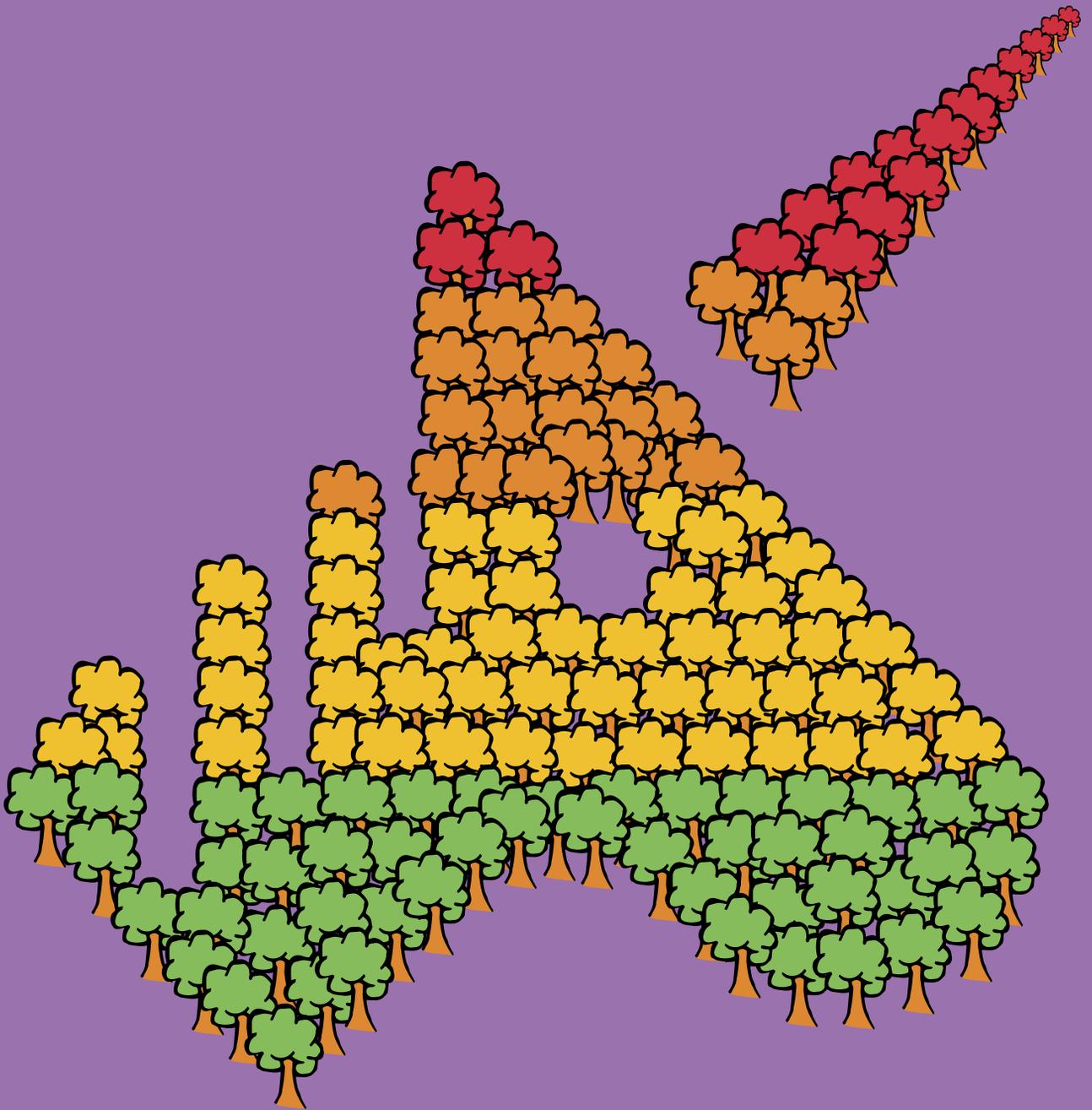


# Changing Times

*Fall 2022*



# Principal's Message

## *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at The Mabin School – Evolving our Understanding in a Changing World*

By Nancy Steinhauer

The Mabin School has always prided itself on being an inclusive learning environment. From the start, in 1980, The Mabin School experience was to address not only the academic aspects of kids' development but the social/emotional aspects and to recognize and provide for each individual. The goal was for graduates to have maintained their love of learning and to be positive contributing members not only to the school community but in general.

As a model of excellence in progressive education, The Mabin School strives to create the next generation of original thinkers, adaptive leaders, and caring citizens. This becomes more possible when the diversity of learners reflects the diversity of our city and our world. For that reason, our current strategic plan identifies the following aspiration: To be in high demand by a greater diversity of communities.

Diversity is a tricky word. What exactly does it mean? Different people define it in different ways. The

Ontario Ministry of Education defines diversity as:

**DIVERSITY:** The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

Certainly, The Mabin School is committed to including a diversity of voices, as that provides our students with richer, deeper learning opportunities. There is considerable diversity within our current student body, but we continue to look for more ways to connect with more communities. Our staff is becoming increasingly diverse, and that is purposeful. It is important to us to widen our perspective, and create greater relevance. Our teachers also look beyond our immediate community to bring in voices that might otherwise not be present. Last year alone, visits from a First Nations Elder, Dr. Robert Phillips, and a transgender musician helped to round out the experience of our learners.

The Ontario Ministry of Education also defines equity and inclusive education:

**EQUITY:** A condition or state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:** Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.



To track the diversity in our community, we have begun to collect demographic data through our annual parent satisfaction survey. Currently, the diversity of our community is most apparent in the diversity of our learners. Each class has a range of students with different strengths and needs, and we celebrate those differences. Our school serves the needs of gifted students just as well as those of students with learning disabilities, and can support students who are socially and emotionally adept as well as those who need more coaching and support.

In 2021-2022, our Board worked closely with Nouman Ashraf from the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto to learn more about equitable and inclusive practices in governance. As part of this work, the Board's Strategy and Equity committee worked with school staff to establish an evolving document declaring our commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at The Mabin School.

In 2022-2023, our focus will turn to anti-black racism and anti-oppressive practices. We have engaged KOJO Institute to guide our work, engaging both Board members and staff in training that will allow us to develop our own practices so that they bring us closer to our goals to be increasingly diverse, inclu-



sive, and equitable. We are excited about this work. It aligns closely with our belief that everyone can be a changemaker, and we can create systems together that support more equitable learning experiences for all.



### **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at The Mabin School (Evolving Document)**

*The Mabin School is committed to social justice. Every child is encouraged to be a changemaker, and use empathy, teamwork, leadership and problem-solving to combat injustice. Our smallness enables us to know one another deeply and to appreciate our strengths. We know that if everyone at The Mabin School is to feel a sense of belonging, it is our job to facilitate strong relationships and to celebrate differences.*

*Inclusion is a core value of The Mabin School. We welcome and support a diversity of learning profiles, and believe that greater diversity leads to deeper learning. We seek to increase the racial and socio-economic diversity of our student body so that a wider range of voices can inform our understanding of ourselves, each other, our city, our country, and our world. We seek to invite and amplify the voices of equity-deserving communities, including BIPOC perspectives. We welcome families that are part of 2SLGBTQ+ communities and, as a non-denominational school, our families come from multiple religious traditions.*

*We are committed to studying and implementing anti-racist and anti-oppressive approaches, with specific attention to anti-black racism and the Truth and Reconciliation process. We strive to uncover unconscious bias at both the individual and system level, to recognize and critically engage with all kinds of social injustice, and to work and learn together towards positive social transformation. We are working to ensure our staff reflects the diversity of our city so that our students have non-stereotypical models of leadership. At The Mabin School, we want all members of our community to be able to bring their authentic selves.*

*The Mabin School's Board, staff, and students are engaged in an ongoing process to continuously improve as teachers and learners in our work to become a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive learning community for all. We are committed to instilling in every child a sense of belonging. We invite all families to join us in this work.*

*Nancy Steinhauer is the principal at The Mabin School. Nancy is an accomplished educator with over 20 years of experience in public and independent schools in Ontario. She has worked as a Student Achievement Officer at the Ministry of Education and is the recipient of Canada's Outstanding Principals Award. Nancy is the co-author of the book "Pushing the Limits: How Schools Can Prepare our Children Today for the Challenges of Tomorrow" which was shortlisted for the Donner Prize in 2018.*



Our commitment to student-led inquiry: the child is leading us which instills agency, leadership, collaboration and problem solving at a young age.

Our identity as a play-based, relationship-based laboratory of learning where empathy is nurtured and modelled.

Our status as a changemaker school provides a social justice lens and authentic opportunities for our children to engage in the world with a sense of personal and collective power.

Our unapologetic "smallness" enables us to create intimacy and a sense of family.

Our approach with families: to partner with parents in service of their children's full development.

**Our Mission**

To create the next generation of original thinkers, adaptive leaders and caring citizens.



**Our Vision**



To model excellence in progressive elementary education.

**Our Aspiration**

Build the foundation that will enable us to achieve the next level as changemakers and influencers in the field of education and children's mental health.

To be in high-demand by a greater diversity of communities.

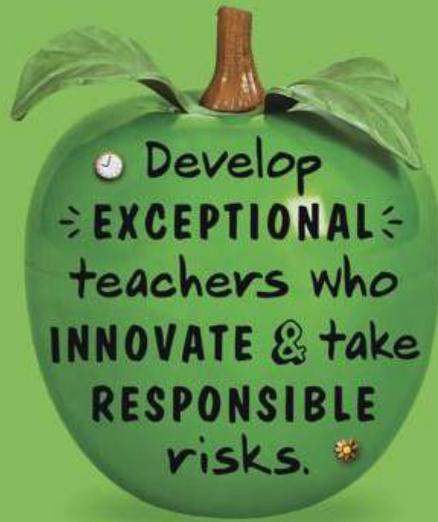
Successfully complete the building and move back home.



Strategic Priority 1 : Model excellence in progressive elementary education



Sustain standards of **EXCELLENCE** in teaching & learning ~ to create ~ **CARING** global citizens.



Develop **EXCEPTIONAL** teachers who **INNOVATE & take RESPONSIBLE risks.**



**ENGAGE** in local education **RESEARCH & training** **SELECTIVELY.**

Strategic Priority 2 : Nurture healthy relationships



Promote **WELL-BEING & MENTAL HEALTH** of our children, staff & families by **FOSTERING** healthy relationships.



Capture & communicate **EFFECTIVE** examples of **AUTHENTIC** relationship building.



**INCREASE** the diversity of **VOICES** in our communities.

Strategic Priority 3 : Amplify learning



Complete the new space, designed to **ENHANCE** our ability to be **ORIGINAL** thinkers, **ADAPTIVE** leaders & **CARING** citizens.



Partner with families to ensure children feel **STABLE, SECURE & SAFE** regardless of our location.



**CONTINUE** to co-create "**MABIN MAGIC**" through play, creativity & connection wherever **WE** are.



# Art on the Go!

By Megan Fehlberg

Art making is not a place for rigidity. An inflexible, overly controlling attitude will only serve to stifle and snuff out creativity. To create art effectively – whether we are children or adults – we need access to spontaneity, freedom, and the space in which to take risks. At Mabin, our art studio is often where that magic happens.

When I learned that I would be teaching visual arts without access to a studio last year – on three different floors, and in 7 or 8 different rooms, no less! – I knew I had to channel the artist within, and model for my students how to approach learning and art making with an attitude of flexibility, creativity and adaptability. We returned to some of the most essential and foundational ways of doing art the “Mabin way”: lots of clay, lots of watercolour painting, and lots of small group collaboration. We focused on being in the moment together and creating with spontaneity.

The art materials available to us were simpler than usual, and there were fewer of them. However, it was clear very quickly that downsizing the materials did not require downsizing in imagination or fun! Children naturally create from a place of spontaneity and optimism. So much of their imagination, their ability to build, paint, create and problem solve is innate. The pandemic, along with the renovation, reminded me to zoom in on these innate abilities within my students, and to remember that no matter the size of the classroom, or the materials available, the job of an art teacher is not to create pretty pictures, but rather to safeguard this innate creativity and help each child learn that art making is a kind of sanctuary.

