

Changing Times

Fall 2023



The Mabin School

There's No Place Like Home!

Principal's Message

By Nancy Steinhauer

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On October 26, 2023, we celebrated the Grand Opening of our Community Learning Lab. Our new build has been 20 years in the making, and has gone through many iterations, many consultations – and as a result suits us very well!

The idea of this addition was to make the learning spaces more effective for the students who are already here. There is no plan to increase the population of the school – 150 is the perfect size. In fact – there is a name for this number. It is called Dunbar's number, based on the work of Robin Dunbar, a British anthropologist, who suggested that 150 is the cognitive limit to the number of people with whom one can maintain stable social relationships—relationships in which an individual knows who each person is and how each person relates to every other person.

This addition, therefore, was built to make it easier for us to build and maintain the relationships in this building – to allow us space to create, collaborate, communicate, play, and learn together. In its first year, the Community Learning Lab has already allowed us to do what-we-do-best better. For instance, the week before the Grand Opening, our new space hosted:

- Every single class in the school as they used the Learning Commons and Art Studio to research topics of inquiry, develop a love of reading, and create original art using a variety of mediums
- The Grade 5s had a writing conference where they identified goals for their memoirs and participated in self-selected workshops led by their teachers and me, rotating three times through three different stations
- The Kindies, having found evidence of fairies in the Nordheimer ravine, worked on designing and building fairy playgrounds in the new Art Studio
- Speaking of art, the JKs, SKs, and Grade 6s started a project together – with their grandparents – and with a professional artist to design a mural depicting nature in the city. This mural, a 3D mural which now sits in the Kindergarten entrance – is an opportunity for integration across grades and generations

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Nancy Steinhauer has been The Mabin School's principal since 2016. She 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. She is thrilled to be back at 50 Poplar Plains Road!

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- Our Kindie parents met with a social worker and some of our teachers to learn together about setting boundaries that support child development
- The Grade 3 and 4 students began to design, with their art teacher, a nook where students can engage in mindful activities and self-regulate – that nook is now an under-the-sea-themed quiet space with student-generated rules and routines



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- Our classroom teachers and Learning Strategies Teachers met with Science of Reading expert Liisa Freure to learn about the latest evidence-based practices in teaching reading
- After school, our staff met in division teams there to discuss assessment and evaluation and monitor student progress
- During Integration time, two of our Houses (yes – we have 4 houses now – Spadina, Jarvis, Prince Arthur, and Poplar) met in here to build together out of cardboard
- Meanwhile, at lunch one day, one of our teachers led a Dungeons and Dragons club in the Learning Commons for students in Grades 4 through 6.

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I could go on, but you get the idea. There are many wonderful opportunities that this space affords our current students, and we have also envisioned that the entire addition will serve our community (hence the name Community Learning Lab) as a place of learning for people 0-99 from within - and beyond - the Mabin community. On Saturday mornings, for example, we open our Kindergarten space up to the community and invite children 0-5 with their parents/caregivers to have a play-based learning experience and forge connections with other families in the community. Our ongoing intergenerational programs encourage mutually beneficial relationships to blossom between our students and seniors in our community. This space has already housed conferences for parents and educators about important topics in child development, best practices in teaching and learning, and children's mental health. In April, we co-hosted the International Association of Laboratory Schools' annual conference here for lab school educators and leaders from across the globe. Visitors from eight different countries roamed our halls to observe the learning in action.

It's important, also, to note that this renovation was designed to keep the spirit of the original building alive. The old house is an important character in the story of Mabin, and it was important to us to keep it going as a learning space that feels like home. Nevertheless, during the build, every room was improved in some way. We added better flooring, safer infrastructure, and new classrooms. All of our homerooms are now above ground, full of light, and we have a designated space for each of our specialty subjects. And, of course, we have a beautiful new playground which allows us to continue to play all the way around the school, while providing us with new features, like our track and our outdoor stage. There is limitless potential for learning.

We could not have accomplished this slightly miraculous feat without the support of a large portion of our community. Thank you to our Board for shepherding this process; to former Mabin parent Guela Solow, our architect, and ARK, her firm, for their thoughtful design; to our construction company, Venture for making it happen on time despite the many challenges that the site, the timeline, and COVID presented; to all of the many parents, alumni, and staff who contributed to the most successful capital campaign the school has ever seen; to our teachers, who made it look easy, even though teaching under the



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conditions of the move and the build were extremely difficult; to our support staff and my leadership team, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make sure that our spaces were set up and ready to go – wherever we were – and that we were operating fairly seamlessly despite many disruptions; and to Jeremy Creed and Jamie Campbell in particular, for leading the Board through the challenge of moving our school off-site and then back on, all in the midst of a global pandemic. And all of us did this to create even better, more inspiring, more supportive learning opportunities for the ones who matter most – our students. Throughout this whole process – the design, the construction, the return – their needs remained at the forefront. We are so honoured that the parents of our students trusted us with their children’s learning and wellbeing through challenging circumstances, and we know that the work we have done together to make this building a reality will allow us to



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create even more inspiring and meaningful learning opportunities for them, with them, and by them for many years to come.

When Gerry Mabin opened up this beautiful little school in 1980, I’m not sure she imagined that it would evolve into this dynamic, exemplary, far-reaching centre of learning, but it has. Her legacy continues to have a meaningful impact on the many lives this school touches, and our new space makes that even more possible – for our own students, and for the larger community beyond. We are all so grateful to Gerry for establishing the best little school we know. We continue to model excellence in progressive elementary education and to create the next generation of original thinkers, adaptive leaders, and caring citizens. This Community Learning Lab will open up new opportunities to realize these lofty goals with our own students, and to become influential leaders in the greater community.

Imagine what we can do from here.

Thank you



A Toast

By Erika Bolliger

The Mabin School’s first ever Campaign Director, David Prendergast, joined us in 2017. At the time, Mabin was looking for a fundraising leader to take on a monumental task: a capital campaign to renovate 50 Poplar Plains.

“It had been in the works for maybe 15 years,” says David, “This was a plan that the school wanted to do and was finally able to take action towards making it a reality.”

The goal of ‘The World Needs More Mabin’ capital campaign was to create a fully accessible Community Learning Lab where Mabin could expand its impact and comfortably host, not only our own students, educators, and community members, but to allow others beyond our walls to experience the Mabin magic for themselves. Our renovation also included: a brand new art studio, Junior and Senior Kindergarten classrooms, extensive external play space, and overall enhancements to the school’s existing facilities.

“It allows for substantial improvement in what we can offer our students and our community,” says Nancy Steinhauer, Principal.



Erika Bolliger, David Prendergast & Gerry Mabin



Donor wall reception (June 2023)

Erika Bolliger is our new Director of Advancement & Alumni Relations. Her career began at the non-profit Ocean Wise Conservation Association where she worked with her network of partners to lead the sustainable seafood movement in Toronto. Erika then moved on to launch the School Smart Forest Program at Canada’s Forest Trust, a program that empowers students and schools to grow forests in Canada while supporting their own philanthropic efforts. Erika initially connected with Nancy Steinhauer and Mabin’s Grade 3 class through the Smart Forest Program during the 2022-2023 school year! Erika has a BSc (Hons.) in Biodiversity and Conservation Biology (University of Toronto) and an Executive Education Certificate in Circular Economy and Sustainability Strategies (University of Cambridge). Erika sat down with David Prendergast and principal Nancy Steinhauer to reflect on David’s impact as Campaign Director upon his retirement at the end of the school year.

The success of the World Needs More Mabin capital campaign was truly an incredible feat. “When I started,” says David, “the goal was \$3 million. As we got further into the project, the Board realized we would need more. They asked if I thought we could raise \$4 million. I believed we could if we gave it our best try - so the new goal was set to \$4 million.”

Incredibly, that goal was achieved and surpassed, making ‘The World Needs More Mabin’ the most successful capital campaign in the history of The Mabin School.

“The gifts we received during the campaign were at levels we had never received in the past - with multiple gifts up to \$500,000 each! To have the level of participation from families, alumni, Board members, and staff - it was just outstanding,” David reflects. “We weren’t sure if we could do this when we started, but with the support of our community we were able to accomplish what we set out to do.”

The impact of the World Needs More Mabin campaign is already being realized: the Community Learning Lab co-hosted the annual IALS Conference along with University of Toronto Schools, George Brown College and The Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study. Our new Kindergarten wing is home to Saturday morning Choosing Times, a Lawrence Ho ('88) community program. There is exciting potential for more as we continue to grow into our new space.



Gerry and David at the World Needs More Mabin capital campaign launch



Jenny Elmaleh, Henry Perrin ('91) & Jamie Campbell ('91) at donor wall reception

To commemorate the campaign and the incredible donors that made it possible, a beautiful donor wall was installed along the ramp to the Community Learning Lab. Designed by the talented Anthony Furia, the donor wall is "not just a list of names," according to David. "It's innovative and like nothing I've seen anywhere else. It truly represents Mabin - it's fun, colourful, and unique."

The donor wall was officially unveiled in June 2023 during a wine and cheese celebration with many capital campaign contributors. "The donor wall is something that people can look at and be very proud of themselves," says David, "and it inspires others."

The donor wall reception also served as a farewell to David, who retired from his role as Campaign Director as of June 2023.

"David has been a kind, generous, organized leader of our Advancement program for the last 6 years. He established foundational systems to support an ongoing culture of philanthropy at Mabin," says Nancy, "And he was extremely supportive in his transition out of the role."

David kindly spent May and June training me and introducing me to the Mabin community to prepare for my official start in July 2023 as Mabin's new full-time Director of Advancement and Alumni Relations. His warm and helpful attitude, as well as his thoughtful attention to detail, made for a smooth handover.

"We will miss him but we know he will always be part of the Mabin community, and we are very happy Erika is here to continue leading and expanding this program and our engagement of current and alumni families," says Nancy.

I am excited to be dedicating my energy towards connecting with our alumni network, current families, and building on the fantastic foundation David has provided. I look forward to continue growing Mabin's capacity to enact lasting, positive change for our students, families, and communities.



Jamie Campbell ('91), Jody Berkes & Nancy Steinhauer

For those who could not attend the donor wall reception at the end of the school year, we were happy to offer a personal tour of the new spaces at another time. Earlier this summer, Jaidyn (Helen) An ('20) and her mother, Shan Li, stopped in for a visit after returning from Switzerland. As major contributors to the World Needs More Mabin Campaign, Jaidyn's family chose to name our new Art Studio the Helen An Art Studio in recognition for her deep love and talent for art. As anyone who has ever visited The Mabin School knows, art and creativity are core elements of the Mabin experience. The new Helen An Art Studio was co-designed by art teachers to ensure the layout was maximally functional and it had everything our students could need when exploring their self-expression.



Shan Li & Jaidyn (Helen) An in front of the Art Studio sign



David with Helen McLean & Sarah Horgan during a visit to the Community Learning Lab



Keynote speaker, Pam Baer, at IALS Conference (April 2023).



You Gave More Mabin!



We thank all of our donors for their generous contributions to 'The World Needs More Mabin' capital campaign. Special thanks to The Mabin School supporters who contributed \$5,000 and up:



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William Scott & Stephan Jost
Yijia You & Zhiyu Du
Ying (Linda) Guo & Weiming Gao Family



What Does It Mean To Be A Lab School?



By Nancy Steinhauer

Last year, we were privileged to co-host the annual International Association of Lab Schools (IALS) Conference, along with the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study, University of Toronto Schools, and George Brown College. It was thrilling. At the Opening Ceremony, I was asked to speak about The Mabin School, how it is a lab school, and to comment on the conference theme: designing cultures of learning.

The Mabin school sprouted out of the Jackman Institute of Child Study in 1980. Our mission is to create the next generation of original thinkers, adaptive leaders, and caring citizens, and our vision is to model excellence in progressive education. While it is difficult to define what makes The Mabin School magical, it has something to do with being:

- Play-based
- Relationship-based
- A changemaker school
- Deliberately small
- Partners with parents in the service of human development



The Mabin School educates future educators.

We host first year and second year teacher candidates from the Masters of Education and Child Study program (OISE/UT) & host Early Childhood Educator students from George Brown College and Toronto Metropolitan University. This year, we even hosted Masters of Social Work students from the University of Toronto. Why do we host these students?

- To share our practice with new educators and have an impact on their future students, spreading progressive practices
- To reflect on our own understandings and become increasingly consciously competent (i.e. understand what we are doing that works, and where we need to improve)
- To learn from the students – most current research, innovative practices

We educate current educators from around the world by hosting them and organizing educator institutes & conferences.

- Local and international educators visit our school to see how we do what we do. This year, there was particular interest in our uptake of the Science of Reading. There was so much demand that next year, we plan to designate specific days for educators to visit and our teachers will guide them through a day of professional development.
- We partner with other schools and experts to provide conferences for both educators and parents.
- In addition to the IALS conference, we hosted Learning Strategies Teachers from across CISOntario schools to learn about how to teach reading in evidence-based ways. Additionally, we hosted a parent conference for parents across the city about raising children with exceptionalities.



We participate in relevant research opportunities to contribute to knowledge-building in the field of Education.

- For several years now, we have been working with Professor Angela Pyle, award-winning teacher, researcher and Associate Professor in the Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development at OISE, and Interim Director of the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study to research play in Kindergarten.
- Currently we are working with Dr. Douglas McDougall and his team to learn more about attitudes and practices in teaching mathematics.
- We continue to seek out opportunities to build our own knowledge through participation in relevant research opportunities and are committed to engaging in evidence-based practices in teaching and learning.

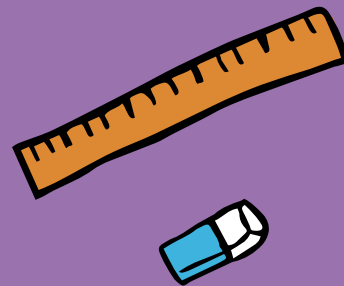


We are committed to progressive education and teacher innovation.

