowridge has supported our daughter's holistic learning for the past five years, considered our family's wishes, and happily helped us navigate through challenges or beautiful school moments year after year. We are grateful to have witnessed and immersed ourselves in many school social events, such as back-to-school picnics, cultural celebrations, golf days and the Gala, that bring families together, genuinely creating a close-knit community we feel proud to be part of.

*Ms. Barb Durna***Teacher from 1999 to 2021**

Meadowridge is an educational masterpiece. As a teacher alumnus, I hold my head high, thinking I am part of its history. The commitment to superior educational practice was always there, but now the facilities and grounds have become an impressive match.

*Ms. Robyn Sheffield***Staff Member Since 2022**

It's a small world at Meadowridge. I reconnected Ms. Hops, who has been part of the school community for over 30 years, with a 2014 graduate I knew. We filmed her reminding him to stay in touch and sent it to him. That memory stands out the most to me; rumour has it they still talk occasionally.



*Veer A.*

**Grade 12 Student**

I appreciate how Meadowridge always starts the year with WWOW week. It allows new students to meet their class and facilitates stronger relationships. It truly embodies the spirit of learning to live well with others and for others in a just community.

*Mr. & Mrs. Samir & Shilpa Shah*

**Alumni Parents '24, Grade 7 Parents, Board Member**

Reflecting on our children's time here brings to mind unforgettable moments - field trips that sparked their curiosity and connection, building fires, and kayaking across the Indian Arm. Each experience has strengthened their resilience and curiosity, embodying Meadowridge's commitment to fostering well-rounded, adventurous learners.

*Dr. Oekie Lampen*

**Alumni Parent '11, '14 & '18, Past Board Member**

Mr. Hugh Burk, the headmaster during my children's time at Meadowridge, was an exceptional visionary. His leadership and mentorship shaped my children's education and steered the school through challenging times, ensuring its resilience and success. His dedication to both students and the school's future was truly inspiring.

*Ms. Lucy Wu*

**Grade 10 & 12 Parent, Board Member**

I was amazed watching my children grow into their own, with confidence and no hesitation. In this community, each student finds their path, discovering strength and purpose that carries them forward with courage and determination.



*Mr. Mike Beaton*

**Grade 4 & Grade 8 Parent**

A standout memory for me was my initial tour of the school, which was led by two confident, knowledgeable young students who introduced me to Meadowridge. Their enthusiasm for its culture and pride in their school convinced me this was the perfect place for my family to grow and thrive.

*Dr. Arvind Kang*

**Alumni Parent '14, '16 & '19**

From their first steps in Kindergarten to graduation, Meadowridge shaped my three children into empathetic and thoughtful individuals. They learned resilience, academic excellence, and the joy of service. The school's mission wasn't just taught but embodied, fostering a lifelong commitment to living well with and for others.

*Mrs. Cathy Craetz*

**Teacher from 1996 to 2013**

When I started at Meadowridge in 1996, we were the little school that could: with students and a facility about a third of its current size, we were already garnering a regional reputation for offering quality education in a caring environment. Fast forward almost 30 years, and we've become the school that can and does: with a school population of ... students and a spacious modern facility set in beautiful grounds, we've earned an international reputation as a top-rated educational institution whose staff, parents and students are all committed to "learning to live well, with and for others, in a just community." What a privilege to share this exciting journey!

*Ms. Kristal Bereza*

**Staff Member since 2005, Grade 9 Parent**

In 2012, I was speaking at the graduation dinner. I had taught this group from Grade 6 through Grade 12. As their current English teacher, I chose to find a children's book with a celebratory message. As I was reading, all the graduates came to the front of the banquet hall and sat on the floor like eager students (suits, dresses, and all) to hear the story. It was such a touching moment of connection that has stuck with me.

*Mr. Bob Gill*

**Alumni Parent '16, Former Board Member**

Under the adept leadership of Hugh Burke, the school changed from the little red schoolhouse that was unsustainable when Colin attended Kindergarten to an IB continuum school, internationally recognized for its broad-based curriculum as well as for well-rounded, happy students when he graduated. The change has been exceptional.

