



Dr. Eric Jackman

Institute of Child Study

# Alumni ECHO NEWS

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

## New Principal Richard Messina's Vision for the Road Ahead

By Richard Messina



Richard Messina, Fall 2015

Einstein reportedly said that he discovered the theory of relativity by simply ignoring a few basic axioms. Dick Fosbury had the same approach when developing his Olympic gold-medal winning high jump technique, the "Fosbury flop". As I begin the 2015-16 school year as the new Principal of the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study Laboratory School, I pledge to the continued examination and rejection of certain axioms such as the segregating of students by social class, by types of learners, and the segregating of curriculum. This will allow us to continue moving forward towards a renewed vision for the school and our 200 students, while helping us achieve our public purpose of excellence in childhood education, teacher education and cutting edge research.

In order for our Lab School to be a vital resource for educational policy makers, public school education and to the University, we need to be broadly

inclusive. We must reflect the diversity of our society in the student and teacher populations, in the curricula, in our instructional methods, and in our partnerships.

A child starting Nursery this fall will graduate in the third decade of the 21st century, an era that will demand creativity and ingenuity, responsibility and compassion. That Nursery student's ability to positively thrive depends largely on the experiences s/he has at school. Those experiences will be shaped by adults, by peers, and by places – the physical environments where the learning takes place.

For this reason our architect partners have designed our new building for tomorrow's world. We will support this vision of place with student admission policies that support all forms of diversity in equity and accessibility. Our fundraising will be aimed primarily to support the social economic diversity of the student population. Our teaching-faculty will continue to represent many different backgrounds and histories, in order to provide a broad range of role models to provide students with powerful experiences of learning from mentors of various cultures.

We will build on work that enhances our influence outside our walls and that incubates programs, products, policies and research within. Jackman ICS has been successful in disseminating its insights at educational conferences and through the publication of the teacher resource, **Natural Curiosity**. We will explore innovative uses of technology with the aim of transforming the learning experience. Strengthening our

symbiotic relationship with the MA CSE teacher-education program will allow the clinically grounded knowledge of professionals to meld with the theoretical, abstract world of the researcher. We are eagerly exploring new technology and platforms to share samples of our work with other educators and our parent community, starting with our website and new Twitter account @JackmanICS.

Much of our future is carried forward in the capable hands of our exceptional teaching team at the Lab School. They build social capital by affirming what is effective and encouraging continued growth. Together we will work to deepen our understanding of pedagogy through reflection, positive purposeful peer interaction, transparency of practice, and the introduction of innovative, research-supported theories of learning. As an experienced administrator and adult educator, I intimately understand the value of our collaborative approach.

One axiom that my 7 years as Lab School Vice Principal taught me to never ignore: we all benefit from a learning environment that values security, a developmental approach, and inquiry. I have been very fortunate in my career to benefit from many mentors and a variety of unique roles that have fostered an understanding of how children learn best – in a secure learning environment that inspires deep understanding, creativity, curiosity, and confidence to flourish. Such an environment that honours diversity and values an interconnected community, in which all members feel known, respected, and supported as active, engaged participants, is important. Welcome to the Jackman ICS environment!

# Principal's message

By Richard Messina

It has been a year of change. At the end of the 2014/15 school year, we said goodbye to several key long-time staff members – Dean Julia O'Sullivan, Director Joan Peskin, Principal Elizabeth Morley, Professor Joan Moss, and Business Officer Penny Deligiannis. We wish them all the best as they move forward into their retirements and future endeavours.

While fondly looking back on the Lab School's history, this issue of the Alumni Echo looks forward to a renewed vision for its future. I am thrilled to be taking on my new role as Principal of the Lab School with several wonderful people beside me. We welcome Professor Clare Kosnick as the new Director of the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study. Dr. Kosnick brings considerable experience in academic leadership to this important role and she is internationally recognized for her contribution to scholarship in teacher education.

