

ALUMNI ECHO NEWS

JICS LABORATORY SCHOOL

ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL

WINDY RIDGE



2024-2025 Issue

We are delighted to share the 19th edition of the *Alumni Echo*, bringing you news and updates on the inspiring developments at the Lab School.

Following the momentous 75th-anniversary reunion of the Institute of Child Study (ICS) in 2000, alumni co-chairs Gillian Graham and Anne Tough launched the first *Alumni Echo* edition in Spring 2002. Their vision continues to guide us today to sustain the cherished connection between the school and its alumni community, friends, and supporters. If you would like to view past editions of the *Alumni Echo*, visit www.oise.utoronto.ca/jics/families-alumni/alumni

We hope you enjoy this edition!

Looking ahead, we're especially thrilled to announce that during the 2025-2026 academic year, we will celebrate the Lab School's centennial—an incredible milestone in our shared history!

To make our centennial celebration truly memorable, a series of special events is in the works, and we would love for you to take part.

We're excited to introduce the new JICS alumni engagement directory, *ICS Connects*. We invite you to sign up and encourage your fellow alumni to join as well. Through *ICS Connects*, we aim to create a vibrant platform for alumni to engage with the school and reconnect with one another. Please be sure to share your updated contact information so we can keep you informed of all the upcoming details next year and in years to come.

icsconnects.ca

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Principal's Message

I am proud to mark my 10th year as principal and my 25th year at the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study (JICS) Lab School. As we approach our centennial celebrations, it is a fitting time to reflect on our journey, acknowledging what has remained constant and what has evolved over the years.

Consistent Foundations

For nearly a century, JICS has been a beacon of excellence in early childhood education, teacher education, and research. Our steadfast philosophy emphasizes child security, development, and inquiry-based learning. Even during the pandemic, while many schools reverted to outdated teaching methods, JICS maintained its progressive, child-centered approach, ensuring optimal learning experiences for our students' well-being. This dedication garnered attention from both local and international researchers, resulting in features in Toronto Life Magazine's August 2020 issue "Class Dismissed" and Dr. Aki Murata's book, *Reopening Better Schools: Unexpected Ways COVID-19 Can Improve Education*.

Our student body remains steady at 202, with a robust application waitlist. JICS students consistently perform at the top percentile in assessments, a testament to our academic rigor. Our curriculum continues to prioritize Math, Literacy, Science and Social Studies along with the Arts, with specialty teachers in Drama, Visual Arts, Music, Library, French, and Physical Education. Cherished traditions like Special Friends (started by teacher Anne Cassidy), student-led clubs, and annual events such as the "Festivals of Lights" Sing-along, Art Night, Music Night, and Hot Dog Night persist, enriching our community. Sarah Murray continues to work her magic with the Graduation Play. The daycare staff, led by Anne Marie Bartoli for 30 years, exemplifies loyalty and commitment to the JICS ethos.

We continue to attract exemplary teachers who are skilled and knowledgeable, and we welcome teacher-candidates from the Master of Arts in Child Study and Education Program, fulfilling a fundamental part of our public purpose. The dissemination of resources like Natural Curiosity to Ontario school boards and our teachers' presentations at conferences amplify our impact. Our accolades include the inaugural Outstanding Laboratory School Award from the International Association of Lab Schools in 2016, recognizing our excellence in Research, Professional Development, Curriculum Development, Teacher Education, and Innovation. The Vanier Institute of the Family wrote that

"One of the most progressive and successful schools in the world is the Institute of Child Study...because the teaching is based on the best-understood, most-proven methods, developed over decades of research."

Each year, we attract hundreds of visitors from around the world: researchers, educators, policy makers. Our graduates may remember the annual visits from Kobe Shinwa University, Japan which continue today.



Embracing Change

In 2008, Principal Emerita Elizabeth Morley and JICS parent Bob Muncaster initiated a commitment to diversity, leading to the creation of the Diana Rankin/Muncaster Family Tuition Support Fund. This fund ensures that JICS remains accessible to diverse families, reflecting a range of backgrounds and experiences. Approximately \$200,000 is administered annually for tuition support. Over 50% of our population identifies as members of historically marginalized groups, making JICS the most diverse elementary independent school in Toronto.

We strive to be an environment that honours diversity and values an interconnected community, in which all members feel known, respected, and supported as active, engaged participants.

We have prioritized professional development to respect and support this diversity, fostering an inclusive environment. Books like Ibram Kendi's "How to Be an Antiracist" and Robin Wall Kimmerer's "Braiding Sweetgrass" have guided our journey, along with guest experts (most recently Dr. Ann Lopez, Dr. Mary Reid, Dr. Nicole West-Burns, Rabia Khokhar, Dr. Belinda Longe, Dr. Andrew Campbell) who enrich our understanding. We want to thank the parents of the Class of 2021 for their legacy gift "in support of equity, antiracism and inclusion initiatives across our school community" for helping to fund these events. Initiatives like our "intentionally designed school year" celebrate various cultural heritages and histories, ensuring every student feels seen and valued. We have created space for parent affinity groups to meet, share experiences, and foster a supportive community.

Our commitment to The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action is unwavering. We actively engage with Indigenous educators and communities, incorporating their teachings and perspectives into our curriculum. Ceremonial practices, such as feasting the bundle given to us by the Seven Generations Educational Institute, incorporating Indigenous knowledge and

perspective into the curriculum, inviting Indigenous experts to teach the children, and the collaborative art project with Indigenous artists, Christi Belcourt and Isaac Murdoch, reflect our dedication to this cause.

We are fortunate to have Social Worker, Ellie Lathrop working with individual students and classes. Ellie also offers parent workshops throughout the year. The following are a sample of the sessions held this year: Supporting the Development of Empathy & Perspective Taking; Parenting in the Digital Age; Supporting Your Relationship with Your Child and Their Tech; The Social Lives of Children; How to Support Your Child Through the Ups and Downs of Friendship; Supporting Your Child's Relationship with Food.

The physical transformation of our school at 45 Walmer Road, including the Margaret and Wallace McCain Pavilion, has expanded our capacity to offer exemplary education. Our state-of-the-art facilities, including a new music/drama/lunch space "Elizabeth's room" and renovated classrooms, provide an enriched learning environment. The light-filled gym has significantly enhanced our Physical Education program (eliminating the need for walks to UTS for gym classes). It also enables us to host intramural sports and competitive teams that engage with TDSB schools. This versatile space transforms into our auditorium, named in honour of Fraser Mustard, a world-renowned advocate for early childhood development. The Fraser Mustard Assembly Hall allows us to welcome the broader educational community with events such as panel discussions on the "Future of Education" and invited speakers like Dr. Ross Green, Dr. Greg Wells, Dr. Elin Kelsey, and Dr. Niigaan Sinclair.

Outdoor spaces like our courtyard have been redesigned to support environmental and land-based education, offering students a sanctuary and outdoor classroom within the urban landscape. Our understanding of best practices for outdoor play has evolved significantly over the past 16 years since the last playground was built, leading to a comprehensive renovation completed in January 2024. The new Sara Jackman playground features

a variety of overlapping play zones designed to inspire, engage, and challenge children. It is fully accessible from the building with a thoughtfully designed ramp and new entry way. There is a sand area with water and hiding nooks for imaginative play, and a mound of stumps creates a varied topography that changes with the seasons, serving as a social space, climbing zone, and tobogganing hill. A pavilion provides a shady respite or outdoor classroom, while a climber shaped like a giant boomerang curves around existing trees, offering endless climbing, hanging, sliding, and swinging challenges. Additionally, there are quiet secret gardens, climbable sheds, a ball play zone, and the essential tricycle track woven throughout the playground. It is our hope that both the courtyard and playground serve as a model for public school planners of what is possible in a small urban space.