**Students Takeovers**  
 Volume 1 Meadowridge School June 2006

## "It's Hard to Ignore to the Tick Tick Booms"

Written by Christopher Dandford

When you're witnessing a show written by such a celebrated and popular composer, it's hard not to have extremely high expectations. Yes, for fans of (and the late) iconic, *Tick Tick Boom!* was written by Jonathan Larson, the composer of the infamous *RENT*, the self-proclaimed "Man of the 90's." It's safe to say the cast, crew, and band completely fulfilled our expectations, and then some. Meadowridge's rendition of *Tick Tick Boom!* captures all of the energy and stages of Larson's loosely autobiographical tale about life, art, and love.

The play stems in the life of star-trait artist, Jon, in New York City. He is worried about the direction of his career in the performing arts going nowhere. His best friend Rocky, who has discarded her dreams of the theatre, is now on the road to becoming a successful businessman, and Jon's work is beginning to interfere with his relationship with his girlfriend, Susan. Making sacrifices for the sake of art is a recurrent theme in Larson's work. Two acts in total, *Tick Tick Boom!* ran about an hour 45 minutes long. In the first act there were 7 songs while in the second act being more dialogue heavy, had only 2 songs. "It's hard to get into the mind of a 30 year old man in 1990," said Hassan Mousavi during the intermission of the second performance. This was Meadowridge's second time this year alone in a final role, the other play portraying Jack, a homicidal high school student in *Rung Bang the Drum*.

*Tick Tick Boom!* was an immense challenge for Musical Director David Noble, as this was the first Meadowridge play to incorporate a live band, which included two keyboardists, a bassist, a guitarist, and a drummer. "The play just wouldn't have been the same with canned music," said David Noble on the matter, before the curtains were drawn on the last performance. The remainder of the cast consisted of 8 dancers, a full chorus, and 1 leading actor. *Continued on page 9*

## La Vida Loca; Las Noches De Havana

Written by Norvina Okada

Meadowridge School had its last dance of the school year on June 2nd. Students from Grade 8 to 12 were invited to a night with a twist of South American feel. Outdoors, traffic was the bit of the night, with dramatic dresses, charming skirts and vivid tops. The VIBE was laid over again to spin tracks and may be one of our Spanish songs for the girls to work their heels to. For three hours and thirty minutes, not a song passed without constant action on the dance floor. The music was from a variety of genres including Hip hop, R&B, Rock and of course the slow jams. "I loved the music at the beginning of the dance, but near the end they played music which I couldn't dance to, which sucked," commented Jacie Hamman. Large white backdrops cast the silhouettes of students, tropical trees shaded the DJ and vibrant neon lights reflected off the mood (blue ball, all night long). "The theme was what I liked, it was different," noted Chris Dandford when asked about his experience. Organizer Jessica Kumpke and the dance committee once again proved their leadership in getting this final dance of the year organized. Adding to the Latin (she wore the large Tiki masks covering the concession stand and the cool, alcohol-free drinks. Pina Colodas and margaritas were being served, and some incredibly good ones for the crowd," remarked Sara Tughravi. Even though the night came to a sudden end when the party was crashed, time passed very fast quickly for so many students' pleasure. And Havana Nights was just as good as any fierce fiesta.

How do you think the new building will help the school?



*Mr. Graham Hokey*

**Headmaster from 1990 to 1997**

Being part of the dedicated team of Board members, staff, and parents who brought the school to its 240th permanent site and built its first three phases was unquestionably the most rewarding experience of my entire career. I have nothing but fond memories and total respect for everyone involved!

*Ashita B.*

**Grade 4 Student**

In Grade 1, we learnt about insects. Each of us got to take care of our caterpillars. We fed them and even named them. We saw how they wrapped into cocoons and shaped into butterflies. We then released them into the North Forest and in the garden in Spring around all the flowers, which was nice to see.