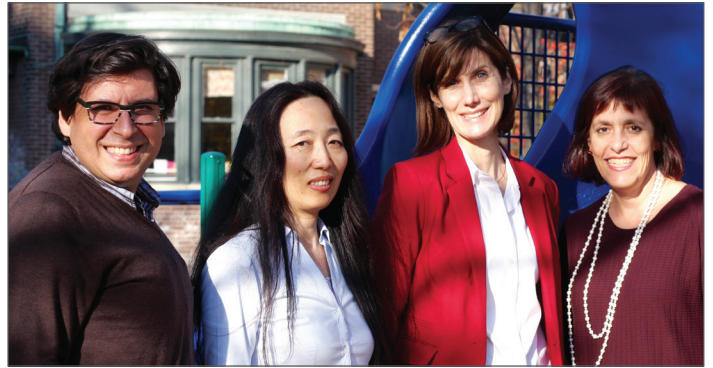
During this important time in the history of the Lab School and MA program, we could not be in better hands with Dr. Clare Kosnick as Director. Dr. Kosnick understands what makes our Institute unique and brings with her a wealth of diverse experiences, vast research, and wisdom to truly explore what is possible.

It is with particular delight that I welcome Chriss Bogert as the new Vice Principal of the Lab School. Many of us know Chriss as a wonderful educator and leader who is inspiring to students, teachers and parents alike. Chriss has had many ties to Jackman ICS: student of the Graduate Diploma of Child Study (Honours); research assistant; staff member; President of the Parents' Association; and parent of three Lab School students. In 1997, she was hired as the ICS Nursery teacher.

Chriss maintained a connection with us during her early parenting years as the Lab School's first Research Coordinator, and then as the Parents' Association Vice President and President. She returned to full-time teaching as Teacher Librarian and Technology Integrator from 2008 to 2013, demonstrating a deep understanding of the progression of children's development across the grades. Passionate about social justice and children's rights education, Chriss began the student-led Social Justice Club, developing a curriculum that shaped a new standard of excellence at our school. Teachers, faculty and staff are thrilled to be working with such a caring, competent, and hard working person.

We are delighted to have Jun Cheng, as our business officer. Jun comes to us from OISE and has proven to be a wonderful addition to our team.

Please join me in welcoming them.



L to R: Richard Messina, Jun Cheng, Chriss Bogert and Clare Kosnick.

## Elizabeth Morley's Retirement Celebration Generates \$60 000+ in Donations for Tuition Support

A strong and clear voice for all that the school is, Elizabeth Morley retired after 22 years of service as Principal of the Laboratory School. Elizabeth's dedication to the Lab School's mission of excellence in childhood education, teacher education, and research in an intentionally diverse environment has ensured the Lab School's position as a hub of innovation, providing value to public school education, to educational policy makers, and to the University of Toronto.

Celebrations of Elizabeth were held at the Lab School with the current students presenting her the gifts of a beautiful hand-made quilt featuring each child's drawing and a song written and per-

formed by the entire school. There was also a celebration at the University of Toronto's Hart House, for alumni students, and family and friends of the Lab School, at which guests paid tribute to Elizabeth and announced gifts recognizing her many accomplishments, including the dedication of the lunchroom in the new school building, named in Elizabeth's honour. The school's 2015/16 Artist-in-Residence, Métis artist Christi Belcourt, will work with the children to create murals for the walls of this highly anticipated room.

We are delighted to announce that more than \$60 000 was raised in Elizabeth's name for the Diana Rankin/Muncaster

Family Tuition Support Fund. Thanks to all who donated, especially to our anonymous donors who offered matching funds. Tuition support is dear to Elizabeth, as it extends the reach of the school, enriching the school as a diverse, inclusive, sustainable, accessible, and exceptional place for all to learn.

Donations are still being accepted in honour of Elizabeth. Please visit: [www.donate.utoronto.ca/give/show/183](http://www.donate.utoronto.ca/give/show/183)

Make cheques payable to "University of Toronto" (in the memo line, please note: "Elizabeth Morley Gift/Tuition Support Fund"), and mail or deliver to:

**Jun Cheng, Business Officer**  
Dr. Eric Jackman ICS ,  
45 Walmer Road , Toronto, ON M5R 2X2



# Current Events: What's "News" in Grade 5/6?

By Julia Murray

As a student in the MA program at the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study, a career goal of mine was to someday work within the walls of their Laboratory School. I was inspired by their philosophy of Inquiry teaching and incredible respect for learning and for students. I wished that I too had the fortune to attend a school with teachers that gently guided discovery, and paid attention to the emotional social life of the classroom with the same loving and watchful eye as their curriculum and learning goals.

