



Dr. Eric Jackman

Institute of Child Study

Alumni ECHO NEWS

THE LABORATORY SCHOOL • ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL • WINDY RIDGE

Breaking Ground

Vision for building an exemplary space

By Tracy Pryce

In 2014, an 11-year campaign of fundraising and planning will culminate in the breaking of ground at 45 Walmer Road and its adjacent properties of 56 and 58 Spadina. At the May 22 meeting of friends and donors, OISE Dean Julia O'Sullivan revealed that the architectural firm Taylor Smyth has been selected for the job following an extensive search and selection process.

The capital campaign progressed over nine years under the indefatigable leadership of Robin Farb, a committee comprised of Lab School Principal Elizabeth Morley, former Director of the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study Janette Pelletier, and members of both U of T's St. George campus and OISE. This group set out to determine the school's programmatic needs in light of a proposed new space, including how space in the current building is used and what would be required to accommodate the school's future needs and goals.

Pelletier explains, "The architects needed to tell us what their vision would be to achieve what we need." They were asked to transform Jackman ICS's notion of an integrated, symbiotic space that combines research and early learning into a building that fosters the fulfillment of an integrated mission. "Overall," says Pelletier, "it is a space which must suitably recognize the core elements that give Jackman ICS its uniqueness: MA studies, cutting-edge research and children's education."

Morley sees the future building as a demonstration of the school's desire to provide "exemplary space", underlining the idea that "students learn through their environment as though it is a second theatre." She and Pelletier anticipate a building that will adhere to the school's programmatic needs while also considering the physical needs of those who spend much of their day within its walls. They also envision a marrying of the old with the new, connecting new space to older parts of the

building in a meaningful and creative way, without sacrificing its uniqueness and history. This uniting of the past and present will not just apply to architectural spaces. For Pelletier, it will be important for the architects to incorporate elements that support Jackman ICS's current programs while making considerations for future development, such as community outreach.



From left to right: Ali Mustafa, Senior Project Manager U of T; Dr. Eric Jackman, Michael Taylor, Taylor Smyth Architects; Robert Smyth, Taylor Smyth Architects. Behind them is a painting of Dr. William Blatz, founder of the Jackman Institute of Child Study.

Morley explains the impetus for the entire project was the need for a large space that will allow the school community to congregate. A broad, open space enhanced by natural light, the combined gymnasium-arts theatre will comprise the first and second floors of a new, four-story building that connects Leighton McCarthy house on Walmer and the buildings on Spadina.

The space will primarily function as the school's gymnasium and house the growing number of educators, researchers and Ministry officials that flow through the school each year. Directly above the auditorium on the third floor, new Lab School classrooms – bright and spacious – will help the school

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MEET THE ARCHITECTS

Founded in 2001, Taylor Smyth has ample experience creating large, complex educational and community environments. Having worked with a total of 16 public schools and 10 Catholic schools in Toronto, the firm's history with learning institutions will be an advantage for the Jackman ICS project. They find inspiration from their clients' "unique vision and identity...and the environments in which they live, work and play."

Principal's message

By Elizabeth Morley

One of the great pleasures of being part of the Jackman ICS family of friends, students, teachers, parents, and researchers is the joy of growth. As you know, we are still and always will be a small school, but over the years our reach has grown so substantially that the projects you read about in this issue of the Alumni Echo are just a sample of all the impact of your school.

Before long, you will see a new building rising in our "backyard", and for us the building will enable gatherings for Jackman ICS that we have not had space for until now. One of the most exciting events we can imagine would be bringing all of you together

right here at the school again to celebrate the next chapter in our long story of influence on the education and well-being of children.

Every year at the Grade 6 graduation, our students remind us that often the things they remember best are the adventures – the field trips and travels, classrooms transformed to rainforests or medieval villages, drama, new technology, old friendships and time on the monkey bars.

Please keep your memories alive by coming back to see us anytime and sending us your contact information so we can let you know what's happening here. We are looking forward to seeing you soon!



Jackman ICS Principal, Elizabeth Morley

Calling Lab School Grads

Are you interested in hearing more about supporting the Lab School by serving as an alumni representative on the Dean's Advisory Board? Find out more information about the nomination process by visiting our website at <http://ics.utoronto.ca/Alumni/index.html>.

Nominations are due by November 20, 2013.