- The Mabin School has been at the forefront of student-led collaborative inquiry for 43 years. Learning has always happened in an integrated, meaningful way that follows the interests and questions of our students.
- The Mabin School is Canada's first independent Ashoka Changemaker School. Recognized in 2016 after a rigorous application process, The Mabin School is exceptional in teaching leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, and empathy.
- MabinLEADs is now embedded into our Grade 5 and 6 program. LEADs stands for Leadership, Entrepreneurship, and Adaptive Design. Through formal and informal opportunities to lead, explore entrepreneurship, and participate in the design process, students at The Mabin School practice habits that many students are not introduced to until much later in their school journeys. Our Grade 5s and 6s have authentic opportunities to run events and create collaboratively in ways that bolster their leadership, creativity, and critical thinking skills.

We are a community of learners. Our teachers are our lead learners.

- At The Mabin School, curriculum is emergent from JK until Grade 6. Teachers co-create their curriculum in response to student voice and choice.
- At The Mabin School, we adopt a universal design approach, with the belief that we can always improve the way we are facilitating learning so that it more precisely meets the needs of all of our students. We embrace the opportunity to have an integrated community of learners, some with special education needs, as we believe a diversity of learners makes for richer learning opportunities for all. Teachers collaborate and learn together to continuously improve their practice and better match the needs of all of our students. We build teacher learning and collaboration into the instructional day since it is such a priority.



We are a learning organization for people aged 0-99.

- The early years are critical for learning, and so we support learning even before children arrive in Kindergarten. On most Saturday mornings during the school year, we host a drop-in for children 0-5 and their parents/caregivers.
- Intergenerational programming is mutually beneficial. Both adults and children benefit from the partnership. At The Mabin School, we use the arts as a way of connecting children with their elders. As Dr. Peter Whitehouse writes, "Having older adults in the environment creates a pattern of respect and the absence of disruptive behaviors that make it easier for the kids to study the kinds of things they need to study..."
- The Community Learning Lab is designed to be a centre of learning for all members of the Mabin community, as well as the local community and beyond. Last year, we hosted a Diversity in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) club that included students from local public schools as well as our own students. Each year, we also host a conference for parents by parents on hot topics in parenting and children's mental health. In the future, we hope to have learning events for alumni of all ages.



The 2023 IALS conference was centred around the theme, "Designing Cultures of Learning." The Mabin School has always focused on a school culture that emphasizes creativity, connection, and a sense of belonging. How do we accomplish this?

Intentionality: Our teachers are intentional about everything they do. They are careful to design their spaces, materials, lessons, and curriculum to meet the various needs of their students and to maximize engagement. The way we work together as a community encourages learning through relationships and about relationships with the ultimate goal of human development.

Coherence: There are a number of elements of our program that enable our approach to be consistent and coherent.

- **Habits of Mind:** We use Costa and Kallick's Habits of Mind as our framework for the social-emotional learning we do. We have 10 Habits of Mind that are woven throughout the 8 year arc of our students' journeys. This becomes a common language for teachers, students, and parents and creates alignment and intentionality.
- **Professional Learning (responsive, regular, and ongoing):** All of our professional development is aligned with our mission and vision. We have a Strategic Plan that is very much alive. We created it collaboratively with input from all stakeholders. Our Strategic Plan guides all decision-making, and does its best to capture the elusive magic that is Mabin's. It sets our priorities and helps us stay focused on what is most important. Professional Learning is also designed to respond to issues as they arise. For example, when the Ontario's Human Rights Commission's Right to Read report was published in February, 2022, our teachers immediately designed a year-long professional learning plan about the Science of Reading with 100% participation and support for implementation.
- **Systems for collaboration and communication:** We build in regular meeting times both during the instructional day and after school to ensure that we are able to work effectively together. We also have systems in place to share information with all staff so that everyone can contribute to problem-solving. We all feel responsible for every student, and every voice is important when addressing concerns. Annual student goal-setting and student-led conferences ensure that student voice is central to our planning and gives students meaningful ways to be seen and heard.



Founding Principles: Although we have changed over the years, Mabin's founding principles continue to be embedded in everything we do.

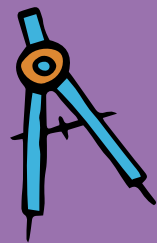
- **Inquiry, Integration, and Reflection:** As our understanding evolves, our practices evolve. For example, integration in 1980 was different from integration in 2023. We are living in a much more inclusive and accepting society than ever before. When we talk about integration, we mean it in three distinct senses:
 - Integration of disciplines and skills across subject areas;
 - Vertical integration of students – younger students and older students have opportunities to learn together and from each other
 - Integration of various learning profiles: we value difference as diversity makes for richer learning. In every class, we have students who are typical learners, students who have special learning needs, students who are socially adept, and students who have social challenges. Each student has strengths to bring to the group, and we all have our own challenges. Our model of support allows for most learners to thrive at The Mabin School.
- **Creating a sense of belonging:** Our goal is for every member of the community to feel they belong here. As Brené Brown writes, "Fitting in is about assessing a situation and becoming who you need to be to be accepted. Belonging, on the other hand, doesn't require us to change who we are; it requires us to be who we are." Students are taught from a young age to invite and include. They love to remind each other of our rule, "you can't say you can't play." Ours is a strengths-based approach where we celebrate strengths and differences. We have conversations about neurodiversity, gender diversity, and other diversities. We see students as problem-solvers, and they are encouraged to identify problems, come up with solutions, and enact them.
- **Adults are open to learning and model both growth mindset and beginner's mindset:** Teachers at The Mabin School walk into their classes in September not knowing exactly what they will be teaching in April. With this in mind, we make a point of hiring great learners at The Mabin School. All of our teachers are interested in continuous improvement and are eager to learn. Like our students, we engage in personal and community goal-setting, self-assessment, and opportunities for reflection. We are a team of teams, and we value the opportunity to collaborate and create together in service of our mission and vision. Continuous improvement is an expectation for every person in the building – and this is supported through time, budget, and human resources.



As one parent recently wrote:

"Mabin does an exceptional job of teaching and nurturing the whole child. Mabin goes way beyond teaching the basic school subjects. They teach children how to be responsible, caring, creative citizens. They help children to really know themselves. They foster a community in which children feel accepted, known and seen. They instill children with the confidence to be independent thinkers, but also collaborative team members. To me, these are some of the most important qualities to succeed not only in school but in life."

Nancy Steinbauer has been The Mabin School's principal since 2016. She 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. She is thrilled to be back at 50 Poplar Plains Road!



Eco Wall of Fame

By Michelle Barchuk

Throughout the school year, teachers and staff members take part in important committee work in support of Mabin's mission and vision. In addition to the Environmental Committee, there is a team who focuses on weekly Integration, as well as both an Equity and a Staff Social Committee. As part of our staff meeting schedule, we build in time to connect in committees and update our colleagues on our progress and any challenges. Key to our success is tying in our goals with the school's strategic priorities.

The Environmental Committee (aka the Green Team) was keen to roll up its sleeves and get started in September. Being back "home", all together for the first time since March 2020, was excellent motivation for us to review our routines and practices through an environmental lens.

One of our main goals as a committee was to raise awareness in terms of what community members were already doing in support of the environment. We established an Eco Wall of Fame near the main entrance of the school to capture the positive choices that were being made. We invited teachers, staff, students and families to contribute a photo and short description of something they were doing to help the environment.

The display soon filled and we were thrilled to see many initiatives that were happening: students picking up garbage outside at recess; reusable mugs and containers being used for snacks; community members biking, walking and taking public transit to school. The list goes on!

Other achievements over the past year, included: minimizing single-use plastics for events; collecting batteries for recycling; donating

clothing and other items at the end of the school year; using our school composter; changing our use of salt in winter to an environmentally-friendly product; recycling and repurposing materials where we could; and planting gardens around the school.

We recognize that there is still much work to be done. However, we are confident that we can continue to make progress with the momentum we have built as a team. We want to become original thinkers when it comes to environmental solutions, adapt ourselves to be leaders in the environmental field, and learn to care more deeply about the environment overall in order to take action to improve The Mabin School - and our planet - for the future.



Michelle Barchuk is our Director of Admissions & Communications. She was part of the staff Environment Committee last year along with Claudine Fiset-Algarvio, Pam Lo, Randall Brown, Sarah Horgan, Megan Fehlberg, and Nigel Goodfellow.



Dedication of The Martin Atkins Memorial Court

By Nancy Steinhauer

On Friday, October 21, 2023, a small group of family and friends of Martin Atkins gathered at The Mabin School to dedicate our brand new Sport Court in his honour. Nancy Steinhauer, Mabin's principal, spoke on behalf of the school and shared the following remarks that afternoon.

We are so honoured to be gathered here today on the fourth anniversary of Martin Atkins' death. He would be so proud to see all of you here honouring him, and to play such a significant role in the growth and development of The Mabin School, where his grandchildren Chase ('22), Harper ('24), and Jax ('27) all developed a love of learning, and empathy for others.

Marty was a premier athlete who loved and excelled at playing football, baseball, basketball, track and field, and tennis. How appropriate, then, that he is being memorialized here with this brand new, beautiful Sport Court – a space where Mabin students can learn to play fairly and compete graciously.

Marty was an innovator – creative, charismatic, and persuasive. He had a big vision, and was a life-long learner who continued to grow and develop passions and interests throughout his life. He was a strong member of his community, and a devoted father and grandfather who put his children and family first.

The Mabin School is, like Marty, magical. We are creating the next generation of original thinkers, adaptive leaders, and caring citizens.

It sounds like Marty was the embodiment of the spirit of Mabin – a true original, who led by example and cared deeply for every life he touched.

We could not have completed our building project without the Atkins family's generous gift, and for that we are truly and eternally grateful. Although I did not know Marty myself, I think he would be pleased to know that he was supporting the development of young people and young athletes in this way.

Thank you to all of you for being here to celebrate Marty, and to help us officially open the Martin Atkins Memorial Court at The Mabin School.



Namin' Mabin!

Special thanks to our donors who generously sponsored rooms, spaces, and programs at The Mabin School:

The Hilary and Galen Weston Community Learning Lab

The Lawrence Ho Family Community Programs

The McCallum Family Gymnasium

e.p.i.c. Kindergarten Room
(in honour of Carolyne Cybulski)

The Martin Atkins Memorial Court

The Helen An Art Studio
(donated by Shan Li and David An Family)

The Ian Hawkins Music Room
(donated by the Koerner Doyle Family)

Mabin Staff Room
(donated by The Staff of Mabin 2018/19)

Outdoor Learning Space
(donated by Bekhor & Green Families)

Innovation Station
(donated by the Shapira Family)

JK / SK Playground
(donated by Jenny & Corey Elmaleh Family)

The Nancy Steinhauer Stage
(donated by The Mabin School Board of Directors)

Tree planted in Honour of The Creed Family

Playful Learning & the Habits of Mind in JK

By Carolyn Cybulski



Persisting <i>Keep going!</i>	Taking Responsible Risks <i>Stretch your skills!</i>
Listening with Understanding & Empathy <i>Understand others!</i>	Applying past knowledge to new situations <i>Use what you know!</i>
Paying Attention to Detail <i>Check again!</i>	Collaborating <i>Work together!</i>
Managing Impulsivity <i>Take your time!</i>	Taking Ownership <i>Be the right thing!</i>
Questioning and Creating Solutions <i>Try a different way!</i>	Thinking about Thinking (Metacognition) <i>Know your learning!</i>

Right from the start, Mabin's Junior Kindergarten students are introduced to 4 Habits of Mind: **persisting**, **listening with understanding and empathy**, **taking a responsible risk**, and **managing impulsivity**. Learning about and practicing these habits guides students in developing dispositions for problem-solving and learning. In Junior Kindergarten, we first learn the vocabulary and what the words mean so that students can gain an understanding of how the habits can be applied. In September, we often begin by learning about **persisting**. We learn not to give up, to keep on trying, and that making mistakes is how we grow our brains.

This past year, however, we began by learning about **managing impulsivity**. It seemed to be the habit that came up naturally in the classroom and was the most helpful to learn about at the time. We read many stories related to the habit of managing impulsivity such as *Rex Wrecks it!* and *We Don't Eat Our Classmates* while discussing how the characters managed (or didn't) manage their impulsivity. Then we explored how WE can practice managing our impulsivity and began to notice examples in ourselves and each other. "Whoa! I put my hand up and waited for my turn!" Having a photo posted on the Habits of Mind wall is always like the icing on the cake, highly motivating while helping students see the varied ways the habits can be applied. This past winter, when Junior Kindergarten students were studying penguins, we decided to mix it up and engage students and families with stuffed penguins and added fun as a vehicle for diving into all four habits of mind. Students were first introduced to two stuffed penguins named Penny and Puffin. Everyone took turns taking home a penguin with the responsibility of caring for their penguin guest. Penny and Puffin were very fortunate and had the opportunity to experience so many

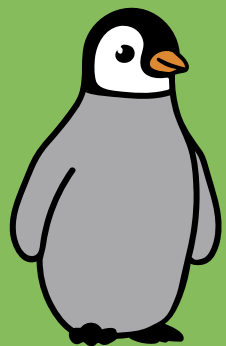


fun activities – from being tucked into a snowsuit while skiing with the family and going on an airplane ride to enjoying a week on an island, to shopping at Ikea and some wonderful baking. While hosting the guest penguin, families also took photos and forwarded them to us. That way, each student had the opportunity to take a responsible risk and sit in front of their classmates to show their photos and present all the varied activities they did with their penguin guest while also explaining the Habits of Mind being practiced. This was such a fun way to engage children and families together while supporting students as they constructed deeper knowledge about the Habits of Mind. Embedding these playful learning experiences leverages engaging, socially interactive learning in powerful ways as our littlest students learn to apply the Habits of Mind.