*Mrs. Natalie Cunning*

**Staff Member since 2010, Alumni Parent '22**

A single standout memory... Watching my son toss his grad cap in the Class of 2022's Convocation Ceremony. I felt immense pride and gratitude reflecting on his ten-year journey at Meadowridge.

*Sirat K.*

**Grade 4 student**

In Grade 3 last year, we went with Mrs. Banack to the North Forest to pick out invasive wild blackberries that were suffocating and harming the native plants Meadowridge had planted there. This experience taught me how important it is to care for and protect our North Forest.



“Watching our campus transform while teaching Kindergarten was a standout memory. My students and I cleared the floor to watch the house demolition for the Early Learning Centre. The best part for the students was seeing the crane lift a toilet out in one piece!”





*Michelle Zhang '22*

**Alum**

One memory that stands out to me is Meadowridge's service trips, mainly my trip to Kenya, where I saw a pride of lions. Reflecting on Meadowridge's growth, a significant turning point was the expansion of the new high school building, with the latest equipment and space allocated for the older students.

*Ms. Jennifer Higginson & Ms. Courtney Higginson*

**Teachers since 2005 & 2010, Grade 5 Parent & Aunt , Sisters**

When you have been attending Meadowridge since before birth and your mom and aunt have been working here for a combined 35 years, these hallways feel more like a home than a school. There may only be three Higginson's in the building, but the feeling of family continues to grow.



*Mrs. Sonal Singh*

**Kindergarten & Grade 2 Parent**

In the last two and a half years, Meadowridge has become part of our family. We have built strong connections with our daughters' teachers, the administration, and other families and formed a community here. Our favourite memories have been all the inclusive holiday celebrations. During the Diwali celebration in 2023, our first year at Meadowridge, I realized how impactful the celebration was in my daughters' eyes.



“Reflecting on our children’s time here brings to mind unforgettable moments - field trips that sparked their curiosity and connection, building fires, and kayaking across the Indian Arm.”

*Carina Luo '22***Alum**

My core memory at Meadowridge was in October of Grade 12. It was intense yet fun staying up late with my friends, working on our biology IA, and then heading straight to a volleyball tournament the following day. Balancing multiple assignments, university applications, and extracurriculars was challenging, but it brought an incredible sense of accomplishment and deepened my bonds with my friends.

*Ms. Cindy Hops***Teacher since 1992**

In my first year at Meadowridge, my lab supplies were limited to a candle labelled "Fuel," a couple of skulls and a butterfly carcass. By 2022, I had travelled with two different teams of innovators to execute their original experiments on the multi-million-dollar Particle Accelerator at the University of Saskatchewan! Dreamers who dare to take risks, take action and persist are the ones who shape the world. Meadowridge stands in as a testament to that truth.

*Miss Tamara Warner***Staff Member since 2002**

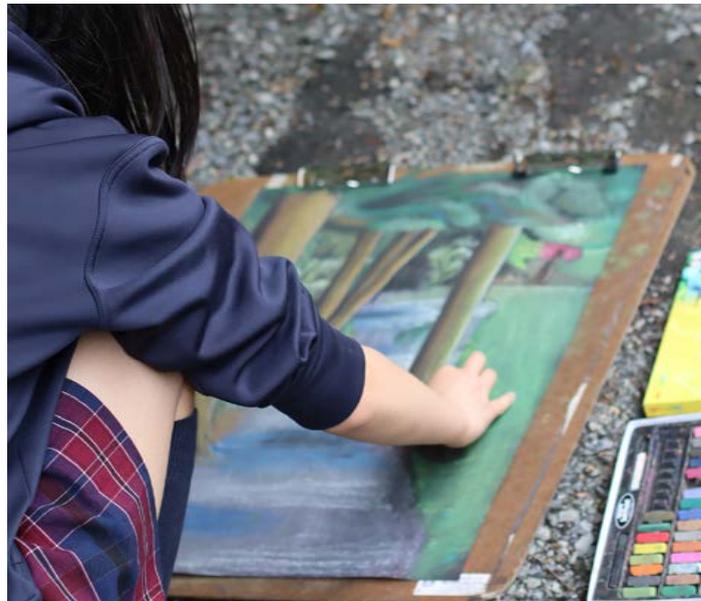
Watching our campus transform while teaching Kindergarten was a standout memory. My students and I cleared the floor to watch the house demolition for the Early Learning Centre. The best part for the students was seeing the crane lift a toilet out in one piece! Learning becomes magical when we slow down and embrace the world around us.