It has now been more than 7 years since I was a Masters student, and this institution still inspires and leads the way in innovative, enriched, and re-researched-based practice. JICS has been called "One of the most progressive and successful schools in the world" by the Vanier Institute, earning this reputation for many reasons. One of these is the pioneering, creative and passionate way in which its teachers deliver the curriculum. As inscribed in the teacher handbook, the curriculum at JICS must be: challenging and coherent, creative and responsive, as well as integrated and holistic. All teachers at JICS accomplish these goals in many incredible ways, but a distinct aspect of the Grade 5/6 classroom's programming that embodies this approach is the "News" program.

At JICS, the study of current events is very unique. Every day, four or five students bring in an article that they believe is important in the context of the world and to the learning of other students in the class. The article can be sourced from any reputable media outlet, from *The Globe and Mail* to *National Geographic*, and is decided upon by the child and his or her family. Students are responsible for summarizing, explaining, and defining the article, framing the discussion for the rest of the class by sharing both their opinions and their reasons for choosing the article.

When a student chooses an article, it is usually because the topic is personally interesting and important to them. They are responsible for teaching the class about why they have chosen it, and as they sit in front of their peers summarizing the main points, pronouncing and



defining difficult vocabulary, increasing their reading fluency, answering questions about content, and diplomatically hearing others' opinions, they are practicing many of the important expectations from the Ontario Language Curriculum. More importantly, though, they are becoming worldly, understanding, open-minded, and knowledgeable individuals.

The nature of each student's article varies. Covering topics in politics, technological innovation, discoveries in the natural world and a host of other topics, the variety of interests and concerns demonstrates the uniqueness of each individual student and their understanding of the world, providing opportunities for students to learn from one another. Some may see this as a rather daunting task for an 11-year old, but at JICS we are accustomed to seeking out a much deeper, more sophisticated way of thinking from children, knowing that in all subjects they have the ability to understand infinitely more than most adults believe they can.

Over the course of a Grade 5/6 school year, almost no topic is untouched. After sorting through a single term of news articles last January that were posted on our bulletin board, we counted a total of 110 articles spanning many topics including Science and Technology, Culture, Politics, War, Crime and Justice, Sports, Entertainment, Indigenous Issues, Weather and Environment, Human Rights, and History.

What the students learn from these articles helps to shape their views of

society: in last year's "News" program, my Grade 5/6 students learned how the Canadian Government makes decisions about going to war in other countries. They learned that despite incredible progress in people's attitudes and understanding about difference, racism is still alive not only in Ferguson, Missouri, but all over the world, including in Canada. They learned that while politicians and media icons work very hard to represent people's wishes and ideals, they are not infallible, but humans who can and do make mistakes. They learned about our healthcare system in Canada and in other parts of the world, understanding the potential for disease and outbreak regardless of solid policies and tireless human effort. They learned that people live in unique ways, practicing beautiful traditions and experiencing different cultures but that much of the world lives in poverty that is unimaginable to many of us, and that we need to care, be aware, and take our responsibility as compassionate, global citizens and activists seriously.

As a teacher, I feel privileged to be in a position to help guide this learning and the expansion of our students' understanding about the world, and to witness the subtle but profound developmental and emotional shift from September to June. If you can, I encourage you to listen closely out in the yard at recess, or at home, and you might just overhear a debate about politics or a conversation about equity that will put a smile on your face - or tempt you to join the conversation!

# The Enduring Impact of Special Friends

By Beth Corcoran

*“We learn through friendship to look with the eye of another person, to listen with her ears, and to feel with her heart.”*



Alfred Adler (1870-1937), psychiatrist, psychotherapist and founder of the school of individual psychology spoke these words when describing the development of empathy, relationships and connection. Moreover, he believed that in order for children and adults to thrive and flourish, they must master what he called the Crucial C's - Connect, Capable, Count and Courage. How relevant these words and principles are in the context of the Special Friends program at Jackman ICS.

Anne Cassidy, former Lab School teacher and current leader in education, developed the Special Friends program at JICS in the late 1980's. A beautiful and forward-thinking initiative, Special Friends has brought students of all ages together for over 25 years with a focus on friendship, relationships, connection and community. It was my great pleasure to speak to Anne about this program and its roots.

*“It is not just a reading buddy program, it is more than that; it is about drawing side-by-side, being together, doing what you do in a family, and getting to know each other.”*

The idea for Special Friends was born from Anne's keen observations of her Grade 5 classroom and the school as a whole. The close, family-like relationships amongst students in her class, and those in the other classrooms, did not extend across grades and ages. While the school was thriving, there was some isolation amongst grades; it was Anne's hope to bring children together of all ages and stages so they could share their different interests, learn about, and from each other, and “just be together”.