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stretch beyond its current space limitations. On the fourth and uppermost floor, Masters students and researchers, who currently share space with both Jackman ICS school and daycare staff, will have their own space to spread out, congregate and learn. Morley sees this floor, which will also feature some integrated space for Masters students to work with small groups of Lab School children, as "a hub of interest in early childhood learning." Just as important, "it will allow us to show more and more people what Jackman ICS does".

Another important consideration is how to incorporate natural light into the new space. "We are in a densely packed

urban setting with limited perimeters," explains Pelletier. "It will require some creativity on the part of the architects to enhance the well-being of the building's inhabitants with natural light wherever possible." Taylor Smyth will

"The cornerstone of the new building is going to be a large theatre arts auditorium...an assembly hall where we can gather people together."

Elizabeth Morley

be capitalizing on every bit of outdoor space there is, including the property upon which 58 Spadina currently sits. The building, not currently occupied, will be taken down. Pelletier also notes the possibility of using the rooftop as both teachable space and a place to gather.

To be sure, the new building has the potential of being a physical manifestation of the three important missions of Jackman ICS: teacher education, research, and early learning. Those involved in the planning think that there are ways to incorporate the building process and its finished product into a teaching opportunity for all students – children and MA's alike. Says Pelletier, "we will try to engage everyone in this process, observing it with the children and witnessing the completed project together."

Research Roundup

By Richard Messina

Graduates of the Laboratory School may recall the one-way mirrors in our Nursery and Kindergarten classrooms, the library pocket board for student sign-out on each classroom door, and the research rooms in the basement where children completed tasks with researchers. Much has changed! Lab School teachers are often collaborators at the design stages of research. Researchers are integrated into the classroom, forming relationships with our students, rather than viewing from afar.

Below is a sample of the scope of our recent and ongoing research projects this year:



Investigating early spatial and numerical skills in Junior Kindergarten children learning in an inquiry and play-based environment

Ashley Olver, OISE and Dr. Joan Moss, OISE

The research tracked young children's developing spatial and numerical sense over a year through a mix of formal skill assessment and informal observation of both teacher-guided and freely chosen play activities.

"In this photo, as the two girls engage in building for compelling purposes of their own, we can observe their understanding of number, pattern, proportionality, and a variety of geometric concepts, embedded in a personally meaningful context that contains both narrative and aesthetic dimensions. The use of proportional materials and focused conversation with adults help to support their explorations and growing mathematical insights!" - Julie Comay

Ways of Contributing to Dialogue in Elementary School Science and History

Dr. Marlene Scardamalia, OISE and Dr. Thérèse Laferrière, University of Laval

Dialogue has been gaining recognition as a vital part of scientific and historical research. The goal of this multi-year research project is to explore ways to raise the level of student discourse by helping students develop distinctive ways of contributing to the progress of explanation-seeking dialogue.



Knowledge Community and Inquiry with Embedded Phenomena

Dr. James D. Slotta, OISE and Dr. Tom Moher, University of Chicago

The purpose of this three-year project is to develop effective models of instruction whereby multimedia simulations of plants, animals or other scientific phenomena are enabled to "come alive" within the walls of the classroom to establish a "knowledge community". This is done through the use of new technologies such as tablet-based software and multi-touch surfaces for displaying and working with ideas.

Fostering Collective Progress in Online Discourse for Sustained Knowledge Building

Dr. Jianwei Zhang, University at Albany

This three-year research project explores new ways to teach science among elementary students in a networked environment (Knowledge Forum®). Students will work together to explore key issues in science: they will ask questions, share and discuss ideas, develop better ideas, review progress, and share their insights with other student groups.

Critical Literacy Meets Inquiry Pedagogy: Teachers' Practices in Elementary Classrooms

Dr. Yiola Cleovoulou, OISE, Chriss Bogert, and Richard Messina

This project explores elementary teachers' approaches and practices to teaching critical literacy through the means of inquiry-based pedagogy.



Deep roots in the Garden of Children

Full-day Kindergarten reflects Jackman ICS research and values

By Janette Pelletier, Ph.D.

Kindergarten and early learning have a surprisingly long history in Ontario. The Education Act of 1887 gave Ontario school boards the power to establish kindergarten, building on international excitement for new philosophies of early education emanating from Europe and a growing kindergarten movement in the United States.