Habits of Mind

At The Mabin School, we focus on 10 Habits of Mind during a student's 8-year journey from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6. Based on the work of Costa and Kallick, the Habits of Mind assist students in school and in everyday life as they are challenged by problems, dilemmas, paradoxes and enigmas for which the solutions are not immediately apparent. Drawing on the Habits of Mind means knowing how to behave intelligently when you do not know the answers. It means not only having information, but also knowing how to act on it. We start with four foundational Habits in JK: persisting, listening with understanding and empathy, taking a responsible risk, and managing impulsivity. Every few years we add a few more Habits while continuing to build on the initial four. These life skills serve our students well beyond their years at The Mabin School. Learn more at habitsofmindinstitute.org.



Carolyn Cybulski teaches Junior Kindergarten at The Mabin School. She is a dedicated educator with more than 30 years of classroom experience yet remains an equally steadfast student, always learning new ways to support, challenge and care for the students she works with. 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, she is a committed ambassador for change, life-long learning, collaboration and innovation.



United in Song

By Alex Morley

Singing is a daily occurrence in Senior Kindergarten. We start off many mornings singing and dancing together and the children often bring our songs home to their families and friends. As we build our repertoire over the year, the students are introduced to traditional music, modern classics and have the chance to write and sing their own songs. Last year we had the opportunity to sing and record with the Bloorview School Choir and with famous Canadian children's entertainers Sharon and Bram.

Mr. Paul Alcamo, the art, music and drama teacher in the Kindergarten program at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital asked The Mabin School to join them in producing an album of children's music. Our students were very excited to join the Bloorview Choir, and Sharon and Bram (of Sharon, Loius and Bram fame). A lot of hard work by staff and students helped us realize this creative project.

Teachers from both schools got together to record the instrument tracks in a studio. The children practiced singing the songs and were enthusiastic about the big recording day. We spent time speaking with the Bloorview choir on Zoom, inviting Paul into our class to sing and teach us about some of the different needs that his students have. We read books about different abilities, and thought about different ways we could all sing and move around while enjoying music together.

When the big recording day arrived, we took a bus to Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital and joined the large and enthusiastic choir who had been practicing the same songs. We spent the day singing together, playing on the playground and getting to know each other. A huge highlight (especially for the adults in the room!) was singing along live with our own childhood heroes Sharon and Bram.

The end result is an amazing album that brought together students and staff from two different schools united in song. We can't wait to share the album with our community!

To learn more about Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, go to hollandbloorview.ca.



Alex Morley teaches Senior Kindergarten at The Mabin School. He has been teaching and working with children for many years. When he's not teaching phonemic awareness and spatial reasoning, he's playing his button accordion with the Kindergarten students! Alex strives to create a safe environment where children can be themselves, feel free and supported, while being challenged and engaged with their friends and academic materials. Alex has taught special education, early years and primary grades in Canada and Mexico. He is a proud parent, dedicated educator, aspiring artist, and enjoys a good joke.

Change, Growth, Transformation: Metamorphosis in Grade 1

By Sandra Giampapa

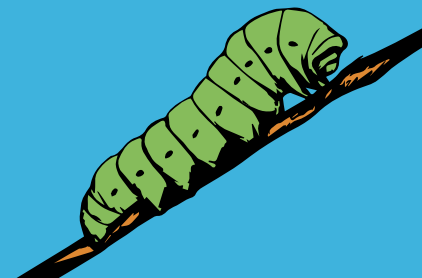
It all began with an email from Donald Davis (a.k.a. The Butterfly Guy) asking if any classes at The Mabin School were interested in rearing monarch butterflies. We thought this would be a rich learning experience and a fun way for the Grade 1s to kick off their school year together, so we jumped at the chance. The students were instantly engaged in helping to feed the caterpillars by replenishing their supply of milkweed and cleaning out the steady supply of frass (caterpillar poop) that accumulated at the bottom of the net that housed them. Every morning, the children eagerly observed the changes that were occurring such as the rapid growth of the caterpillars and the shedding of their skin. After the first caterpillar journeyed all the way to the top of the net to get into a J shape, the others followed suit. The students watched as the beautiful chrysalises crowned by golden dots encased the larva in preparation for the next stage in the life cycle.

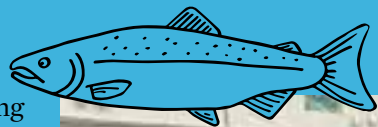
While the caterpillars were busy transforming, the students began to learn about the metamorphosis of butterflies through various read alouds and engaged in oral, content-related activities that developed their understanding of sen-

tence structure in the library with Jillian. They also compared and contrasted butterflies to moths and learned about other living things that go through metamorphosis. After a few more weeks, the chrysalises turned translucent and appeared black. The first monarch emerged - wings crumpled and tentative with its first steps. Several others emerged shortly after that. We released the butterflies that survived - though many did not. The Grade 1s freed our final butterfly on a chilly blustery October day and we bid them a fond farewell.



As part of what we *thought* was going to be a "wrap-up" discussion in December, we revisited the initial questions we had posted on our Wonder Wall and the students demonstrated their learning as they answered each of the questions and shared their knowledge. As we reflected, I asked, "Can you think of any characters in stories you know that have gone through a metamorphosis?" Several kids brought up superheroes and one student said, "Well all humans go through metamorphosis because we start as an egg and that's very different from what we are now and then we will become adults." To the teachers' surprise and delight, the discussion instantly heated up. The students began voicing differing opinions and arguing about the true nature of metamorphosis - and that is when we knew we were caught in what the Opal School called a "tangle." A conceptual disequilibrium, a silken thread to pull on, a knot to unravel... our inquiry was emerging.

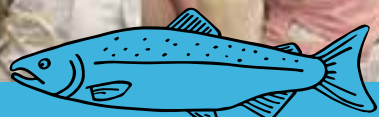




Following the lead of our young learners, we broadened our thematic lens to include explorations of change, growth and development as well as metamorphosis. Serendipity, once again, led us to the next phase of our inquiry. Ben Teskey, the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program Coordinator, asked if any Mabin classes would be interested in participating in the Atlantic Salmon Classroom Hatchery Program. Jillian had often talked about her amazing experiences raising salmon with her students and we committed to participating. Little did the teaching team know how perfectly this opportunity would fit into our (literally) emerging theme!

Early in January, unbeknownst to the students, Jillian helped the Grade 1 teachers situate the sizable, silver-lined, insulated tank in the classroom. It was an imposing structure! We draped the installation and the next day, we invited the curious students to ask good questions in order to help them gain clues about what might be hiding under the tarp. "Can you play with it? Is it made of wood? Are there many parts? Is it longer than Sandra? Is it alive?" After the big reveal, the students were excited but remained perplexed. "Is it a robot? Is it a machine?" What was this massive tank for? The students continued to speculate. "It is for a fish. No, it's a frog! No, there's going to be a turtle!" The students now had more questions than answers and the adults left them to sit in the uncertainty of their wonderings.

The following week, the teachers announced that it was time to "prepare" the tank. They enlisted the help of the students to wash sand off of gravel before placing a layer of it at the bottom of the tank. Then, came the big job of filling the tank with cold water. It was all hands on deck during the operation! After



many, many trips to the sink, the tank was full. It was time to turn on the chiller in order to lower the internal temperature, activate the flow of water through the filter and allow the air pump time to release oxygen in the aquarium.

At last, the momentous day arrived! We welcomed our special guest, Nikki Spencieri, an ecologist from the Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program, on January 18th and she surprised the Grade 1s with 100 salmon eggs housed in small plastic round tubs. Peering through magnifying glasses, the students were fascinated by the orangey-pink, pea sized, eyed eggs floating in water. Using long tweezers, Nikki carefully placed one egg

in each cell of the incubator tray (a.k.a fish condo) and secured the plates shut using nylon tie bolts and nuts. Once the egg-filled condo was safely submerged in the tank water, it was time to learn about the Classroom Hatchery Program and get some questions answered. Nikki discussed our responsibilities as "members of their science team" and taught us how to maintain a healthy environment for our eggs.

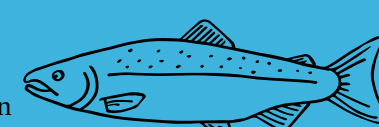
At this point in the presentation, Sebastian raised a good question. "Why salmon?" he asked. Nikki explained that we were participating in a very important initiative to restore the once robust salmon population in Ontario streams and lakes. She told us that many years

ago, the water systems teamed with salmon. "They say you could walk across the backs of the salmon to get to the other side of a shallow river!" she exclaimed. Industrialization and deforestation caused too much soil runoff. Erecting large dams to harness power made the salmon's return journey up the river impossible. The water became too warm and too dirty. These factors combined with overfishing, led to the salmon extirpation. As apex predators, salmon are very important to our ecosystem and food chains. Nikki told the Grade 1s that raising fry in a safe environment, would be an important contribution to the repopulation of salmon in Lake Ontario. The students were keen to be stewards of the environment and become changemakers.

During the weeks that followed, the Grade 1s monitored the tank by recording the temperature on a daily basis to ensure the conditions were just right for the eggs. They were also learning more about the salmon life cycle and the changes that occur at each stage. Knowing what to look for, the students eagerly checked in on the eggs to spot signs of hatching. They had seen a video in science of alevin doing an energetic wiggle "dance" when they hatch out of their eggs! Right on schedule, approximately 7 weeks after our eyed eggs had arrived, we confirmed that they had all hatched. On March 8th, Jillian carefully unscrewed the bolts of the incubator trays and the newly freed alevin quickly swam to the safety of the gravel bed lining the bottom of the tank. We knew that the fish would be fine over March break because we had learned that alevin retain a yolk sac from which they feed.

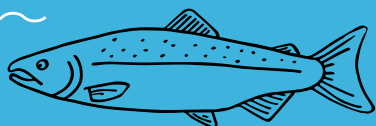
On our return from March break, we saw no signs of the fish in the tank. The alevin were impossible to spot as they were translucent and well camouflaged. Alas, we had to simply trust that they were still doing well. In the meantime, the Grade 1s were continuing to explore

the theme of growth and change. In science, they recorded their first-hand observations of mealworms metamorphosing into darkling beetles. The students discussed seasonal changes and learned about the various and ingenious ways that animals and plants adapt. They observed the life cycle of sea monkeys and set up experiments to determine how water temperature affects the birth rate of these tiny creatures. They also observed and recorded the growth of bean seeds, considering variables that create optimal growing conditions. The students even planted and grew vegetables including lettuce, basil, and flowers! During this exploration, the students learned the stages of scientific experimentation and came to understand the difference between qualitative and quantitative data. As a culminating project, the Grade 1s worked in small groups to design



their own experiments. Collaboratively, the young scientists hypothesised, conducted their experiments, analysed the results and arrived at conclusions. In science fair style, they recorded their findings on presentation posters and shared them with their families during the Grade 1 Metamorphosis Metashare.

Our theme was integrated across the curriculum. In math, we measured life size images of salmon at various stages, learned how to read a thermometer for our daily readings, filled buckets to represent the mass and weight of adult salmon and even made over 2000 eggs made out of modelling clay to help us understand the sheer quantity of eggs that salmon lay when they spawn. The Grade 1s continued to learn about salmon through various media, including two more virtual presentations with Ben Teskey. In literacy, the students explored the features of non-fiction texts and then began to write and illustrate their own books about salmon. Relying on theme-related content, the students learned to expand simple "kernel" sentences by adding prepositional phrases and conjunctions <but>, <so> <and>, in order to describe the salmon life cycle and their predators. Incorporating different genres, they included a comic book style chapter to depict the gruelling journey salmon make to return to the very spot in the river where they were born in order to spawn and, ultimately, die. With the goal to raise awareness and funds for the Ontario Streams charity which is dedicated to the conservation and rehabilitation of Ontario streams and wetlands, the Grade 1s collaborated with their Grade 3 learning buddies to create informational posters explaining the negative impact of human factors that lead to the local extinction of salmon. The Grade 3s also interviewed their younger buddies about raising salmon, affording the Grade 1s an opportunity to share





their learning and to reflect on their experiences.

During read aloud time in class, we looked for evidence of not only external, but internal growth and change among the characters we met. The examples were plentiful! In the book titled, *The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes* by Gary Rubinstein and Mark Pett, the previously perfectionist protagonist Beatrice develops an acceptance for making mistakes and even comes to value them as learning opportunities. *Born Bad* by C.K. Smouha is a book about The Big Bad Wolf who feels constrained by the singular persona of “being bad.” With the help of other creatures who embrace the multidimensional and variable aspects of their identity, the Wolf has a transformative experience as a result of honouring his truth and allowing himself to celebrate the “sheepish” side of his personality. Encouraged to self-reflect, the Grade 1s considered how they had changed over the year. Here are a few things they noticed:

“Our brains have gotten smarter.”

“I like to read more.”

“I have gotten taller.”

“I am older.”

“I am braver and willing to take more responsible risks.”

“I am learning more math skills.”

“I am persisting more.”

“I have become kinder.”



Thinking about other opportunities to help the students make personal connections to our theme, it seemed only natural to invite Gerry Mabin to speak to the Grade 1s about the “metamorphosis” of The Mabin School! The students sat mesmerised as Gerry described the changes and growth that Mabin has gone through since its first days over 40 years ago. She described how a group of enthusiastic parents convinced Gerry to start a new school. Together, they sourced out a small space on Jarvis Street and she remembered the fun they had scavenging for materials such as milk crates for chairs on garbage nights in the neighbourhood! Eventually, as more and more children began to enrol, this intrepid group of educators realised they needed a larger building! That’s when they found a beautiful home nestled on Poplar Plains Road and the school moved to its current location. The Grade 1s were surprised and tickled to hear that there used to be a swimming pool where the current Kindergarten playground is!

Meanwhile back in the tank, our alevin were developing into fry. In the third week of May, we began to incrementally raise the temperature of the water to 10 degrees celsius, in order to mimic the conditions of spring. Approximately two days before our release date, we spotted several fry in the gravel bed. That was a big relief and a welcome sight: the fish were alive and well! On the morning of Friday, May 26th, we began the process of gently removing the gravel from the tank, being careful not to inadvertently scoop up any fish. Next, we used a small net to gather the fry and placed them in Tupperware containers filled with water. Counting as we went, the Grade 1s were thrilled that 76 fry had survived the first stages of life in our classroom tank. After safely snapping the containers into a cooler, the fish were ready for transport.