If we choose to unlock our creativity, it is always there for us. Students can always return to the simple tasks of building with clay, or spreading colours across a blank page. They can take comfort in doing these acts of art making with freedom and spontaneity. It can bring both comfort and the space to take new risks.

The pandemic took many things from us. The renovation and our temporary relocation off site took away another layer of familiarity, comfort and convenience. However, these challenges did not take away from what the making of art continued to offer us: a way to express ourselves in times of hardship, a way to come together creatively, and, perhaps most importantly, a way to approach uncertainty with the spirit, spontaneity, and flexibility of an artist.



Megan Fehlberg is one of our talented visual art specialists at The Mabin School. Megan has tremendous respect for the imagination and curiosity of all children (and adults!), and she works tirelessly to guard these attributes while building artistic confidence and skill. From teaching circus acrobatics, to drama and dance in inner-city schools, Megan has been teaching children for over fifteen years, and is passionate about bringing a rich and varied art program to the students of The Mabin School. She is thrilled to be making art with her students in our brand new Community Learning Lab this year!

# A Mabin Grad Reflects

By Ted Meighen ('92)

It seems to have changed right before my very eyes! I noticed it every time I drove by 50 Poplar Plains Road to check on the progress of Mabin’s most substantial physical change in its over 40 year history. As an alumnus, current parent and Board member, looking at what has taken shape through these lenses is especially gratifying. It serves to reinforce for me the need to keep the “Mabin magic” going not only for today’s students but for those of tomorrow.

Looking back, it was likely not long after I graduated from The Mabin School that talk of expanding the existing building began. Here we are in 2022, at the same site where bulldozers, earthmovers and people with hard hats have been working steadily for over a year to bring those early visions to life. These processes are never fast, and it’s certainly a testament to years of visionary parents, faculty, leadership and community members, that the dream of a reimagined Mabin campus was never lost and continued to take shape and gain momentum over the years.

Upon returning to our home on Poplar Plains Road, you will notice a significantly renovated existing structure with new floors, refreshed interiors and upgraded water, electric and roofing. The addition above our gym – a combination of accessible Kindergarten classrooms, and our new Community Learning Lab – will help build the next generation of original thinkers, adaptive leaders and caring citizens. Its open plan, large windows with natural light, and flexible space (for imagination, free play, art and student-led inquiry) will deliver what Mabin has always been known for ever since I was a child, but in a much-improved way.

As a current parent of a Grade 3 student, I am grateful that both current and future students will get the benefit of an expansion of this magnitude. An updated playground, a new running track and basketball court will also provide flexibility when it comes to opportunities for physical exercise, recess play and after school activities.

An exciting new opportunity sits with our Community Learning Lab, part dedicated art studio and part learning commons, which will offer Mabin the chance to work with various external groups to provide a space where meetings, events or even drop in play could become the norm. This wider perspective and accessibility – beyond the playground as it were – are important steps for the school, as we continue to build on our commitment to being inclusive community partners in our diverse city.



Ted as a Mabin student.



The Mabin School after renovation.

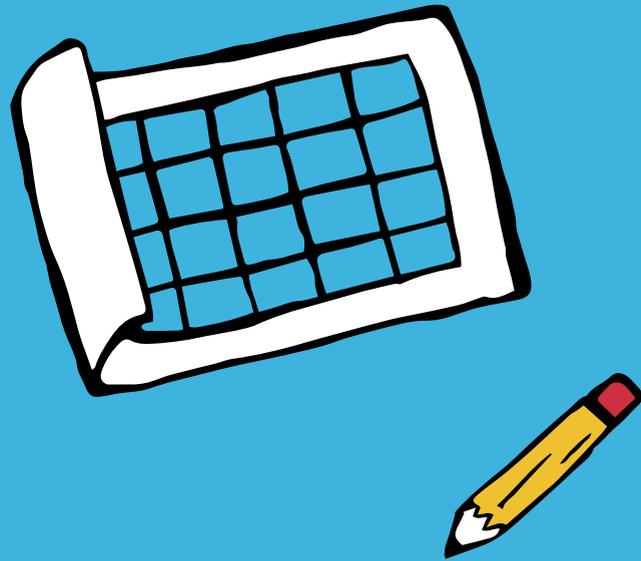


Like father, like son!

To say Ted Meighen ('92) wears a number of hats within the Mabin community would be an understatement! Ted and his brother Max ('01) attended The Mabin School as students and Ted's son Henry ('26) is now following in his father's (and uncle's) footsteps. In addition to being a Mabin alum, and current Mabin parent, Ted is also an active member of our Board of Directors. He was instrumental in helping The Mabin School accomplish the building of our brand new Community Learning Lab.

# Inventions and Design in SK

By Alex Morley



The Senior Kindergarten (SK) students showed an interest in inventions over the past year. Using children's literature, we began looking at some famous inventors and talking about why they invented the things they did. We learned about Elijah McCoy, the famous Black Canadian inventor who found a way to lubricate train wheels while the train was moving. We learned about Sarah E. Goode, one of the first Black patent holders in the USA, who invented a bed that folded into a desk. We learned about Frances Gabe, the inventor of the self-cleaning house.

After learning about some amazing people who solved problems using design thinking, we got to work on our own inventions. The students came up with a problem that they wanted to solve, thought of a solution and made a labeled diagram showing their invention. After getting their patents cleared by the patent board (their teachers), they got to work making prototypes out of recycled materials. We had houses that made food, cleaned themselves and took care of children. We had robots that served food, rockets that shot masks, and even some unicorns that made rainbows! Students showed their creative problem-solving skills and artistic abilities while working through the design process.



After we finished our invention prototypes, we had an amazing two-day workshop with Noah's mom, Lauren. She taught us all about engineering and presented us with the problem of building a bridge from Happyville to Factory Town. The kids worked through the engineering process from brainstorming to designing and building a prototype. They came up with many different designs to solve the problem and worked in teams to build their prototypes.

What started as an interest in inventions turned into a whole-class workshop, creating prototypes and sharing our thinking.

My invention is called speedboot. It takes things to places. It could carry a cat. It could also carry anything. It puts things on it so it can carry them. It uses wheels with motors to get there. The problem I was solving was to carry things.

-Migao

My invention is a house that does everything for you except go to work and eat. You have to do that yourself. Its roof is lined with pots and pans and the walls have electrical boxes. The table can float high and shrink lower to its own accord. The food can appear on the table for there is a dishwasher that supplies ample food attached to the bottom of the table. And, if the table goes too high and flattens out, it has an automated electrical zap that will zap its flying device and make it go back down where it was. It also has a laundry machine attached from one part of the roof to the other. You can dry it by flipping a switch. The problem I was solving was having too many kids and a job, so you don't have time to take care of the kids. The house does everything for you. There is an automatic school bus to get your kids to school and back from school. It does everything.

-Daveed

My invention has a vacuum cleaner that is actually a wheel and it is sort of stuck in the back. You can open up the back in case you need to take out the stuff. I used pasta for the buttons. It cleans up stuff. You need to take it places to clean. It holds little things inside it. If it needed bigger stuff, it could have a bigger pack. I was trying to solve the problem of cleaning up my bedroom. I don't have enough storage, so I can ask it for my stuff and it will open up and give it to me.

-Amber

This is a machine and this is a heart that makes it really colourful and beautiful. The machine cleans pets. It uses magic to clean the pets. The rainbows make the magic and the rainbows make cats colourful. The rainbow is made by rain and sun, and it goes into the machine to make magic. I was trying to make pets more colourful by inventing this machine.

-Reese

I invented a thing that helps you not to scream. It can talk. It knows that you are being loud because the robot sense can tell it that someone is screaming. It tells you to be quiet in a nice way. It is polite. It can also tickle your back at night time to help you go to sleep. Sometimes, I scream at school when I get excited and it makes the teachers scared and sad. I scream by accident. I imagined this robot to tell you not to scream.

-Hugh

My invention is a telescope. It opens up and you can look through it. It helps you see things closer. It is also a stuffy. It can help you if you are bored to have fun. The problem I was solving was to help a kid who is bored to have something to do.

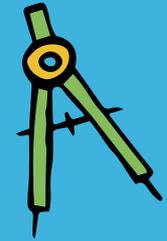
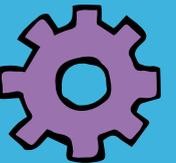
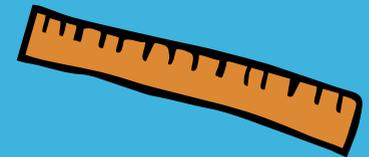
-Paige

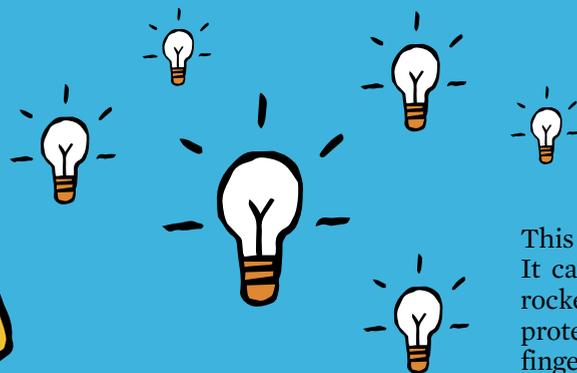
It is a grass maker and cutter. The grass goes through the pipe and then into the other pipe, and then it comes out of this pipe when it is ready. When the box closes it cuts the grass. It is a machine that works on its own. It is not really a robot, it is an automatic grass cutter. It makes the grass because of the green stuff, that's why I chose something green. I was trying to solve the problem that I couldn't cut the grass. I have real grass inside it.

-Llewyn

This invention is to keep me quieter. It has little things that move around. And it is kind of like a mask but you hold it. It has pieces of string. It is painted pink, red, yellow, green, black and blue. So, I cut out a piece of an egg holder, it has tiny holes, so it makes my voice quieter. It was a kleenex box that I painted. I was trying to solve the problem that sometimes I can be too loud.

-Mabel





This helps astronauts fly to space. It can fly out of our galaxy. It has rocket boots. It has an antenna that protects its head. It has hands and fingers that can shoot astronauts out into outer space. The middle part protects his body. It is a robot. Rocket ships can't send astronauts out of our galaxy, so I invented this robot to take them out of the galaxy.

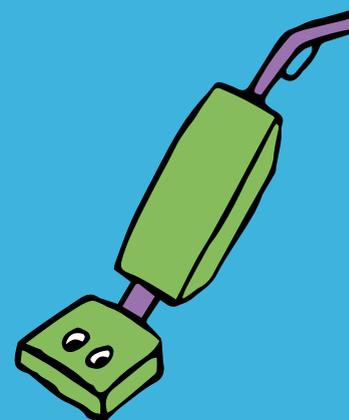
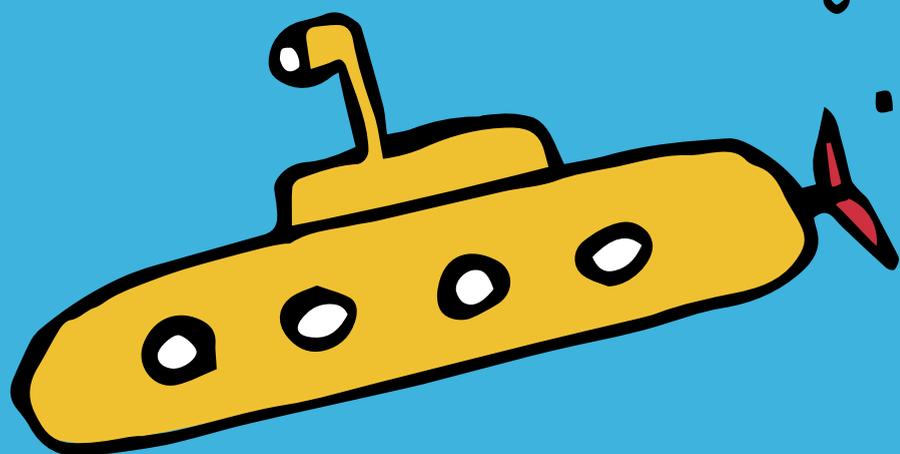
-Dewayne

This can see through paint and it fights bad guys for me. I can control it. It is a robot. It can take bad guys to the police. It has black arms and legs, and it has a colourful body. It has a head that is blue with eyes. The eyes can shoot lasers. The problem was that they might be bad guys who want to steal and this robot could protect me.

