



Environmental Education — ICS leads the way for Ontario's Teachers

By Lorraine Chiarotto

Since the earliest days, teachers at the Institute of Child Study have embedded ways of looking at the natural world as part of what they do with children. Indeed, when we think about learning at the Institute of Child Study over the past decades, we can picture children digging through soil for earthworms, examining the PH levels of water samples, building life size trees in the classroom, or developing a classification system for local plants. The remarkable kind of excitement for learning at the Institute, which is the result of putting children's questions at the centre, attracted a benefactor who was keen to see this learning replicated in classrooms across Ontario.

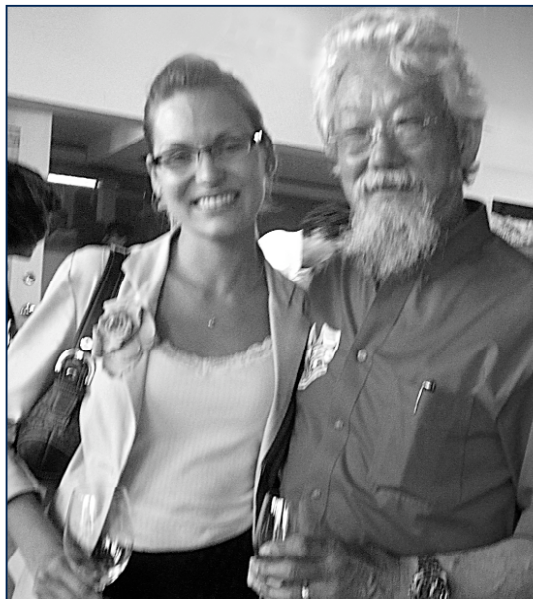
Timing is everything. New parallel guidelines for environmental education at the Ontario Ministry of Education presented an exciting opportunity for the Lab School to share its work with the broader educational community. A two-year *Environmental Education Initiative* is currently underway to disseminate the ICS approach to Environmental Education with elementary school teachers in Ontario.

Launched in 2009, this Initiative was made possible through generous grants from the Norman and Marian Robertson Charitable Foundation, artist/photographer and ICS parent Edward Burtynsky, and an anonymous donor. The main objective is to develop and disseminate a comprehensive "how to" handbook, to be

available on the ICS website by 2011, for pre-service and in-service elementary school teachers in Ontario. The handbook, called *Un-earthing Natural Curiosities: Digging Deeper with Children to Uncover Big Ideas*, will include examples from both ICS classrooms and its public school partners, to show how elementary school teachers can shift and improve their approach to teaching environmental studies and link their work

to Ministry expectations. We now have a way to share our valuable experience and leadership for classroom inquiry, cross-curricular integration, experiential learning and student leadership for environmental responsibility.

An excellent and impressive Outreach Advisory Board will further extend the scope of the ICS Environmental Education Initiative. Comprised of educational, Ministry, and environmental leaders, members include: Dr. David Suzuki, Dr. Roberta Bondar, Edward Burtynsky, Michael de Pencier, Michael Ball, Dr. Ron Dembo, Jennifer Canham, Dr. Deborah McGregor, Laura Nemchin, Dr. Erminia Pedretti, Annabel Slaight, and Dr. Ingrid Stefanovic.



Lorraine Chiarotto with Dr. David Suzuki, who is helping ICS raise the bar for Ontario's teachers and environmental education.

Through the Initiative, ICS has forged links with four GTA elementary public schools. Over the past year, we are discovering together how an "ICS" integrated, inquiry-based approach to environment fits into different public education settings all of which will inform the new handbook.

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"You have been the most unexpected and inspiring gift to us! It is through ICS that we are inspired to raise the bar and change old practices."

Liga Miklasevics
Principal, Victoria Village Public School

Principal's Message

Welcome to the ICS Alumni Echo for 2010! With each passing year, the Institute of Child Study Laboratory School broadens its reach and influence in the wider educational world. While ICS is growing up and having a bigger impact, you will see in the pages of this newsletter that we remain the warm and welcoming small school you know, dedicated to nurturing curious and confident learners in a setting that embraces innovation.



Elizabeth Morley

It is exciting to build public school partnerships and develop a close relationship with the Ontario Ministry of Education. Many of you remember experiences in the out-of-doors as an important part of your education here. Our Environmental Education Initiative will produce an online teaching handbook for all Ontario educators about exactly how ICS teachers use the environment to integrate a deep understanding for our natural world as well as a sense of responsible citizenship.