It was a perfect spring day as we drove into the Greenwood Conservation area. The young stewards were eager to walk to Duffins Creek, a tributary of Lake Ontario in order to fulfil their important job of helping to repopulate the local waters with salmon. Safeguarding against shocking the fish with frigid temperatures, the Atlantic Salmon team helped us mix the river water with the tank water and each of the Grade 1s were given two fry in a clear plastic cup. The students expressed mixed emotions. While they were incredibly excited, the children were acutely aware of the dangers the fry would face on their journey downstream. Finally, the students named their fry and wished them safe travels as they released the salmon back into their natural habitat.



Reflecting on this culminating experience, a few of the students had this to say:

“I loved the entire experience. I loved learning that much about one species and I also love nature so helping nature was a great thing for me. I felt that I was helping animals for a big cause, which was restoring Atlantic Salmon back to Lake Ontario. It felt good.”

-Daveed

“I felt happy when we first got them because we didn’t really know what the tank was for. I felt happy because we were raising salmon and it was a good thing to do because we lost the Atlantic Salmon because people kept cutting trees down. I felt sad when the inquiry was done because when we released them I missed them.”

-Romy



“It felt really nice to raise salmon because they were always with us until we released them. It was important for us to raise them so they can go back into the actual river and start their journey back to the lakes.”

-Theo

“It felt cool because I never got to raise a salmon before. It was important because we needed to repopulate the salmon in Lake Ontario. I felt happy because the salmon got to go out into the world and live their lives.”

-Caroline



Sandra Giampapa joined The Mabin School in 2008 and she is our Grade 1 teacher. Sandra is a life-long learner whose many interests have taken her on a varied educational journey. She holds a Music Diploma and an Extended Studies Certificate from Humber College with a major in vocals and arranging. She has a BA (Hons.) in Philosophy and a Master of Arts in Child Study and Education from the University of Toronto. Sandra is a passionate teacher who brings her keen interest and knowledge of early literacy acquisition skills and mathematical education to her teaching. Sandra inspires her students to follow their wonderings and deepen their learning through engaging and multi-faceted inquiries. She is truly a master of metamorphosis!



Michelle Barchuk (she/her) is our Director of Admissions & Communications.

Pride @ Mabin

By Michelle Barchuk

A glorious and sunny day in June marked the full school culmination of our Pride celebrations at Mabin, and what a celebration it was! Organized by our student Pride team - Elliot Veneziano ('23), Alexandra Pierce ('24) & Ayane Handa ('24) - and supported by our teachers, staff, students, and families we had a fantastic time showing our rainbow colours!

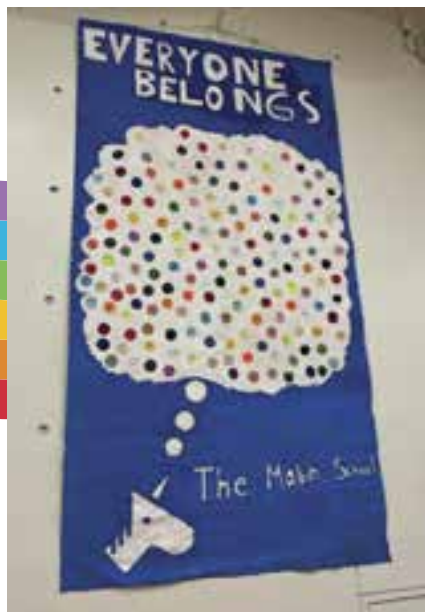
Leading up to the big day, Grade 5 and 6 students led integration activities, which included: reading and discussing stories of inclusion and belonging to our JK to Grade 4 students; and preparing posters of support and flags for our upcoming full school parade in the neighbourhood.

We kicked off our Pride festivities with a full school assembly to remind us of the importance of Pride, inclusion and empathy. Each class came dressed in a specific colour - JK-Red SK-Orange 1-Yellow 2-Green 3-Blue 4-Purple 5/6-Pink - with the goal being to create a rainbow together. We showed our colours - literally! - and sang together with musical accompaniment by Bruce Grant, Lauren Saunders, Alex Morley and Nancy Steinhauer.

We then headed outside to parade down the street to Hydro Park where we sang some more, danced and played together. It was magical!

Thanks to all of our community members who joined us! Special thanks to Barry Green (Mabin teacher Jillian's father) who joined us for the afternoon taking some of the fantastic photos you see here. Follow Barry on instagram @barrygreenphotography.

While single day and month-long celebrations are important and impactful, at The Mabin School we strive to incorporate a sense of belonging, acceptance and inclusion for our community members 365 days a year. Happy Pride to all!



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at The Mabin School

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 difference. 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.



Photo by Barry Green

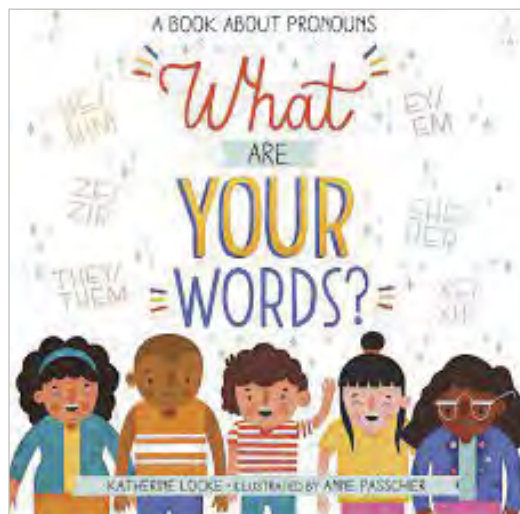
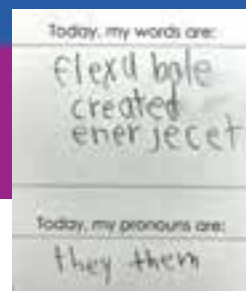
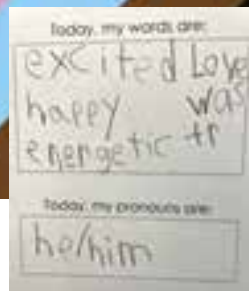


Photo by Barry Green



Exploring Pronouns in Grade 2

By Michelle Barchuk



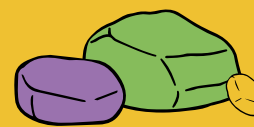
Last year, our Grade 2 students explored gender inclusive language together with Grade 2 teacher, Pamela Lo, and Learning Strategies Teacher, Lauren McGuire. They read a story called *What Are Your Words?* by Katherine Locke. In this story, Ari is a child who is still figuring out “words,” or pronouns. Sometimes Ari likes she/her pronouns. Other times, Ari prefers he/him pronouns. On the day of a big neighborhood party, Ari isn’t sure what pronouns feel right. Ari meets neighbours and learns about their “words.” Ari learns about pronouns like they/them and ze/zir, and learns it’s okay not to know your pronouns right away. (You can watch a readaloud of this picture book on Youtube.). Grade 2 students brainstormed what their own “words” are and what pronouns felt comfortable for them. They thought of words like “funny, silly, energetic, dragon lover, artist, and creative,” as some words to describe themselves.

The class also discussed the pride flag, specifically the meaning of the colours on the left side (brown and black to represent people of colour, pink, blue, and white for the transgender community). As visitors to The Mabin School will note, this flag is proudly displayed throughout the building to remind everyone that this is a safe, inclusive space for all.

Michelle Barchuk (she/her) is our Director of Admissions & Communications.

Pride Art

By Gina Brintnell



We had such a fun and memorable Pride month celebrating in June with The Mabin School community! I wanted to take a moment to shout out the incredible work of the Grade 5/6s who took time both in art class and during integration to learn more about LGBTQ+ history to honour changemakers and their important contributions.

Students began their learning through a queer hero scavenger hunt, researching the lives of different LGBTQ+ heroes, their struggles, contributions, achievements and the impacts of their work. These individuals included both past and present activists and artists, such as: Elliot Page, Marsha P. Johnson, Harvey Milk, k.d lang, Jazz Jennings, Kairyn Potts, a two-spirit Indigenous youth advocate and influencer, and many others. The 5/6s then created posters honouring a hero of their choice and displayed them around the school, representing their importance and to help promote empathy, respect, and understanding. Students understood the importance of this work to help combat stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination by showing that LGBTQ+ individuals have always been a part of society and have made significant contributions to various fields. By including LGBTQ+ history, students are encouraged to question the narratives they encounter, think critically, and explore diverse perspectives. It helps them develop a more comprehensive understanding of history and society, which prepares them to be engaged and informed citizens.

To further promote a spirit of inclusivity, the Grade 5/6s undertook the Rainbow Rock Garden project! Grade 5/6s learned about rock painting, as both an early artform - to express creativity, and community - and to also spread messages of love, unity, and peace. They also learned about the importance of Pride celebrations and their historical context of resilience and resistance for social change. They took their learning to make their own rainbow rocks, creating visible and lasting symbols of support for the strength of the LGBTQ+ community, reminding the whole school we all belong. Thank you 5/6s, you rock!



Gina Brintnell is both a Learning Strategies Teacher and Grade 5 and 6 visual arts teacher at The Mabin School. Gina initially joined Mabin during the pandemic, teaching Grade 6 alongside Chris Russell, as well as Grade 4-6 visual art during the 2020-2021 school year. Gina has a Master of Arts in Child Study and Education and a Master of Arts in Theatre from the University of Toronto. She has taught at The Study Academy, has an art practice of her own, and has served on a local executive of the Council for Exceptional Children.



Trees: What Are They Good For?

By Oliver Buchman ('26) & Lev Thorek ('26)

Trees are a very important part of the world. In fact, without them, humans, other animals, and plants could not survive. So why do we cut down trees so much? The Mabin School's Grade 3s have been wondering this question for a long time.

In September, the Grade 3s started their inquiry about fungi and went to the Humber Arboretum to learn information about trees and animals, and questions started to grow.

In October, they started to take care of Reishi, Pink Oyster, and Lion's Mane mushrooms. The mushrooms even grew baby mushrooms called pins. Then, the Grade 3s also went on a trip to Earthbound Farms, to learn about trees and animals.

In November, the Grade 3's went on a guest walk with Bob Kortright, to their local ravine to learn more about trees and fungi, and we were thankful for his time. Later that month they went to Norval, an extension of UCC's campus, to learn more about green ways to help the Earth's forests.

In December, the Grade 3 students started a SmartSchool Forest project. To fundraise, they made posters to increase awareness about the importance of trees. The Grade 3s raised money to plant saplings and everyone could donate. The Grade 3s and Canada's Forest Trust are trying to plant 15,000 trees in the Acadian Forest in New Brunswick. While animals are still experiencing deforestation, the Grade 3s are working to prevent it with their SmartSchool Forest and we are saving many animal's homes.

In January, the Grade 3s learned about Food Chains and Food Webs, for their forest, the Acadian Forest.

Editor's Note: Newspaper Club ended before our writers could share the details of their fantastic expo in June. End of year celebrations of learning, often referred to as 'expos' at The Mabin School, are a popular way for students to share their learning with their parents at the end of an inquiry. The Grade 3 class hosted their parents in our Community Learning Lab where they took their guests on a tour of various stations where another aspect of their study was highlighted. Visitors are always impressed at the level of detail and understanding our students develop through our emergent curriculum model.



Now in Grade 4 at The Mabin School, Oliver and Lev were part of last year's student Newspaper Club. When tasked with an article to write, both students were keen to share information about the Grade 3 inquiry project at the time. With guidance from Grade 3 teacher Randall Brown, Learning Strategies Teacher Rhamiya Thirunavukkarasu - and a host of experts (in the - literal! - field), the class inquiry spanned many months, integrated many curriculum areas, and included a changemaking element to make a difference in the world. This is an excellent example of how students learn deeply at The Mabin School. In this article, Oliver and Lev take us through the first few months of their class inquiry, outlining the highlights along the way.



Student journalists, Oliver & Lev working on their posters.





It Started with a Feather...

By Michelle Barchuk



At The Mabin School, anything – and I mean ANYTHING – can spark a class inquiry. And it can happen any time. Grade 4 teacher Sue Ball and Grade 4 Learning Strategies Teacher, Lauren Saunders, never could have predicted, for example, the passion their students would display for and about birds last. We follow an emergent curriculum here which means we really let the kids lead the way in their learning with teachers as the “guides on the side” to ensure learning is deep, rich and cross-curricular.

During the 2022-2023 school year, our Grade 4 students became passionate about birds right from the start. A class field trip to Norval Outdoor Education School, run by our friends at Upper Canada College, launched an inquiry that spanned the school year. Jackson Fogle (‘25) discovered a colourful feather during that outing and the inquiry – quite literally – took flight!

Michelle Barchuk is Director of Admissions & Communications at The Mabin School. Her spirit bird is the cardinal and she would be more than happy to tell you why.



Bringing experts in where needed and participating in additional field trips help deepen our students’ learning, regardless of the topic of inquiry. In this case, the Grade 4s learned about Project NestWatch, a long term monitoring program of breeding birds and nesting activity in Canada. They were connected to FLAP Canada to learn more about conservation efforts. A return trip to Norval, explorations in the ravine system as well as a day spent at Tommy Thompson Park were further experiences that continued to fuel the students’ collective curiosity.

Inquiries at The Mabin School often include a changemaking component which allows students to make a difference in their community and, often, beyond. During their bird inquiry (affectionately referred to as “Birds! Birds! Birds!”), the Grade 4 class took it upon themselves to fundraise to purchase bird feeders for installation around our school yard. They promoted and hosted a fun-filled bird-themed dance party and invited everyone in the community to participate. Their goal was to raise funds to keep the feeders full of birdseed for our feathered friends.