-Jakob

This is a sun. This is a button in the middle. When it is rainy, you can press the button and it gets sunny. On the back is a battery pack. There was a strawberry and he didn't like it when it was raining. So I thought of this invention to help him make it sunny when it was rainy out.

-Romy



This is a robot to take care of my dogs Ollie and Kaya. My mom can tell it what to do and how to take care of the dogs. So when we go somewhere else, the robot will just take care of them. This robot can train my dogs. The problem I was solving was that we needed someone to take care of our dogs when we went away somewhere. So I invented this.

-Poppy

It is a food dispenser. And there is also an app you can click to from your phone and it will start making food for you. You can control it from the park so food will be ready for you when you come home. The problem I was solving was that when you have lots of children and lots of stuff to do, you don't have time to do your chores. So you just click the button on the app, and it will start making the food for you.

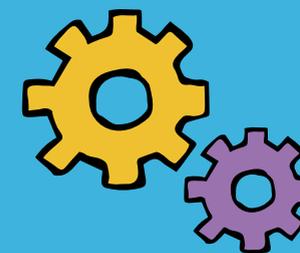
-Charlotte

This device gives you anything you want. You say what you want and press the button and you open it up and then you see it. The problem that I was solving was that I didn't have too many toys at my house. I wanted to have more toys. This invention could solve the problem because it could make me more toys.

-Skylar

It is supposed to help me swim. So I can see all the little fishes, sharks, whales, dolphins, octopuses and squid. It has two paddles and a little telescope to see better. There is also a window. It is like a submarine. When I actually build the real thing it will be really big. I don't know how to swim, so, until I learn how, I can use this thing to see under the water and swim around.

-Theo



This is a rocket ship that shoots out masks at the bottom. So at first, the masks travel down the ramp. Then it goes down more and falls down to the tube. The tube stays like this until it is showtime. Then it opens. If it opens too early it will land on the blocker. If it's the right time then the blocker will fold back and the masks will have a straight path. The problem I was solving was that there weren't enough rocket ships. Also, this shoots out masks so people could have more masks.

-Noah

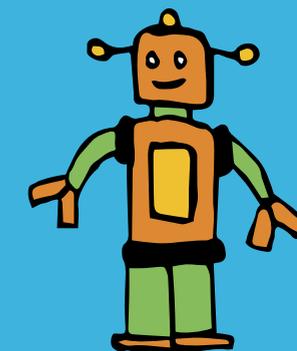


This robot protects houses. It does spinjitsu. It spins around and you can't see it since there is a colour around it. It uses a sword and it also squirts out water. I was trying to stop bad guys from stealing stuff when I invented this.

-Sebastian

It is a unicorn. It has a tail that is a rainbow. It makes rainbows. My favourite part is the feet!

-Eleanor



Alex Morley teaches Senior Kindergarten at Mabin. He has a background in special education and experience teaching in Toronto and Mexico City. Alex can be seen regularly playing one of his many instruments, sometimes while riding a unicycle and sporting a bow tie! He enjoys spending his days with 5 year olds and instilling a joy and love of learning in his students.



# Food! Glorious Food!

By Randall Brown & Lauren McGuire

At the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, the Grade 3 class began to ask questions about where different foods come from and how they grow. As a class, we investigated this interest by dissecting fruits and vegetables, sprouting and growing seeds, reading books about farming, and visiting a working farm.

During our food investigations, the Grade 3s collected stickers from fruits and vegetables at home and placed them on a classroom map, organized by their country of origin. This inquiry led the class to ask many questions related to geography so we spent time learning about different cultures through food and understanding the journey of food from farm to table.

Throughout this inquiry, the Grade 3s had many conversations about access to food and wondered how they might be able to play a role in improving the food security of families in their local community. The class also became very curious about the free pantries and fridges that exist in our city, and they went on a grocery shopping trip to see how much it would cost to plan and purchase meals for a family. Following this trip, the class decided to write and publish a letter in our school newspaper, *The Choosing Times*. This letter educated readers about community fridges and solicited food and toiletry items for donation.



During our inquiry, the class formed relationships with different community organizations working on increasing food security in Toronto, learning from and supporting these organizations. While the Grade 3s learned about many different aspects of food and the food system (such as healthy food, sustainable foods, and farming practices), they also developed an interest in food waste, and began to ask many questions about it. The class was shocked by the amount of food wasted in Canada.

As their final project, the Grade 3s decided to further educate our community about several issues relating to the food system by creating informative and entertaining videos. The class also created a "Little Free Pantry," which they collaboratively decorated with their parents. The pantry will be placed at our school, and we hope it will bring about a positive change in our community by improving food access.

*Randall Brown teaches Grade 3 at The Mabin School. She has a special interest in environmental and social justice education and is passionate about teaching empathy and empowering students to positively contribute to their communities.*

*Lauren McGuire is a Learning Strategies Teacher at Mabin where she supports students and teachers, and provides reading intervention through the Empower program. Lauren loves to figure out exactly how kids learn, and support them to understand themselves as learners.*



# Mabin Day 2022: A Celebration of All Things Mabin (Including Gerry!)



By Nancy Steinhauer

Five years ago, we established a new tradition: Mabin Day. Falling close to our founder Gerry Mabin's April birthday, our idea was to have a predictable day each year to celebrate the arts, creativity, and history of The Mabin School. Each year on the Thursday before the Victoria Day long weekend, we invite Mabin families from near and far — old and new — to join us for an afternoon of celebration and, of course, a parade!

This year was the best Mabin Day yet. Organized by a combination of students, staff, and parents, Mabin Day 2022 was a true community party. The joy was palpable as we were able to gather together in person as a community for the first time in over two years. It was truly spectacular, and made more so by this opportunity to be together again.

Usually we celebrate Mabin Day right at 50 Poplar Plains Rd., but with our construction project well underway, this was not possible. Instead, we started the party at 35 Prince Arthur, one of our temporary homes, and made use of the local green space at Taddle Creek Park. It was a beautiful, sunny day, so our specialists led integrated groups of students through a rotation of art activities and music making outdoors while our Kindergarten students were treated to a special storytelling session with master storyteller, Mariella Bertelli, in their classrooms. One of our staff members, Alex Simons, who is also a sculptor, led the whole community to collaborate in the building of a communal unicorn made of magical sticks and wishes. This unicorn, which was about the size of a large dog, was on wheels, and Alex walked it to Taddle Creek Park early Thursday morning via the route that Taddle Creek flows through Toronto — all the way from Dufferin and Eglinton to Bloor and Bedford. We named our new friend May Bin.

The whole school met at 2:00 pm at Taddle Creek Park for an assembly outside. Parents and community members joined us, including



Next year, Mabin Day will be back at 50 Poplar Plains Road once more. Mark your calendars now for **Thursday, May 18, 2023!** We can't wait to see you and welcome you home!



a few curious onlookers. Each year at Mabin Day, we present the Ian Hawkins Spirit Award. This award was created in 2018 to honour Ian Hawkins, a long time music/French teacher at Mabin. He was at the school from 1993 until his retirement in 2018 and the annual award is given to an individual or group of people in the Mabin community who demonstrate kindness, supportiveness and community spirit. Our Parents' Association donates \$500 in the winner's name to use to enhance the music program at the school.

Our 2022 winners were the Grade 5 and 6 students, who truly did an outstanding job of leading their peers despite very challenging circumstances. Relegated to their own campus at the Alliance Française building at 24 Spadina Road during the 2021-2022 school year, the Grade 5s and 6s nevertheless led every assembly, numerous full school events, and even our new house system. Sometimes, the Grade 5 and 6 students did this remotely over

Zoom, and at other times, they were live and in-person. Towards the end of the year, many more opportunities for in-person integration arose, and the Grade 5 and 6 students shone as they gently and empathically interacted with younger students.

This year's special guest speaker was Gerry Mabin herself! Our founder talked about our mascot, the unicorn, and how it feeds on kindness. Gerry joined the JK class in the parade that followed from Taddle Creek Park up Bedford Road. "May," the unicorn on wheels, led the way, where ice cream trucks awaited at the Hydro Park, along with balloons, music, a fantastic DJ, delicious pizza, and fun games led by our Grade 5 and 6 students. We were truly thrilled to be together again.



Special thanks to Mabin parent Karuna Satov for sharing her Mabin Day photos with us!

Nancy Steinhauer is the principal at The Mabin School. Nancy is an accomplished educator with over 20 years of experience in public and independent schools in Ontario. She has worked as a Student Achievement Officer at the Ministry of Education and is the recipient of Canada's Outstanding Principals Award. Nancy is the co-author of the book "Pushing the Limits: How Schools Can Prepare our Children Today for the Challenges of Tomorrow" which was shortlisted for the Donner Prize in 2018.

# And the Winner Is...

By Chris Russell

*During his years at The Mabin School, Chris Russell has taught Grades 5 and 6 and PE and he is our Vice-Principal. Chris works to support an emergent and differentiated curriculum, and helps students and their families through the transition process in preparation for life beyond Mabin in Grade 7. A fan of the arts, athletics, outdoor education, and community service, Chris uses these interests to inspire, sustain, and celebrate learning in all subject areas within and beyond the classroom. The following remarks have been condensed from Chris' presentation at Mabin Day to announce this year's worthy recipients of the Ian Hawkins Spirit Award.*

Today, I have the honour of announcing this year's recipient of the 2022 Ian Hawkins Spirit Award. This annual award honours an individual or group within the Mabin community who demonstrates the values and spirit embodied by beloved teacher Ian Hawkins who was appreciated for his sense of fun, helpfulness, and commitment to teaching and bringing people together. These are key ingredients to creating an inclusive and caring community, and they are also reasons why this year's recipient of the Ian Hawkins Spirit Award was nominated and chosen.



This year's recipient has given a great deal of their time and energy to making sure that the rest of the school has had fun, and learned in a variety of whole school events. They have supported younger students throughout the year as they led them through activities and created opportunities for fun. They were gentle and kind, and gave each student what they needed in their encounters with them.

They have supported peers as well as other students at Mabin throughout their time in our community. They have pulled together and worked very hard, especially throughout the challenges of COVID. They are leaders at Mabin who have planned, developed and run full school events throughout the year, including: Orange Shirt Day, the Terry Fox Run, Halloween Fun Day, Remembrance Day, Black History Month, Pink Shirt Day, Carnival, Earth Day, Mabin Day, and Pride Month... to name only a few. They performed a wonderful musical production of Willy Wonka, and have created businesses to engage the Mabin community and beyond. This year's recipient has met the challenges of working from a new location, both virtually and in person, while contributing to the larger school community and keeping the Mabin magic alive.



*It is my pleasure to present the 2022 Ian Hawkins Spirit Award to this year's Grade 5 and 6 students. Congratulations to all of you! Bravo!*

# Extra! Extra! Grade 2s Explore Newspapers

By Jillian Green

Our Grade 2 inquiry began with students naturally writing their own newspapers in class during Choosing Time, a time in the day or week when children can choose their own activities and explore what interests them. The class was eager to construct “The G-2” news and report on current Grade 2 events. Our student teacher, Quinn, had recently graduated from a journalism program and began teaching us about different types of media.

One area that the pandemic hit the hardest was our students’ writing! Normally, our inquiry units are more observational/science based, but this natural curiosity from the children to craft a newspaper also served as an excellent way to provide more rigorous practice in an area that was challenging for students to learn virtually.

As I look at the finished projects (incredibly crafted newspapers, filled with detailed paragraphs and cursive writing), I realize that many students did not remember how to print their letters at the very beginning of Grade 2!