Some of you told us how proud you were when the *Toronto Star* wrote about our inquiry-based teaching and learning in a front page feature last fall. "Teaching Kite-Obsessed Children to Soar" was a beautiful article that highlighted the work of ICS teacher Carol Stephenson and our Senior Kindergarten class, but you will recognize the approach as distinctly *the ICS way*.

Recently, the school received a combined grant totaling \$1 million to establish the new ICS/Robertson Program for Inquiry-Based Teaching of Mathematics and Science, in which the Lab School plays a key role. Our research program continues to be recognized internationally, with our work on technology, scientific reasoning, inclusive curriculum and math education being presented and published around the world.

International connections also involve links to lab schools in other countries, including our partnership with Hangzhou, China, which has established a lively annual exchange of teachers and ideas. This year, an outreach partnership with Scadding Court Community Centre in downtown Toronto has invited our mentorship with young adults, preparing them to volunteer in schools in desperate need of resources in Southeast India.

In June, we celebrated our annual Hot Dog Night under bright blue skies and dappled shade from the new trees. Nothing essential has changed over the 24 years that I have been coming to Hot Dog Night, as a parent, then

teacher, and now as principal. The welcome, the simplicity, the friendships, the fun—these are the same. My sons, Nick ('95) and Alex ('97), have the menu memorized—as you probably do, too. Some things last. Others evolve, like the welcome addition of Vice-Principal, Richard Messina (because it's a busy place!) and the plans to further expand our footprint at ICS to allow for more research and outreach.

As we look ahead to 2011, we hope you will be with us for our **85th anniversary celebration**. We invite you to an alumni reunion on the evening of **Saturday May 14, 2011**. Details will follow, but please put the date in your calendar. Come join us!

Elizabeth Morley has been Principal of the ICS Lab School since 1993, and was a teacher from 1990-1993. This year, her term as Principal was extended again for five years until 2015. She is also President-Elect of the International Association of Laboratory Schools (NALS).

An opportunity exists for an alumnus to serve on the OISE Dean's Advisory Board for the Lab School
Please visit
www.oise.utoronto.ca/ics/ICS_Lab_School

Prof. Janette Pelletier appointed new Director for ICS

We are delighted to announce that Janette Pelletier has been appointed as the new Director of the Institute of Child Study and research director of the Institute's Dr. R.G.N. Laidlaw Centre.

Jan has been a faculty member at ICS/OISE since 1999. She is a leading researcher in early child development and educational policy including early literacy, cognitive development, family literacy and French immersion. Her work with Professor Carl Corter played a key role in developing Ontario's new policy for integrated full-day kindergarten learning, which begins implementation this fall. Jan takes over July 1 from current ICS Director Dr. Kang Lee. Kang completes his five-year term on June 30 and will spend the coming year on sabbatical leave in China with his family, including Nathan, a Grade One student in the Lab School.



Prof. Janette Pelletier

Dr. Richard Volpe pays homage to Canada's "Dr. Spock"

By Rachel Berman

The Secure Child: Timeless Lessons in Parenting and Childhood Education was written by ICS professor, Dr. Richard Volpe and published earlier this year.



Dr. Richard Volpe

It's the early 1970s. A truck pulls up to 703 Spadina Rd. and unloads heaps of brown paper bundles tied with string. Dr. Richard Volpe surveys the mass of bundles. They contain information about Dr. William Blatz's 1920s-1960s study on the impact of the environment on children's long term outcomes. What Volpe didn't know at the time was that this collection of bundles contained an unpublished manuscript by Blatz and colleagues. Once Volpe found this treasure some years later, he believed it needed to be shared, and this led him to publish this edited collection of essays about Blatz, founding director of the Institute of Child Study (ICS).

In the first part of the book, we meet the controversial Dr. Blatz, the pediatrician and psychologist whose portrait hangs in the foyer of ICS. His advice to parents, and his important, but largely unsung contribution to childhood education in both Canada and abroad, in particular his "security theory," have been shared by various authors. The book concludes with the previously unpublished manuscript by Blatz and his colleagues, *The Expanding World of the Child*.

Both the first and second parts of the book describe that Blatz's emphasis is on the well-being of the child, personal decision-making, conflict resolution, opposition to competition, emphasis on social responsibility, the importance of secure learners, and his appreciation of the diversity of learners which remains alive and well. Although many of these may seem like fairly standard educational ideas today, they were radical when Blatz and his colleagues, the majority of whom were women, advocated for them more than sixty years ago.