By the time the St. George's Nursery School (renamed the Institute of Child Study in 1937) was founded in the mid 1920s, many programs for young children were targeted to families in need. William Blatz, the school's first Director, helped to move early childhood programs out of a welfare niche and into the mainstream. Since that time, important research and policy work at Jackman ICS can be noted in the Day Nurseries Act, the Exemplary Kindergarten Study and recently, the local research behind Ontario's full-day kindergarten. Of course, the model for excellence in early



Early play at the Lab School approx. 1930

education is right here in our own Laboratory School.

Blatz's scientific groundwork followed the child study principle of closely observing children and their environments. The Ontario Day Nurseries Act of 1946 grew out of such observations

made over decades at Jackman ICS. School staff helped draft the initial standards for Ontario when the DNA was developed.

The Exemplary Kindergarten Study, commissioned by the Ontario Ministry of Education in 1992 and written by Jackman ICS researchers and collaborators, described the scientific basis for kindergarten education, including principles such as systematic literacy programs and intentionally designed play experiences. These principles were adopted in the Ministry's Kindergarten Program, the first Ontario Kindergarten curriculum in more than 50 years.

Jackman ICS researchers also led detailed observational early years research in the Toronto First Duty project and the Peel Research project. These studies showed that existing services could be arranged in new ways to provide higher quality environments and outcomes for children





and effective supports for parents. These observations informed government ministries in the creation of principles of practice embedded in the Ontario Best Start initiative in 2005, eventually leading to the establishment of full-day kindergarten.

(There is an explosion of interest in the science of early child development.)

Ontario's bold step in offering full-day kindergarten has leveled the playing field for all children in the province. But leveling the playing field requires high-quality, research-informed, developmentally appropriate curriculum and practice. The new Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program (2010) recognizes the need for play and inquiry. Sound familiar? Of course, this has been the model of exemplary teaching at Jackman ICS

for 88 years! Intentionally designed play and active learning are natural paths for children's learning. For example, we have many studies showing that pre-readers can master early language and literacy skills through playful activities such as singing as opposed to drills. Other studies show that mathematical understanding can also be enhanced in a similar way with active exploration of concrete materials.

Presently there is rapidly emerging evidence on brain development, epigenetics (the way that environments and experiences can affect the expression of a person's genes) and the importance of investing early. As our research moves forward in this context, and Jackman ICS sees the completion of its

new building, we aspire to have the new space provide opportunities for outreach activity, an enhanced vision for full-day kindergarten with on-site child and family centres, and integrated learning at all levels, here and beyond our own doors.

Ontario's Kindergarten Milestones

- Ontario Day Nurseries Act (1946)
- The Exemplary Kindergarten Study(1992)
- Ontario Ministry of Education Kindergarten Program (1998 and 2006)
- Ontario Best Start (2005)
- Pilot Studies: Toronto First Duty (2002-12)
- Peel Research project (2008-ongoing)
- Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program (2010)

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? Class of 1993



Standing: L to R - Selina Schmocker, Lorna Wright, Samantha Banack, Adam Harvie, Daniel Sliwka, Sean Henderson, Brian Dickson, Alison Haynes, Alison Broverman, Stephen Shore. **Seated:** Abra Shiner, Henry Kestler, Tim Groves, Glenn Hui, Myrto Mylopoulos, David Spevick
Here's who we were able to track down 20 years later! We apologize to those we could not reach and invite all grads to contact us at: elizabeth.morley@utoronto.ca.

Samantha Banack graduated from McGill University in English in Cultural Studies and Sociology. Her career has included development and finance, live action production and festivals (including TIFF). She works at The Mill in London, England where she coordinates design and digital projects.

Alison Broverman studied at York University and has worked at the CBC for several years on a variety of projects including CBC Books. She currently produces a program for CBC Radio called *How to Do It*.

Tim Groves is a freelance reporter and investigative researcher in Toronto. His articles and blog focus on surveillance, national security, environmental justice and First Nations struggles.

Adam Harvie graduated from Concordia University with a Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Science with a Fine Arts Speciality. He is an independent website builder and designer in Montreal. In July, Adam became a father to baby Elsa Maeve.

Alison Haynes graduated from U of T with a Bachelor of Music Performance, and moved to the west coast. She is currently studying athletic and exercise therapy at Camosun College in Victoria BC.

Sean Henderson is head of the science department at Eastern Commerce Collegiate Institute in Toronto. He became a new dad in September. Baby Declan is also the first grandchild for Sean's mom, Lab School drama teacher, Sarah Murray.