Through an Art Gallery of Ontario workshop, we began to draw inspiration from Mary Ann Shadd, a Black female and Canadian changemaker in the 1800s who began her own activist newspaper. Through this workshop, we observed a replica of a printing press, and students became

curious about the art of printing. We followed up with field trips to the Textile Museum to participate in a printmaking workshop, and even visited the print shop in the Robertson Davies Library on the University of Toronto campus. This field trip was a real treat, as we were able to design our own paper banner, and observe a variety of printing presses in action.

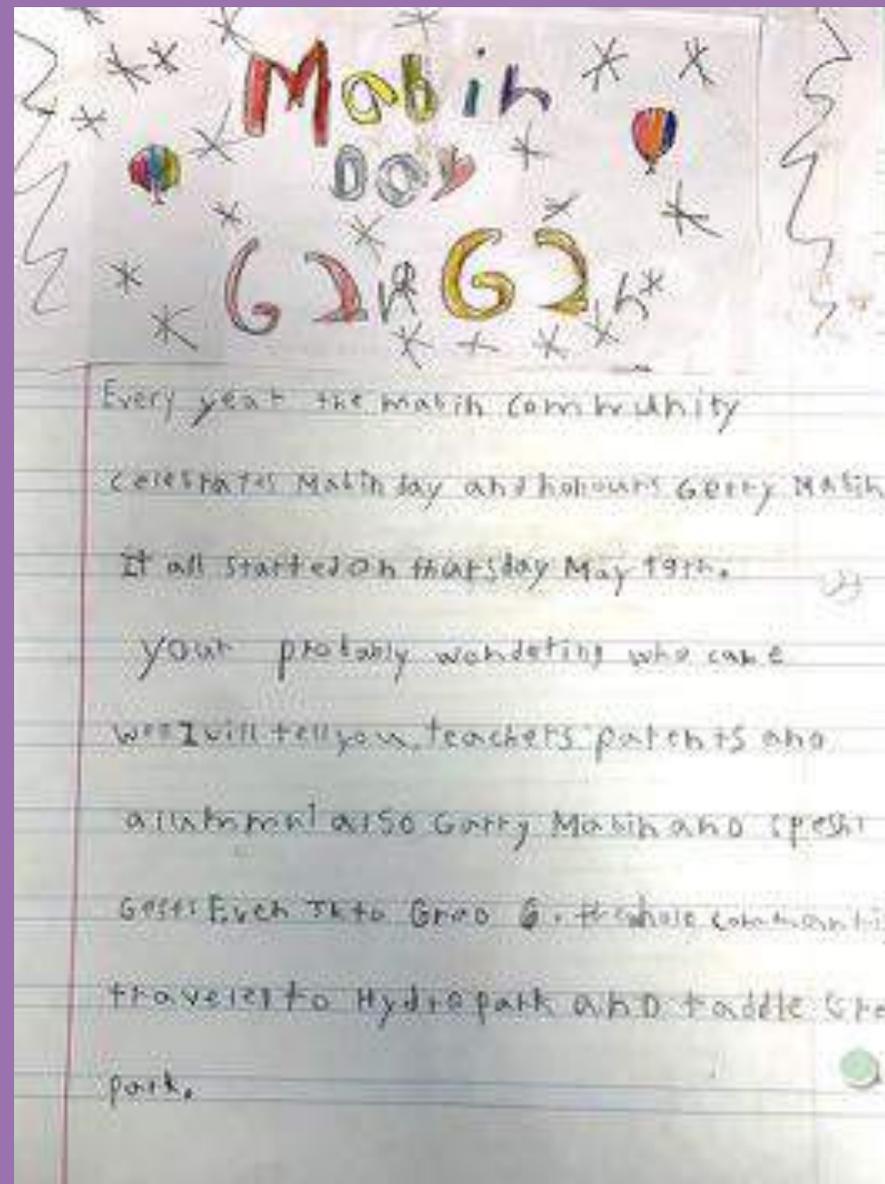
For the content of our paper, we studied the art of expository writing in depth, including paragraph writing, topic and closing sentences, different sentence types, utilizing subordinate conjunctions, selecting appropriate punctuation, and capitalization conventions, and of course expanding on our ideas by using elevated vocabulary and juicy details! One day I banished “fun” from the classroom, because students were not allowed to say “it was fun” and we brainstormed richer vocabulary choices.

Each student created their own individual paper. The articles featured school events, and coverage of Mabin Day was our feature story. In science class, the students designed their own Bloxel video games, we studied print advertisements in class, and examined how toys are packaged and marketed to children. The students then created an ad for their own video games, which was featured in their papers. Students each

connected with a Grade 4 buddy and interviewed one student for their paper. This was a lovely way to integrate once COVID restrictions were dropped, and to make connections and build community.

The most exciting part for the students was working on the layout, putting all of the pieces together, and seeing their finished products. The students reflected on their report cards a huge sense of accomplishment from completing such a large, multi-step project.

It’s always fascinating to see how inquiries develop from year to year. In this case, what began as an enjoyable Choosing Time activity became a deep dive into the art of the newspaper for the entire Grade 2 class. And one of the many joys of teaching in a school that values inquiry-based learning is that I never could have predicted that at the beginning of the school year!



Jillian has been a member of the Mabin teaching community since 2010. Prior to this, she taught at the Jackman Institute of Child Study (OISE/UT). Jillian holds a B.A. Hon. in Contemporary Studies and Art History, along with a Masters of Arts in Child Study from OISE. Jillian is a Registered Early Childhood Educator and has additional qualifications in Primary Education and Special Education. Jillian is passionate about creating knowledge building communities and designing emergent curriculum to inspire students. During the 2022-2023 school year, Jillian moves from the Grade 2 classroom to our Community Learning Lab to take on an exciting new role as Teacher-Librarian and TLC Coach!



# Class of 2022

## Valedictorians' Speech



*The following remarks were shared by the co-valedictorians of this year's graduating class: Simon Bergeron ('22) and Meryl Satov ('22). Our Grade 6 graduation ceremony was held on June 14, 2022 in the beautiful theatre at Alliance Française at 24 Spadina Road.*



**Simon & Meryl** Hello everyone. I am Simon, one of this year's valedictorians. I started at The Mabin School in SK.

And I am Meryl, Simon's co-valedictorian. I started at The Mabin School in JK.

Thank you so much for being here with us today.

We would like to take the next few minutes to share some of our favourite memories and experiences at Mabin.



**Meryl** One of my first memories at Mabin was Bunny Day. Back in JK, we all dressed up as bunnies and our teacher, Lisa, brought a bunny to class. Nancy and Sarah were also with us in JK. Thank you to all three of you for making my first memories at Mabin so special.

**Simon** When I first came to Mabin in SK, I met Meryl, Talia, and Rachel, as well as Laura, our awesome SK teacher. I learned a lot about the Habits of Mind in SK, especially persistence. There are a few rules at Mabin that make the school a more inclusive environment, for example: "You can't say you can't play".



**Meryl** In Grade 1, Sandra and Stef were our teachers and they were so much fun. Grade 1 was also the year Guy, Luka and Gabe joined our class. Drama was one of our favourite subjects and we loved playing "Graveyard".

We also made a shadow puppet play about ants! One of my other favourite memories was the Grade 1 "sleepover" (that wasn't a sleepover) with Sandra, Stef and Lauren. I remember the scavenger hunt that ended with ice cream sundaes and watching a movie!

**Simon** For Grade 2, we had Paul and Emma as teachers, but for me what stands out for this year is the addition of Max.

**Meryl** In Grade 3, Alice joined our class. I remember doing smartie math with Steph Levy and Lauren McGuire. We also learned about inventions and wrote a song about them with Eugene.

**Simon** Thank you to Sue and Alex for making Grade 4 a very special year at Mabin. You worked very hard to make learning fun and memorable. You found great ways of teaching subjects. For example, online and in-person games. One game was a math challenge where two people had to compete. The person who got the right answer first remained standing to take on another challenger.

**Meryl** In Grade 5, Heather was our teacher for the first time with Jenny and we did FLL (Robotics). We learned a lot about the ocean and made documentaries. Grade 5 was a challenging year because of COVID, but with the help of our teachers, we were able to get through it.

**Simon** Hana and Liam joined in Grade 6 which was a year of challenges. Of course, there was COVID which made everything complicated and difficult for the past two years!

Thank you, Heather, for finding ways around these challenges, and allowing us many opportunities to learn and experience new things, like when we had to create our own businesses. Some really interesting ideas came out of this project, and I know that some of us are planning to keep working on our new business.



**Meryl** Megan, Sama, Gina, and Lisa, thank you for always making art a fun experience. We always looked forward to art class and we loved all the cool projects that we did. When we had art with Megan, we would always mix the paint on the floor and that is one of my favourite memories.

**Simon** Thank you so much, Jill, Andy, and Chris for making physical education my favourite subject. You always thought of unique games that were fun and engaging for our class. For example, "Secret Snowman" was a more fun version of dodgeball.

**Meryl** Michelle and Heather, thank you for always making science fun and interesting. I remember lots of fun things we did in science, but one of my favourite memories is the egg drop we did with Michelle. Science was always something to look forward to at the end of the day.

**Simon** Lauren, thank you so much for making sure that every time we had French, our class had a lot of fun while learning a lot.

We will always remember you as the best French teacher I know.  
Je dis ça parce que tu mets toujours beaucoup d'effort dans tes classes de français.

**Meryl** Ian, Bruce, and Eugene, thank you for being our music teachers over our years at Mabin. I remember playing the turkey game with Ian and it was so much fun. We also had a lot of fun making music with the Whirly Tubes.



**Simon & Meryl**

Lauren, thank you for making drama a favourite subject for everyone in our class. We love playing drama games with you, like "Dr. Know It All" and "Darling, If You Love Me". Thank you for helping us to make our musical so special. We never could have done it without you.

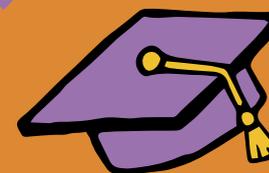
Thank you to our librarians Randall, Sonia, and Heather for giving us a chance to calm down for part of the day and just read.

Nancy, thank you for being an amazing principal and always keeping things organized. You've helped us so much throughout all our years, but especially this year. You provided loans for our businesses, helped us organize school events and so much more. Mabin wouldn't be the same without you.

Thank you so much Andy for running morning sports every morning.

Thank you so much fellow graduates for being unique in different ways and helping us to get here. It is amazing to be graduating with all of you and you will always be our friends.

We will always remember Mabin as an amazing school and experience, and even though we are excited to move on to our new schools, we will always remember this as a place to learn, have fun and make friends.



# Grad Tributes

By Grade 5

In honour of our Class of 2022 graduates, our Grade 5 students wrote thoughtful, individual tributes to each of the Grade 6s and shared these reflections at graduation in June. The Grade 5 and 6 students were an especially tight community last year and grew to know each other very well as a result of being off site together at 24 Spadina Road during the 2021-2022 school year. Highlights from their personal remarks about each member of the graduating class are below.



## Luka

What we like most about you is that you throw yourself in with all of your heart. What inspires us about you is that you're a very energetic person, for example when you are playing football or any other game you are very energetic and never slow down.

## Alice

What we like most about you is that you express yourself in colourful and detailed ways using your fashion sense and artistic ability. What inspires us about you is your curiosity. You always want to find out what is happening with other people and you ask the teachers a lot of questions.

## Rachel

What we like most about you is that you are very comfortable when surrounded by others. What inspires us the most about you is your generosity. One example is at recess you always include different people that you don't often play with.

## Gabe

What inspires us most about you is that you are such a charismatic person. What we like most about you is how you differentiate yourself while you are respecting others, just like a swan.



## Hana

What inspires us most about you is that you are such an open-minded person. You were so open to learning about new topics and issues and always listened without judgement. The thing we like most about you is how freely you express gratitude. You are always quick to share a kind word or thought with everyone.

## Simon

What inspires us most about you is how committed you are to everything you do, for example when you are leading a school-wide event. The thing that we like most about you is that you have lots of tricks up your sleeve and you are always trying to find loopholes.



## Talia

What we like most about you is that you remain true and authentic in all situations. What inspires us about you is that you are always peaceful, and calm, especially when you are drawing.