Students learned about many different birds, and charted their migratory patterns while also studying an individual bird in detail. They worked collaboratively to extend their knowledge by collecting facts, pictures and ideas all tied to the theme of birds. Grade 4s developed their research and presentation skills as the inquiry drew to a close.

At the end of the school year, parents and family members were invited to the school for a celebration of the students’ learning. Visitors ‘migrated’ throughout our indoor and outdoor spaces, participating in a variety of activities and learning experiences designed by the Grade 4s themselves. The students’ enthusiasm and pride in their work was evident, proving, once again, the value of an inquiry-based approach.





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



Strategic Priority 2 : Nurture healthy relationships



Strategic Priority 3 : Amplify learning



A Word from our Valedictorians

By Emily Wilson ('23) & Micah Starkman ('23)

On the afternoon of Tuesday, June 13, 2023, we hosted our very first Grade 6 graduation ceremony in the brand new Community Learning Lab. We gathered to celebrate our graduates and wish them well as they head off to Grade 7 this September. Our grads will be moving on to a variety of public and independent schools next year (including RSGC, UCC, Havergal, Toronto Prep, Greenwood College and Montcrest). We are so proud of each and every one of our students!

Class of 2023 valedictorians, Emily Wilson ('23) and Micah Starkman ('23) shared the following remarks on behalf of their peers during our 2023 graduation ceremony:

Micah: We are so honoured to be chosen by our classmates to be this year's valedictorians.

Emily: As representatives of our class we would like to celebrate our experiences at Mabin and acknowledge those who have helped us along the way.

Micah: We will start off by sharing some of our most memorable experiences.

Emily: My favourite memory is in Grade 1 when we did a "sleepover" at school and no, it was not a real sleepover, it was just us staying at school and staying up a little late. When we were doing it though I probably thought we were staying up until midnight. We did a bunch of activities and one that I still remember was a puzzle. This was challenging, but it paid off when we all got ice cream at the end! The whole thing was a fun and exciting experience.



Micah: One of my first - and possibly favourite - memories at Mabin was attempting to hatch two praying mantis egg sacs with our amazing Grade 3 teacher, Randall. Our class decorated a small case for the sacs, and we all took turns spraying a little water on them to keep them hydrated. I was praying that they would hatch, but unfortunately none did. It was still a very fun experience and we also got other chances to take care of different critters.

Emily: We have heard from Alek and Alex how much fun they had doing the StopGAP project with Lisa Grassa and Nance in Junior Kindergarten. They also talk about how much they miss nap time. Carolynne, the current JK teacher working with Nance always welcomes us to her class to help out and pair up with the JKs. Fun fact: did you know Carolynne was mine and McCrea's teacher in Senior Kindergarten before any of us came to Mabin? It was nice to be reunited!

Micah: In Senior Kindergarten, Antimo joined the pack, and to this day he misses Choosing Time, expertly led by Laura and Sarah. Now Sarah is teamed up with Alex in Senior Kindergarten and they always seem to have so much fun there, singing songs and playing games together.

Emily: Grade 1 was when (my brother) McCrea and I first came to Mabin. I remember when we made our own model inventions! I think I made something along the lines of a dresser. It would help you get dressed in the morning if you were lazy, which I wasn't back then but now... I am. Sandra and Stef were our amazing teachers in Grade 1. They were always so enthusiastic about our learning.

One of my Grade 2 memories is when we did our Ancient Egypt inquiry with Jillian and Lauren M. I remember for our expo we got to dress up as gods we were assigned. I got Thoth and kept my costume until just a few weeks ago. Another memorable part of that year was when we mummified a chicken. It stunk so bad!

Micah: Grade 3 wasn't just my first year at Mabin, it was also Elliot's, who still keeps me laughing every single day. I already shared one of my favourite memories about Grade 3 with the bug inquiry. This was also the first year of COVID. We were in for a tough ride, but are grateful Randall and Lauren M. were there to guide us through online learning.

In Grade 4, the pandemic continued, but this time we got to be in person for part of it. We even had a whole floor to ourselves at 35 Prince Arthur Avenue. Some of our favourite memories that year include running our Terry Fox event virtually, and the song some of the girls wrote for Pink Shirt Day called "Don't Think - Wear Pink." We still sometimes sing it! That year, we had a lot of helpful teachers in the building. Lisa Sherman was our classroom teacher. She was funny and always made learning interesting.

Emily: Lisa was also our teacher in Grade 5. That year, we relocated once again, this time to 24 Spadina Road, also known as Alliance Française. That year Alfred joined our crew. We got to do lots of special things in Grade 5, like ice skating, going out for lunch on our own, rock climbing (twice!) , and even starting our own business "Green Greetings". We were also honoured to receive the Ian Hawkins Spirit Award for doing an amazing job running all the school events and putting on the school musical.





Micah: In Grade 6 we continued to run all the events, taking on even more responsibility by mentoring this year's Grade 5s. Last Friday, we finished our final leadership event here: the Mabin Pride parade. This year Heather was our classroom teacher and made our last year special. Lucy and Jesse were new additions to our class and it was great to have them here.

Emily: Surprisingly, one thing that I will always remember and will want to do again when I am older is all of the projects that we have done. One of my favourites was the math board games we made about all of the things we had learned throughout the year. Now you might be wondering "Why would you enjoy doing projects?" Well, I can tell you that if Heather did not "funnify" them then they would have not been as exciting.

Micah: This year we also got to go on an overnight trip to Montreal and Ottawa. We had so much fun going to circus school, the biodome, biking around the Rideau Canal, and telling lots of jokes along the way. Another highlight from Grade 6 was our murder mystery party. (Don't worry – no one was actually murdered.) We finally got to do some sports with other schools this year, including basketball games and a track and field meet. I hope we continue this tradition for future Grade 5 and 6s. This year Gina was our Learning Strategies Teacher, and also our visual arts teacher. Thanks for supporting our class when we needed the extra help, Gina.

Emily: Over the years we have had many great art teachers, including Megan in the old art room. I still remember hanging out in the old nook. Sama and Lisa were two more of our art teachers. We did grid art with Lisa, which was one of my favourite projects ever. It is actually the background for my computer. As an art teacher, Gina always gave us lots of creative freedom. We did fun projects like learning watercolour techniques and creating animal portraits in the style of Indigenous woodland art.

Micah: Science is an area where we did lots of fun projects, such as fingerprinting, Robotics, making carnival games, extracting banana DNA and so much more. (I am still upset that we didn't get to eat any of the leftover bananas.) A thing that I love about how Michelle Li teaches science is how calm she is. I feel like kids really like it when their teacher is calm because it can make them feel less stressed or have a better work ethic. Lastly, I've got to say, how do you come up with all of these project ideas for the whole school?

Emily: Over the past 3 years we have had the chance to do drama. In Grade 4, we did some improv games because it was our first year doing drama. When we were in Grade 5, we worked with Lauren to perform *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. I remember that I had a quick costume change in the middle of a scene and it was very stressful. Overall it was an exciting and fun experience though. This year, with less time, we put on the production, *The Jungle Book*. In this show both of us had main roles which was different from last year. When we were main characters it was obviously hard to remember things like lines and scenes, but once we did, it was easy. We both had experience from last year and Lauren as a brilliant director which helped.



Micah: Lauren wasn't just our drama teacher, she also taught us French for most of my time here. This year we had Claudine as our French teacher, and we are super thankful for all of our projects and mini plays that we have done. My favourite French memory was when we were doing our mini play in French, called *Le garçon qui joue des tours*. A funny part of this production was all of the bloopers. The Grade 6s know what I am talking about.

Emily: We have had a couple of different Phys. Ed. teachers over the years, but it did not matter who we had, we always had fun! Thanks to all of the gym teachers and especially Amr for making our last year at Mabin exciting and special. One gym activity that I will always remember is Secret Santa. You pretty much pick someone to be the "Santa" and then play regular dodgeball. If someone on your team gets hit and it's not the Santa player, then Santa can tap that person and they can play again. If you hit the other person's Santa then they can not revive anymore. And just a walk down the hall is music!

Micah: Thank you Bruce for teaching music, and planning the spring concert and all of the concerts at assembly. I bet teaching the whole school music is hard. Something that you have inspired me to do is to quit school and become a full time hamboner, or a glockenspiel player. I will choose later.

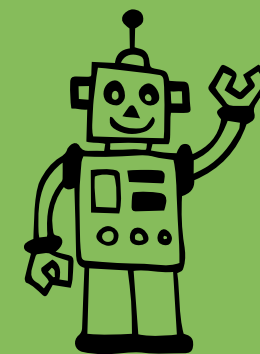
Emily: Thank you to all of the staff we haven't mentioned for everything you have done for us and The Mabin School. A special thanks to the custodial staff for cleaning the building and to the office staff for keeping us organised. Finally, thanks to the IT specialists for solving our tech problems and doing the lights for our musical.

Micah: None of this would have been possible without the parents of all the students, and especially the Mabin Parents' Association. A big thank you for everything you've done.

Emily: We also appreciate the hard work of Michelle B., Chris and Rachel for keeping our school running smoothly.

Micah: Nancy, thank you for being our incredible principal - such a magical one - over our time at Mabin. I also want to thank ChatGPT for the assistance this year. But on a serious note, thank you so much fellow graduates for being such good friends over the years we have been at Mabin.

Emily: Thank you for listening and we hope to see all of you in the future.



Stories of Structured Literacy

By Jillian Green

As a teaching team in past years, Lauren McGuire and I were always eager to engage in an inquiry to ensure our literacy practices were in line with evidence-based practices. When Carolyn Cybulski joined our staff as Junior Kindergarten teacher a number of years ago, she brought with her a strong background in teaching literacy skills, Orton Gillingham training, experience working with children and adults with dyslexia. Carolyn was able to model what a structured literacy program could look like - where students learn foundational literacy skills through direct, explicit and systematic instruction.

Around the same time, a provincial human rights inquiry was closely examining how reading was taught in Ontario. The Right to Read Report was released in February 2022 and findings included the fact that Ontario had not been using evidence-based approaches to teaching students to read. The Report also included recommendations to the Ministry of Education to update literacy curriculum across school board and faculties of education. It also involved thinking about how to address systemic issues that affect the right to learn and how to read and write.

In response to the science of reading movement and the Right to Read report, we wanted to provide professional development (PD) to our teachers. We called up Liisa Freure from Fundamental Learning to work with us to design a full year PD

experience for our teachers. Liisa worked with us to build common knowledge on the science of reading, orthographic linguistics and structured word inquiry. Together, we explored areas of phonology, phonemes and graphemes, handwriting spelling, morphology and etymology. Liisa was responsive to our staff learning needs and provided both lecture style learning, model lessons along with debriefing, and coaching with teachers. An example of a model lesson was learning how to teach about morphology with the Grade 1s who were studying the concept of metamorphosis through butterflies, mealworms, and salmon.



Jillian Green is our Teacher-Librarian and Teacher Learning and Curriculum Coach. In this newly established role, she works with every teacher and student in the building to support learning.

Along with new professional development, we updated the way we assessed our students and we adopted a universal screening practice, called for by the Right to Read Report, and in line with research. Our aim is to catch even our youngest students who may need extra support learning to read, and provide them with the instruction and support they need.

Lastly, we invested in updating our resources, including curriculum materials and decodable readers. In particular, we purchased colourful and motivating new books for our classrooms that follow a specific phonics progression.



At The Mabin School, we have an enviable model of support. Our strong Learning Strategies Teacher (LST) team partners with each of our classroom teachers so we can get to know our students' needs and be responsive and thoughtful teachers.

Our next step was sharing our learning journey with others. Last spring, we presented to Mabin's Board of Directors and hosted colleagues from other schools for visits and observations. We presented to other passionate educators at the 2023 International Association of Lab Schools Conference (co-hosted by The Mabin School) and at the CIS Ontario Learning Services Conference in May. We even hosted a pizza and structured literacy night at Mabin for both independent and public school colleagues where we shared and collaborated at a time when curriculum and purchasing decisions are being made for the upcoming school year.



Our story certainly isn't over. We continue to build on this momentum as we reflect and refine our practice in support of all learners at The Mabin School. Sharing our expertise and experience with others, while deepening our own learning, allows us to continue to improve and grow as an institution and we are looking forward to another exciting learning journey during the school year ahead!

A Hal of a Week!

By Michelle Barchuk

While the Mabin community knows me as our Director of Admissions & Communications, I actually began my career in education as a French teacher. Over the years, I have taught French Immersion at Withrow Junior Public School in the TDSB as well as Core French at both Royal St. George's College (RSGC) and Kingsway College School (KCS). (Fun fact: Sam Jarvis-Cohen, our fabulous Extended Care Coordinator, was a former student of mine!) Imagine my surprise and delight this past school year when I had the opportunity to work with the very first administrator to hire me as a teacher: Hal Hannaford!

At the end of the Fall term last year, our principal Nancy Steinhauer, announced that she had been selected to spend two weeks of professional development at Columbia University in New York City with other talented heads of school from around the world. While I was certainly pleased for Nancy, I also wondered what it would be like not to have her in the building every day. Of course, Nancy (as always!) had a plan. And what a plan it was!

The Mabin School would welcome a guest principal at the end of January. An experienced school leader would join us to offer support and guidance as needed in the absence of our own fearless leader. Who would it be? I wondered. Who could possibly fill Nancy's shoes while she was away?

Soon it was announced that none other than THE Hal Hannaford (former head of KCS, RSGC and Selwyn House) would take a break from retirement to spend a week with us here at The Mabin School. I couldn't believe it! Hal had hired me back in the early '00s as a French teacher when he was at RSGC. I learned a tremendous amount from Hal over the years, including the importance of relationships; giving yourself permission to make mistakes (and learn from them); and having a sense of humor and playfulness.