The program started by matching the Grade 5 students with the SK class, once a week on Fridays. It quickly grew to its current formation - a program in which all children from JK - Grade 6 participate. Described as a “true gift” by a JICS parent, this program has been a huge success for several years and brings a tremendous amount of joy and connection to young and older students alike.

Each JICS teacher is committed to shaping the program in ways that work for his or her current cohort, making it flexible and personal for each child through carefully selected teacher matches. The school's youngest students are paired with the oldest children, allowing Grade 5 and 6 students to build relationships with

JK and SK students in activities that focus on activity sharing, learning, reading, talking and being. Additionally, Grade 4 and 1 children and Grade 2 and 3 students are matched together in a peer-mentor model, seamlessly bridging the transition to a true mentoring role.





At the beginning of the school year, Special Friends meet for the first time. In some cases, each child is given a puzzle piece that he/she must match with another student; the puzzle is connected and a special friendship is born. This first activity takes courage, and forms the connection of friendship. Throughout the year, Special Friends come together weekly to share an activity, a conversation, a task or book. And, on special occasions such as the Terry Fox Run, Lunar New Year celebrations, or the Halloween parade, Special Friends offer reassurance and a familiar face; they can be found side-by-side, at times hand-in-hand, experiencing school events and celebrations.

Giving the older children responsibility for this special relationship sends them an encouraging message about their capabilities as leaders and friends. As Anne recalls: "I taught a young boy in Grade 5/6 who was going through

a tough time. This boy developed a lovely relationship with his Special Friend. I had an opportunity to watch him evolve and change his way of being when he became a mentor to his Special Friend. He saw himself in a different light."

The Special Friends program has endured at JICS, making lasting impressions on students and teachers alike. Anne recently re-connected with a JICS alumnus who said: "After all these years, I still have my puzzle piece from SK."

Thank you, Anne, for the gift of the Special Friends program at JICS. It is one of several enriching and truly special programs at our school, helping our children build meaningful relationships, develop empathy, and master the Crucial C's. These areas of development will have a lasting impact for them, and for us all.

*"My Special Friend read stories to me...it was something to look forward to on Fridays."  
– Tate, SK*

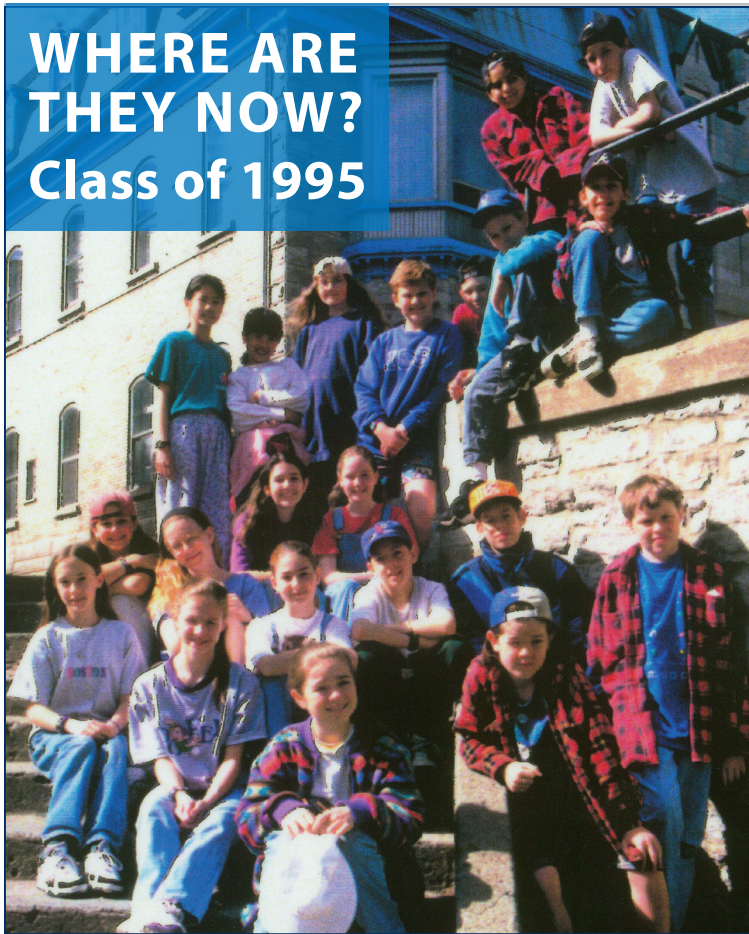
*"My favourite part was being with the little kids and reading to them. Their cute faces were always so excited to see us. It also gave us a chance to spend time with kids in the younger grades that we wouldn't have seen without being a Special Friend." – Toby, Grade 3*