## Meryl

What inspires us most about you is your thoughtfulness. During Pride and in your Baking Club, you were so kind and thoughtful and always lent a helping hand to the younger kids. What we like most about you is that you like to stop and take stock of things and think carefully about your appreciations (during Community Meetings).



## Liam

Your first and sadly last year at Mabin is coming to an end. We just wanted to say that we enjoyed you being here because of your intuition and capability of adapting to varying situations. Therefore, we present you with the Totem card of Intuitive Chameleon. By moving to a new country, new city and new school, you adapted quickly and easily made new friends.



## Guy

What inspires us the most in you is how you are so friendly. You are always very kind and you invite people to play with you. The thing we like most about you is that you relax the atmosphere for better group communication and you stay calm when things get hard.



## Max

What we like most about you is that you express your opinions with confidence and stand up for what you think. What inspires us about you is that you are very wise. You can retain so much knowledge from the many books you read.



# Grade 6 Businesses

By Heather Pettigrew

This past school year, the Grade 5s and 6s piloted the Mabin LEADS (Leadership, Entrepreneurship, and Adaptive Design) program with a focus on business and entrepreneurship. In the first term, students learned the basics of starting a business through Junior Achievement's "Our Business World" program. In the second term, they started planning their own businesses.

Grade 5s worked together to develop one business as a class. After considering their interests, budget, and time frame, they chose to make greeting cards with flower seeds in them and called their business Green Greetings. The students

worked hard to come up with a business plan, learned how to make seed paper from recycled materials, and designed and sold their prints to members of our community.

In Grade 6, each student chose to start their own business. They also considered their interests and limitations when choosing their entrepreneurial pursuits. Each student came up with their own business plan complete with a logo, marketing plan, and pricing structure. Each student also created and sent out a marketing research survey to help them make choices regarding their businesses. Students were also matched with a mentor from within

the Mabin community who assisted our young business owners along the way. Students had a lot of freedom in deciding how they were going to run their business and each week would meet as a class for a "Board Meeting" in which they shared their progress and received feedback from peers. By the end of the year, students had a chance to present all they had achieved at Mabin's first ever Business Fair at Mabin Day. We are so proud of what they were able to accomplish and encourage each of them to continue their entrepreneurial pursuits!



## TipsForGaming

My service is a Fiverr gaming coach to people who just started playing Roblox, specifically "Bedwars". My goal is also to educate parents of players on how to play the games their children are playing. This will help parents understand more what their children's interests are.

**Mission Statement:** Give new players a competitive advantage over other players.

**Reflection:** "I found that the biggest challenge for me was getting customers. Because you are starting up a business, instead of having a trusted business, which means most people would want to go with someone more trusted - even if your service is better than the other service."



## Swan Dive Jewelry

Swan Dive Jewelry manufactures high-quality bracelets for both kids and adults. All jewelry is made from beautiful plastic beads.

**Mission Statement:** To make affordable and beautiful bracelets that kids and their families can afford and treasure.

**Reflection:** "My favourite part of our entrepreneurial studies was that we got to be creative."

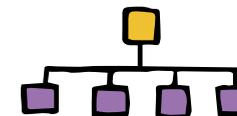


## Highland Custom Woodworking

Highland Custom Woodworking is a custom wood crafting business that makes quality items from maple and other solid woods.

**Mission Statement:** To create quality wooden creations to be enjoyed and cherished by everyone.

**Reflection:** "I learned that the most important thing when running a business is to remember that you are making your product or doing your service for someone so you should do your best work."

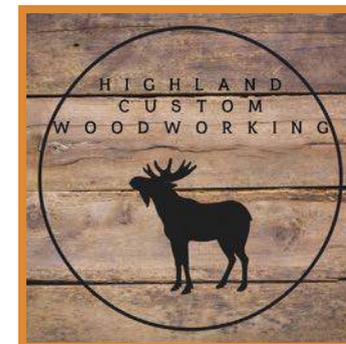


## Petzy

Petzy is a pet sitting service that will take care of all your pet's needs like walking and feeding while you're away.

**Mission Statement:** To help all owners take the best care of their pets.

**Reflection:** "My favourite part of running a business was planning it out because I liked researching how businesses work."





### Liam's Lawn Work

Liam's Lawn Work is a lawn mowing, snow removal, leaf removal, and plant care (e.g flowers) service. Some people don't have the time or just can't do lawn work. We can do lawn work for them.

**Mission Statement:** To make lawn work more affordable.

**Reflection:** "Advice I would give to someone starting a business would be to make sure it's your passion. You don't want to spend a lot of time on something you don't want to do."

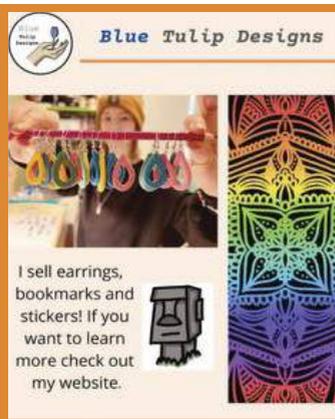


### LK Coaching for Gamers

I provide high-quality hour-long coaching sessions for several games including Roblox games like "Arsenal" and "Bedwars".

**Mission Statement:** To allow everybody to learn how to play a game that they think is fun.

**Reflection:** "My favourite part of entrepreneur studies was running the business because I could start making money by doing what I enjoy."

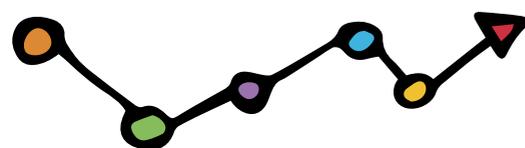


### Blue Tulip Designs

Blue Tulip Designs sells stickers with custom names and cool designs, and also sells earrings and bookmarks. All items are handmade things that are very creative and top-quality products people will love.

**Mission Statement:** To make and sell cool and artsy products.

**Reflection:** "I learned a lot from making my own business like how to make a budget and keep track of my products."



### Sunset Dye

Sunset Dye makes custom colour long and short sleeved shirts and scrunchies. We have a website you can order from. This business is important because some people might not have time to tie-dye.

**Mission Statement:** To make Toronto more colorful.

**Reflection:** "I learned you need a lot of patience and you should pick something you love doing and have an idea of how to sell."

### CocoCookie

CocoCookie is a stand outside of the founder's home and in Sibelius Park, where homemade hot chocolate and cookies will be sold to pedestrians in the neighborhood.

**Mission Statement:** To make fairly priced, yummy hot chocolate and cookies that will make some child's day just a bit better.

**Reflection:** "I am proud of the fact that I was successful in my business studies. I made some money, and I got to hang out with my friends at the park, which was fun."

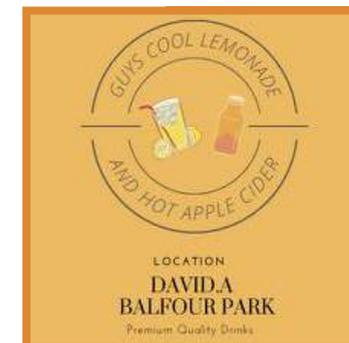


### Guy's Cool Lemonade and Hot Apple Cider Stand

Guy's Cool Lemonade and Hot Apple Cider Stand is giving people in the Summerhill neighbourhood a refreshing, healthy break at a reasonable price.

**Mission Statement:** To make people happy with a drink we love.

**Reflection:** "The most important thing that I've learned is work hard and it will pay off."

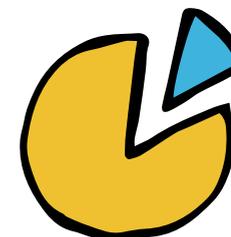


### Baker and Spice

Baker and Spice is a club for students at The Mabin School who love to bake. Baker and Spice teaches kids how to bake, as well as gives parents free time while their kids are having fun.

**Mission Statement:** To teach students how to bake, learn and have fun at the same time.

**Reflection:** "If someone was starting their own business, some advice I would give them is to have a money tracker because it makes keeping track of your money easier."



The Grade 5 students created a class business: Green Greetings.



Prior to teaching Grade 6 at The Mabin School, Heather Pettigrew has previously enjoyed experiences educating students at science centres, museums, and aquariums across the country. Since completing her MA in Child Study and Education (U of T, OISE) Heather has enjoyed tutoring students one-on-one and has spent much of her time in both public and independent schools throughout the city. Her passion is in empowering students to feel confident and successful in whatever they do, and she brings that focus into the classroom. Heather Pettigrew teaches Grade 6 at The Mabin School.

# Staying Connected through Mentorships

By Nancy Steinhauer

In this year's inaugural Mabin-LEADs program, our Grade 6 students identified a need, and then designed and implemented a plan, creating their own businesses. Knowing we have many entrepreneurs within the Mabin community, we put a call out to parents and alumni who might be interested in serving as mentors to our students. The response was immediate and enthusiastic, and each student was paired with two mentors who examined their business plan and provided constructive feedback and advice.

Students learned a ton, and feedback from the mentors was very positive as well. They remarked on how insightful and reflective Grade 6 students are in 2022, and were struck by how important it is to enable our young crowd of determined and creative minds. As one mentor said:

"I want to thank my mentee for teaching me how savvy and intelligent kids in Grade 6 are and proving that age is just a number, business men/women come in all ages."

Special thanks to all of our dedicated mentors for taking time to share their knowledge and wisdom with our Grade 6 students last year!

## Alum, Board Member & Parent

Jamie Campbell ('88)  
Ted Meighen ('92)

## Alum & Board Member

Alan Gertner ('96)

## Alum & Parent

Kate Gertner ('94)

## Alumni

Ross Curtner ('00)  
Annemarie (Mayer) Dunleavy ('94)  
Quinn Simpson ('96)

## Parent

Adam Bekhor  
Josh Diamond  
Jordan Fogle  
Sam Fogle  
Alia Jadad Garcia  
Eryn Green  
Eran Henig  
Adam Lipper  
Eliot Muir  
Mike Reid  
Mark Satov  
Samara Starkman  
Noah Waisberg

## Alum Parent

Becca Perren

## Alum Parent & Grandparent

Kelly Meighen

**Mabin LEADs:**  
**Leadership**  
**Entrepreneurship &**  
**Adaptive**  
**Design**

*Nancy Steinhauer, Mabin's current Principal, has served in many roles during her extensive career in education. She has worked in public and independent schools and has been a teacher, a Principal, a Vice Principal, and even a Student Achievement Officer, over the years. Nancy has acted as a mentor to both new and experienced educators and she has benefited greatly by being mentored by others herself.*

# Parent Profile: Gabriel Granatstein

By Corrina Taccone

"My high school's motto was 'Non nobis solum', a Latin phrase meaning 'Not for ourselves alone,'" says Gabriel Granatstein, father of Charlotte ('28). Inspired by this saying, Gabriel enlisted in the Canadian Armed Forces as a young man. While service and the military were not something that was part of his family history, Gabriel was compelled to see if joining the military was something he could achieve. "I wanted to be a peacekeeper and got to be a peacekeeper, serving across Canada and overseas," he recalls.

Now a lawyer by training and maintaining a role in the military as a reservist, Gabriel thinks back on his experience serving and the positive impact it had on his life. "The military gave me a sense of confidence I did not have before. I met a lot of different people across Canada and abroad. I developed a bond with people and came to appreciate the depth of those relationships," Gabriel remembers. "The military has been the thing that is most constant in my life."



Originally from Montreal, Gabriel moved to Toronto about 10 years ago and settled in the GTA where he owns his own business selling tires across Canada. As a parent to a young daughter who currently attends Mabin, Gabriel was offered the opportunity to participate in the school's Remembrance Day ceremony. "It was very moving. I had participated in several Remembrance Day ceremonies, mostly in Montreal at my old school, but what struck me about Mabin was the depth of the questions I received from the students," Gabriel explains. Gabriel recalled his experience in the past with school ceremonies and how some were caught up in the formalities of the presentation and were less focused on interacting with the students and what the students wanted to know about the military and service. Mabin was different. "I thought that the ways in which the students asked questions, interacted with me, showed genuine interest in remembrance and service, what it means to wear a uniform, what peace is...was tough, but good," Gabriel admits.