For those interested in the history of developmental psychology, early childhood education, parenting advice, and child development theories, this collection makes for an intriguing and enlightening read.

Rachel Berman, Associate Professor, School of Early Childhood Education, Ryerson University, and mother of Joshua Ghan, in Grade 3 at ICS.

Environmental Education continued from page 1

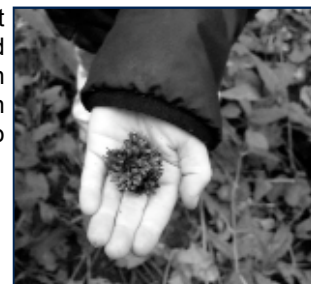
Teachers from participating schools have attended learning events, professional development days at ICS, and have received ongoing support in their own public school classrooms. Additionally, all U of T students who are training to become teachers at the elementary level (almost 1,000) will benefit from the new Environmental Initiative through special pre-service workshops. As a result, many teacher candidates have requested a Practicum placement at ICS to experience inquiry-based environmental education in action.

Other outreach activities include the establishment of both an Award and a Fellowship to encourage teaching excellence. The first annual *Institute of Child Study's Edward Burtynsky Award for Teaching Excellence* in Environmental Education was recently announced. Winners of this Burtynsky Award will have their work featured in the ICS handbook, will receive a photographic print or Burtynsky book, and will receive a contribution to a new field trip fund for their school. The Institute of Child Study Laboratory School's

Dr. David Suzuki Fellowships were established to offer an opportunity for selected Ontario university teacher education students who recently completed their studies, to do a one-week fellowship at the ICS Lab School under the mentorship of Lab School teacher/researchers, immersing themselves into the Institute's inquiry-based and integrated approach to environmental education.

The ICS Environmental Education Initiative provides the opportunity for the Lab School to build on a legacy of teaching about the natural world and have a real impact on environmental education for children in Ontario and beyond.

Lorraine Chiarotto is the teacher/coordinator for the ICS Environmental Education Initiative and ICS graduate of MA Program ('08).



Teacher Alumnus Ted Hunter

By Samantha Linton ('79)

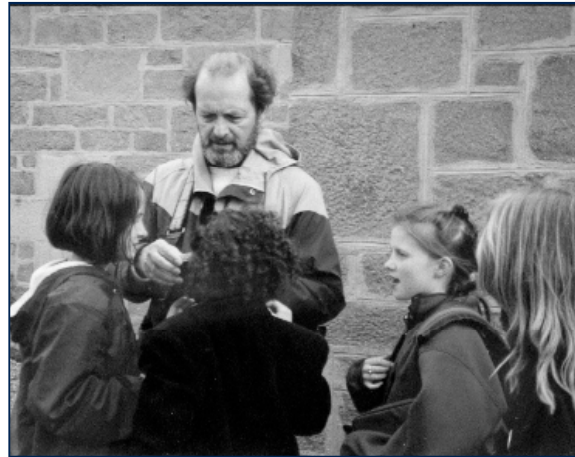
It was the 1960's and Ted Hunter, a frustrated teacher in Australia, had a plan: to take 13 years to travel the world, working as he went. First stop – Toronto, Canada. And oh, what a fateful stop it was! When he got a job teaching at ICS, he never looked back.

Hunter taught at ICS for 30 years from 1966 to 1996. At the heart of his teaching philosophy were the many excursions, both local and out-of-town. His dedicated work formed the basis for many events that are still central to the ICS experience today. One early example was the first of many trips to Quebec City. In order to make Canadian history come alive, he and a colleague initiated these trips so that the children could experience the reality of events from the past.

For Hunter, any opportunity to get out of the classroom was a chance to make learning exciting and real for the kids. He recalls how one year in planning for an Ottawa trip, an opportunity arose to visit Governor General Michener. The GG's schedule was full so it was suggested that the children should join him in his daily jog around the grounds of Rideau Hall. In preparation for the event, the class would gather at Varsity Stadium at the crack of dawn and jog around the track to build up their endurance so they could keep up with the GG on his daily run.



When he started at ICS, Hunter was pleasantly surprised to meet the principal John MacInnes who on his daily visits to the classroom would ask "What did you do that was exciting today?" When I told him he'd say, "Well, that's not very exciting, is it?" With that strategy constantly shaping his approach, Hunter thrived in the open and creative environment of ICS.



Ted Hunter on one of his legendary field trips

"Mr. Hunter had a video camera that was tethered to a reel-to-reel video deck and you could actually see yourself on TV. I think he and NASA were the only people using this technology at the time."