*Mr. & Mrs. Mahmud & Rishma Sunderji***Alumni Parents '23 & Grade 11 Parents**

Since joining Meadowridge in 2010, we've cherished the close-knit community and the pride of being 'lifers.' Watching our eldest graduate in 2023 and now seeing our younger daughter thrive in Grade 11, leading the debate tournament, reaffirms that Meadowridge truly prepares its students for their future.

*Danielle Christensen***Staff Member since 2018**

I vividly remember arriving at Meadowridge for my first interview, captivated by the breathtaking campus. Years later, I still find myself in awe of our stunning surroundings, but even more, I cherish the vibrant community and the meaningful relationships I've built with families and friends. Meadowridge holds a special place in my heart, and I am truly grateful for every moment here.



*Mrs. Candace Grottschalk '00*

**Alum, Grade 4 & 6 Parent, Board Member**

A standout memory for me has and always will be everyday shaking the Headmaster's hand in the morning. I have fond memories when first attending Meadowridge of this daily part of my routine.

At that moment, it may not have been as significant, but as I look back on it now, it was a memory that taught me the art of the handshake and how it is a symbol of "good faith," peaceful intentions, and no ill will towards each other; a sign of respect. It also taught me how to have a strong handshake! The daily routine of the handshake every morning grew to be so much more than having respect and caring for each other within the community of Meadowridge.

*Caja Blomley '13*

**Alum**

The care, kindness, and compassion the teachers at Meadowridge have for their students stand out most when I think back to my time there. I still feel this warmth whenever I walk back into the school. As I move forward in my career, I've worked to bring this kindness into the spaces and situations I encounter. School can be an uncomfortable space for some, and through the same care that was modelled to me, I work to make it better.

*Mrs. Charlene Smoke*

**Staff Member from 2020 to present**

Some of my most cherished memories at Meadowridge are in the North Forest, where I've stood alongside students and colleagues as facilitators and participants.

We've connected deeply with the land, embraced cultural teachings, and built meaningful relationships with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers. Witnessing these connections come alive at our Indigenous Peoples Day Assembly has been incredibly moving, reflecting our growth and shared understanding journey.

*Cassia N.*

**Grade 8 Student**

The school has grown so much since I started Kindergarten in 2015. I was in the first class in the ELC building, watched the high school complex take shape in Grade 2, and saw the elementary playground transform in Grade 6.

*Scott Spurgeon*

**Staff since 2000**

It isn't easy to choose a single standout memory after 20+ years at Meadowridge. What I have enjoyed the most are some of the amazing people I have had the opportunity to meet and work with. This includes students, coaches, parents, staff, officials, and organizers. I now love to meet alumni and past community members to chat about the 'good old days.'

*Mrs. Stephanie van der Pauw*

**Kindergarten & Grade 2 Parent, Former Student**

When we had our children, we knew we wanted them to attend Meadowridge as we did. We were blown away by the Early Learning Centre and the North Forest, and Campground. It is important to us for our children to have access to nature and play-based learning.



“Meadowridge is an educational masterpiece... The commitment to superior educational practice was always there, but now the facilities and grounds have become an impressive match.”





## *Mrs. Joyce Villadiego*

Joined Meadowridge in Fall 2006  
Middle School Spanish Teacher

### **What brought you to Meadowridge?**

I had just returned from Spain and was eager to start my teaching career. I'd recently finished my elementary education training and was encouraged to apply to Meadowridge because of my Spanish skills. This was my first exposure to the city of Maple Ridge and to Meadowridge School, so I wasn't fully prepared for the interview. However, Meadowridge saw my enthusiasm and allowed me to join their community even before I graduated.