*Ontario Certified Teacher and recent grad from the University of Toronto, Corrina Taccone holds a Master of Museum Studies and Master of Library Information Science. Her experience ranges from digital exhibition coordination and project management at the Ripley's Aquarium to providing reference and research assistance to graduate students at University of Toronto's OISE Library. She recently joined us at The Mabin School taking on the role of part time archivist. Her role at Mabin consists of completing digitization of archives, creating displays of archival materials for the school community, as well as contributing articles to The Changing Times.*

Gabriel's experience at Mabin's Remembrance Day ceremony highlighted the importance of teaching kids the significance of celebrating veterans and how one communicates service to children. "What I tell kids is that it's about celebrating service. There are several ways to serve your community and country. We celebrate veterans on Remembrance Day but it's more about service and that can take many forms," Gabriel says. The same goes for when he has these conversations at home with his daughter. As with most kids, Gabriel's daughter asks him the tough questions, but ultimately he tries to respond in a way that is age appropriate, yet not patronizing.

Having not grown up in Toronto, Gabriel recalls not having any preconceived notions about The Mabin School when deciding if it was the right fit for his daughter. Having attended a very strict all boys school in Montreal, he wanted something different for his daughter. "What I didn't expect was how welcoming Mabin would be to us as parents and how they foster and support creativity in their students in a way that is so subtle and seamless. When I ask my daughter what she learned at school, she says she didn't learn anything and yet she is able to read, write, and do math," Gabriel says. Gabriel remains happy with his decision to enroll his daughter and looks forward to when his son can attend. He appreciates how the teaching methods at Mabin are so subtle and integrated that his daughter doesn't feel like she's learning subjects like math, she just knows math. For his daughter, the learning feels very natural where she can just enjoy being a kid.

# Parent Profile: Aleksandra Pikula

# AN ALTERED LIFE

At age 51, Marianne Fedunskiw suffered a series of devastating strokes, but she got her life back thanks to Dr. Aleksandra Pikula, a stroke neurologist at the Krembil Brain Institute, and the team at Toronto Rehab, including occupational therapist Jessica Galbraith. Here is her story.

BY WENDY GLAUSER

*Dr. Aleksandra Pikula, proud mom to Luka Knezevic ('22), is a Neurologist, Clinician Investigator and Director of Stroke Research with Krembil Brain Institute at UHN. This article is reprinted with permission from Krembil Brain Institute magazine. [Here is the link](#) to the full issue. [Click here](#) to listen to a KBI podcast episode featuring Aleksandra where she discusses why stroke in young adults is on the rise.*

**MARIANNE FEDUNSKIW:** I had my first ischemic stroke when I was 34, and I bounced back really quickly. I was only in the hospital for a few days. I thought it was a fluke because I had none of the risk factors. A few months later, I went on to finish my PhD and pursue an academic career.

Then, in 2016, my husband and I spent six weeks back in Oxford, England, where I had finished my postdoctoral fellowship years before. I was 51 and working on my second novel. I was cycling to a friend's for dinner when I had to stop. I had a headache, with a pounding so severe it felt like a stake was being driven through my head. I texted my husband and he met me with an Aspirin, and that helped. I even got through the dinner.

We didn't realize I was having a stroke so it was only when a friend insisted, that I went to the hospital in Oxford. After an overnight stay, I was discharged. We were due to fly to Toronto a few days later, as my research contract was up. The day after we returned, I went to the emergency department because I still had a bad headache and I was spending a lot of time sleeping. I woke up in the stroke unit of Toronto Western Hospital. I later found out that this time I had had both a hemorrhagic and an ischemic stroke. About half of hemorrhagic strokes are fatal, so it's a miracle I survived.

**DR. ALEKSANDRA PIKULA:** I met Marianne briefly on admission, then followed her for about 90 days after her strokes, which is standard practice. During her hospitalization, Marianne spent time in the intensive care unit. But when I saw her, she had already completed inpatient rehab, she was able to walk and her language had recovered. Typically, at this point most patients would be discharged from our clinic. The stroke neurologist would educate the patient on what to do to avoid a second stroke, such as addressing common risk factors (high blood pressure, diabetes) and engaging in healthy lifestyle choices. Then they're back to their family physician for ongoing followup.

However, what we see is that such short interactions with patients are a real problem. Stroke is a life-changing experience, and even if a patient recovers from their physical deficits, there are many emotional issues to deal with as well. A stroke can have a major impact on a person's well-being



↑  
Dr. Aleksandra Pikula's groundbreaking work looks at the long-term psychosocial needs and functional outcomes of younger stroke patients.

at any age, but for people under 65, like Marianne, a stroke can be truly devastating. Post-stroke recovery may take years. Many patients feel they need to learn how to navigate a new norm, as they try to get back to their careers, their relationships, their lives. At the same time, many patients are responsible for taking care of young children or elderly parents. Yet, despite no true physical disability, they may have "invisible" deficits that will not allow full engagement. The research shows that 30 to 40 per cent of younger stroke patients will experience cognitive dysfunction post-stroke, such as difficulty with multi-tasking and attention, and up to 80 per cent have psychosocial issues, like depression and anxiety, or the feeling of ongoing stigma and loss of self-identity. Many aren't able to go back to work right away, or ever, so there's a huge economic cost, but also a personal and societal cost. It's a lot to expect family doctors to manage these complex issues alone, so we have to shift our focus to thinking of stroke as a chronic disease rather than an acute one.

## Act FAST!

The acronym FAST is used by numerous organizations around the world to help people understand and detect stroke symptoms.

**F**  
**Face**  
Is it drooping?

**A**  
**Arms**  
Can you raise both?

**S**  
**Speech**  
Is it slurred or jumbled?

**T**  
**Time to call 911 right away.**

## Providing support to younger patients

**DR. PIKULA:** Stroke in younger adults and patient-reported outcomes are not well understood or commonly studied. My team and I are conducting a very important study that examines the long-term psychosocial and occupational needs of younger stroke patients, with an emphasis on our patients' lived experience. We've gathered data on around 100 patients, using tools that measure a variety of aspects of quality of life, including their mental health, social supports and treatment preferences. Only 25 of these patients went back to work full time. We've also conducted in-depth interviews with about a quarter of the patients in the study to better inform how we can care for patients after stroke in a more holistic manner and help them reintegrate back into their personal and professional activities. More importantly, we are in the process of developing an intervention that will be further tested to examine how to help these patients adopt a proactive self-management approach to lifestyle changes, thus limiting the chances of stroke recurrence (which is high in this population group, given their expected longer lifespan post-stroke).

**MARIANNE:** When I first spoke with Dr. Pikula, I was breaking down a lot. She connected me to a psychiatrist, Dr. Kathleen Sheehan, who works with relatively young people with chronic illness. Dr. Sheehan helped me work through the grief related to the death of my father and the loss of the academic career I was hoping to have. In my life at Oxford, I was always meeting new people and striking up interesting conversations. After my stroke, I knew I couldn't pursue my dream job there. I can't multi-task anymore, and handwriting is something that hasn't come back, though I'm still able to type. For me, my career is my identity. If I don't have my career, then who am I? The mental health implications of a post-stroke world can be devastating.



## Embracing a new life

**DR. PIKULA:** At our stroke program for younger adults, called SiYA, we follow patients for years after a stroke. I see them every six months, and our clinic readily connects them to rehabilitation, psychiatry, nutrition and a range of other services that are closely integrated. At University Health Network, about 15 per cent of people recovering from stroke are under 50, while 30 per cent are below the age of 65. This population group is often in a peak professional position. Many have families, young children or elderly parents to take care of, and their identity is interconnected with professional achievements and life satisfaction, so they need a strong support system. I try to guide them into adapting their career expectations and rediscovering themselves. For example, one of my patients was a business executive, and now she is working part time as a business consultant. She still has that purpose through her work, but she's contributing in a different way. Many patients started a new career or even began volunteering to rediscover their purpose. It's the same with Marianne. She's finding ways to bring her research and passion for writing back into her life, yet on her own terms.

## Better brain-saving operations

The Krembil Brain Institute is pushing the envelope to help more stroke patients.

Until recently, there wasn't much clinicians could do to treat major strokes. Blood thinners could help break up small clots, but it was hard to treat big ones. Then, in 2015, results from a breakthrough endovascular therapy (EVT) trial were released that forever changed how strokes get treated. With this therapy, a catheter is inserted into the groin or wrist and carefully moved through the artery all the way to the blood clot in the brain. Then, a wire with a stent on the end is pushed through the tube. When the wire reaches the clot, it

"grabs" it and pulls it out.

At first, major stroke organizations only recommended EVT for strokes caught within six hours and in large veins. In the years since, however, clinicians at the Krembil Brain Institute (KBI) have increasingly pushed those limits. "We're moving into new frontiers," says Dr. Ronit Agid, a neuroradiologist and clinician investigator at the KBI. "At first, we would only go if it's a large vessel; now we go into vessels that are one millimetre in diameter." So long as imaging shows the area near the clot still has some blood circulation,



**DR. RONIT AGID** is using endovascular therapy in increasingly smaller blood vessels.

clinicians can operate up to 24 hours after a stroke.

The new treatment possibilities mean more brain-saving operations than ever before, especially at the KBI, which is



**Marianne getting her first electroencephalogram at Toronto General Hospital.**

**MARIANNE:** Dr. Pikula has helped me realize I have worth outside my career. It's very subtle, how she does it. When she talks to me, I don't feel like she pities me. It's like she's catching up with a former colleague who has just taken a different path. She's helped me accept that I needed to give myself time. In stroke recovery, often the brain is ready to go off and resume life as normal. But then you can be hit by fatigue – you might even fall asleep in the middle of a conversation. So you really need to relearn how to "be," and in my case, I needed to consider "who" I could become.

**DR. PIKULA:** We're still analyzing the results of our study of younger stroke survivors, but one theme we've seen is that they need long-term and comprehensive supports in many aspects of their recovery. Many express a need to have a health navigator who is specialized in stroke to help them access services in the community, like nutritional programs, mental health services and classes like yoga, where people can engage socially with less pressure, that are geared toward younger adults with similar experiences. Medications help, but we have to work on complementary tools as well, assisting patients with improving their lifestyle. Stress, sleep and diet are really important for the brain to recover, as well as to prevent another stroke. Based on this study, we're in the process of designing a program to better meet the needs of young stroke patients, and we recommend governments fund such programs. It costs money, but when you consider the impact on someone's long-term mental and physical health, and for our society as a whole, it's worth it.

**JESSICA GALBRAITH (OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST AT TORONTO REHAB):** When I met Marianne, she suffered from brain fog, what she described as "getting stuck." I helped her find ways to conserve her energy and stay focused. We used an approach

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF PATIENT (MARIANNE FEDUNKIW), TIM FRASER (DR. AGID), DR. NICHOLSON, DR. KRINGS



**Marianne, post-stroke, is all smiles as she celebrates her nephew's grade 12 graduation last year.**

called goal management training, where we would break down her writing goals into smaller chunks and plan how she could work on the steps. We worked on schedules where she would write for short periods of time, not hours like she did before. And we would build on that, day by day.

We want to support people in achieving their goals of returning to work, school or volunteering; we just want to make sure they don't go back too early or quickly, when they might not be ready.

There needs to be a balance between activity and rest after someone has a stroke because there is a lot of consolidation of learning and healing that happens at rest. But even though they're not working, it's important for people to engage in meaningful occupations. Hobbies or social activities give them that feeling that they're being productive, and it's also therapeutic because it promotes further stroke recovery. So I asked Marianne if there was a hobby she wanted to try, and she decided to try sculpting. Afterward, she gave me the amazing sculpture she made. It's sitting in our office at work. It means a lot to know I've had this positive impact on Marianne's life.

**MARIANNE:** It's tempting, when you have a stroke, to say, "I can't do this." With the sculpting class, I didn't know if my fingers would work properly, but I was sitting across from the live model and we had this smooth clay. I could do it. It was so therapeutic and freeing, because I wasn't evaluating myself based on what I was pursuing as a career. I'm not a professional sculptor.