We have embraced new traditions that reflect our evolving community. One highlight is intentionally designing the school year to include special activities for events such as Diwali, Eid, Rosh Hashanah, Lunar New Year, Persian New Year, Black History Month, and many more. Additionally, Grandpals Day, established in 2018, honours the special role grandparents and grand-pals play in children's lives.

An annual fundraiser, JICS at the Movies, supports the Diana Rankin Muncaster Family Tuition Support Fund. Recent screenings have included *Women Talking* and *Brother* in 2022/2023 and *Four Daughters* in 2023/2024. This year's screening was *Forty Acres*, produced by JICS Alum Parent, Jennifer Holness.

We are continuously adapting our programming to better serve our students. Recognizing the importance of developing a relationship with nature, we have introduced land-based education in our courtyard, allowing children to learn about and from the environment. Our Tech Club, launched in 2014, aimed to provide purposeful and authentic engagement with technology. JICS has been recognized as a "pocket of excellence" for incorporating coding into the curriculum, as highlighted in Jennifer Lewington's Spring 2017 cover article in *Education Today*. Our new technology room, funded by a donation from the Prokoudine/Aranovsky family, will support STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) education and coding opportunities. Recently a collaboration with Paul Dietz, a distinguished engineer in residence and director of fabrication in UofT's Computer Science Department, was featured in *UofT News* (July 16, 2024). Dietz piloted an animatronics workshop with JICS students which will be scaled up for schools across the country.

We are excited to introduce these two programs (land-based education and technology-based instruction) which we are calling "Leaves and STEM" this year.

Our commitment to research remains strong. A longitudinal study, described in the 2019-2020 Issue 17 of the *Alumni Echo*, explored engagement and achievement, particularly focussing on teacher-student relationships. Findings showed that caregivers' positive attitudes towards math correlate with reduced math anxiety and higher math achievement in children. This year, teachers are reading Dr. John Mighton's *All Things Being Equal: Why Math is Key to a Better World* and



Principal's Message continued

collaborating with experts like Dr. Brent Davis, University of Calgary to refine our math teaching methods. We are also partnering with the Youth Association for Academics, Athletics, and Character Education (YAAACE) to integrate children's interest in basketball with math education. YAAACE is a Black-led, non-profit community organization whose principle mission is to improve the lives of the children and youth living in Toronto's under-resourced communities. The central aim of the partnership is to use basketball to improve the teaching and learning of probability.

Our dissemination efforts include the 2018 publication of the 2nd edition of *Natural Curiosity*, responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. This resource, widely used in college and university teacher education programs, bridges environmental and Indigenous education. Over 38,000 copies have been purchased by over 30 school boards, and more than 17,050 educators have participated in related professional development. We are currently prototyping a new series of monographs to extend our outreach. One sample, completed by SK teacher Carol Stephenson, explores how art can enhance science learning and how science can enhance art.

In Spring 2023, Carol, Elizabeth Morley, and I partnered with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Kobe-Shinwa University to support inquiry-based teaching in Japanese schools. Carol's work with rocket design was featured in a workshop for Japanese high school educators, resulting in the co-published resource "A Collaborative Journey Towards the World of Exploration, Inquiry & Research!" disseminated by the OECD. Subsequently, we were invited to represent Canada in the 5th Global Forum on the Future of Education and Skills 2030 (December 2024) in Bucharest, Romania and in Tokyo, Japan in 2024. We contributed to designing an educational "compass" to navigate the complexities of modern education, integrating generative AI into policies.

As we prepare for our centennial celebrations, we are excited about the future of the JICS Lab School. Our belief that "all ideas are improvable" drives us to continually seek better ways to serve our students and fulfill our public purpose. We look forward to celebrating with you and exploring new horizons together.

All the best,
Richard Messina
Principal

THE JICS LAB SCHOOL IS CELEBRATING ITS
100TH ANNIVERSARY
FIND OUT ABOUT EVENTS ON [ICSCONNECTS.CA](https://icconnects.ca)

Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study launches centennial campaign, namesake makes landmark donation to support economic diversity

by Perry King

With excited children in tow and a beautiful new playground revealed for the community, the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study Laboratory School (JICS) and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) made an extraordinary announcement for an unprecedented campaign.

To mark a century of commitment to inquiry-based learning and investment in the well-being of children, leadership unveiled the JICS Centennial Campaign, which sets out to raise \$2 million to support [The JICS Laboratory School Endowment](#) providing critical resources to enhance economic diversity within the school.

In celebration of the launch, Dr. **Eric Jackman**, the Institute's namesake, made a landmark gift to the campaign, to support economic diversity and tuition support.



The community at the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute gathered to mark the launch of the JICS Centennial campaign and celebrate Mrs. Jackman's birthday (person with the scissors). All photography courtesy Gary Beechey/BDS Studios.

“This campaign will honour our historic past while investing in the future through increased financial support for supporting diversity at the Lab School,” said Professor Erica N. Walker, Dean of OISE, to all in attendance – community members, staff, faculty, parents, children and the family of Dr. Jackman.

The endowment also funds professional development in key areas such as EDI, Indigenous education, mental health and well-being, and environmental education, ensuring that JICS continues to grow as an inclusive, innovative learning environment.

“The endowment fund’s mission is clear: It’s an investment in our children and the future of a transformative learning community that’s already exemplary and supports our public purpose,” added Dean Walker.

The ceremony was also the formal launch of a new playground facility that had been erected on the Walmer Avenue side of the JICS site. Dr. and Mrs. Jackman’s son, Robert Jackman, came in from Chicago to celebrate the special milestone.

But, that’s not all. With children and a live band playing a drum roll, Dean Walker made an announcement to mark Dr. Eric Jackman’s contribution.

“In recognition of this incredible landmark contribution, I am delighted to announce that this beautiful playground will officially be named the Sara Jackman playground,” said Walker, to rousing applause and a look of surprise and wonderment on Mrs. Jackman’s face. A banner was turned on stage to reveal the new playground name, with the image of young Solomon Martin-Rueter, an alumnus of the Lab School, enjoying the playground space.

“The Jackman family have been champions of early childhood education and their leadership will fuel us to achieve our many goals as an Institute,” said Sim Kapoor, director of OISE’s Office of Advancement, Communications, and External Relations. “I would like to deeply thank the Jackman family for their generosity – with this newly minted playground and their continued support of our work.”

“This wonderful child centered space will stand as a testament to the Jackman family’s generosity and Mrs. Sara Jackman’s dedication to early childhood education and play based learning,” added Walker.

“When [Dr. Jackman] suggested naming the playground in honor of Sara, I was absolutely thrilled,” said Richard Messina, who proudly serves as the JICS Laboratory School principal, in his public remarks. “Her anticipation and excitement for the project were as boundless as that of the children. Sara regularly walked by the school to check on its progress, and she played a key role ensuring

the playground was completed as quickly as possible, like no one else could have done.”



Solomon Martin-Rueter, now a middle school student at Greenwood College School in Toronto, spared a moment to talk about the playground as well.

“You’re all very lucky to have this amazing playground,” he said. “I remember the first time I got to play on the new structures. After months of watching the playground slowly being constructed piece by piece, we finally got to go on it. Everyone raced to the boomerang and started climbing. I most vividly remember one of my friends climbing up and walking on the ropes, something I think you are still doing today.”