Glenn Hui studied Computer Science and Statistics at U of T, completed a Master of Science degree at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He currently works as a Senior Survey Analyst at the Statistics Centre in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Henry Kestler studied at George Brown College and the Second City Conservatory Program. He works in Toronto as an event architect and photographer.

Sarah Lipton has a Masters of Nursing from U of T. She works as a critical care response team nurse at the Hospital for Sick Children and also works as the on-call coordinator of organ and tissue donation at Trillium Gift of Life. Sarah is the mother of two-year old Brandon, and 4-month old Bronwyn.

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Alumni Profile: George Polanyi-Williamson (Class of 2009)

Commitment to social justice started at the Lab School

By Suzanne Schwenger

George Polanyi-Williamson is clear that his passion for politics and community change was sparked during his nine years at Jackman ICS. As he says, "ICS helped to prepare me and my peers to think about the world around us and the broader community environment."

Now a Grade 11 student in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at Monarch Park Collegiate Institute, George first became interested in current events during morning news presentations in Grade 5. Incensed by an article in *The Globe and Mail* in which an author referred to all children as 'vicious dwarfs', George wrote a Letter to the Editor saying that, "If I, as a 10-year-old, were to generalize about adults based on what she has written, I would say all adults are vicious giants." The newspaper published the letter.

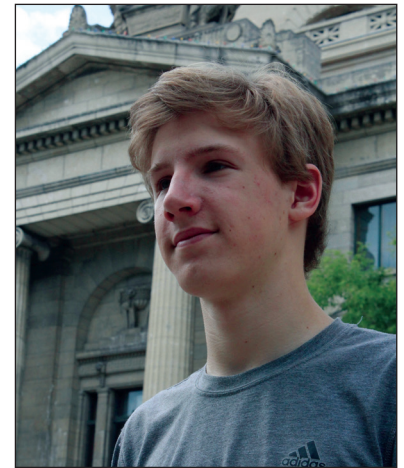
Graduating in 2009, George moved to Spectrum Alternative Senior School for Grades 7 and 8. Despite the much bigger class size, he found the transition to be remarkably smooth. As he puts it, "we already knew how to be good questioners and inquirers, work in groups, ask the teacher for help and look for answers on our own."

George got his first taste of real politics in Grade 8 when he volunteered for George Smitherman's campaign in the Toronto mayoral election. Even though his candidate went down to defeat, George loved the experience. With the approach of high school, he wondered if there was a way to use his growing interest in politics as an opportunity to learn about the neighbourhood around Monarch Park Collegiate in Toronto's east end. After joining the New Democratic Party as a youth member, he walked into the local Toronto-Danforth office to volunteer his services. That summer, George knocked on many doors and learned a lot

about his new high school community and local issues. Political engagement continues to play a big role in George's life.

Although his two hardest academic years in the IB program (Grades 11-12) are just beginning, George is thrilled with his high school curriculum. "The whole idea is to stay well-rounded," he explains. He particularly appreciates the IB's focus on global issues, another interest which was fostered back at the Lab School. Outside of the classroom, he has participated in debating, Reach For the Top and the History Team. He also volunteers at a soup kitchen and a swim school. Not surprisingly, he was elected Class Representative in Grade 9.

Looking back, he gives the Lab School credit for launching his involvement in politics and social justice. "No matter what class it was, we would think about other people in our community—near and far. From cleaning up Kendal Park to raising money for people struggling in another part of the world, we learned how to get involved." For current Jackman ICS students who are getting ready to graduate, George has this message: "Keep thinking about what you can do personally. Whether it's politics, fundraising or volunteering, you can make a difference!"



George at the Manitoba Legislature, Summer 2013

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Myrto Mylopoulos is a post-doctoral teaching fellow in the philosophy department at Fordham University in New York. Her research focuses on the philosophy of mind, philosophy of action, and cognitive science. She is especially interested in the relationship between action and consciousness.

Emer Schlosser studied at Western and became an online writer, editor and content manager, with a passion for films and food. She is the Arts & Entertainment Editor at Addicted (lifestyle and entertainment news) and also works as a copywriter at BlueBand Digital in Toronto.

Selina Schmocker graduated from Queen's University with a degree in Biology and Psychology. She works as the research coordinator at the Zane Cohen Centre for Digestive Diseases at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto.