-Nick de Pencier ('78)

He learned to encourage the children to collaborate in the learning process. One of the highlights of his career was when he showed his students "The Loon's Necklace", a NFB film about an Indian legend. "It inspired the students to make their own film," he says. Partnering with art teacher Dorothy Medhurst, they turned the classrooms into movie sets.

First they got rid of the furniture and transformed one room into a forest with trees hanging from the ceiling, another room became a cave. The students wrote the script, sewed the costumes, built the props, set up the lights, recorded the sound-track and in the end shot the scenes on an old 16mm camera. When MacInnes poked his head in one day and asked, "Are you teaching them any math or language?" he replied, "No, we'll get to that later. The math and language will flow from the task at hand."

Hunter's three-decade teaching career at ICS spanned an exciting time in education, paralleling the explosion of technology from clunky manual typewriters to early computers that had to be programmed to word processors. Nowadays, he gets his excitement from travelling, and pursuing his interest in photography.

*Sam Linton ('79), mother of Charlie Borwick ('08) and Sasha (Gr.4)
She is currently working at Can West - History Television*

Where are they now? CLASS of 1990

Daniel Beiles ventured off to New Zealand, Australia and travelled by land from W. Timor to Hong Kong. He had a five year career as a chef, but then focused on wine and the living vine... working as a sommelier at Vinifera Wine Agency, of which he is part-owner, and is half-way through a degree in physical geography & geology.

Jeremy Bennison currently lives in Toronto. After not graduating from Sheridan college for animation, he spent a year in Taiwan teaching English, and began a freelance illustration business. He is now part of a team of illustrators and architects at Forrec Ltd. designing theme parks, cultural attractions, and entertainment centres worldwide. Visit his website: sharkandmonkey.com.

Adam Brueckner is living in Toronto. He recently completed his MBA at U of T after Masters (U of T) and Bachelors (Waterloo) degrees in engineering. After stints at a small management consulting firm and Merrill Lynch, he now works as a senior analyst at Oxford Properties Group.

Millefiore Clarkes resides in PEI. She is a documentarian and filmmaker, currently working on her second feature-length doc entitled 'The Telling', a poetic portrait. She also works as an editor in film/television.

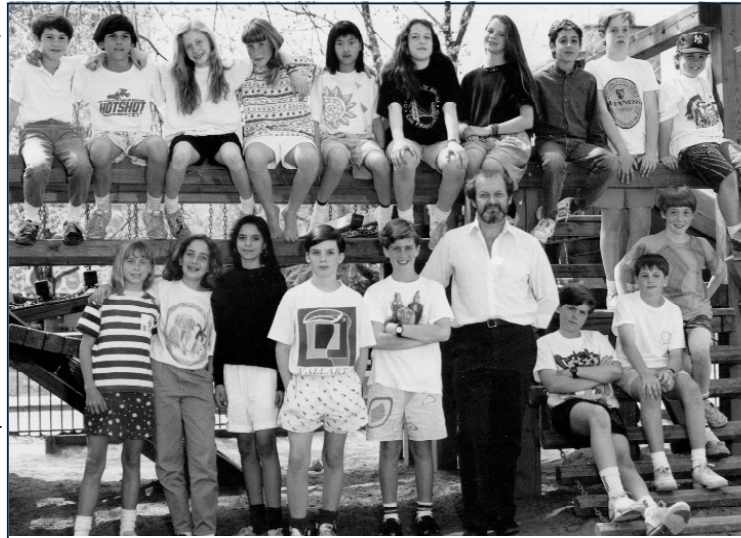
Nadja Drost spent several years working in environmental activism, human rights in Latin America and producing a documentary film after graduating from Trent University. She decided to throw herself into journalism after freelancing in West Africa, and did a Master's in Journalism at Columbia University in New York. She has been living in Bogotá, Colombia for the last year, where she reports for Global-Post, Time Magazine and a variety of media outlets. She continues to defend herself from post-ICS friends taunting her for going to a laboratory school.

Nick Freeman currently lives in Tel Aviv, Israel. After graduating from the University of Guelph and working at U of T for a few years, he tried the adventure of living abroad. Four years later, he's still in Israel and visits Toronto regularly. Nick is working as the Sales Manager for New York based high-tech company, LivePerson.

James Gildiner went to McGill (Eng./Philosophy). He took a couple of years off to work, but then ended up in Law school at the University of Victoria. He is currently working in Toronto, living in Cabbagetown, and articling at Lee and Company, specializing in immigration law appeal work.