As the community honours the past 100 years, added Messina, they also look to the future, as the playground will play an essential role in shaping the physical and emotional development of our students for generations to come. “It stands as a testament to what thoughtful design grounded in research and imagination can achieve. Thank you all for being part of this momentous occasion,” said Messina.

A time for play, a time for celebration

The event also served as a birthday party for Mrs. Jackman, whose birthday was the week before.

Solomon was joyful in his praise of Mrs. Jackman. “Sara, who is very special to the school and to me personally, has recently celebrated her birthday. Grade 3s, will you please join me in singing happy birthday?”

They did, with the live band adding background music in the process.

Dr. Jackman added to the festivities, sharing a tie that was made by one of his grandchildren – with blue and purple handprints made with their little hands, and streams of paint up and down the tie itself.

“Wherever I go, people stop me and they say, ‘Where did you get that tie?’ I tell them that my grandchildren made it,” said Dr. Jackman, proudly. “It’s the best tie in town. You want to make your parents and grandparents proud – get them a tie.”

Dr. Jackman had asked his wife if he could throw her a birthday party tonight. She said, ‘No, I don’t want a birthday party,’” he recalled, to light laughter. “So I said, Okay, I’ll call JICS and ask if they could throw a birthday party.

“Thank you all so much for coming and giving Sara a birthday party!”

It was a rainy day during the celebration so any outdoor play was on hold. Mrs. Jackman herself had brought running shoes to play in. After thanking everyone for the surprises, she had one question: “Can I come another day and play on the playground? All right!” she said, to cheers.



What the students have to say about the new playground...

I like the fact that we can use our imagination.

I like how the boomerang is a challenge that we will get used to!

I like the swing-out because it is really fast and when you get swung it feels like you are flying.

I like how there is something for everyone because for the kids who like play there is the main structure and for kids who like to rest have the climbing shed.

The thing is the boomerang is pretty scary, though it’s a good thing because then I can face my fear of heights.

I would give it 5/5 stars.

I like the stumps because they are good for climbing.

What I like about the new playground is the stumps because it’s a nice place to sit and think.

There are SO many areas to explore, and there is so much room to run around.

It was worth the wait!



Class of 2021 Legacy Gift

The JICS Lab School has a longstanding tradition of receiving meaningful legacy gifts from graduating classes. These contributions serve as lasting tributes to each cohort's time at JICS and as valuable additions to the school community.

In 2021, Grade 6 families chose a gift reflecting the unique challenges of their final year—amid the pandemic, social protests, and a heightened awareness of systemic racism. Their legacy gift, a donation to the JICS Lab School Endowment Fund, was specifically allocated to advancing equity and anti-racism initiatives at the school. A Statement of Intent ensures these funds are dedicated to impactful actions promoting equity and combating racism within the JICS community.

The 2021 legacy gift supports a range of initiatives, including guest speakers, professional development, curriculum workshops, parent education events, and research dissemination on equity in education, in line with JICS's public mandate. This gift honors the vision of Dr. William Blatz, the school's founding director, reinforcing JICS's commitment to educating both students and the broader community on equity, inclusion, and active social justice.

Managed with guidance from the JICS Teacher/Staff Equity Committee, the proceeds from this donation are allocated each school year based on current needs. This gift, representing 100% participation from Grade 6 families, is commemorated with a plaque in the courtyard hallway as a reminder of JICS's dedication to equity, diversity, and inclusion. At graduation, Principal Richard Messina expressed gratitude to the Grade 6 families for their support in advancing the school's journey towards a more inclusive community.

Professional Development Supported by the 2021 Legacy Gift

- **August 2021:** From Kindness to Anti-Racism: Centering Identity and Critical Consciousness for Critical Teaching— Rabia Khokhar, educator and equity consultant, led a workshop helping teachers examine identity through an equity lens, emphasizing strategies to create inclusive, welcoming environments for all students.

- **November 2021:** Stories Can Change the World: Using Stories to Counter Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Hate — This session guided teachers in using stories to challenge Islamophobia, emphasizing the value of diverse perspectives and critical analysis to foster empathy and inclusion.
- **November 2021:** Building Inclusive and Equitable Bookshelves — In this parent session, Rabia Khokhar demonstrated the role of books in nurturing empathy and inclusion, offering guidance on choosing stories that affirm diverse identities and foster critical thinking.
- **May 2022:** Dismantling Anti-Asian Racism: Beyond Performativity, Checklists, and Hashtags — Dr. Mary Reid presented to parents and teachers on recognizing and addressing anti-Asian racism, and how to discuss these critical issues with children.
- **August 2022:** Heroes and Equity — Rabia Khokhar returned to lead a workshop on using “Heroes” as a framework for exploring equity, encouraging teachers to integrate local and global perspectives and inspire students with diverse role models.
- **August 2023:** Culturally Relevant and Responsive Education (CRRP): Preparation, Planning, Pedagogy, and Practice — Dr. Andrew B. Campbell (“Dr. ABC”) led a workshop on embedding CRRP into teaching practices, promoting an inclusive mindset and equitable education.
- **December 2024:** Anti-Racist, Decolonizing, and Equity Education — Dr. Ann Lopez, a prominent scholar in equity education, led a session on integrating anti-racist and decolonizing approaches into K-12 education

At JICS Lab School, fostering belonging and critical consciousness is core to our mission. We welcome our families' continued partnership in building a community where everyone feels valued and included.

WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU ARE UP TO!

If you're interested in being featured in the *Where Are They Now* section or as an Alumni Feature in the next edition of the Alumni Echo, or have other information to contribute, let us know on ICS Connects or email Victoria Sandic at victoria.sandic@utoronto.ca

Recent Gr 6 Legacy Gifts

The parents of the **Class of 2022** generously gifted six pottery wheels to enhance our Visual Arts Program. Pottery-making and kiln-firing are integral to our arts curriculum, and now “throwing on the wheel” has become part of our artistic language. We will remember this cohort with every bowl, vase, and cup created, welcoming both students and guest potters to explore this craft.

The **Class of 2023** parents thoughtfully contributed two ping-pong tables to enrich our Physical Education Program and recreational breaks. These tables are already beloved by students and staff alike, igniting a friendly rivalry that is sparking excitement and a dash of competitive spirit!

The **Class of 2024** parents chose to support the Diana Rankin Muncaster Family Tuition Support Fund, demonstrating a commitment to maintaining and enhancing economic diversity at the Lab School. This donation, made with 100% participation, honours the late Diana Rankin, a cherished JICS Lab School parent. The Tuition Support Fund serves a dual purpose: providing crucial assistance to current JICS families and welcoming new ones through bursaries that help cover tuition. At the JICS Lab School, we believe diversity is the cornerstone of a robust educational experience, as it enriches our teacher education program and advances impactful research. This fund reinforces our commitment to fostering economic diversity within our student body, ensuring that every child benefits from an inclusive learning community.

ICS CONNECTS

A COMMUNITY FOR ALL ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF THE
DR. ERIC JACKMAN INSTITUTE OF CHILD STUDY

Historical Naming Opportunities: The Courtyard & The Book Nook

As an integral member of the JICS community, we wanted to reach out to you and share some exciting news. We cannot imagine a more generous community than the parents and friends of the JICS Lab School. You were all instrumental in helping us achieve our mission to improve public school education through your support of our research, teacher education, and innovative educational practices.

We wanted to share with you two historical opportunities that have arisen at the Lab School, which would make a generational impact on JICS. These opportunities are not just for the school, but for the entire JICS community, including our alumni.