What a treat to work with Hal again! From touch football with the Grade 6s at recess to daily lunch duty to morning arrival, Hal was everywhere. The Mabin community welcomed him with open arms and by the end of the first day I think Hal had learned the name of every student and staff member in the building proving, once again, the importance of relationships. I appreciated the enthusiasm and energy Hal brought to those dreary winter days back in January. And while the fun moments certainly outweighed the serious ones, he was there when we needed the solid advice of an experienced and dedicated leader. The week flew by and soon it was time for Hal to return to retirement life in Montreal. (If you've met Hal you will know that retirement doesn't mean he is actually slowing down at all!)

After moving on from RSGC all those years ago, I never would have dreamt that someday I would have the chance to work alongside Hal again. I'm so grateful that I did.

Michelle Barchuk is our Director of Admissions & Communications who is sometimes referred to as "other Michelle" (to avoid confusion with our amazing science specialist, Michelle Li!) or "the one who takes all the pictures" by our youngest students. Before joining The Mabin School in 2017, Michelle taught French for many years in public and independent schools here in Toronto. She was also Assistant Director of Admissions at Toronto French School earlier in her career. Read on to learn how working alongside Hal Hannaford was a wonderful and unexpected reunion last winter!



A Letter from Hal

To the entire Mabin Community,

Hey Mabin! You are all truly wonderful and I want to thank each and every one of you for making my (too short!) week with you so special.

Mabin is more than a school. It is a loving, caring community where the focus is on innovation, creativity, spirit, initiative, and originality. A place where everyone can strive to be just who they are, and a place where people do learn the value of looking after one another. When it is all said and done, that is what education is all about.

I can promise you that what I learned most is that clearly the world needs more Mabin. I used to think that, but after experiencing Mabin in person, I now know that.

With deep respect and admiration,

Hal

Hal Hannaford holds degrees from Concordia University, University of Toronto, and INSEAD in France. As a young teacher, he also served as director of Kilcoo Camp, a summer camp for boys. Hannaford has taught elementary and high school in Canada, and served on the Faculty of International Business at the American University in Paris. As a teacher, he survived with his unique brand of energy and creativity. In Toronto, Hannaford was the founding headmaster of Kingsway College School in 1989. He joined Royal St. George's College School in 1996 as headmaster and remained there until he moved to Montreal to become headmaster of Selwyn House School (Canada) in 2009. Enthusiastically philanthropic, Hannaford has raised more than \$30 million for charities as a volunteer auctioneer, most notably for The Children's Aid Foundation in Toronto. Learn more at halhannaford.com.



Library Life

By Jillian Green

What a thrilling year it's been in our new library space! I've had an absolutely wonderful experience this year in the Teacher-Librarian role. Having been without a school library since 2020, it's been exciting to update and curate our resources, and make space for important conversations and learning. Our Community Learning Lab has come a long way since the empty shelves last summer when we moved back to 50 Poplar Plains Road to the busy well-used space it is today.



Special Guests

We have been fortunate to be able to host incredible guests and authors in the library space over the course of the year. J. Torres visited students in Grades 3-6 to teach us about creating graphic novels. J. was nominated for a Forest of Reading award for his book *Stealing Home* and took home third place. To learn more visit J's website.

Fay and Fluffy added so much joy to our Mabin Day celebrations this year! Our students were eager to listen to stories about inclusion and friendship, such as *All Are Welcome*, *Not Quite A Narwhal*, *I Love My New Toy*, *Abdul's Story*, and *I Want My Hat Back*. You can learn more about Fay and Fluffy by visiting their website or watching *The Fabulous Show*, their TV show on youtube.

Anoosha Syed is a Forest of Reading nominated author and illustrator for her most recent book *That's Not My Name*. Anoosha gave the JK-2 students a sneak peek into how she illustrates her books and invents new characters. The book, *Rise Up and Write It*, is a great motivator and model for social activism in children.



Jillian Green is our Teaching, Learning & Curriculum (TLC) Coach, and Teacher-Librarian. She 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. Hons. from the University of King's College in Halifax where she studied 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, Special Education and Librarianship. Currently, she is focused on learning more about how children acquire literacy skills. Jillian is passionate about creating knowledge building communities and designing emergent curriculum to inspire students.

Volunteers

I would like to thank our incredible volunteers whose support has helped our library program to run smoothly! Mabin students, parents and grandparents have helped in many ways over the course of the school year with tasks such as: shelving books, organizing chapter book/series collections and updating our library database. We welcome volunteers of all ages in the library. Contact jillian@mabin.com if you would like to get involved!

Celebrating Our Community Learning Lab

From student learning time, clubs, collaboration, integration, professional development, and international conferences, it has been an amazing year in our new community space! I still can't believe we managed to unpack all of the boxes in time for school to start! As we celebrate our first full year in our new space, I can only imagine what we can do from here!



Nigel & Jeff:

Together Again!

By Nigel Goodfellow

I've heard time and time again that the greatest impact on a child's education is their teachers, and I wholeheartedly agree. I don't have many memories about my elementary school teachers, but I can tell you everything about my Grade 3 teacher Mr. Jeff Borsten.

I was in a Grade 3/4 split at Mutchmor Public School in Ottawa back in 1995, and it was my first year at that school. Mr. Borsten was my teacher, and I had never had a teacher like him. We listened to everything he said, talked about him at the dinner table, and enjoyed every minute of time we had in the classroom. Mr. Borsten read us many stories, and I can still remember sitting on the carpet enthralled by his witch voices in Roald Dahl's *The Witches*. I remember such a small but significant moment with great clarity: I had been working very hard to ensure my math notebook was clear and well-organized, which was something I struggled with. One afternoon, Mr. Borsten took my notebook and showed the whole class while gushing about how neat and accurate everything was. It feels good to receive praise, but it feels incredible for that praise to come from a teacher you admire. It's hard to put a finger on exactly why Mr. Borsten was so great. He just was, and everyone knew it. When Mr. Borsten left the school to teach abroad at the end of the year, the community rallied to try to keep him. We had a party in his honour, and we all slicked our hair back with gel just like he did (and still does) every day. Through some incredible coincidence, I've had the opportunity to reconnect with Mr. Borsten and work with him again (although I am allowed to call him by his first name now). Jeff was the Assistant Head at Montcrest School, but somehow we both converged on The Mabin School at the exact same time. Now that I've had



the chance to see him interact with students as our Acting VP, I better understand why he was so revered. It's not really a single thing that teachers do that kids remember, but the hundreds, thousands of little interactions that lead to trust, understanding, and respect. I can't remember those thousands of things Jeff did while I was in Grade 3, but I'll never forget how those things made me love school and learning.



A Note to Jeff from Nigel's mom, Marianne:

Hello Mr. Borsten. I would never have called you Jeff when you were at Mutchmor School but now, I think that I can. I have just been chatting with Nigel and I could not resist sending you a message. I find it such fun, really, that you and Nigel are in the same school once again. I also find it quite wonderful that you have kept in touch with one another all these years. You were the best elementary teacher that Nigel and Sebastian ever had, and I wish that you had been able to stay for Mippy. I send best wishes and perhaps sometime when I am in Toronto, we can have a visit.

Nigel Goodfellow joined The Mabin School in 2022 as our Grade 5 teacher. He previously taught at the International School Bangkok, St. John's-Kilmarnock School and The York School. Nigel is an ISTE and Google certified educator. He has additional qualifications in reading, math and special education. Nigel is particularly passionate about Universal Design for Learning, structured word inquiry, social-emotional learning, technology integration, executive functioning, and agency. Nigel is also a published musician and music producer with an interest in technology and geography.



Intergenerational Art

A Mutually Beneficial Opportunity for Mabin Artists of All Ages

By Nancy Steinhauer

The Jarislowsky Foundation's **Intergenerational Art Program** at The Mabin School allows us to nurture relationships between Mabin students and seniors in our community. In the program, we share stories; interact with people who start as strangers and become friends; and come to the realization that the human condition is our common denominator and building community is the underpinning of a healthy society. These projects give voice to the knowledge and experience honed by elders in an enjoyable environment and empower children to build self-confidence while interacting and collaborating with the elders to explore a concept creatively.

Our first **intergenerational art project** last year involved our JK/SK students, Grade 6 students, and their grandparents. Working with artist **Allycia Uccello** on an installation which graces our Kindergarten block area, we played with the theme "Nature in the City/The City in Nature." Over several weeks, Allycia worked with our students and their grandparents to design and create a landscape based on our local ravine. Each time the students built with their blocks, they were reimagining the experience of building a city in nature. And the mural protects our walls too! To learn more about this project, scan below:



One of our volunteers in this project was **Gail Baker**, grandmother of Chloe ('29) and Oliver ('26) Buchman. Gail is an exceptional educator in her own right, and a changemaker extraordinaire. Gail has been working in education for over 45 years and has always been committed to arts-based learning. In 1996, she co-founded The Toronto Heschel School, an arts-based Jewish day school where she served as its head for 18 years.

In her recent book, *Vision and Values: My path to arts based education*, Gail writes:

Implementing an arts-based approach to teaching and learning is also an important vehicle for imagining a better future for ourselves and others. While taking on roles and points of view, we become more empathetic. Under the direction of a sensitive teacher the classroom becomes a safe space for imagining the possibility of a new direction or better tomorrow. More importantly, it facilitates empathy that leads to action and a socially just way of living. This is the essence of moral imagination. Additionally, an arts-based focus can help facilitate community building in venues beyond the classroom.



This captures the essence of our intergenerational programming. Gail also saw the value of intergenerational learning in her work. She co-founded the Intergenerational Classroom, a program that creates collaborative integrated arts learning opportunities for students and senior citizens. A champion for this kind of learning, Gail will be participating again in next year's first intergenerational project, when Grade 4 students take the lead on an intergenerational art project with Making Art Making Change.

Making Art Making Change (MAMC) is a non-profit, federally-registered charity based in Toronto, Ontario. Since 2010, its founders have offered innovative, high-quality, art programming to elders, women, newcomers and youth from a variety of communities throughout the GTA.

MAMC was started by Elena Soni, a past Mabin parent and the art teacher for the junior grades here at the school from 2011-2019 and Vanessa Barnett, a current Mabin grandmother, an art educator and instructional leader in the TDSB for 27 years.

This Is Who We Are – An Intergenerational Project, invites Grade 4 students and adults to engage in a conversation using The Mabin School's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement to discover how much we understand equity-informed practices and to dispel any misconceptions. Our goal is for participants to visually depict how the Mabin community implements these understandings. Adults and students will be working collaboratively on a mixed media mural that will take pride of place at the main entrance to our school building.

Elena and Vanessa, experienced educators in art and guiding creative processes, will facilitate an engaging, safe and joyful project for all. We will provide encouragement, and technical instruction to all participants as we navigate the artistic journey. E and V – as they are known in the studio – also will integrate writing and reflective activities alongside the art-making process, further promoting self-expression and self-discovery.

The project will take place over 8 weekly sessions, beginning at the end of September, 2023. Grandparents will be invited to choose a morning (10:15 am - 12:15 pm) or

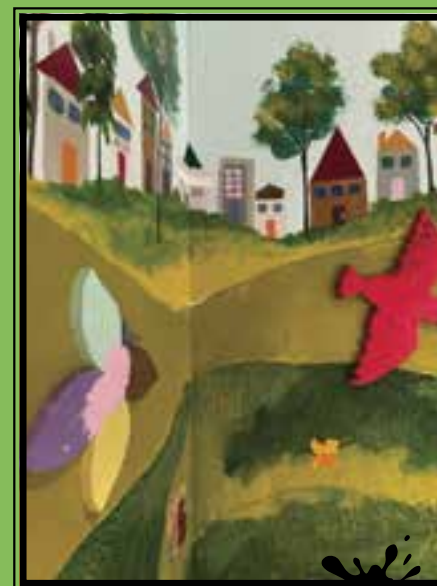


afternoon time (1:15 - 3:15 pm) slot. The interaction between the adults and students will be structured in phases, where all participants will gradually build upon skills and experiences, resulting in a deeper level of bonding. Each phase presents new challenges and opportunities for creative exploration, and deeper understanding of Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity.

The emphasis is on community-building, encouraging social interaction across generations and collaboration among participants. To guarantee the success of this intergenerational relationship, grandparents are encouraged to commit fully to the 8 sessions. This aspect of the program enhances the overall experience by fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie. Participants have the opportunity to think critically, share ideas and beliefs, and provide feedback to others. This group engagement will promote mutual support and encouragement.

The mural will represent our collective voice as an Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive community. All other grades and staff will contribute imagery to complete a vital communal statement. Elena and Vanessa are honoured to have been invited to work alongside students and elders at The Mabin School, and The Mabin School is honoured to be working so closely with them. We invite all of our community members to come for a visit in the new year to see the completed installation. We are excited that the first thing that visitors will see as they enter our building is a representation of our commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

As a learning community for people aged 0-99, we value our Intergenerational Art program. We continue to look for meaningful opportunities to bring children and seniors together to learn, create and connect. We know that everyone benefits from these relationships and we appreciate our visiting artists for facilitating their development through art-making.



Nancy Steinhauer is principal at The Mabin School. Since arriving at Mabin in 2016, Nancy has championed opportunities for artists of all ages to engage together in creative projects in a safe, welcoming and inclusive space.

Kudos to Kelly!



Kelly Meighen's involvement with The Mabin School goes way back to the beginning and continues to this day. A longstanding champion and supporter of the school since its early days, Kelly sent her children Ted ('92) and Max ('01) Meighen here. She is also a proud Mabin grandparent to Henry ('26).

We were thrilled to learn recently that Kelly Meighen had been named the 24th Chancellor of Western University, effective July 1, 2023. As such, Meighen will be the honorary and symbolic head of the university, presiding over convocation ceremonies to admit candidates to degrees, diplomas and certificates. She will also serve as an ex officio voting member of the board of governors, university senate and certain committees of both governing bodies. Kelly's extensive background in philanthropy, as an advocate for youth mental health, the arts and non-profit governance in Canada will no doubt serve her well in this new role. Kelly is also president of the Meighen Family Foundation.

Keri Ferguson, Western University Communications, wrote a thorough article about Kelly and all the expertise and talents she brings to her new role in *Western News* in July 2023. We have her permission to republish it in full here.