Abra Shiner is an artist living in Toronto. Her colourful and whimsical pen and ink illustrations can be viewed online at 'Packrat Printed Goods'.

Stephen Shore graduated from Dalhousie University with a degree in Economics and Statistics, and went on to study law at the University of Toronto. He works as a Labour and Employment Lawyer at the firm Sherrard Kuzz LLP.

Daniel Sliwka studied at the Ontario College of Art and Design. He now lives in London, England, where he designs websites, print media and 3D graphics.

David Spevick completed Masters Degrees in Business Administration and Information Systems from Boston University's School of Management. He currently works at Artez Interactive in Toronto.

Visit the Jackman ICS website regularly for upcoming events and news: www.oise.utoronto.ca/ics

Carol Stephenson: Celebrating 20 years of a Master Teacher

By Norah L'Esperance

In September of 2000, I was an idealistic student in the Institute of Child Study's MA program. Holding high my fervent ideals for what was possible in education, I entered my first placement: a real-life elementary school classroom. Perhaps too quickly, I was disenchanting. When I brought my disappointment to our Practicum Coordinator, however, she had the remedy: she placed me in Carol Stephenson's classroom. Carol was then, and continues to be, an inspirational model of what it is to be a teacher and a demonstration of what is possible in education.

Eight years before I landed in her classroom, Carol herself was a student teacher in the (then) Diploma program, placed in Elizabeth Morley's Grade 3/4 classroom. Since 1993, Carol has been a Lab School teacher, mentoring student teachers, connecting with researchers and sharing her passion for learning with children and parents. She has taught all the early grades from Nursery to Grade One, including 13 years as the Senior Kindergarten teacher. Confidence has been a hallmark of her work since she first arrived, always ready to embrace opportunities while looking for ways to shape and improve the program. For two decades, Carol has shared her intelligence, values and sense of fun with the Lab School community.



Carol's first Nursery class in 1993

As a teacher, Carol brings her love of sketching, joy in music and scientific curiosity to her classroom curriculum. Even more importantly, she brings her keen ability to "read" other people, to understand the emotions and thinking behind their behaviour. As one parent explains, "Carol's insights into each child's learning style, personality, strengths and weaknesses point to how intimately involved she becomes in the

Alumni ECHO's Editors are Tracy Pryce, Suzanne Schwenger ('69) and Kristen Thomson. Kristen is the mother of Samir and Zayd (Grade 3) and Nyla (Grade 1). Tracy is the mother of Anna (Grade 2) and Sophia (JK). Suzanne teaches Primary Music at Jackman ICS and is the mother of Maddy Bondy ('05).

experience of each of the children in her classroom." A colleague who travelled overseas with Carol, remarks on her ability to read the emotions and gestures of people everywhere."

While Carol shines in the classroom, her contribution to the school outside the classroom is equally robust. Her work on fundraising events, school-wide arts opportunities and a host of committees has helped to shape the vision and practice of the school. The expectations she has for the children in her class – that they listen, offer ideas and treat each other with respect — is something she demonstrates herself as a colleague. Carol can often be found in a leadership role, not because she has sought out the spotlight, but because she is so fully engaged and has so much to share.



Carol in 2013. One Lab School parent describes her as, "an incredibly perceptive and empathetic teacher who has the uncanny ability to delve deeply into the consciousnesses of a child and connect with them on this level!"

"Teachers everywhere tend to understand they are meeting a Master teacher, and a person with untold experience and wisdom to share."

Lab School teacher, reflecting on traveling with Carol

Perhaps most significant, is Carol's keen ability to move from theory to practice, and back again. Toronto journalist Alanna Mitchell was inspired to write about Carol's Senior Kindergarten kite project because it was such a clear example of the connection between new ideas in neuroscience and education. One need only walk around Carol's classroom to see what learning looks like: the walls are covered with children's drawings, theories, questions and descriptions of the very real problems they are tackling together. In demonstration lessons, Carol has inspired visitors, fellow teachers with the nuanced way she works with children and draws out the best in them. Carol makes educational theory real; she makes ideas visible, achievable and fun.

The Lab School website describes Jackman ICS as, "an exciting learning environment for young children, their parents, graduate students, and researchers to work together toward deep understanding." At the heart of this community of learners is the Lab School teacher. For 20 years, Carol Stephenson has shared her passion and talents in this role, shaping the school and its ongoing contribution to the wider educational community.