I'm also working on a play, which is about four people recovering from a stroke. I'm hoping to turn it into a musical. One of the characters is training to be a surgeon, but then she has a stroke and her hands no longer work the same. Her fine motor skills are affected. Over time, she realizes she may not be able to become a surgeon, but she could be a neurologist. I'm calling her Aleksandra. ■

a world-class regional stroke centre with a leading acute stroke team. Nurses and clinicians from radiology, anesthesiology and neurosurgery have to be ready to work together, fast. "We pride ourselves on a team-based approach to brain health care," says Dr. Patrick Nicholson, a neuroradiologist at the KBI. "We train fellows from all over the world, so they go back home and hopefully help improve their systems of care locally."

With treatments now available for more stroke patients, even for those who may have to fly to an advanced stroke



**DR. PATRICK NICHOLSON** is training fellow neuroradiologists around the world.

centre, it's that much more important to educate the public about strokes, explains Dr. Timo Krings, a neuroradiologist and scientist at the KBI, and the David Braley and Nancy Gordon

Chair in Interventional Neuroradiology. "While the majority of our population knows what the signs of a heart attack are, very few know the symptoms of a 'brain attack' or stroke and may thus not receive timely treatment," notes Dr. Krings. "So this is one area where we can focus future research and education."

Thanks to today's neuro-interventional radiology procedures, someone can go back to their life after a major stroke, whereas just 10 years ago, they may have needed 24/7 care, explains Dr. Agid. "From being



**DR. TIMO KRINGS** is trying to better educate the public about stroke symptoms.

able to regain their vision or speech, or even walk again, we can now help many more stroke patients go back to a normal life," she says. "There is no better feeling."



# Staff Profile: Meet Rhamiya!

By Corrina Taccone

"I discovered Mabin at an unlikely time. The pandemic had just recently been declared and things were not looking the best for occasional teaching opportunities," Rhamiya Thirunavukkarasu recalls. Having initially been working in the public school board, Rhamiya made the transition to The Mabin School and found that it was the best decision she ever made. She became attached to the small school environment and how the learning was tailored to the student's needs and what THEY wanted to learn.

From a young age, Rhamiya loved working with kids. She had a lot of teacher role models in her life and was attracted to the idea of bonding with kids and getting to see their development over time. That's why when she joined Mabin, she found it was the perfect fit for her. "At first I didn't quite realize my passion for teaching, but when I was a camp counselor at Markham Museum and I started coaching soccer in high school, I found that I enjoyed mentoring and that I was good at it," Rhamiya admits.

The best part about Mabin for Rhamiya has been the relationships she has developed with staff and students, as well as how much spirit everyone has. During the pandemic, Rhamiya was worried about fitting into a new school, but it came as no surprise that there was an amazing sense of community at Mabin where

she was welcomed with open arms. After a rough couple years having to adapt to online learning, Rhamiya welcomes the return to normal as she remembers the student-staff soccer-baseball game at the end of the 2021-2022 school year. "It was a really nice memory coming together after a long time of not being together," Rhamiya says. It reminded her of the sense of community that is so rich at Mabin and how that feeling fosters a lot of the excitement and joy for learning that is evident amongst the students and staff.

Having started working at Mabin as a physical education teacher, Rhamiya recalled the opportunities she had to teach outside and how she was always encouraged to bring her students outdoors on nature walks or visit parks nearby. As someone who loved getting outside exploring new bike trails and rock climbing herself, there was yet another reason for Rhamiya to fall in love with what Mabin had to offer.

Like most kids, Rhamiya recalled at a young age wanting to be an actor, a singer, an astronaut. However, those things, she said, were just pieces of her that made up some of the things she was passionate about. Teaching was the true fit and was a reflection of her whole self. "My growth as a teacher at Mabin has surprised me a lot. I cannot imagine leaving Mabin. It would feel like a breakup if I were to leave."



Ontario Certified Teacher and recent grad from the University of Toronto, Corrina Taccone holds a Master of Museum Studies and Master of Library Information Science. Her experience ranges from digital exhibition coordination and project management at the Ripley's Aquarium to providing reference and research assistance to graduate students at University of Toronto's OISE Library. She recently joined us at The Mabin School taking on the role of part time archivist. Her role at Mabin consists of completing digitization of archives, creating displays of archival materials for the school community, as well as contributing articles to *The Changing Times*.

# An Opportunity of a Lifetime!

By Rhamiya Thirunavukkarasu

**A**t The Mabin School, continuing to learn and reflect is as important for our teachers and staff as it is for the students we teach. Professional development opportunities are valued and encouraged for all members of the Mabin team. This summer, Rhamiya was selected to participate in the Summer Institute for Early-Career Teachers at the Klingenstein Center: A two-week, fully-funded fellowship for independent and international school teachers through Columbia University which took place at The Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, CT. She reflects about her summer PD experience here.

KSI (Klingenstein Summer Institute) was an empowering and refreshing experience that provided me with an incredible opportunity to collaborate with many motivated and knowledgeable educators at the end of the 2021-2022 school year! Each of us brought a unique perspective and experience, which led to many insightful discussions and deep connections. I was constantly challenged to critically reflect and redefine my teaching philosophy, to be one that reflected intentionality and with my students' success in mind. Throughout KSI, I was exposed to current teaching practices and issues where we were provided opportunities to explore, collaborate and conceptualize how we could integrate our new learning into our classrooms. At first, all



the learning felt intense and overwhelming because I had to challenge my current way of thinking towards change. With time and deep reflection, I realized that in order for new learning to take place, I needed to let go of old ways of thinking. KSI challenged me to grow in ways I have never thought were possible. I left KSI with more confidence as a teacher, a sense of belonging, and lifelong friends.



Rhamiya Thirunavukkarasu has had a variety of teaching experiences since joining The Mabin School during the pandemic. She is passionate about our mission to create the next generation of original thinkers, adaptive leaders, and caring citizens. Rhamiya has a genuine interest in nurturing students' academic development through culturally responsive education. She strives to actively create an inclusive learning environment where all students can reach their full potential while feeling valued and recognized. Rhamiya is one of The Mabin School's Learning Strategies Teachers.

# The Four Houses of Mabin

By Lauren Saunders

Last year, we officially introduced our very own house system at The Mabin School. Why houses? We love our ‘home’ at 50 Poplar Plains and the fact that Mabin feels like a family for us, so we leaned even further into that identity! A house system helps foster a feeling of connection and belonging across grades. Students have the opportunity to build relationships with teachers and staff members outside of their grades, which adds to a strong sense of community. Additionally, houses create a consistent framework to bring the school closer together and promote Mabin spirit!

Students and staff members each belong to one of four houses: Spadina, Prince Arthur, Jarvis or Poplar. Members of the same family belong to the same house which helps build spirit among siblings and family members. Each house has an official colour and mascot and, on spirit days, members of each house are encouraged to dress in their house colours to show their spirit.

Read on to discover where the names of our four houses came from!

Not too long ago, in the beautiful land of Toronto, Ontario, there lived a wonderful educator who loved to teach young people. Her name was



50 Poplar Plains Road

## Jarvis

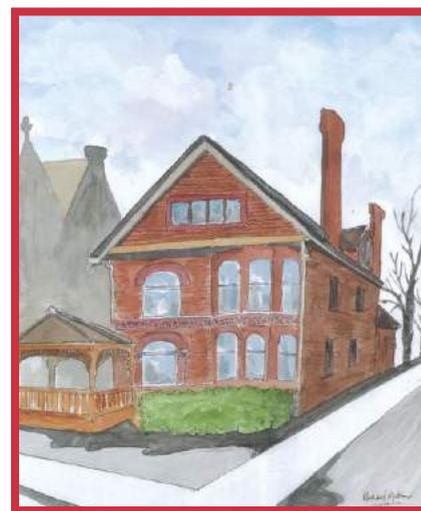


Gerry Mabin. She dreamed of one day starting her very own school, where kids could try new things and explore their own interests while they learned. She was an incredible teacher. So incredible, in fact, that one day, she was given the chance to start her very own school. But starting a school is not so easy to do. She would need help from her friends, a little luck, and a lot of perseverance.

The first challenge was finding the space. Where would the very first Mabin students learn? With help and encouragement, Gerry Mabin went looking for somewhere to start her school. They searched high and low for the perfect place. They looked at old school buildings, they looked at churches, and even some empty warehouses! Just when they thought they were out of luck, a big, old house at 506 Jarvis Street became available. It needed a lot of work to be ready, but Mabin had found its first home.

Once The Mabin School had finally secured its space, there came another challenge — how would Gerry and her friends find kids to be the very first students? Along with her friends Julia and Joanne, Gerry went from house to house to talk about the school that didn’t exist yet! And the visits were a success because on September 8, 1980, The Mabin School opened for the very first time. There were 25 kids in JK to Grade 2, 4 teachers, and one little puppy named “Danny Jarvis”.

## Poplar



506 Jarvis Street

Time passed, and The Mabin School grew and grew. Gerry Mabin added Grades 3 and 4, and then Grades 5 and 6! Her dream had come true. Gerry had created her own school where the only limit to a kid’s learning was their imagination. It wasn’t until three years later that the Mabin team — now a little bigger — moved to their beautiful house on the hill at 50 Poplar Plains Road. The building needed lots of renovations — there was even a swimming pool in the front yard that had to be filled in and covered up! But Mabin was proud to call this place home.

Many more years passed, and The Mabin School grew and grew again. There were 150 kids and lots of teachers. Everyone loved the house

## Prince Arthur



on Poplar Plains, but it was starting to feel just a little bit small. In 2020, because of COVID-19, the school needed more space to keep all of the students safely distanced. That’s when Mabin found 35 Prince Arthur. JK-Grade 3 stayed at the house on Poplar Plains, and the 4s, 5s, and 6s moved into this new building for the 2020-2021 school year.

The year after that, it was finally time for The Mabin School to go on an adventure! While the house on Poplar Plains got some much-needed additional space and renovations to the existing house, all the Mabin kids needed someplace else to learn and play! During the 2021-2022 school year, JK-Grade 4 stayed at 35 Prince Arthur, while the 5s and 6s moved into a new place at Alliance Française at 24 Spadina Road.

And so, in its many years as a school, Mabin has actually had four different homes since 1980, but through it all, the spirit of Mabin has always remained.



24 Spadina Road

## Spadina



That’s the true story of The Mabin School, and where we found the names for our four houses: Jarvis, Poplar, Prince Arthur, and Spadina. Members of all four houses are thrilled to be back together at our original ‘home’ for the 2022-2023 school year!



35 Prince Arthur Avenue

Lauren Saunders holds an MA from the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. A professional actor, Lauren is also fluent in French, plays the ukulele, enjoys Science Fiction, and is certified by the BADC in sword, dagger, knife, and unarmed combat. She has taught French, and drama at The Mabin School and is enjoying her new role as one of our Learning Strategies Teachers. When not directing school musicals, or running weekly assemblies, Lauren can be found promoting school spirit far and wide.

# Inquiry at The Mabin School

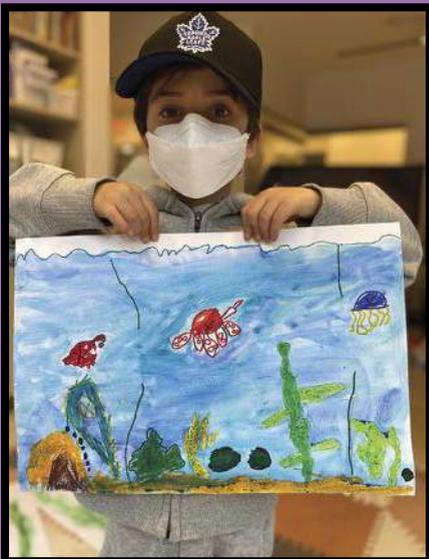


By Michelle Barchuk

Ever wonder how an inquiry starts at The Mabin School? Where does that spark come from? And where does it go once a class is thoroughly engaged in a topic? As a school dedicated to following the kids and their curiosity since 1980, teachers at Mabin are experts at picking up on those common interests and taking our students – and themselves! – deeper into their learning. Here are a few examples of the deep learning students participated in during the 2021-2022 school year. In this issue, for more on our inquiry-based approach, you can also read about the JK, SK, Grade 2, Grade 3 inquiries and Grade 5 & 6 businesses.