Nuno Gomes is a commercial pilot, working for Porter Airlines in Toronto as a flight dispatcher. He has worked as a pilot operating executive charters out of Buttonville Airport.

Emily Harris-McLeod lived in Quebec, BC and Northern Ontario, before returning to Toronto last year to work as a counsellor and social worker in public health. She writes and records music on the side while dreaming of how to escape the city.



Upper: Adam Brueckner, Damian Sullivan, Jenna Wright, Nadja Drost, Priscilla Hui, Emily Harris McLeod, Sarah Schmocker, Nuno Gomes, James Gildiner, Christian Lander.
Lower: Stephanie Williamson, Mille Clarkes, Candida Moniz-Santo, Jeremy Bennison, Nicholas Freeman, Darryl Flatman, Daniel Beiles, Thomas Anderson-Barker

Christian Lander lives in L.A. with his wife. He holds degrees from McGill and the University of Arizona. He's the author of the blog/book and TV pilot *Stuff White People Like*.

Sarah Schmocker (Shutt) is currently living in Toronto with her husband Scott and her 9-month-old son Jackson. She recently graduated as a Naturopathic Doctor from the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine and will be practicing at a clinic in the Beaches this summer.

Stephanie Williamson has taken many Adult Education classes over the last ten years and received two certificates. She is a proud Somato Respiratory Facilitator, a Certified Etheric Practitioner, as well as a new-born Christian. She is working towards completing her high school degree in June.

Jenna Wright studied at McGill University and fashion/costume design at College Lasalle. Now she is working as an actor and a costume designer for TV, film, and commercials in L.A. She performs regularly in improv comedy shows. Her soon-to-be-published photobook is called *Try-Ons*.

Special thanks to Nadja Drost, Jenna Wright & Anne Tough for gathering our news and to Ted Hunter for the archived class photograph.

 Find us on
Facebook

*Looking for ICS friends from the past?
Contact your class rep
or join us on Facebook!*

The de Pencier family—three generations connected to ICS

By Gillian Graham



Family photograph on Anna's birthday, May 2010. From Left to Right: Anna (Grade 1), Mark de Pencier ('81), Nick ('78), Jennifer Baichwal, Honor Magnus (Grade 4) and Michael de Pencier.

"When Nick's mum, Honor de Pencier put Magnus on the waiting list for ICS the day he was born, I thought she was a little crazy, as school at that point was the farthest thing from my mind," recalls Jennifer Baichwal, a documentary film maker with her husband Nick de Pencier ('78) (*Manufactured Landscapes, Act of God*) and mother of Magnus and Anna, both current ICS students.

In choosing ICS for her grandson, Honor was continuing a family tradition that spans two families and three generations. It began with her sister-in-law, Marni Lithgow de Pencier who in the 1940s had attended Windy Ridge, a children's school run by Dr. William Blatz and the Institute of Child Study. Together with her husband John, Marni wanted their four children to benefit from Blatz's educational philosophy.

"I used to claim that happiness was piped into the school through any available entry," recalls Marni de Pencier. Marni still calls it, "the best school that any of our four children attended" — which puts ICS in a league with the University of Chicago, Columbia and Yale University.

Marni and John's four children all have careers in law and education. Eldest son, Joseph de Pencier ('67), is now senior counsel for a federal agency in Ottawa, and still loves fish sticks because of Friday lunches at ICS. An avid runner who cycles to work, he is involved with international sport organizations,

including the International Paralympic Committee, International Cycling Union and World Anti-Doping Agency. "ICS nurtured powers of critical thinking, curiosity about the world and especially a love of reading that have stood me in very good stead over the years," he says.

Jan de Pencier Seaborn ('69) is a lawyer in Toronto, Michele ('74) is a teacher and Adam ('71) is the new Head of School at Trafalgar Castle School in Whitby. Among the benefits of his ICS years, Adam lists a lifelong friendship with Ted Larkin ('71) and inspiring school trips. "I remember one to the Provincial Legislature that found us returning home with all kinds of fantastic maps of Ontario, including one of Lake Superior that sparked my interest to this day," he recalls.

For John's younger brother, Michael de Pencier and his wife Honor, the choice of primary school was pretty much a *fait accompli* when their first son Nick was born in 1966. For a time in the 1970s, Nick and his younger siblings Miranda ('80) and Mark ('81) were all at ICS under the respected and beloved principal Gerry Mabin. "I remember an enormous amount of space for self-motivated creativity in the school," says Nick, now a documentary film maker. "In music we were all little John Cages creating our own "automatic" instruments using many xylophones, gravity, and a marble. In art, we would all pile into Dorothy Medhurst's jalopy van to collect clay from some

secluded riverbed out by the Niagara Escarpment and bring the buckets back to school to mould and sculpt.”