The Courtyard

Nestled among tall downtown Toronto apartment buildings and Victorian homes, you will find our outdoor classroom, our natural oasis... our courtyard. The JICS courtyard is where we gather for Indigenous teachings with guests, and it is a model for public schools of what is possible in a small urban space. The sounds of the busy city are replaced by the songs of birds and our waterfall, creating a calming space where children build an authentic relationship with the Land. Unique features of this multi-sensory learning space include a condensed forest therapy trail, a Carolinian woodland, a tallgrass prairie, a wet meadow, a conifer forest, a native plant wetland and a waterfall. Research indicates that children are suffering from a nature deficit. They have limited access to natural play places. The JICS courtyard is used by teachers and students to learn about nature and to be in nature. We are offering a naming opportunity valued at \$300,000, which will help JICS students continue to form relationships with nature and inspire public schools to create their own teaching forests.



Students experiment with water play in the courtyard pond.



Students pick berries in the courtyard.



The Book Nook

We have design dreams for the second-floor open area between the Grade 4, 5, and 6 classrooms. This light-filled space will be transformed into a multipurpose space dedicated to the Junior Grade children and embodying many values of the JICS philosophy: well-being, knowledge creation, exploration, sharing, collaboration, diversity, and community building. The Book Nook will be a much-needed gathering area for clubs and projects as well as a breakout space for small group meetings and offer quiet nooks for reflection and self-directed study. We are offering a naming opportunity valued at \$250,000, which will allow a JICS family to impact how our students grow as learners, collaborators, and innovators.



For more information on these historic opportunities and to learn more about what is possible with naming gifts, please reach out to our Senior Development Officer, Reesa Barkhouse, at reesa.barkhouse@utoronto.ca or 705-978-3610.

SIGN UP TODAY
[ICSCONNECTS.CA](https://www.icscconnects.ca)

Announcing the AYAL Capital Advisors Award

We are thrilled to announce the **AYAL Capital Advisors Award**, which has been established to enhance tutoring support for students at the JICS Lab School. This award is made possible through the generous donation of JICS Alumni Parents, Cecilia Yeung and Peter Chan.

Purpose of the Award: The AYAL Capital Advisors Award supports outstanding second-year Master of Arts (MA) students to provide essential tutoring to selected children of the JICS Lab School. The award not only benefits the students being tutored but also offers valuable

professional experience to the MA students involved.

Nature of Service Work: The award recipient engages in school-based tutoring for students in Grades 1 to 6 who require extra support to reinforce their learning. These students are identified by their classroom teachers, ensuring that the assistance provided is both targeted and effective.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Cecilia Yeung and Peter Chan for their generous contribution to our community through the AYAL Capital Advisors Award. This initiative enhances the educational experience for the children of the JICS Lab School while also supporting the professional development of our MA students.

INTERESTED IN MAKING A CONTRIBUTION?
jicsfamily.com/donate

JICS at the Movies: A Celebration of Film, Diversity, and Community Support

The February 6, 2025 screening of *40 ACRES*, a gripping and socially conscious thriller exploring race, family, and legacy against the backdrop of a near-future global hunger crisis, is the latest in a long-standing tradition of impactful film events at JICS.

Produced by JICS alumni parent Jennifer Holness of the award-winning Hungry Eyes Media, *40 ACRES* had its world premiere to a sold-out audience at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) this past September.

This special screening was made possible through the generosity of JICS alumni parent Hussain Amarshi of Mongrel Media, a long-standing partner in our mission to use film as a tool for community engagement and fundraising. All proceeds support the Diana Rankin Muncaster Family Tuition Support Fund (DRMF), which helps maintain economic diversity at the JICS Lab School.

A Legacy of Powerful Screenings

Our film series has a rich history of showcasing thought-provoking cinema. Here are some highlights:

- **2024:** *Four Daughters* - An Academy Award-nominated Arabic-language movie that pushes the boundaries of narrative storytelling to honor the lives of brave and complex women. This event featured a compelling Q&A with director Kaouther Ben Hania.
- **2022:** *Women Talking and Brother* - Audiences engaged in discussions with *Women Talking* director and Oscar-winning playwright Sarah Polley, as well as *Brother* producer Damon D'Oliveira, author David Chariandy, and actor Lamar Johnson.
- **2010:** *Mao's Last Dancer* - An Australian film based on the memoir of professional dancer Li Cunxin.
- **2003:** *Go Further* - An environmental documentary featuring Woody Harrelson and a group of activists advocating for meaningful environmental change. The

event was enriched by the presence of its director, former JICS parent Ron Mann, who led an engaging discussion.

Through these screenings and matching campaigns, we have raised over \$100,000 for the DRMF Fund.

The Impact of Your Support

“The tuition support fund enables economic diversity at the school, deepening the community and enriching the educational experience for all students,”

said Damon D'Oliveira at the *Brother* screening. His words reflect our commitment to fostering an inclusive environment where students, faculty, and families from diverse backgrounds feel valued and have a true sense of belonging.

Principal Richard Messina adds:

“Diversity is not just a value—it’s a moral imperative. At the JICS Lab School, we intentionally cultivate an environment that celebrates diversity among students, faculty, and curriculum. It is critical to ensuring an exemplary education, where children learn best by engaging with diverse perspectives and experiences.”

About the JICS Lab School

With a threefold mandate of teacher education, research, and exemplary education for 202 students, the JICS Lab School is dedicated to influencing and improving public school education. Our commitment to diversity

strengthens our teacher training programs and ensures our research remains relevant—most importantly, it enriches the education of every student at our school.

Thank You for Your Support

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has attended JICS at the Movies, contributed to our matching campaigns, and supported the Diana Rankin Muncaster Family Tuition Support Fund. Your generosity enables us to remain the most economically diverse independent elementary school in the city, embodying our mission to create a truly inclusive learning environment.

Stay informed about future movie screenings and other JICS community events by joining icsconnects.ca today!



2025/2026: 100 Years of Exploring What Is Possible

Join Us in Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Institute of Child Study!

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

JICS Centennial Gala & Art Auction
in support of the JICS Endowment Fund

Date:
Tuesday, May 13, 2025

Time: 7:00 PM until Late

Location: Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA),
152 Sterling Road, Toronto

Ticket info coming soon at icsconnects.ca

JICS Centennial Gala & Art Auction

In support of the JICS Endowment Fund, we invite you on May 13, 2025 to indulge in an elegant wine and cheese reception while exploring our exciting art auction, featuring:

- Unique experiences and rare treasures
- Curated works by renowned and emerging artists.

This promises to be a night of sophistication and inspiration. Together, we can ensure that every child has the opportunity to attend the JICS Lab School and that its legacy as an intentionally diverse hub of innovation continues to inspire and shape the future of education.

If you have ideas for exceptional auction items or experiences, please contact Richard Messina at richard.messina@utoronto.ca

The Lab School's Mission

For a century, the JICS Lab School has been a leader in redefining education, contributing transformative research

on critical topics like Full-Day Kindergarten and innovative approaches to teaching rational numbers in Mathematics. To sustain and expand this important work, we rely on a thriving and diverse community.

Diversity is the cornerstone of our mission:

- Racial & cultural backgrounds
- Abilities
- Family structures
- Socio-economic status

The JICS Endowment Fund provides financial assistance to families. It is our hope that every child has access to our inclusive, collaborative, and enriching learning environment.

Celebrating Generosity

The JICS community's generosity has been extraordinary. Since its establishment, the Endowment Fund has raised over \$1 million. With your continued support, we aim to reach closer to our ambitious \$2 million goal, creating lasting change for generations to come.