## Shark Share!

Following their class trip to Ripley’s Aquarium, a student sparked a class debate about the pros and cons of aquariums and then the Grade 1s participated in a vote by justifying their positions. At Evergreen Brick Works, students learned how living things are wholly dependent on the health of our local water systems and reflected on ways we could conserve water. Elder Dr. Phillips’ presentation helped students understand the First Nations perspective that humans have an egalitarian relationship with nature. Utilizing a variety of research media, the Grade 1s learned about the form and function of internal and external parts of a shark’s body including the respiratory system, the digestive system and the unique sensory system. They gained knowledge about various shark diets, predatory habits and life cycles. Through their research, the students came to understand the reasons that some shark species are perfectly designed to be the fiercest predators in the ocean! Students cre-



ated a detailed diagram depicting the parts of a shark and wrote a nonfiction text comparing sharks to other fish. Students were also encouraged to participate in the dissection of a dogfish shark and were delighted to get an up close view of the fatty liver globes, the delicate filaments of the gills and other internal organs such as the heart and the stomach. At the end of the school year, students were excited to share their learning with their parents during their Shark Share event! It was exciting to have parents in the building once again and they enjoyed having this window into their childrens’ learning.



## Fantasy in 4

Our Grade 4 students were especially interested in different types of fantasy last year, including portal fantasy, real world with elements of magic and fantasy beginning and ending in the fantasy world. Students had the opportunity to create a fantasy character biography with a backstory, a description of personality and characterization of magical elements. The Grade 4s built their own fantasy worlds inspired by their understanding of geography, but added magical elements. Students chose the format of their culminating tasks and took pride in sharing their creations with the school, at assembly, and with their parents on a special day when they were able to visit the Grade 4 space which had been transformed by the students into a mini fantasy world of its own.

Michelle Barchuk is our Director of Admissions & Communications. She started her career in education as the Assistant Director of Admissions at Toronto French School and spent 15 years in the classroom as both a Core French and French Immersion teacher in public and independent schools here in Toronto. Michelle often wishes she had been able to attend Mabin as a child herself, but assures prospective parents that being part of the team as an adult is the next best thing!

# A Tale of Two Sites

By Michelle Barchuk

To say the past year has been an adventure at The Mabin School would be an understatement! The 2021-2022 school year was a memorable one in many ways for our community, not the least of which was successfully operating the school while offsite at two (!) different locations, away from 50 Poplar Plains Road for the first time since arriving there in 1983. The fact that our team did this during a global pandemic, and had to juggle remote learning and rapid-changing public health measures during that time, is all the more incredible.

Our Principal, Nancy Steinhauer, called it our ‘year long field trip’ and what a trip it was! Our Grade 5 & 6 students and classroom teachers, along with Vice Principal Chris Russell, were based out of Alliance Française de Toronto at 24 Spadina Road, while our Junior Kindergarten to Grade 4 students, teachers and staff were located at 35 Prince Arthur Avenue. (The Prince Arthur site was already known to us as our Grades 4-6 students were based there during the 2020-2021 school year while JK to Grade 3 remained at 50 Poplar Plains Road.)

Operating a school out of two different buildings a 10 minute walk away from one another posed its share of challenges. From new recess routines (involving public parks and crossing busy city streets multiple times each day), to finding creative ways to use our smaller spaces, to not seeing each other in person on a daily basis, it wasn’t easy; however, our team certainly made it look that way!



*Michelle Barchuk is our Director of Admissions & Communications. She has enjoyed a varied career in education and has held a range of positions in Toronto schools over the past 20 years. From Assistant Director of Admissions at Toronto French School to teaching both Core French and French Immersion in independent schools and the TDSB, perhaps Michelle's favourite role is being able to be a kid again here at The Mabin School.*



*A chance encounter with Charlotte & Bill Martin, parents of Nick ('95) & Charlotte ('88), outside 35 Prince Arthur Avenue last fall.*

Being off site in downtown Toronto also brought with it many benefits. Access to nearby sites (the Royal Ontario Museum, Philosopher's Walk at U of T, the public library, Isabel Bader Theatre, Queen's Park, Bill Bolton Arena, to name a few) afforded our students many opportunities to learn and play in a new neighbourhood. Taddle Creek Park, at Bedford and Bloor, became a common meeting place for full school assemblies and special events, like our Remembrance Day service, Pride Parade and Earth Day cleanup, and many more. Partnering with local organizations, like Friends House on Lowther Avenue, gave us a chance to make new community connections.

Our temporary locations also made us visible in the neighbourhood to friends of Mabin who sometimes passed by unexpectedly. For example, I bumped into Carol & Bill Martin, parents of alumni Nick ('95) and Charlotte ('88), when I was leaving 35 Prince Arthur at the end of the day last fall. Mabin magic indeed! They were curious about what had been happening at Mabin in the years since they had been parents at the school and I was pleased to be able to fill them in about our build and off-site adventures.

We have now left both temporary sites behind us. The experience and memories remain, however, and they will no doubt inform our practice going forward as we continue to reflect and process the year long adventure we have had as a community. In the meantime, we are certainly thrilled to be together again — in one location! — back in our beloved home at 50 Poplar Plains Road where we are starting an exciting new chapter in the history of The Mabin School.

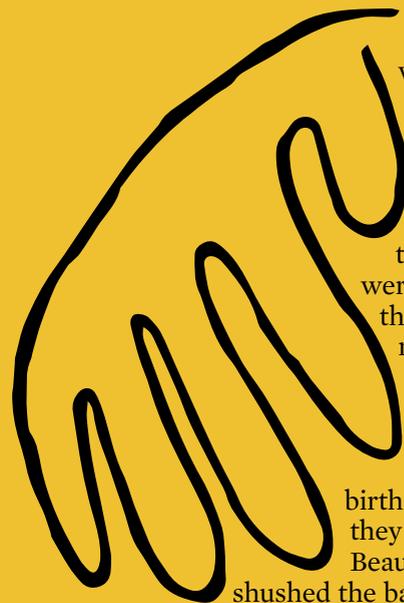


*Michelle Barchuk is our Director of Admissions & Communications. She started her career in education as the Assistant Director of Admissions at Toronto French School and spent 15 years in the classroom as both a Core French and French Immersion teacher in public and independent schools here in Toronto. Michelle often wishes she had been able to attend Mabin as a child herself, but assures prospective parents that being part of the team as an adult is the next best thing!*

# Oh, Baby!

By Carolyne Cybulski

*Carolyne Cybulski is a dedicated educator with more than 30 years of classroom experience who teaches Junior Kindergarten at The Mabin School. Carolyne remains an equally steadfast student, always learning new ways to support, challenge and care for our youngest students. Her passions and focus have been literacy development and the complex relationship of movement in learning. The founder and principal of e.p.i.c. School for 20 years, Carolyne brings a varied perspective that fits well with The Mabin School. She is a committed ambassador for change, life-long learning, collaboration and innovation.*



Early in the school year, Junior Kindergarten students began playing games about babies, but it was the game “Baby, baby” – named and developed by students while under the playground climber – that originally inspired further inquiry into the topic of babies. This game grew, changed, and became the activity everyone wanted to play until the end of the school year.

The JK baby inquiry started with students sharing their knowledge of babies. There was plenty of chit-chat about what babies do, eat and wear, but when we shared a short video about what happens with a new baby, students were motivated to share their own experiences with photos of themselves and family members as babies, a video of a gender reveal, books about growing babies and even photos of themselves as newborns. This is how our inquiry and all of their wonderings grew. “What is that white stuff on the baby?”, “How does a fetus eat?”, “Does a fetus eat?”, “Does a fetus poop?”, and “What is an umbilical cord?”. Babies turned out to be a great subject of inquiry!

Our inquiry topic was very timely with two pregnant Mabin teachers keen to be special classroom guests so they could share information and answer questions. Thank you to Stefanie and Lisa for spending time with the JKs. Having teachers who were growing their own babies was how we discovered the website that compares the growth or size of a fetus with the size of different foods. If you know anything about JK, it is that food is the perfect learning tool, offering fun, hands-on sensorial learning. We simply had to bring varied foods to represent each month of pregnancy from a sesame seed all the way up to a watermelon. We began by ordering the foods from smallest to largest while discovering that it takes 9 months to grow a baby. This presented an ideal opportunity to practice math language by estimating how big Stefanie and Lisa’s babies were. Were they a grape, an avocado or maybe a watermelon? And then we ate our way through nearly all 9 months of pregnancy as we tasted different food items while making “Yum and Yuck” graphs as we went along. Children took responsible risks tasting foods they might otherwise not have tried as we played with concepts of more and less. Babies, it turns out, offered many opportunities to explore varied math concepts including learning “how much did you weigh when you were born?” which quickly became “how many of these foods will it take to equal your birth weight?” as children weighed them on the scale. “Can you hold them all or will they fall?” Don’t drop the fruit and veggie babies!

Beautiful new baby dolls inspired new kinds of play as everyone happily nurtured, and shushed the babies, carried them into their block-made airplane, and carefully buckled them in before take-off while the sounds of a plane motoring into the air, played on a speaker. Cooperative games involving passing a baby with care or learning how and why to swaddle a baby served as other ways to plant the seeds of growing empathy, along with new vocabulary and focused practice following directions. A game of “Don’t Let the Baby Cry” was a fun way to explore letter and sound correspondences while also talking about how we can soothe babies. We sang the word baby, one time for each finger on a hand, and then changed the onset sound, ending up with silly words such as “daby” or “zaby”. We bathed the baby dolls and carried them everywhere as we continued to explore the topic of babies right up until the final day of school in June.



# We Want to Hear from You!

*In each issue, we aim to feature a variety of voices from the Mabin community. We welcome contributions from students, staff members, parents, alumni and friends of The Mabin School. If you have an idea for an article, please contact Michelle Barchuk, Director of Admissions and Communications, at [michellebarchuk@mabin.com](mailto:michellebarchuk@mabin.com) or 416-964-9594 ext. 247.*

## Changing Times - Fall 2022

The Changing Times is published once or twice a year by The Mabin School to highlight stories from school life and to share news about our alumni.

### Editor

Michelle Barchuk

### Design

Anthony Furia

### Contributors

Michelle Barchuk  
Simon Bergeron ('22)  
Randall Brown  
Carolyne Cybulski  
Megan Fehlberg  
Jillian Green  
Lauren McGuire  
Ted Meighen ('92)  
Alex Morley  
Heather Pettigrew  
Karuna Satov  
Meryl Satov ('22)  
Lauren Saunders  
Nancy Steinhauer  
Corrina Taccone  
Rhamiya Thirunavukkarasu

The Mabin School is an Ashoka Changemaker School, a member of the Conference of Independent Schools of Ontario and a member of the International Association of Laboratory Schools.



The Mabin School



CHANGEMAKER SCHOOLS



international association of laboratory schools



Conference of Independent Schools of Ontario

The Mabin School — 50 Poplar Plains Road, Toronto, ON, M4V 2M8  
T 416.964.9594 [mabin.com](http://mabin.com)



# Many of our students are here today because you were here yesterday.

We feel privileged to be teaching the children of our alumni. We are thrilled each year when we realize that almost 100% of our applicants come to us through word of mouth.

We appreciate when you share your happy memories of your time at Mabin. Thanks for encouraging other wonderful families to visit us and learn what The Mabin School is all about.

While Junior Kindergarten is our main entry year, we occasionally have spots in other grades. For more information, and to find out if we have a spot for a student in your life, please contact Michelle Barchuk, Director of Admissions and Communications, at [michellebarchuk@mabin.com](mailto:michellebarchuk@mabin.com) or at 416-964-9594 x247.



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50 Poplar Plains Road, Toronto ON Canada M4V 2M8  
T 416.964.9594 F 416.964.3643 [mabin.com](http://mabin.com)