*"Having a special friend was a really nice way to connect with kids in other grades. When I was little, it felt special when the big kids read us stories. When I was older, it was fun to be the big kid."  
– Liam, class of 2003*





# WHERE ARE THEY NOW? Class of 1995



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 with updated contact information, especially the class of 1996, who will be featured in the next issue of the Alumni Echo. [richard.messina@utoronto.ca](mailto:richard.messina@utoronto.ca)

Back Row, L to R: Nick Morley, Patrick Harvie  
4th Row: Liliane Nguyen, Grace Hui, Kathleen Lewis, Graham Durrant-Taylor, Luke Cronin, Kevin Armstrong, Gabriel Bourgeois  
3rd Row: Lindsay Banack, Jessica Grant, Jenny Bosworth  
2nd Row: Celina Carter, Lindsey Wepler, Sasha Manes, Alex Carter, Thomas Lipton, John Jordan  
Front Row: Ashley Weisel, Kathy McDonald, Mack Thompson

**Graham Durrant-Taylor** is currently a lawyer at the TD Bank.

He lives in Toronto and regularly sees many of his former classmates. In his spare time he likes to go to restaurants, watch Netflix, and figure out how he's going to get his kids into Jackman ICS.

**Jessica Grant** completed her B.A. (Hons) from McGill University in Religious Studies and her LL.B. from the University of Ottawa. Jessica is a litigator practicing at Blaney McMurtry LLP in Toronto. She is married to a New York based lawyer and divides her time between Toronto and New York.

**Grace Hui** graduated from Queen's University with a Bachelor of Commerce. She articulated at Deloitte & Touche and then pursued her passion for charity work, volunteering in Jordan before landing back in Toronto at The MasterCard Foundation, working on scholarship programs for disadvantaged youth from sub-Saharan Africa. Grace is active with her church and likes playing ultimate frisbee.

**John Jordan** "I've spent the last seven years in Europe, moving around between Oxford, Dresden, and Tubingen. I am currently working as a postdoc (history) at the University of Bern and coaching American football for a local club team here. We were Swiss champions last year."

**Kathleen Lewis** is currently an infant mental health worker and lactation consultant in the youth shelter system in Toronto, working primarily with pregnant and parenting youth. She is completing a Masters of Social Work at Ryerson. She fondly remembers the generosity and compassion of her ICS teachers and classmates.

**Thomas Lipton** "My life has changed a lot recently. In December, my son Atticus was born - which has been endlessly rewarding (and tiring). In January, my wife Palma, Atticus, and I moved back to Toronto from Boston for a new job I started at the law firm of Blake, Cassels and Graydon. I am excited to be home!"

**Sasha Manes** completed her M. Ed. at OISE, in Adult Education and Community Development. She works for YWCA Toronto in the Philanthropy Department. Sasha and her husband Chris live in the Annex, around the corner from her still-best-friends and alumni classmates Lindsay Banack, Celina Carter and Jenny Bosworth. Sasha's first baby is due in November 2015.

**Nick Morley** completed the Adventure Tourism Business Operations program at College of the Rockies, followed by an undergrad in Anthropology from the University of Victoria. He first worked at the Land Conservancy of BC and is currently at the Toronto Wildlife Centre - Canada's largest wildlife veterinary hospital. Nick continues his studies in Human Resources Management at Ryerson.

*continued on page 7*

**Kevin Armstrong** "I work as a forest firefighter in the summer, and a ski patroller, avalanche technician, and avalanche educator in the winter. I spend my free time gallivanting around the mountains, rock climbing or biking. My girlfriend is a home-schooled hippy teacher and our house overlooks a lake and mountains. Q: Where am I? A(backwards): CB, NOSLEN"

**Lindsay Banack** graduated with a BA in philosophy from the University of Guelph. Her career in events began while running the successful catering company, The Food Dudes. She currently works as an Event Consultant at CIBC, managing the venue for internal events at their head office in downtown Toronto.