Many more exciting events are being planned for the JICS Centennial, including a special alumni and friends Homecoming event in Fall 2025 at our historic location 45 Walmer Road. Stay tuned for exciting updates on icsconnects.ca as we release more event information and ways to get involved!

JICS Centennial Homecoming

More details coming soon on ICS Connects. We look forward to welcoming you back to JICS for this milestone!

Don't forget to:

- **Spread the Word:** Share these events with your network of parents, colleagues, and friends interested in improving public school education.
- **Attend and Participate:** Secure your tickets at icsconnects.ca as soon as they're available.

How You Can Help Us Celebrate 100 Years

Are you interested in joining a planning committee?

How about being a Cohort Rep?

Do you have interesting connections for events?

Is your JICS memorabilia begging to be showcased?

Are your stories from JICS waiting to be told?

Email us at JICS100@utoronto.ca

Start sharing your memories with us by using #JICS100 across social media!

Celebrating 30 Years of Excellence: Anne Marie Bartoli's Legacy as Daycare Director

Anne Marie Bartoli has been a steadfast presence, nurturing and guiding young lives for 30 remarkable years. As the licensed daycare director, she has shaped not only the daycare's programs but also the community's trust and affection.

Her journey began in a humble setting. "When I first started, it was part-time, we only had an after-school program," Anne Marie recalls. With one small cabinet of toys and a vision, she embarked on a mission to create a space where children could thrive.

Over the years, that vision grew into a dynamic daycare offering a range of programs. "We expanded to include the Nursery afternoon program, before-school care, and camps during March break and last two weeks of June," she says. Anne Marie is particularly proud of the dedicated team that has remained with her through it all. "Many of our staff members have been here for over 20 years. That consistency creates a sense of family for the children and parents."

A Philosophy Rooted in Play and Care

At the heart of Anne Marie's daycare is a simple yet profound philosophy: providing a nurturing, play-based environment. "We want children to feel safe, and parents to have peace of mind" she explains.

"After a rigorous school day, some kids just need time to relax—read a book, play with friends, or enjoy a snack. It's like an ongoing playdate where they can just be themselves."

This supportive atmosphere is enhanced by multi-age groupings, a unique feature of the daycare. "The younger

kids look up to the older ones, and the older kids take on a mentoring role," Anne Marie says. "It's a nurturing environment that parents appreciate, and it even inspires some older children to pursue babysitting and working with kids."

A Legacy of Joy and Community

Anne Marie cherishes the long-term connections forged through her work. "When alumni children come back to visit, they remember the fun times—the camps, the water sprinklers, and just the feeling of being cared for," she says. These memories reflect the home-away-from-home atmosphere she and her team have cultivated.

What hasn't changed over the years is Anne Marie's dedication to creating a daycare that serves the community's needs. "The ability to provide care for families throughout the school year is something I'm incredibly proud of," she shares.



Looking to the Future

As Anne Marie celebrates this milestone, she remains excited about what's ahead. "I'm thrilled to continue growing and adapting to the needs of our families while staying true to our philosophy," she says. Her passion and commitment ensure that the daycare will continue to be a safe haven and joyful space for generations to come.

Anne Marie's legacy is one of warmth, dedication, and the countless lives she has touched along the way. Congratulations, Anne Marie, and thank you for everything you've done to make our daycare a cherished part of our school community!

JICS Director, Jennifer Jenkins, PhD. C. Psych.

Professor Jennifer Jenkins of the Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development began her three-year term as Director of the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study (JICS) July 1, 2023.



Professor Jenkins received her PhD in Psychology from the University of London's Institute of Child Health in 1987 and joined the University of Toronto as an Assistant Professor in 1991, appointed at first to the Institute of Child Study. In 1996 she received tenure and joined APHD, and was promoted to Professor in 2001. Since 2010, she has held the prestigious Atkinson Chair in Early Child Development and Education.

Professor Jenkins is an internationally recognized scholar and leader in the generation and dissemination of scientific knowledge for the field of child development and children's mental health. With a focus on the cognitive and social-emotional development of preschool and school-aged children, she has conducted longitudinal

cohort studies examining the interplay between biological vulnerability and high-risk environments and has connected her research to policy and practice. Her publication record includes 5 books and over 100 refereed articles. Her extensive funding record includes support from SSHRC, CIHR, CFI, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Atkinson Charitable Foundation, the Lawson Foundation, and the McCain Family Foundation. She is also a dedicated teacher who has supervised more than 40 graduate theses to completion, and was the 2006 recipient of the David E. Hunt Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching.

Professor Jenkins' extensive administrative experience includes service as Associate Chair of APHD (1996-98), Director of the Laidlaw Centre (2000-01), Program Chair of the Developmental Psychology and Education graduate program (2001-04; 2018-21), Director of Academic Programs at the Fraser Mustard Institute of Human Development (2015-16), Director of the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development (2010-present). JICS is delighted to have Professor Jenkins guiding us through our Centennial year!

Natural Curiosity Highlight

Developed by the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study (JICS) Laboratory School, **Natural Curiosity (NC)** is an innovative environmental and land-based inquiry program that helps teachers address a critical link between environmental and Indigenous education. As a team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, Natural Curiosity provides professional learning opportunities – including webinars, virtual and in-person workshops, Indigenous language courses, communities of practice, and consulting – to support educators across Turtle Island (North America) on their journey of centring Indigenous perspectives in children’s environmental inquiry.

Natural Curiosity is a donor-funded education program that helps educators embrace the natural world as a place of learning, curiosity and reciprocity, enabling them to transform their practice and create generations of lifelong learners with the experiences and perspectives necessary to tackle the environmental challenges of the 21st century.

To date, Natural Curiosity has disseminated best practices from the internationally renowned JICS Lab School by distributing almost 38,000 copies of our educator resources across the world, and engaging 17,050+ educators across Turtle Island in professional learning programs to improve the quality of environmental education in the public school system.

NC works in active collaboration with Indigenous advisors and educators to highlight the importance of Indigenous perspectives in environmental and all education.

Research has found that teaching young children about the environment has similar potential reductions in carbon emissions as other large-scale mitigation strategies, like rooftop solar or electric vehicles (Cordero, Centeno and Todd, 2020). Despite this incredible opportunity for environmental change through education, only 32% of Canadian teachers feel they have the knowledge and skills to teach about the changing environment. Educators say they need professional development, classroom resources, and curriculum policy to effectively prepare learners for a sustainable future (Canada, Climate Change and Education, 2019). As Indigenous education also becomes increasingly prioritized across the curricula, more educators are seeking ways to pursue an authentic process of Truth and Reconciliation in collaboration with their students. From an Indigenous perspective, reconciliation also includes reconciliation between people and the natural world (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Final Report, 2015). NC is well positioned to address these gaps by supporting educators to embrace the outdoors, grow their environmental literacy, and thoughtfully integrate Indigenous perspectives into their teaching practices, in turn improving environmental education in public schools for tens of thousands of students.

In 2023/24, NC developed and presented 12 large-scale professional development opportunities for 8,350 educators across Canada.