Kelly Meighen named Western's 24th Chancellor

The esteemed philanthropist believes healthy relationships, strong supports, fundamental to success

By Keri Ferguson, Communications, Western University

Western University has announced Kelly Meighen as the university's twenty-fourth Chancellor, effective July 1, 2023, for a four-year term.

Meighen, BA'71, LLD'13, is president of the Meighen Family Foundation, a position she's held since 1990, following more than ten years serving on its board.

Through both the foundation and her individual efforts, Meighen has made a profound impact on youth mental health, the arts, and non-profit governance in Canada. She has also led the Foundation's new strategic focus to support organizations and initiatives that improve access to safe housing, healthy food and services for vulnerable children.

"We are so fortunate to have Kelly serve as our next Chancellor," Western President Alan Shepard said. "Kelly is highly regarded by the leaders she has supported and worked with across multiple organizations, including Western, where she's made valuable contributions as

a board member, chair of the development and fundraising committee and as vice-president of Western's Alumni Association. She's also a great humanitarian, moved to improve the health and wellbeing of others."

Photographer: V. Tony Hauser



Meighen has chaired the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) board of trustees, the CAMH Foundation, McGill University's Academic Advising and Mentoring Advisory Board and the Stratford Festival. She has held board positions with Evergreen, Jack.org, Upper Canada College, the Wellesley Hospital, Huron University College and The Royal Conservatory of Music.

In each of these roles, Meighen focused her efforts on strengthening governance and assessing the organizations' responsibility to and impact on the broader community.

Deep ties to Western

As Western's Chancellor, Meighen will be the honorary and symbolic head of the university, presiding over convocation ceremonies to admit candidates to degrees, diplomas and certificates. She will also serve as an ex officio voting member of the board of governors, uni-

versity senate and certain committees of both governing bodies.

"I'm absolutely thrilled to take on this role," Meighen said. "I look forward to reconnecting with Western and representing the university from different perspectives. My first job will be to arm myself with information so I can be an effective and supportive advocate, in whatever way the university needs."

Meighen grew up in London, Ont., where her father, Richard Dillon, BA'48, LLD'79, was Western's first dean of engineering. Western is also where Richard met Meighen's mother, Elizabeth Dempsey, BA'41.

"I was lucky to have two very supportive parents, who were great role models," Meighen said, crediting them for inspiring her volunteerism, and instilling in her a sense of optimism and hope.

Relationships, resiliency 'key'

Through her service at CAMH, and as a founding member of the board of Jack.org, a youth-led national charity focused on mental health, Meighen brings extensive knowledge on the importance of supporting the wellbeing of students – and all community members.

"People of all ages need help," she said, noting Western as one of the first U15 universities to make substantial investments in mental health resources and supports for students.

"When I look back on my own experience, there was no discussion about your emotional health or the right words to describe how you were struggling," she said. "But over the past 15 years it has become a critical issue, with an expectation that universities should help address it."

"We need to be asking, 'How are you as a student? How are you as a student body? And how are you managing in this world?'"

At Western, Meighen earned her degree in psychology and learned to think analytically. It's a skill she believes is just as – or even more – important today as students navigate a world of misinformation and disinformation.

"Never in our lifetime have we seen the whole concept of a 'trusted source' become such a fraught term," Meighen said. "It creates a great need to provide young people with the skills to discern and separate what's real from what's not. They need sound analytical skills and the tools to test things so they can be reassured and develop a framework – either personally or professionally – they can rely on."

Meighen also believes developing resilience and strong interpersonal skills are as key as the scholarly aspects of post-secondary learning.

"I think at the core of personal and professional success is the ability to develop and sustain strong, healthy relationships," she said. "If you take the field of health care, for example, you can produce skilled and capable nurses, physiotherapists or doctors, academically, but what else do they need? They need to be optimistic, energetic, resilient, curious and open-minded. They also need to be good listeners, and skeptical, in the best way."

Dedicated and decorated volunteer

For her outstanding and exemplary community contributions and to Canada as a whole, Meighen received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002 and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012.

She is the first woman named Honorary Colonel of The Royal Regiment of Canada, one of the country's oldest Light Infantry units.

In 2008, she received the Philanthropist of the Year Award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals and was named one of Canada's Most Powerful Women in 2009.

Meighen was the 2010 recipient of the Dr. Ivan Smith Award, Western Alumni's highest tribute, presented to an outstanding individual in recognition of their sustained and significant contributions to the Alumni Association, Western and society.

She and her husband, The Honourable Michael Meighen, a lawyer and former Canadian senator, received honorary degrees from Western in 2013 for their dedication

to philanthropy and public service. That same year, they were recognized with the Yorktown Family Services Humanitarian Award for Community Service.

When asked what drives her longstanding commitment to volunteerism and service, Meighen said, "It all comes back to relationships."

"It's that personal connection. You become involved and are carried along by the great people you meet, the fun you have learning from people whose skills are so different. Because of that, you very quickly gain an appreciation of how you can contribute and help others achieve their vision."

The role of Chancellor traces back to the founding of the university, with Bishop Isaac Hellmuth holding the inaugural post.

Members and friends of the Western community were invited to submit nominations for Chancellor. An electoral board jointly established by the board and senate, whose membership was composed of board members, faculty, staff, alumni and a student, unanimously selected Meighen for the position.

Meighen is the fourth woman to hold the role in Western's history. She follows Linda Hasenfratz, BSc'89, EMBA'97, LLD'19, CEO of Linamar Corporation, who completed her four-year term as Chancellor June 30.

Congratulations, Kelly!

Reading the announcement, I can see why you and your family feel aligned to The Mabin School. Like you, we believe that relationships are at the heart of all learning and essential to Children's Mental Health. As Dr. Jean Clinton tells us, love builds brains.

**-Nancy Steinhauer
Principal**

CN Tower Climb

By Michelle Barchuk

Congratulations to the Mabin team who took on the challenge of climbing the CN Tower stairs (1,776 to be precise!) in April 2023 and raised \$960 in support of the World Wildlife Federation. A total of 2,771 climbers participated in this annual event. The fastest time was 11 minutes and the longest time was 1 hour & 51 minutes. Mabin French teacher Claudine Fiset-Algarvio, principal Nancy Steinhauer and a number of current Mabin parents made it to the top of the CN Tower on foot in support of WWF. Wow!

Here is how our amazing team did: Claudine Fiset-Algarvio (45 minutes, 1 second; 2,514th place), Nancy Steinhauer (45 minutes, 2 seconds; 2,520th place), Charles Roy (18 minutes, 50 seconds; 306th place), Jonathan Godsall (16 minutes; 65th place) & Jordan Slatt (19 minutes, 1 second; 329th place). We are so proud of all of you!

Michelle Barchuk is our Director of Admissions & Communications.



Coming Home

By Erika Bolliger

“That’s where the art room used to be!”

When our alumni come to visit The Mabin School for a tour, usually the alumni become the tour guides. Those who attended Mabin know our small school on Poplar Plains well; and thanks to thoughtful planning during our new build and renovations, much of the original building remains the same.

“You’ve preserved the spirit of Mabin”, says Sara Wilson (’92) who visited The Mabin School with her mother, Wendy, husband, Jesse, and daughter, Sadie, this summer. They contributed a brick to “The World Needs More Mabin” capital campaign and this was their first visit since construction was completed.

When asked how Sara’s mother Wendy heard of Mabin in the first place, she explained that she had read an article about Gerry Mabin and her school in Saturday Night Magazine in 1980. She held onto a copy until Sara was born, and then remembered it two more years later when Sara was old enough to apply.

“You mean this article?” Michlle Barchuk, Director of Admissions and Communications, asked, pulling out a copy of our 40th anniversary Changing Times magazine like a rabbit out of a hat. She flipped quickly to the reprint of that original article. “That’s the one!” exclaimed Wendy, unbelievably.

Wendy and Michelle reminisced about the article en route to the Mabin archives. In preparation for Sara’s visit, we had pulled out some old class photos, and even hard cop-

ies of “mini-mags” saved from Sara’s years at the school. Sara pointed herself out to her daughter, Sadie, now 2 years old. Sadie, on the other hand, preferred to play the drums with dad while we continued our trip down memory lane together.

“It was such a joy to see how the spirit of the place has been so lovingly preserved, while also expanding to accommodate the next generation,” Sara shared in a follow up email. “That place [Mabin] was magic,” Wendy agreed, “and clearly the magic continues in its brilliant new space.”

Mabin alumni are always welcome home! Email alumni@mabin.com to book your personalized visit today. We can’t wait to see you!

“That place [Mabin] was magic and clearly the magic continues in its brilliant new space.”



Erika Bolliger is our Director of Advancement and Alumni Relations. She joined The Mabin School full time in July 2023 and one of her first priorities was to get to know our community. Erika has already connected with a number of our alumni and their families in her short time here.



A Journey into the Past: Revisiting Mabin Decades Later

By Susey Harmer (née Kenedi) ('87)

My brother Rob and I recently embarked on a journey down memory lane as we visited The Mabin School together after almost 40 years. Having been part of the school's inaugural classes that began in Kindergarten at the Jarvis Street location and eventually transitioned to the iconic Poplar Plains address, it has always held a special place in our hearts. Amidst our busy schedules and lives, we made a conscious decision to carve out time for this special moment of reminiscence, and I couldn't be more grateful for it.

My first moment of nostalgia hit when entering the front yard and noticing children on the climber.



I remember an old wooden one in the same place and there used to be a large tree (maybe it was a walnut tree?) where loads of caterpillars would spiral down and provide endless entertainment at recess.

We had the pleasure of being shown around by Michelle Barchuk, our warm and knowledgeable tour guide, who effortlessly brought back waves of nostalgia. Though much has changed, as we walked through the familiar hallways and explored the classrooms, memories flooded back, transporting us to a time when the world seemed simpler. We got a chance to meet the current principal – Nancy Steinhauer – and it is easy to see how the warm personality and character that Gerry Mabin established, carries on with Nancy and Michelle. We reminisced about the teachers (Dalia, Mo, Paola and Joanne to name a few) who had left an indelible mark on our lives, the friendships that had blossomed, and the countless lessons we had learned both inside and outside the classroom.



Sharing this experience with Rob was particularly meaningful. We had been through it all together, from those early days in the other building to the eventual move to the Poplar Plains address. We had witnessed the growth and evolution of The Mabin School firsthand, and our shared memories served as a testament to the enduring spirit of the institution.

The moment I stepped into the gym, a rush of emotions overwhelmed me. It was in this very room that we used to gather, sitting cross-legged on the floor, as Gerry Mabin strummed her guitar and filled the air with the timeless melodies of the Beatles. The sound of her voice, accompanied by the gentle strumming, created an atmosphere of pure magic. It was a time when life was unencumbered, and any worries of the day melted away in the presence of music. Recalling those cherished moments, I couldn't help but smile. The gym had always been a place of solace, a sanctuary where friendships were forged and memories were made. I vividly remembered sneaking into the back room behind the gym with my best friend, occasionally avoiding going out for recess. We would be secretly tucked away, hidden away from the world, digging through plastic grapes and other props used for performances.



Gerry Mabin created a family atmosphere that allowed us to feel comfortable exploring based on our interests, creativity, individuality and all in an environment that felt like home. How could I forget about her mischievous cat, Roo? It seemed like Roo had a knack for making surprise appearances just outside our classroom windows during class time. It was as if the feline had a sixth sense, knowing exactly when to capture our attention and provide a momentary distraction from our studies.



I remember the excitement that would ripple through the classroom as Roo made his grand entrance. The students would eagerly abandon what they were doing and flock to the windows, their faces pressed against the glass, hoping to catch a glimpse of the playful cat. Roo seemed to revel in the attention, strutting along the windowsill with an air of nonchalance, as if he knew he had become the star of the show.

His presence brought a sense of joy and lightheartedness to the classroom. The teacher would often pause the lesson momentarily, allowing us to enjoy this unexpected interlude. Roo's visits became a cherished part of our school experience, a delightful interruption that added a touch of whimsy to our days. Even though we were there to learn and grow, Roo reminded us to appreciate the



small moments of joy that could be found in unexpected places.

As Michelle led us through the school, I couldn't help but notice the remarkable changes that had taken place. The new building, with its modern architecture, stood tall and proud; a testament to the school's growth and progress. It was a sight to behold, and I marveled at the thought and effort that had gone into its construction.

One of the most striking features of the new building was the large indoor space it housed. This expansive area (aka the Community Learning Lab) served multiple purposes, acting as a venue for big gatherings, as well as a classroom for various subjects. Though modern in construction, it blends beautifully with the old building and offers impressive versatility; making it very clear that the school has adapted to the changing needs of its students and its tremendous growth.

As I stood in the midst of this magnificent space, I couldn't help but feel a sense of pride. The Mabin School had come a long way since my time there, and it was heartwarming to witness its growth and evolution. The children in the space were working away as we toured around and weren't afraid to acknowledge us and ask questions. The creativity that pours out of the environment

is also obvious in the interest-led art activities and 'under-the-sea' painted nook in the Art Studio. The dedication to providing a nurturing and enriching environment for students was evident in every corner of the school.

Leaving the school that day, a sense of gratitude washed over me. I was grateful for the opportunity to revisit the place that had played such a significant role in our formative years. I was grateful for the memories that had been rekindled and the stories that had been shared. I carried with me a renewed appreciation for the memories that had shaped me and my brother. The visit reminded me of the power of music and art, the adaptable and positive approach to learning, and the importance of growth. The Mabin School, with its new building and continued commitment to excellence, was a testament to the enduring spirit of education and the lasting impact it has on our lives.

Life moves at a rapid pace, and it's easy to get caught up in the demands of the present. However, taking the time to pause, reflect, and revisit our past can be a powerful reminder of who we are and where we come from. Our visit to The Mabin School served as a beautiful reminder of the importance of having a great education in a very supportive environment.