In Grade four he learned to develop his own photographs in Russell Fleming’s darkroom. “With a bare lightbulb, we exposed the outline of our hands onto photographic paper and then watched it magically appear when plunged into the developer bath. We built pin-hole cameras out of cardboard and tinfoil and etched in reverse the leafless trees behind his house.”

Tellingly, given his future career, Nick and his classmates made mock game shows in Grade 6 using inventive video systems cobbled together by Ted Hunter.

“ICS had panache.”

Miranda de Pencier ('80)

Miranda de Pencier, an actress (Josie Pye in *Anne of Green Gables*) and film producer (Adam, and the forthcoming *Beginners* with Ewan McGregor and Christopher Plummer), recalls the “wonderfully strong and unique personalities” of her ICS gang, including Melissa Hall, Nora Jaffary, Megan Follows, Heather Gray, Leanne Weld, Elizabeth Garrier and Sarah Morris. Whether learning Beatles songs with Gerry Mabin, writing symphonies for the xylophone, or building 10-foot wooden sculptures of women and designing their batik clothes with revered art teacher Dorothy Medhurst, education and fun were rolled into one. “I believe that the spirit of freedom and the depth of knowledge that ICS gave me is still a huge influence on how I think today as a film maker — be creative, try to think outside the box, and keep following my passion even if it’s an uphill battle all the way.

Today as grandparents, Honor and Michael are closely

involved with the school. Michael, one of Canada’s leading ‘green’ leaders, serves on the Lab School’s Advisory Board for the Environmental Education Initiative (see *front page feature*). In her regular visits to the school, Honor notes the same exemplary degree of “observation and care” as in Nick’s day, and welcomes what she sees as a stronger emphasis on basics such as spelling.



L—R: Mark, Miranda and Nick de Pencier in the 1980s

For Nick, the continuity with the past is even more precious. As he puts it, “No more slabs of ham on plastic plates with mashed potatoes, no more mid-day naps on mats, but the rooms are the same and I know instinctively where every stairway goes in the old McCarthy House. Magnus and his younger sister Anna both love school at ICS. They thrive, and a building that for me was a temple of the distant past, becomes part of a dynamic present.”

Gillian Graham is a freelance writer and the mother of Sam Bailey ('98), James Graham ('01), and Emily (Mimi) Graham ('03). Gillian is the Founding Director of the ICS Alumni Association and past ECHO Editor

How do you think ICS affected your life?

As we approach our 85th anniversary, we want to gather reflections from past alumni on their experiences at the Institute of Child Study. How did the school affect your later education? Your career choice? Your parenting? Your friendships? Your understanding of the world?

Nicoline Guerrier '73 is collecting anecdotes and stories to be featured in 2011-12. Please send your thoughts, photos and memories to Robin Farb:
Email: robin.farb@utoronto.ca
Mail: ICS, 45 Walmer Road, Toronto, ON M5R 2X2
Fax: 416-934-4565



BRAVO SARAH

Our
brilliant and talented
ICS Lab School
Drama Teacher
Sarah Murray

*Celebrates
20 years!*

**THANK YOU
SARAH!!!**



*A tableau with Sarah Murray (Centre) and her Wednesday Afternoon Drama Class, June 2010.
Sarah Murray is the mother of Sean ('94), Charlotte ('97), Rhys ('04), and Glynnis who is currently at ICS in Grade 5*

**ICS Grade 5/6 Students meet
distinguished alumnus Dr. Eric Jackman**



ICS Alumnus, Dr. Eric Jackman (1930's) served as Honorary Colonel of the Toronto Scottish Regiment (Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother's Own) and following the 2009 Remembrance Day Service at U of T, the ICS Lab School's Grade 5/6 students met Hon. C.I. Jackman, seen above, alongside ICS Teacher Ben Peebles (right)

**Attention all ICS Alumni...
Save the date!**

**85th Anniversary ICS Reunion,
Saturday, May 14, 2011**

Join us for
an evening celebration of the
Institute of Child Study!

**PLEASE REGISTER ONLINE
to receive the invitation & details
please visit
www.oise.utoronto.ca/ics**



The ICS Alumni Echo is edited by
Suzanne Schwenger ('69).
Suzanne teaches Primary Music at ICS
and is the mother of Maddy Bondy ('05).