In 2024/25, NC will scale up our professional development program through existing virtual learning and new in-person offerings including:

1. **SAHTU Regional Teachers Conference** – presenting the Keynote and 8 Workshops for 60+ educators from the Sahtu Divisional Education Council in Yellowknife, NWT.
2. **Four Seasons of Indigenous Learning: Season 2** – Ten-part professional learning course, in partnership with the Outdoor Learning School and Store, will support 7,000+ participants in strengthening their connection with the local land as part of their personal journeys toward truth and reconciliation.
3. **Natural Curiosity Throughout the Seasons** – Webinar for Take Me Outside Week, with an estimated 150+ educators watching live and 1000+ watching the recording.
4. **Aki Kinamaagewinan: Engaging Educators and Youth in Indigenous Land-based Learning Through Natural Curiosity** – Building on the success of the gatherings in 2022 and 2023, in partnership with ENAGB Indigenous Youth Agency, NC will offer this retreat at the Humber Teaching Lodge in the spring of 2025, for 50+ educators.
5. **Indigenous Language Courses** – Online Cree and Mohawk language courses offered in partnership with the Outdoor Learning School and Store with 400+ early bird registrants and a goal of 1000+ participants joining the courses.
6. **Natural Curiosity Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)** – This introductory, self-paced course will expand the reach of our transformative professional learning program, empowering and inspiring educators across Turtle Island to integrate Indigenous perspectives and environmental inquiry into their teaching practice. The course is currently in development, and will be piloted from January to April with select teachers, to then be launched in September 2025 for all educators.

These proposed initiatives are informed by best practices in education from the JICS Lab School, and will synergistically work together to promote environmental and Indigenous education across Turtle Island.

The valuable work of NC is donor funded. Please consider making a donation.



FIND OUT MORE:

- 🌐 naturalcuriosity.ca
- 📘 [naturalcuriositypage](#)
- 📺 [naturlcuriosity](#)
- 📱 [naturalcuriosityed](#)

Designing Cultures of Learning: The Essential Purpose of Lab Schools

by Vice Principal Chriss Bogert and Principal Emerita Elizabeth Morley, co-chairs of the 2023 IALS Conference



Laboratory Schools share a common purpose: to intentionally design learning-centred classrooms where ideas, innovation, and research can thrive. Lab Schools began with a desire to explore what is possible in education for children when educational philosopher John Dewey started the first North American laboratory school at the University of Chicago in 1896. The “Dewey School” flourished as a place to explore and implement emerging theories on child development and education, with the initial premise that the function of a laboratory school should be the “working out and testing” of new educational approaches (Dewey, *The Child, and the Curriculum*, 1902). This purpose still resonates in this century and shapes the role Lab Schools play today. Many university and college affiliated Lab Schools now exist around the world engaged in innovative education, dissemination of practice, pre-service educator training, research and professional inquiry, professional learning, and advocacy for the improvement of learning for all children.

Hosting the International Association of Laboratory Schools (IALS) conference in April 2023 was a distinct honour for the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study. We co-hosted with The George Brown College School of Early Childhood and The Mabin School, both also members of IALS. Over 190 conference attendees came from 48 institutions across 9 countries to participate in the conference. The theme “Designing Cultures of Learning: The Essential Purpose of Lab Schools” was chosen to provide an opportunity for IALS member Lab Schools to share how they are intentionally designing and researching how children learn best in our present-day context. Modern times inspire Lab Schools to continue to explore how to respond to current societal and environmental realities - such as racial and gender-based inequities, issues related to climate change, and post-pandemic trauma - with new learning and new ways of operating. As well as cognitive or academic-focussed changes, Lab Schools prioritize social-emotional and moral learning, to foster students who are not only competent to act for a better world but have the caring disposition to do so.



Immersive School Experiences

In our pre-conference offerings, participants were invited to immerse themselves in the life of a Lab School by experiencing a typical morning in a particular grade or age group, or job shadowing an administrator. Others could sign up for a Natural Curiosity workshop on the environmental inquiry process incorporating Indigenous perspectives to guide student learning in land-based education. Another group joined Indigenous scholar Doug Anderson and land restoration ecologist Ben Porchuk in our outdoor courtyard to reflect on how and why to encourage students to develop a relationship with the natural world.



A Celebratory Opening Ceremony

We had a vibrant opening ceremony in the J. Fraser Mustard Assembly Hall with welcome speeches from Principal Richard Messina, Dr. Eric Jackman, and Professor Erica N. Walker, Dean of OISE. Dr. Walker welcomed global Lab School leaders, emphasizing the value of exchanging viewpoints through lively discussions. Dr. Eric Jackman reflected on the long legacy of Lab Schools and the excitement he felt in seeing the room filled with educators from around the globe. The launch of the Toronto IALS conference, delayed by the pandemic, felt like a long-awaited celebration—a joyful reunion of global educators coming together to share ideas, reconnect, and ignite new collaborations.

Lab School Visits

Visiting hosting schools remains a favourite and important part of every IALS conference. Each participant was taken on a curated tour of the JICS Lab School as well as a visit to another exemplary university or college affiliated school in Toronto: Casa Loma or Nelson Mandela Child Care Centres at George Brown College School of Early Childhood (which has 13 early years Lab Schools in the city), The Mabin School, or University of Toronto Schools (UTS). The exemplary staff and warm welcome from each of these schools made the tour day a highlight of the conference for many. Each hosting school extended an invitation for conference visitors to return whenever they are back in Toronto.

A Keynote Address with Dr. Pam Baer Inviting Vulnerability: Equity and the Arts Classroom

In the beautiful new Learning Lab at the Mabin School, Dr. Pam Baer delivered a powerful and thought-provoking talk on the importance of creating safe spaces for students to share and explore aspects of their identity. Dr. Baer invited the audience to reflect on how to welcome and embrace diversity in our classrooms, examine the meaning of teaching equity, and reimagine classroom power dynamics through an arts-based pedagogy. The evening was unforgettable, with Lab School colleagues gathered around tables, enjoying warm hospitality, delicious food, a transformational workshop, and animated conversations.

A Keynote Address with Dr. Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair Ten Ways Indigenous Education Informs Lab Schools

Overlooking Lake Ontario at George Brown College's Waterfront Campus, Dr. Niigaan Sinclair delivered a profoundly inspiring message, encouraging Lab Schools to embrace education as a communal, holistic, and inclusive practice that continually explores "why." Emphasizing that we are all gift givers, he urged educators to draw from Indigenous teachings, which ground learning in relationships—with one another and the natural world—through deeply observing, listening, and sharing experiences. By fostering trust, storytelling, and a deep connection to the land, educators can create meaningful learning environments that nurture ethical accountability and a shared sense of purpose.



Presentation and Poster Sessions

Hosted in JICS classrooms, we were able to offer 54 presentation sessions and 10 posters that demonstrated participating Lab Schools' intentional approaches and priorities. These included topics such as the design of caring, inclusive, and connected school communities that promote a celebration of identity and sense of belonging for all its members, incorporating Indigenous perspectives in building sustainable and reciprocal relationships with the natural world, or fostering inquiry and innovation through the design of idea-centred learning experiences. A poster session provided an engaging forum where members connected to exchange ideas, share insights, and discuss research and practice with colleagues who share similar interests. The conference at JICS gave space to voices from around the world, to highlight how Lab Schools create, explore, and build learning cultures that continuously seek, apply, and share new knowledge about children's development and education.



Inspiring Research Collaboration Meetings

The conference also provided two hybrid opportunities for those interested in research to come together and discuss the possibilities of collective research by IALS members. The first event, titled Conversations about Research: Capturing Children's Voices, offered a brief overview of a recent study by Falk Lab School as an exemplar, followed by an open discussion about the possibilities and challenges of doing research with and about children. The second conversation, Future Directions for IALS Research Collaborative, was a working session where participants had a chance to share ideas, ask questions, and shape the agenda for the next research collaboration. This collaboration is now well underway; look for a Special Edition of the IALS Journal to come out in 2025 with a focus on how Lab Schools honour children's voices, perspectives, and participation in research and learning.