**Jenny Bosworth** lives with her husband, Ben in the Annex and works as a real estate agent on the Ophira Sutton Team, servicing the Annex and downtown Toronto. As an agent, Jenny has the pleasure of maintaining ties to JICS by working with current families and past peers who now call the Annex home.

**Gabriel Bourgeois** "I've spent the last 9 years in New York, working in finance/consulting with a focus on the energy industry. I am currently managing a team within Bain Capital that invests in the debt and equity of energy companies. Still working on art and music in my free time."

**Alex Carter** After graduating from UWO, Alex went back-packing around Europe and met his wife, Haelie. They now live in the Annex with their two children, Rylie and Hudson. Alex competes on the World Squash Doubles Tour while owning a successful Wealth Advisory Business. The kids have applied to JICS and hopefully the family tradition will live on!

**Celina Carter** After living on both coasts of Canada, Celina returned to the Annex five years ago! She writes, dances, and travels the world. Professionally, she is a Registered Nurse and researcher at Ryerson University with expertise in urban community health and vulnerable populations. In September, she embarks on her Doctoral studies at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health.

# Alumni Profile: Simon Sutcliffe

By Suzanne Schwenger

## Lab School encouraged an optimistic belief that the human condition could be positively changed

Simon Sutcliffe is on a Platonic quest for a higher truth. That's why, in the fall of 2014, he founded an online magazine called Matigari, ([www.matigari.com](http://www.matigari.com)) which looks at the ideas of truth and justice in society.

Simon attended Greenwood College School after graduating from JICS in 2009, during which time he focused on social sciences and humanities. He became engaged with the New Democratic Party of Canada due to the influence of his peer and fellow grad from JICS, George Polanyi-Williamson.

**"I think that this Deweyian education that focuses not on competition but co-operation, at JICS ... has an intensely optimistic belief that the human condition can be changed through early childhood education."**

Simon remembers that the transition to Greenwood was difficult as the new school was double the size of JICS and he was the only one from his class to attend Greenwood for Grade 7. Yet, he feels that JICS set him up for success: "I thought that JICS prepared me to enjoy learning for learning's sake and that will forever make any educational transition very easy." When Simon looks back on his years at JICS, he remembers being ex-

cited about school, and "...being excited to learn everyday with such amazing teachers, such as Julie Comay!" Simon's inspiration for creating the online magazine Matigari came from a book of the same name written by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, which follows the journey of the protagonist, Matigari, through a ravaged postcolonial Kenya as he searches for truth and justice. Simon devoured all of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's books while visiting Kenya himself. "This book was so profoundly inspirational to me, it caused me to create this magazine after

reading it, to pose questions on issues and hopefully answer them, to be on a Platonic quest for a higher truth." Simon invited his former school chum, George Polanyi-Williamson, to join him in this venture.

George is currently working as an editor on the magazine and has recently contributed two major features in the magazine. Simon recalls, "I reached out



to George when I was starting the magazine, and we have collaborated quite closely ever since, he is my biggest aide in writing the magazine."

Although the magazine is intentionally non-partisan, this past summer Simon worked as an intern in the office of the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Hon. Thomas Mulcair. He is now in his first year at the University of Toronto's University College studying Philosophy, Political Science, and History.

A dedicated learner and deep thinker himself, Simon has these words of wisdom for current JICS students: "Enjoy learning, for the sake of learning!"

*Where are they now?, continued from page 6*

**Liliane Nguyen** graduated from George Brown College with a Marketing diploma. After traveling around Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and Vietnam, she worked at various media agencies. She currently works at Rogers Sportsnet and lives in Toronto. She stays active by coaching skating, playing floor hockey and learning new trampoline skills.

**Ashley Weisel** graduated from the Ontario Veterinary College in 2011 with her DVM after obtaining her Bachelor of Science from McGill University. Ashley is currently a small animal veterinarian practicing in Elmira, ON. She lives in Waterloo with her fiancé and their many four legged creatures.

**Lindsey Wepler** completed degrees from Queen's University and the University of London before attending law school at Dalhousie. She practiced

corporate law but after great experiences with the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Refugee Law Office, she decided to specialize in Refugee and Immigration Law. She lives in the Annex and has started her own firm as a sole practitioner.

### ***The class of '95 suffered the loss of three great friends:***

**Patrick Harvie** (remembered by Nick Morley) I was lucky enough to continue my friendship with Patrick into the beginning of high school. Patrick was always up for an adventure and would push the comfort levels of many of his friends. He taught me to live life to the fullest. Patrick also taught me something else. He was with me through some of the hardest points in my life, he taught me that a true friend will always be there through the tough times, not just the good.