Since then, Meadowridge has become my home. I grew up here, graduated from university, got married, found a family, and learned to teach middle and high school. Meadowridge is where I've found my footing and grown as a teacher and a person.

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

No two days are the same, and I love that. I begin by preparing for my classes and greeting students. Working with middle schoolers is always entertaining—they're at this unique stage where they're part child, part teen, and their conversations are endlessly exciting and funny.

Teaching my classes is the best part of the day, but the quieter moments are just as meaningful. Whether taking a much-needed lunch break with my colleagues or chatting with students about their latest adventures, those little connections bring me so much joy.

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

The students. Middle schoolers are curious, funny, and always full of surprises. Another highlight is the relationships I've built with my colleagues. Many have become close friends; we share a supportive, collaborative environment. It's a privilege to work with such a great team.

### **What's your favourite Meadowridge tradition?**

The Christmas Assembly is my absolute favourite. It's a beautiful way to unite as a community before the holidays. Each grade has a designated colour and students perform and sing the "12 Days of Christmas" with increased energy as the song goes on. That energy is contagious, even though we're all a bit tired from the busy season and ready for the Winter Break.

In Spanish 8, we developed a tradition of creating a unique presentation based on the song *Feliz Navidad* including dancing, singing, signage, and the infamous student-made Christmas tree pyramid.

### **What would surprise us about your position?**

How much it involves. Although my title is "teacher," I also feel like my position helps me to embrace being an on-going learner, emotional counsellor, general manager, chaos coordinator, and party planner. Supporting my colleagues and students often goes far beyond the classroom.

When I started teaching, I didn't realize how much I would continue to learn and grow. It has been a constant developmental journey, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

"[A] highlight is the relationships I've built with my colleagues. Many have become close friends; we share a supportive, collaborative environment. It's a privilege to work with such a great team."

### **Favourite Meadowridge memory.**

There have been so many great trips, fun experiences and memorable moments that I can't choose just one. To name a few... I really enjoyed the school field trip to Belize where I calmly swam through a smack of jellyfish and came one foot away from a lionfish while spending time learning with high school kids. It was fun learning how to knit with my colleague's knitting CAS club because it helped me learn a life skill that I enjoy in my free time. Watching my Spanish 12 classes perform at school assemblies the dances, like merengue, salsa, and bachata, that were taught in class.

Something recent is being able to put into practice my SFU Post-Graduate studies project about Belonging. I was able to integrate Kindness as a theme into my units and my teaching; I have seen the impact in my teaching and my students. I've become so passionate about this, together with other graduates from the program, we published a teacher resource book about belonging and kindness.

I have embraced creating this sense of belonging with my Advisory groups, by having group themes each year. Whether they were pineapples, avocados, llamas, tacos, cactii, or villagers, it really connects us into a community. This year we are the cute fruits of the Villadiego Fruit Basket. What will we be next year?

### **Spring or fall?**

Spring, for sure. I'm a warm-weather person, and I love seeing the flowers bloom and feeling the days get longer. Spring also means badminton season, which I always look forward to.

### **Favourite meal?**

Noodles of any kind, whether it is Chinese, Korean, Japanese, or, of course, Malaysian. One of my favourites is Assam Laksa, a Malaysian noodle soup that's spicy and full of seafood; my mom makes the best one. Born in Malaysia, the flavours always bring me back to my home country.

### **Best way to spend the day?**

Any day is well spent when I spend it with my nieces and nephews! I take pride in being the best aunt I can be, and I genuinely enjoy spending time with my family. Every moment is unique, whether playing with the little ones or going out for food and drinks with the older ones. I love my nieces and nephews!



**MEADOWRIDGE**  
**SCHOOL**

12224 240th Street  
Maple Ridge, BC V4R 1N1  
[meadowridge.bc.ca](http://meadowridge.bc.ca)

*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.