A Reunion of Minds and Mission

Each IALS conference feels like a family reunion: it is a time to reconnect with relatives from far away and an opportunity to meet new members of the family. As Lab School educators and researchers, we share the same DNA to explore what is possible in education with the end goal of improving public school education. It is affirming and inspiring to connect and explore collaborations.

The work that Lab Schools do matters. We believe that the education of children, and the education and support of the people who care for children, are the most important ways to have a positive effect on the present and the future. The opportunity to host this conference was a gift for the JICS Lab School, to showcase our school to our growing IALS family and to be part of creating this shared opportunity for professional renewal and commitment. We know that each participant will take what they heard, what inspired them, and build on it. They will take what has challenged them, and reflect on it. They will be making positive changes, where and when they can, to improve educational experiences for children. They will lean into friendships and opportunities for collaboration, reaching out to share challenges, joys, and ideas for continued partnerships, that this conference sparked. And they will continue to make a difference, as the JICS Lab School strives to daily, in this most critical profession of childhood education.

Related Article:

Global Lab Schools leadership converges to JICS for highly awaited IALS conference By Perry King, April 28, 2023 <https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/home/about/news/04-28-23-global-lab-schools-leadership-converges-jics-highly-awaited-ials-conference>

ARTS BASED DIVERSITY LEARNING

made possible by

THE PATRICK HARVIE ARTS FUND

Arts education is vital to students' intellectual, social, physical, and emotional development. The PHA Fund enhances arts education at the JICS Lab School by supporting school-wide events and arts-based diversity-learning experiences for all students.

Highlights from the 2023-2024 school year include:

- Orange Shirt Day/Day for Truth and Reconciliation: Musician Nathan Roy, Anishinaabe from the Wikwemikong First Nation, and Grammy-nominated Bear Creek Drum Group Singer.
- Islamic Heritage Month: Performances by internationally renowned singer/instrumentalist Maryam Tollar and percussionist Naghmeh Farahmand (Persian Daff/Frame Drum).
- Hindu Heritage Month Diwali Assembly: Tabla artist, Dhaivat Jani.
- Festivals of Light (celebrating Hanukkah, Diwali, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Yalda Night, Winter Solstice, Yule): Fancy shawl and jingle dress dancer Nichole M. Leveck(Wyandot/Algonquin) and singer/drummer Isaiah Cada (Ojibwe).
- Black History Month: Ngoma presentation and dance workshop by Carnival Spice & Everything Nice Dance Group. Steelpan workshop with Winston "Pappy" Frederick.
- Lunar New Year: Wai Mo Lion Dance Performance.
- Asian Heritage Month: Toronto Chinese Orchestra performance and workshop. Junior Grades workshops with Emmanuelle Châteauneuf, a Filipino-French Canadian graphic artist and writer.
- Pink Shirt Day: Fay and Fluffy Storytellers Assembly.
- International Francophone Week: Njacko Backo African Voyage Dance Performance.
- PRIDE: Queer Songbook Orchestra.

IMAGINE WHAT ELSE IS POSSIBLE

DONATE TODAY



Two New Programs: Leaves and STEM

Leaves: Land-Based Education in the JICS Courtyard

By Krista Spence

The Land-Based Learning program aims to connect students with a way of learning from the land throughout the seasons. Using our senses to notice the natural surroundings, to explore changes, to share wonders, are the initial behavioural goals of this program. Information is shared about how various species and elements are connected. The role of humans is also developed, incorporating both the humility of understanding that insects, animals, and plants have knowledge that we may not understand, as well as a sense of responsibility to nurture and care for what we can.

Depending on the seasons and student wonders, topics explored may include pollination, fungi, animal tracking, signs of change, mapping, focussed observation and scientific sketching, seed collecting, planting and harvesting food, improving growing conditions for various creatures, developing experiments to better understand our impacts, mounting cameras to explore who else uses the space when we are not outside, and ensuring that students feel comfortable in nature.

This work is deeply informed and grounded in Indigenous teachings that have been received from various teachers including Isaac Murdoch (Anishinaabe), Doug Anderson (Bungee Metis), Tom Porter (Mohawk), Niigaan Sinclair (Anishinaabe), and the Natural Curiosity text. This time also provides an opportunity to share truths and connections to the history of this place, based on Indigenous stories shared by Philip Cote III and others. Through sharing about practices connected to the times of year, by planting and harvesting medicines, caring for important objects, and through visits from Indigenous teachers and land-based educators, we ensure that many voices are shared in this work.

The relationships developed in this program will hopefully ensure that over time, the students will come to know many of the plants and insects that share the outdoor space with us. We aspire to share the seeds of native plants, as part of our responsibility, to recover and restore land in various places in Toronto. We will continue to explore ways to show reciprocity both to the Land and to the Indigenous people who live here.

STEM: Technology Education

By Nick Song

In addition to my 10 years of teaching Special Education at JICS, I've always tried to bring my passion in tech to my work with the students wherever possible. My vision of a successful technology program is one that grows with a student through their time at JICS. Students participate in projects that develop both their soft skills (such as collaboration, problem solving, and adaptability) and

technical skills, which are built on each year.

Technical areas of the curriculum include:

- Coding with a variety of programming languages
- Circuitry
- 3D design and printing
- Media editing (audio and video)
- Robotics

Philosophy

Technology education in Ontario is typically/commonly/ currently taught by siloing skills to focus on each individually. Skills are developed sequentially by completing relevant tasks. However, my view is that technology shouldn't be considered a subject of its own, but rather a tool to improve learning in many other areas.

My philosophy of technology education is not focussed on particular programs or kits, but rather the broad application and integration of technology skill sets to everyday life. Technology is inherently engaging to children because of the bustling technology-laden world we live in. There is an initial attractiveness to technology because, especially at these young ages, it can sometimes appear to be almost magical. With this in mind, it would be a disservice not to give students exposure to these topics. How else can they discover if they like it or not if they don't have the chance to try? Elementary grades are the perfect time for children to explore different skills and areas of tech to see what resonates with them.

Approach

Open-ended project work, creative expression, and collaboration - Students learn a lot more than just technical skills by working with others. Project work involves a high probability for inter-peer problems to arise; knowing how to solve these challenges with different classmates is an important skill to practise. Open-ended projects also give students more opportunity for creative expression than working through a set lesson.

Computational thinking - Working through tech projects requires a type of logical thinking that isn't typically required in other subjects, but widely applicable in the real world.

Play - The benefit of incorporating play in tech is that there's less risk and less pressure of getting things "perfect" – because when you work with tech, things are going to go wrong a lot. Play removes the fear of being wrong and makes it easier for students to explore freely.

The belief that children are capable - We often underestimate the ability of young children to pick up technological skills, seeing it as "too complicated" or "too abstract". Through working with students, I have found that although they may not have the language to explain their understanding, they can often instinctively comprehend many technological processes.

Flow - I provide opportunities for students to discover states of flow while immersed in tech projects. It's so beneficial for students' cognitive development to have the feeling of being entirely focussed and positively engaged in the work they're doing.

Remembering Two Beloved Annes of the JICS Community

The JICS community mourns the loss of two extraordinary members of our family, Anne Tough and Anne Cassidy. Both played pivotal roles in shaping the heart and soul of the Institute of Child Study, leaving a legacy that will forever inspire us.

Anne Tough

In February 2021, we said goodbye to Anne Tough, a beloved figure whose influence on students, colleagues, and families spanned decades.