One of the most interesting things about my job at Mabin is that I have a chance to meet many new people on a regular basis. Whether giving a tour to a prospective family, chatting with a neighbour or talking to a representative from another organization about how to promote our school, there can often be connections back to The Mabin School in unexpected ways.

Imagine my surprise, a few years ago, when one of my media contacts announced that my new rep would be **Susey Harmer (Kenedi) ('87)**. While I didn't know it at first, both she and her brother **Robert Kenedi ('85)** attended The Mabin School back in the early days. Once

we discovered the connection, we set up a few Zoom calls during the pandemic where Susey shared some of her fond memories of her days at Mabin and I updated her on the exciting changes at the school. For several years, due to the pandemic as well as being off-site during the building of our Community Learning Lab, we weren't able to meet in person at 50 Poplar Plains Road. That all changed in June of 2023.

During one of our phone calls last spring, I spontaneously invited Susey and her brother to come back and visit while students were still in the building before summer holidays. As anyone who has visited The Mabin School knows – the

magic is in watching the interactions between students and teachers and staff in our spaces. There's nothing like seeing our school in action! To my delight, both she and Rob accepted and I thoroughly enjoyed showing them around and hearing more about their time here in the 80's as children. They, in turn, were thrilled to see how the blend of old and new spaces preserved the original vision of the school while moving it into the future at the same time. It was such a pleasure to meet these early graduates of The Mabin School and hear firsthand that the spirit of the place remains 40+ years on. There is certainly no higher compliment than that!

Michelle Barchuk is Director of Admissions & Communications at The Mabin School. She used to walk by Mabin as a child on her way to her own elementary school. Michelle always enjoys connecting with our alumni - whether they graduated last year or many years ago.

Welcome Home

By Michelle Barchuk



Thank you for the glorious tour of Mabin! We really appreciated you taking the time in this very busy period. It was also great to finally meet in person! That brought back some really special memories - I'll never forget Gerry (Mabin) playing her guitar in the gym and all of us singing along.

It was a pleasure meeting your team, seeing the classes in action and the new addition is just spectacular!

Like I said, there is something very special about this place and it is heartwarming to see that the true and genuine spirit that Gerry envisioned and created still lives on.

-Susey Harmer (Kenedi) ('87)

The April Fools' Day Club

By Bandall Rown and Malex Aorley

Mabin teachers were startled last spring to receive a mysterious email requesting them to recruit one student from each grade to join an inaugural group to promote mischief and mayhem: The April Fools' Day Club. It was a dark and stormy day when the selected few entered the Senior Kindergarten classroom with trepidation. The room appeared empty, but for one office chair. Slowly, it swiveled towards the children, revealing The Messenger, Malex Aorley* (*name changed for their protection).

"I guess you're wondering why I've asked you here today?" The Messenger whispered.

The children stared, wide eyed and speechless, at the shapeless form. "You have been selected to participate in the planning, and implementation of schoolwide tomfoolery of the very highest order."

Thus began the first ever meeting of The April Fools' Day Club at Mabin. Although the content of these meetings remains confidential, we have been permitted to inform you that the children worked tirelessly to plan, order supplies and implement many school wide pranks, planned specifically to be fun, inclusive, and appropriate.

On the big day, the school was filled with merriment, as fake cockroaches, vomit, poo, fried eggs, and hand buzzers ruled the day. Each door was marked with a caution sign and the entire school was Rick-rolled at assembly. All agreed that this Club brought joy and community-building to The Mabin School on that fateful day.

Plans are already afoot for our 2024 event. The Club can be reached at aprilfools@mabin.com should you have any ideas for future silliness. All ideas are welcome!

My favourite part of the club was everyone's faces when they saw the pranks. It made me feel sneaky, but in a good way. I liked that I was one of the few kids in the school that got picked to be a part of the club. I loved the feeling of getting picked and being the only one in Grade 2. My favourite part was also the Rick Roll!

- Ryan

We put fake poo on the ground. It was so fun because people thought it was real but it was fake. We should do it again next year because it was so fun. Everyone laughed a lot.

- Ethan

I liked scaring Dilek by putting the fake vomit on her desk. I like to be a trickster. You have to put it down when no one is looking.

- Leo

I remember setting up all the stuff, all the April fools that we were going to be doing. I liked it and would want to do it again.

- Miles

My favourite part was probably when Sue told me that I was getting a special mission from (name withheld). Getting surprised was really fun. I liked making people laugh. When you make someone laugh and you realize that you had a part in that then it makes you feel really good.

- Lilly

I absolutely hated this idea. But when I saw the pure joy and excitement on the children's faces, I couldn't help but appreciate it!

- Sue

Bandall Rown and Malex Aorley's names have been changed to protect their identities. (Editor's note: While the authors' names are very similar to our own Grade 3 teacher (Randall Brown) and our Senior Kindergarten teacher (Alex Morley), both educators claim no knowledge of either Bandall or Malex and could not be reached for further comment at the time of publication.) They also insist that they have never been Rickrolled.



Ian Hawkins Spirit Award

By Michelle Barchuk

Drum roll, please! The 2023 Ian Hawkins Spirit Award goes to.....PENPA! Our fantastic day custodian Penpa Tsering is always there when we need him. From helping with Saturday Morning Choosing Time to cleaning up a spill to setting up lunch tables in the gym every day and everything in between. As you can see from the quotes received on the nomination form, we can always count on Penpa for a smile and a helping hand. (He also happens to make the most delicious pancakes ever!) On Mabin Day, the 2023 Ian Hawkins Spirit Award was presented to Penpa at a full school assembly by Jax ('25), Ryder ('26) & Skylar ('28) Erlick in a touching presentation where they outlined exactly why Penpa was such a worthy recipient. Please join The Mabin School in congratulating this beloved member of our community on his well-deserved award. Congratulations, Penpa!



Penpa with Ian Hawkins



Penpa greets all of the members of our community with a smile each day, always making the first steps into our building joyous, radiating his kind spirit to all. Throughout the day he interacts with students, staff and parents, sharing a laugh, a smile and helping everyone feel included.



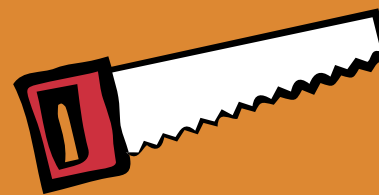
Penpa supports our entire community each day. On top of all his regular duties, Penpa is always ready to lend a hand. He especially likes fixing things (like the Kindergarten bikes), helping classes (like hanging the Grade 4 bird feeders) and hurrying around to help whenever he is needed.



Penpa brings his own great spirit to the school. He shares Tibetan cookies on Tibetan new year, he supports staff and students in his own way by building and maintaining strong relationships. He is the one who brews the coffee, clears the snow and prepares our building for each new day.



Penpa has worked for many years supporting our school and building relationships in our community. I would like to see our community honour his contributions to the community and spirit of the school. I tell him every day how much I appreciate him and I want to nominate Penpa for this award.



The Ian Hawkins Spirit Award is an annual award which honours the contributions of Ian Hawkins, beloved music and French teacher at The Mabin School, from 1993-2018. Each year, it recognizes member(s) of the Mabin community who embody the spirit of what Ian brought to our school: kindness, supportiveness and community spirit. The award can recognize an individual or a group. Staff, teachers, students, parents, other Mabin community members, or a group composed of members from multiple areas are all eligible for consideration. Past recipients since its inception in 2018 have included: EcoWarriors, Andy Lavia, Rachel Northup, Chris Russell and the Grade 5 & 6 students. Nominations open each Spring. Interested in learning more or being a member of the selection committee this year? Contact pa@mabin.com.



Michelle Barchuk is Director of Admissions & Communications at The Mabin School.



Mabin Day

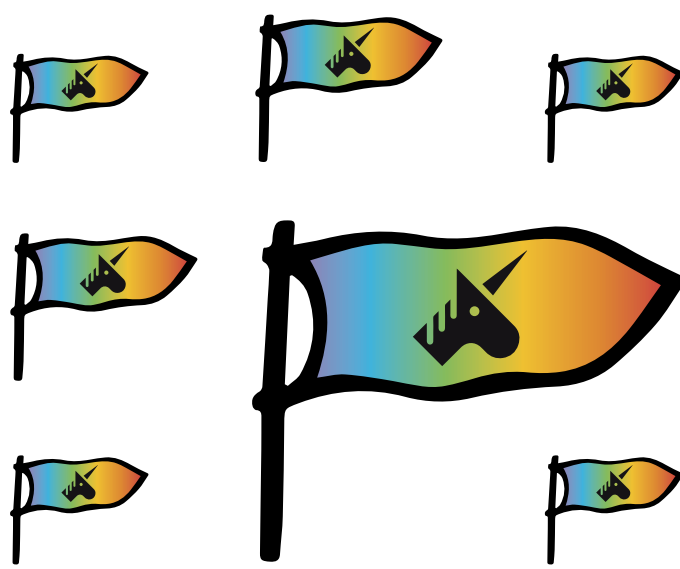
By Michelle Barchuk

Back in 2018, we established a new tradition: Mabin Day. An annual celebration of all things Mabin, each year Mabin Day takes place on the Thursday before the Victoria Day long weekend. It's a chance to invite Mabin families from near and far – old and new – to join us for an afternoon of celebration and, of course, a parade!

Our 6th annual Mabin Day in 2023 was another great success and we were thrilled to be able to celebrate back “home” at 50 Poplar Plains Road once again! We are grateful to our mighty Parents’ Association and our Grade 5 & 6 students who planned all of the festivities collaboratively. Thanks to everyone who came out to share in the fun with us. Special thanks to all of the staff members and parents who volunteered to help!

On Thursday, May 18, 2023, we donned our Mabin gear and started the afternoon in the gym with a special guest at assembly. Gerry Mabin joined us as we kicked off the celebrations and announced the Ian Hawkins Spirit Award winner: Penpa Tsering! (Read about this worthy recipient on page 58 of this issue.)

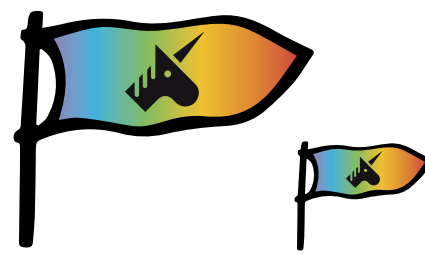
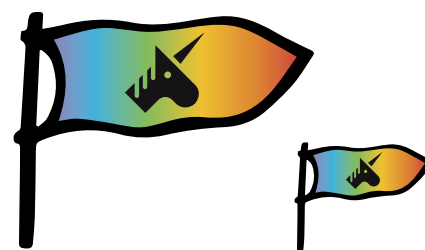
After assembly, it was time for integration with students of all ages spending time together doing art and enjoying Drag Queen Storytime with Fay & Fluffy in the Community Learning Lab. Afterwards, we gathered outside and the entire school paraded around the block before the REAL party started! There was pizza, ice cream, fun and games, a talent show, a dance party, and even a dunk tank! I think it's safe to say that there was something for everyone and it was a fabulous afternoon.



Mark your calendar today for
Mabin Day 2024

Thursday, May 16, 2024

We can't wait to see you next year!



Michelle Barchuk is Mabin's Director of Admissions and Communications. She is a big fan of Mabin Day and any opportunity to put on her Mabin SWAG and join in a parade!

Join us Saturday Mornings!



The Mabin School's free **Saturday Morning Choosing Time** sessions are possible as a result of a generous donation from former Mabin student Lawrence Ho ('88). We are grateful for the opportunity to host this program which allows us to open our doors to the wider community. On any given Saturday, you may see Mabin alumni, staff members, neighbours and friends of The Mabin School with their children, enjoying their time together.

In June, Lawrence, who is now based in Hong Kong, came to visit. As he wandered through the old building and the new additions, Lawrence reminisced about how welcome his family felt when they first moved to Canada and how they were so embraced by the Mabin community. It was for that reason he asked that his donation be specifically directed to community programming that reaches as many children and families as possible. As a result, our Saturday Morning Choosing Time, hosted in our new Kindergarten classrooms, was created as an open invitation to any family to experience the Mabin magic in a safe, welcoming, creative, and inclusive environment. "It is so nice to see how the new area has turned out," Lawrence shared in a follow up. "I am honoured to play a small part in it."

Parents/caregivers with children 0-5 years old are invited to drop in for our free **Saturday Morning Choosing Time**, a Lawrence Ho Family Community Program, in our Kindergarten space. It runs between **10:00 am and 12:00 pm** on a series of dates throughout the school year. No sign up. All are welcome to stop by and play. Join us and bring a friend!

Fall 2023

October 14, 21, 28
Nov 4, 18, 25
Dec 2, 9

Winter 2024

Jan 13, 20, 27
Feb 3, 10, 24
Mar 2

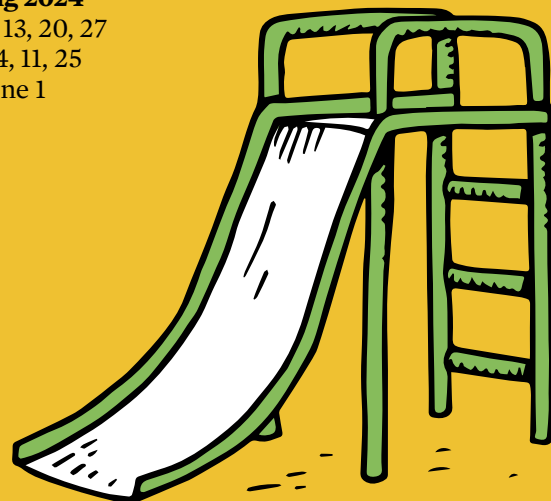
Spring 2024

April 6, 13, 20, 27
May 4, 11, 25
June 1



Access our online school calendar to check these dates at mabin.com any time.

Questions about this program?
Contact admissions@mabin.com.



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 or 416-964-9594 ext. 247.

Changing Times - Fall 2023

The Changing Times is published each year by The Mabin School to highlight stories from school life and to share news about our alumni and alumni families.

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.

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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 or at 416-964-9594 x247.



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