**Robert Kingsley** (remembered by Celina Carter) Robert was the sweetest gentle giant. He would wait at the classroom door every morning with the biggest hug in the world for his classmates, often lifting us off of our feet! Robert left ICS after grade two, but we still saw him at birthday parties and, of course, Hot Dog Night. No matter how big we got, his fantastic hug still lifted us off our feet. Although Robert passed away while we were all still young, he will always be remembered as a very important member of our ICS family.

**Andrew Prince** (a remembrance by Nick Morley) To my memory, Andrew was a little shy. But once he felt comfortable and trusted you, he was the most generous and sincere person. I remember playing with his electric train set in his basement. He let me drive the train and set up a new track. Andrew modelled the importance of sharing.



## Honouring Julie Comay By Carol Stephenson

This year, for the first time in eighteen years, school started at Jackman ICS without Julie Comay welcoming 22 excited children into her classroom. Having taught many grades here – Grade 2, SK, Nursery and JK – Julie's contributions to her students, peers, and the school itself will have lasting significance.

Anyone who has had the pleasure of working with Julie, if asked to describe their experiences, will touch upon her intellect and curiosity. Initially a student of philosophy, Julie brings a degree of rigorous abstract thinking to procedural and pedagogical discussion that is both daunting and inspirational. She has been known to scrutinize and deconstruct a decision or judgment, refusing to accept anything – whether school traditions, educational philosophy, or psychology trends – at face value.

A prodigious and wide-ranging reader, Julie regularly shared interesting journals and articles from a multitude of sources, emphatic that we must always look beyond our own walls and practice, to ensure our choices are informed, thoughtful and dedicated to ensuring the safest and most supportive environment for the children it will affect. Her unflinching, wide-ranging questions – “Why would we do it that way? How would that affect a four-year old? What could go wrong if we proceed in this way?” – always making us stop to think more deeply about our decisions and their possible outcomes.

Julie's refusal to take things at face value is inherent in her work with children in the classroom. She acknowledges and makes room for each child in their own quirkiness, knowing that such are the characteristics that can be the very best part of a person. She supports children with their struggles while shepherding the many positives that exist alongside and emerge from the challenges. She is masterful at that.

During her time at JICS, Julie was involved in two major academic projects. One was her award-winning PhD thesis Individual differences in narrative

perspective-taking and theory of mind (2008). Julie's classrooms were always rich in fabulous books and stories, and for her thesis she considered how one could track and assess a child's trajectory of growing developmental sophistication through their comprehension of story and their own storytelling – because, of course, Julie took down lots of stories!



Julie's other big project was a collaboration with her friend and fellow doctoral student, Mary Thelander, who led the investigation into ways in which intensive exposure to sophisticated books and oral stories can build both language and social reasoning skills in children. This longitudinal research took place in public school classrooms (JK through Grade 3) designated as high needs, encompassing students from a multitude of languages and cultures. Common thinking held that second-language vocabulary could only be built slowly and incrementally.

The teacher would read a book where it might say: “THE BALL. THE BIG RED BALL. THE SMALL RED BALL. THE SMALL BLUE BALL,” perhaps having the class repeat each phrase. The work that Julie was supporting asked: “What if we expose children to fabulous stories, to whole narratives rather than pared down language concepts? How will that affect vocabulary development?

How will that affect engagement with story and literature? How will that affect children's reading and writing as they move through school?” What they found was that in a language and story-rich environment the children's vocabulary and narrative sophistication grew by leaps and bounds, as did their understanding of the subtleties of human motivation and interaction. Based on the documented transformation of children and teachers alike, the program has now been adopted in a wide range

of schools in Ontario and beyond.

In thinking of all the ways Julie has enriched our school and practice, I invariably return to her absolute dedication to the individual. As a teacher, one often tries to balance the needs of each child with the needs of the class community as a whole. Yet more than any of us, Julie always – always! – found the time to see, delight, and respond deeply to each of the children in her care. Every child in her class felt safe, loved, and known. For parents, myself included, this was profound. We discovered someone who seemed to see and understand our children for the amazing, complex creatures they are. Like the children, we placed our trust in her completely, basking in her wisdom and her warmth.

Julie's commitment to children is not over. It has just moved geographical boundaries. But wherever she goes, what incredibly lucky children she will meet!