Graduates remember Anne as the gentle, caring, and wise Grade One teacher who brought reading to life for so many 6- and 7-year-olds. Using engaging tools like The Letter People videos and a treasure trove of picture books, Anne instilled a lifelong love of learning in her students. She also taught a split Grade 1/2 class, enriching her young learners with her thoughtful and innovative approach.

Anne had a remarkable gift for supporting not just her students but also their families. She provided guidance that was both child-centered and adult-friendly, offering wisdom that resonated with parents as they navigated their children's formative years. Her commitment to the JICS philosophy—that a secure child can best reach their potential—was evident in her every action. Anne cultivated a classroom environment rooted in safety, acceptance, and respect, enabling each child to thrive.

Anne also mentored countless student teachers, generously sharing her expertise and staying connected with them as they embarked on their teaching journeys.

After retiring in 1996, Anne continued her dedication to the JICS community. In 2000, she co-chaired the founding of the school's Alumni Association, established to commemorate the Institute's 75th anniversary. She also co-edited the Alumni Echo newsletter for seven years, fostering lasting connections among alumni and staff.

In recognition of her lifelong contributions to education and community building, Anne received the University of Toronto Arbor Award in 2010. Her warmth, wisdom, and unwavering devotion to JICS continue to resonate across our community.



Anne Tough receiving the University of Toronto Arbor Award in 2010.



Anne Cassidy in her classroom at JICS.



Anne Cassidy at UofT in 2021.

Anne Cassidy

In February 2024, we lost Anne Cassidy, a dedicated and innovative educator whose 23 years of service at JICS left an indelible mark.

Anne joined JICS in 1981 and quickly became known for her exceptional creativity and passion for teaching Grades 4, 5, and 6. She forged deep, enduring connections with her students, often maintaining relationships well beyond their time at school.

Anne's teaching was grounded in personalization and innovation. She tailored her curriculum to the unique interests and needs of each class, transforming learning into a dynamic and engaging process. Programs like her daily "News" discussions became models for educators elsewhere, exemplifying her ability to make classroom activities relevant and thought-provoking.

Anne's commitment to social justice was interwoven into her teaching. From organizing sandwich-making initiatives for shelters to leading advocacy projects that brought her students to CBC News Sunday to discuss refugee issues, Anne empowered her students to engage with the world around them meaningfully.

Anne also introduced traditions that remain cherished today, such as the "Special Friends" program, which pairs younger and older cohorts to foster mentorship and connection. Her creative approach to teaching Mathematics, which included real-world applications like graphing UNICEF fundraiser revenues and calculating field trip costs, inspired countless students.

After retiring in 2005, Anne brought her passion for education to The Gambia, where she worked with Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) as a teacher educator. There, she launched the "Booko Project," a grassroots initiative supported by the JICS community that shipped nearly 1,000 books to schools in need.

Returning to Toronto, Anne continued to support the JICS community. She tutored students, worked as an instructor with "Friendship in Action," and served on the ICS After School Daycare board. Anne's dedication, creativity, and kindness enriched everyone fortunate enough to know her.

A Shared Legacy of Love and Learning

Together, Anne Tough and Anne Cassidy embodied the spirit of JICS: a profound commitment to education, a passion for innovation, and an unwavering belief in community.

Their contributions have left a lasting imprint on our school, our students, and our families. They will always hold a special place in our hearts, and their legacies will continue to inspire generations to come.



Anne Cassidy (left) and Anne Tough (right) in The Gambia (2008).

A New Way To Stay Connected As JICS Turns 100!

ICS Connects

As the JICS Lab School turns 100 years old, we are excited to launch a new way for our alumni and community members to stay connected. When you sign up for *ICS Connects*, you'll be connected to the vast Institute of Child Study community, from graduates of the Lab School, the MA CSE program, the Graduate Diploma programs, to Alumni parents, grandparents, donors, and friends.

With *ICS Connects*, you will be able to:

- Update your profile
- Network & message other users
- Become a mentor or a mentee
- Post job openings & look for job openings
- Find alumni-owned businesses
- Stay informed about upcoming events

In addition to this new platform, we have two new additions to our staff to help us grow, expand, and stay better connected to our community.

New JICS Development Officer

In September 2022, Reesa Barkhouse joined our team of advancement and communications professionals at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) and the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study (JICS) Lab School in a newly created role of Senior Development Officer (SDO), Leadership Annual Giving and Planned Giving.

Reesa is a passionate fundraiser with a strong background in individual giving, leadership prospecting, donor stewardship and community engagement.

She also has a vocational background of philanthropy with a MA in Arts Management and Leadership from Queen's University. She started her fundraising career at the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, where she was the sole development personnel who created and implemented every aspect of the organization's fundraising strategy. While there, she grew revenue and their donor base as well as led the Board of Directors and fundraising committee on alumni engagement events and philanthropic initiatives. She comes to the University of Toronto from the Lung Health Foundation where she focussed her efforts on donor relations, foundational giving, leadership gifts and planned giving.



As the new SDO, Reesa looks forward to inspiring donors to make a significant impact, bolster our community of engaged supporters and highlight the meaningful and plentiful cases for support that the JICS Lab School has to offer. She is excited to immerse herself in a successful fundraising environment that is committed to inclusion, collaboration and most importantly its alumni, volunteers, and donors.

New JICS Communications Officer

This year, we welcomed back previous JICS Lab School employee, Victoria Sandic into the new role of Communications Officer.

Victoria is a graduate of the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study's Master of Arts in Child Study and Education (MA CSE) program, an Ontario Qualified Teacher, and was the JICS Lab School's In-House Supply Teacher and Administrative Assistant for 4 years. She also has a background in marketing, communications, and freelance graphic design with various private companies. Victoria's connection to and knowledge of the JICS Lab School and the Institute as a whole is invaluable in enhancing our communications efforts.



As the new Communications Officer, Victoria is excited to facilitate more connection amongst our alumni and greater community with the launch of *ICS Connects*, and enhance our online presence to fulfil the JICS Lab School's public purpose.

Stay Connected at [ICSCONNECTS.CA](https://www.icconnects.ca)

Reesa Barkhouse: reesa.barkhouse@utoronto.ca

Victoria Sandic: victoria.sandic@utoronto.ca

[oise.utoronto.ca/jics](https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/jics)

[jiclabschool](https://www.jiclabschool.com)

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Do you need to update your contact info?

Register on ICS Connects!

Any contact information will be shared privately with the JICS Lab School, and only information you choose to display will show on your profile to other users. All users go through an approval process before being added to the ICS Connects platform to ensure our community stays protected and connected.

Visit www.icconnects.ca

JICS CENTENNIAL HOMECOMING

Many exciting events are being planned for the JICS Centennial, including a special alumni and friends Homecoming event.

Stay tuned for exciting updates on icsconnects.ca

ICS CONNECTS

A community for alumni & friends of the
Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study



CONNECT

Find and reminisce with fellow ICS graduates.

GIVE BACK

Introduce, employ, and offer to act as a mentor for ICS Grads, and participate in ICS events.

EXPAND

Leverage your professional network to get introduced to people you should know.

RE-CONNECT WITH OLD FRIENDS

ICS Connects allows you to utilize the trusted Institute of Child Study environment to expand your professional network, and reconnect with your cohorts as a Lab School graduate, MA CSE or Diploma graduate, or alumni parent.

YOUR INSTITUTE OF CHILD STUDY COMMUNITY

By fully integrating with social networks, and cultivating a culture of helping and giving back, you will be amazed how vibrant your Institute of Child Study community is!



STAY INFORMED ABOUT OUR 100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

JOIN TODAY!

[WWW.ICSCONNECTS.CA](https://www.icsconnects.ca)

